

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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By now it's unlikely that anyone will need telling, but, for the record, **Christopher Lee** received a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours. In Sir Christopher's long and, despite the 'horror' tag, immensely varied career, he has famously portrayed Sherlock Holmes, Mycroft Holmes, and Sir Henry Baskerville, as well as recording seven of the later short stories and a good abridgement of *The Valley of Fear*. His autobiography *Lord of Misrule* is well worth reading.

For *So Painful a Scandal* (The Baker Street Irregulars, Michael H Kean, 3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953-2837, USA; \$35.00 + postage) **John Bergquist** has assembled half a dozen notable scholars to examine the manuscript of 'The Three Students'. The MS, along with the BSI archive, is at the Houghton Library at Harvard. Phillip Bergem follows the editor's introduction with 'Notes on the Manuscript', actually an essay, preparatory to his annotated transcript. I'm not sure whether the transcript itself is particularly useful, but it serves to anchor the annotations, and they certainly are useful. Few of us can easily consult *The Strand Magazine* and *Collier's*, so it's good to know just how the text differed in its first published versions — quite a lot when it came to punctuation, as Conan Doyle was notably lax there. And I'm fascinated by the possibility that the manuscript's deleted word 'open' was read by the editor of *Collier's*, appropriately for the outer door of Soames's room, as 'oaken'. (But Conan Doyle's 'storey', meaning one floor of a building, is not a misspelling.) Randall Stock relates the wanderings of the MS, which Conan Doyle donated to a Red Cross fund-raising sale in 1917, where it fetched seven guineas. (Mr Stock's website at www.bestofsherlock.com is an invaluable guide to such matters.) Michael Eckman contributes a pleasant short piece about his visits to Oxford and Cambridge. Nicholas Utechin believes 'The Three Students' is by far the weakest of the stories in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, and lists no fewer than seventeen stylistic or constructional flaws. Perhaps he tries just that bit too hard with: 'Nowhere else does the author tease so prissily in mentioning that he/Watson might write up an incident (the results of Holmes's researches into those early English charters) as a future adventure: every single other allusion to an unrecorded case refers to an adventure that had actually occurred.' What Watson says is that the researches 'led to results so striking that they may be the subject of one of my future narratives'. The 'results' had indeed actually occurred. But he's spot-on with, for instance: 'The Fortescue Scholarship has nowhere been described as being for students of St Luke's alone. There is no justification — other than to move a slapdash plot — to make Holmes suspect only the three. And — gosh — they are all on the staircase above Soames. You could not make it up...' Guy Marriott makes a good case for Peterhouse College, Cambridge as the 'real' St Luke's. However, the window which he claims matches the one in Sidney Paget's drawing is actually so low that no one, let alone a six-footer, would need to stand on tiptoe to look through it — and he ignores the fact that the buildings in Old Court are at most three storeys high instead of the required four. Oliver Nicholson makes a good case for St Mary's Hall, Oxford, now part of Oriel College, but he's perhaps too quick to dismiss the definitive evidence for Cambridge: the black clay from the jumping pits. (Mr Nicholson adopts the tone of Monsignor Knox, using terms such as 'the Doylean Redactor' and 'the Watson-Quelle', and introducing me to one or two words that I'm unlikely ever to use, such as 'inconcinities' and 'obnubilated'.) Finally Andrew Malec contributes an illuminating essay about Frederic Dorr Steele and his illustrations for the story, outstanding among which is the uncompleted picture reproduced on this book's cover. Rejected by *Collier's*, it was acquired from the artist by Gray Chandler Briggs and bought in 1984 by Richard Lancelyn Green. The frontispiece, the Paget illustration already mentioned, is reproduced from the original drawing,

now owned by Constantine Rossakis. *So Painful a Scandal* is an important contribution to the scholarship of Sherlock Holmes. I could wish, though, that the manuscript pages had not been reduced from their actual size of 12¾ x 8 inches.

A while back I recommended an unusual and fascinating volume of new stories, *Holmes of the Raj* by **Vithal Rajan**. Now, stimulated by rather worrying echoes of the late 19th century in today's news, Dr Rajan has returned to the Great Detective. *Sherlock Holmes and the Pirates of the Horn* is a play, and a most interesting one (Lazy Bee Scripts, 2 Wood Road, Ashurst, Southampton SO40 7BD). Today, as the author observes, it's America that's ostensibly protecting world trade from Somalian pirates while, it seems, actually protecting its Middle East oil reserves. A hundred and thirty years ago Britain was doing something remarkably similar. The serious threat of piracy had been suppressed decades before, but in 1888 at the Convention of Constantinople, the world's powers reluctantly ceded control of the Suez Canal to Britain. For the purposes of the drama, Dr Rajan supposes that there was a resurgence of piracy, and — since Sherlock Holmes is involved — that the waters are metaphorically as well as actually deep. The action of the play does not stray away from London, apart from a scene at a house party in the country, but it requires a cast of at least fourteen. Having been commissioned by a Greek ship-owner to uncover the truth behind the numerous attacks on vessels off the Horn of Africa, Holmes gets his information from many sources, official and decidedly unofficial. Devotees of Billy Wilder's film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* may not be surprised to learn that Mycroft Holmes knows more than he lets on. The script makes for stimulating and highly intelligent and literate entertainment (though the word 'hijack' was not, apparently, coined until the 1920s). You can read the whole thing on-line at http://www.lazybeescripts.co.uk/FullLengthPlays/Sherlock_Holmes_and_the_Pirates_of_the_Horn.htm, where you'll also find information about buying and producing the play. I'd love to see it produced!

Forthcoming from HarperCollins India (A-53, Sector 57, Noida, UP 201301, India) is *The Curious Case of 221B: The Secret Notebooks of John H Watson, MD* by **Partha Basu**. 'In this brilliant retelling that turns the Holmesian canon on its head... Partha Basu brings back a host of characters who have captivated generations of readers, except that they are no longer what we had made them out to be.'

Interest in Holmes is as high as ever in the Sub-continent. Take a look at <http://in.groups.yahoo.com/group/SherlockHolmesSocietyofIndia/>, the discussion group of **The Sherlock Holmes Society of India**. You may be tempted to join in the debates — and why not? ('Sumalsn' is the Society's founder, Sumal Surendranath.)

This morning's post brought a copy of **Lyndsay Faye's** *Dust and Shadow: An Account of the Ripper Killings by Dr John H Watson* (Simon & Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, USA; \$25.00). I'll review it next time.

Following the deserved success of *Eliminate the Impossible* and *Close to Holmes*, **Alistair Duncan** is working on *The Norwood Author: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Norwood Years (1891-1894)*, due in March 2010 from MX Publishing Ltd (335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX). Amazon.co.uk is taking pre-orders now.

In November comes *A Study in Survival: Conan Doyle Solves the Final Problem* by **Roger Straughan** (O Books, The Bothy, Deershot Lodge, Park Lane, Ropley, Hants. SO24 OBE; office1@o-books.net). We're told: 'Dame Jean Conan Doyle was clearly convinced of Dr Straughan's unusual powers of communication with her father,' and: 'A donation will be made from sales of this book to the Undershaw Appeal.'

Check the BSI Publications website at www.bakerstreetjournal.com, where a new regular feature is the 'Deal Table'. The first 'deal' is on *The Hound of the Baskervilles: A Facsimile of the Original Manuscript of Chapter XI. by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle along with Commentary on the Story*, reduced from \$35.00 to \$25.00 (plus postage).

Nick Utechin reports that he still has a dozen or so copies of 'The Sometimes Elusive Quarry', his 2008 Richard Lancelyn Green Lecture. The Society printed 200 for our own annual dinner and 200 for the BSI dinner. They're available for the cost of postage (a cheque for £1.50 payable to N Utechin for UK addresses or a \$5.00 bill for US addresses) from Nick at Highfield Farm, 23 Highfield Avenue, Headington, Oxford OX3 7LR — e-mail highfieldfarmhouse@yahoo.co.uk. **Gerald Zwirn** offers two copies of the *Catalogue of the Collection* of the Sherlock Holmes pub, published by Whitbread: a first edition from 1857 and a later one from 1963. This attractive and desirable 54-page book contains essays by H Douglas Thomson, John Dickson Carr and A Lloyd-Taylor, plus thirteen plates and several line drawings, as well as the catalogue. Mr Zwirn invites offers for each at gz@myconnection.co.za.

At http://www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times09-6.htm is the June issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times (Classic Specialties)*, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com.)

You can stay overnight, and cheaply, at Holderness Hall! **Ilam Hall**, the splendid gothic mansion which Jonathan McCafferty identifies as the Duke's mansion, is a Youth Hostel. E-mail ilam@yha.org.uk. Or see the YHA website at <http://www.yha.org.uk/find-accommodation/peak-district-sherwood/hostels/Ilam/index.aspx>.

Aleš Kolodrubec, President of the Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes, reports that Asteroid no. 46722 (1997 RA1), discovered by Lenka Šarounová and Petr Pravec at the Ondřejov Observatory on 2 September 1997 has been officially named **Ireneadler**. You'll find the citation at <http://scully.cfa.harvard.edu/~cgi/ShowCitation.COM?num=046722>.

News from Paul Spiring: Ipplepen Parish Council has placed a bench outside Caunter's Close in the village, as a memorial to Arthur Conan Doyle's friend **Bertram Fletcher Robinson**, who inspired the writing of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

The Royal Mail will mark ten of this year's anniversaries with its **Eminent Britons** 1st Class stamp set on 8 October. Fred Perry, Henry Purcell, Matt Busby, WE Gladstone, Mary Wollstonecraft, Arthur Conan Doyle, Donald Campbell, Judy Fryd, Samuel Johnson and Martin Ryle feature. www.norvic-philatelics.co.uk/2009/10a-eminent-britons.htm has a good preview of the stamps and the first day cover.

John Addy reminds me that there's a huge amount of Holmesian and Doylean material freely available at www.archive.org/index.php — plus much else, of course: scans of hard-to-find books and lots of vintage radio recordings.

In October, at the Cockpit Theatre in Gateforth Street, near Lisson Grove, our member **Sandy Easton** will play Dr Watson in his own play *The Matter of the Cardinal Jewel*, a production of the Venturers Drama Group of the Visually impaired. Sandy himself is blind. Holmes will be played by Lee Innel, a sighted actor. The rest of the cast is mainly blind and partially-sighted. There's no further information yet on the website at www.venturersdramagroup.org.uk.

On 7 July the restored and remastered version of the 1922 film *Sherlock Holmes*, starring **John Barrymore**, will be released on Region 1 DVD by Kino International (333 W. 39th Street, Suite 503, New York, NY 10018, USA). It will also be available as one of a 4-disc set, *The John Barrymore Collection*. You can order it from Amazon.com or from <http://www.kino.com/video>, but make sure your DVD player can cope!

We're still waiting for the BBC to do the decent thing and release the 1965 *Sherlock Holmes* series on DVD. Meanwhile, Network Fulfilment (Sony DADC, 6 Solar Way, Innova Park, Mollison Avenue, Enfield EN3 7XY) has just issued the first series of *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* as a 4-DVD set. These thirteen plays, inspired by Hugh Greene's first anthology, feature the likes of John Neville, Robert Stephens, Roy Dotrice, Donald Pleasance and Donald Sinden. You can buy the set on-line at shop@networkdvd.net. And on 6 July Acorn Media UK (16 Welmar Mews, London SW4 7DD) will release the BBC series *The Edwardians* as a DVD boxed set. Nigel Davenport is Arthur Conan Doyle, Timothy West is Horatio Bottomley, Anthony Hopkins is Lloyd George, Ron Moody is Baden-Powell... Eight plays in all.

Anyone heading toward Connecticut should, of course, visit Gillette Castle, the gloriously eccentric mansion that William Gillette had built at East Haddam. For years our good friends **Harold and Theodora Niver** have taken on the personae of William and Helen Gillette, at the Castle and elsewhere. The testimonials on the website explain why Harold and Teddie are so successful: www.sherlockholmesct.com.

Simon Hall advises me that The Baker Street Fellowship is now called **The Sherlock Holmes Society of Nottinghamshire**. You can get more information from Simon, who founded the Society six years ago, at sdehall2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Hawthorne Race Course at Cicero, Illinois will see a unique Sherlockian double on 31 October: the **Watsonians'** 50th Annual Silver Blaze and the **Baker Street Irregulars'** Triennial Silver Blaze. Details can be had from Susan Diamond at szdiamond@comcast.net. (For non-cognoscenti: the name of the horse has for decades been applied to a race — or, rather, to more than one race. The definitive guide is Wayne Swift's *History of The Silver Blaze*, published as *The Baker Street Journal 2000 Christmas Annual*, and long out of print.)

Do take a look — a frequent look — at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, where **Jonny Hough** is keeping our Society's website up to date and alive. Also check www.flickr.com/shsl, where many photos of our events are now shown to great advantage.

Peter Blau reports the death at the age of eighty-two of **Edward S Lauterbach** on 3 June. A professor of English and a long-time member of The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis, he effectively succeeded his late father Charles Edward Lauterbach as the poet laureate of the Baker Street Irregulars. He was invested into the BSI as 'Thornycroft Huxtable, MA, PhD, etc.' in 1965.

Tenniel Evans, who died on 10 June aged eighty-three, gave a memorable performance as Hilton Cubitt in the 1984 Granada TV production of *The Dancing Men*. His acting career encompassed far more over a period of nearly sixty years, but he's likely to be best remembered as the bolshie and very Welsh Able Seaman Taffy Goldstein in the long-running BBC radio comedy *The Navy Lark*. On his father's side he was related to George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), and on his mother's to John Tenniel, after whom he was named.

As far as I know, the musician and broadcaster **Steve Race** had no particular connections with the world of Sherlock Holmes... except that forty or so years ago he occasionally attended our Society's annual dinners. He was the guest, I think, of Lord Donegall, a notable jazz enthusiast. Steve Race died on 22 June, aged eighty-eight.

Steve Duke of the Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria reports the recent death of **J Michael Chisholm**, a founder-member of the Society and a long-time stalwart of Sherlockian activity in Australia.

[*In the last DM I said that the late **Joe Fink** held the BSI investiture of 'Tonga'. That was actually his ASH investiture. In the BSI he was 'The Martyrdom of Man'. My apologies.*]

Particulars received. **Canadian Holmes**, Victoria Day (May) 2009 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Chris Redmond, 523 Westfield Drive, Waterloo, ON, Canada N2T 2E1). **The Illustrious Clients News**, June 2009 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). **Ineffable Twaddle**, July 2009 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). **The Morning Echo**, 15 June 2009 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria**, Steve Duke, PO Box 340, Reservoir, Victoria 3073, Australia). **Prescott's Press**, June 2009 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). **The School Report**, Summer 2009 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). **The Scion**, Spring 2009 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). **The Serpentine Muse**, Summer 2009 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA).

And **Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press**, June 2009 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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