

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Sherlock Holmes's London by **David Sinclair** (Robert Hale Ltd, Clerkenwell House, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT; £17.99) is a handsomely illustrated addition to the select library of topographical studies of the Canon. Mr Sinclair comes to the topic without the benefit – or possibly encumbrance – of long association with Holmesian devotees and their writings, but he knows his London and his Sherlock Holmes. He's delved into the street directories of the period and studied the large-scale maps. He's tramped the streets of London, comparing and contrasting. The result is a fresh and attractive look at the city in which Holmes lived and worked. He traces the journey that Holmes, Watson and Miss Morstan took on a foggy evening from the Lyceum Theatre to Norwood, pointing out sites of interest and noting Holmes's, or Watson's, lapses. (He can't place Thaddeus Sholto's house or Pondicherry Lodge precisely, but then it took Bernard Davies some forty years to identify them.) From Pondicherry Lodge, he follows Holmes, Watson and Toby on the trail of the wooden-legged man. Devoting the first chapter to this longest detailed trek through London sets the scene very nicely. The identification of the site of 221B at the present 25 Baker Street is well-reasoned, but the charm of this particular exercise, as of much of the book, is in the incidental detail. Is it coincidence that in 1877, when Holmes was lodging in Montague Street, a Dr John Watson had rooms nearby in what is now Southampton Place? Subsequent sections cover pretty much all the metropolitan locations, mostly within a mile or so of Baker Street but some as far out as Harrow, Croydon and Norbury. A rare lapse is the claim that the Museum Tavern must be the Alpha Inn because it bears the double letter A above its first floor windows: I agree with the identification, but the device is in fact the letter M. The final chapter, 'Following the Trails', directs the reader to some of the surviving locations from the Canon. *Sherlock Holmes's London* is an attractive, intelligent and entertaining book.

In *The Chicago Silver Blaze 1960-2009* **Susan Z Diamond** relates something of the joys and frustrations of organising the world's oldest annual 'Silver Blaze' still running. In 1952 Tom Stix Sr had instituted what was then called the Silver Blaze Purse at Jamaica racecourse in New York. Six years later, after a joint meeting of the newly revived Hounds of the Baskerville (sic) and Hugo's Companions, Bob Hahn arranged the first Chicago Silver Blaze at Arlington Park. Since 1992 the race has been an essential part of the annual Watsonian Weekend; this handsome booklet is published by the Watsonians. The fiftieth race held on 31 October at Hawthorne racecourse, was also the BSI's Triennial Silver Blaze. The history, the companion collection of congratulatory messages, and a commemorative pin cost \$18.00 postpaid. Checks should be payable to The Watsonians and sent to Susan Diamond at 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA. Peter Blau notes: 'The race also was the occasion for the publication of *Two Celebrations: The Fiftieth Annual Running of the Chicago Silver Blaze and the Triennial Silver Blaze of the Baker Street Irregulars* edited by **Candace Lewis**. The 56-page book includes 14 black-and-white and color photographs and is available for \$12.95 (plus shipping) from www.bakerstreetjournal.com.'

[**The Pleasant Places of Florida* will sponsor the twentieth Florida Wesssex Cup Weekend at Tampa Bay Downs racetrack on 12-14 February. Our Society has not yet sponsored a race – but the idea is under consideration.*]

Inspector James McLevy was a celebrated character in mid-Victorian Edinburgh. He entered the city's police force in 1830, becoming a detective three years later. It was the start of a thirty-year career that he was to draw on for a series of exciting and illuminating memoirs. (*McLevy, the Edinburgh Detective* is currently in print from Birlinn Ltd, West Newington House, 10 Newington Road, Edinburgh EH9 1QS.)

Since 1999 BBC Radio 4 has broadcast six series of plays by **David Ashton** in which Brian Cox plays Inspector McLevy, and Mr Ashton has also written three novels, the latest being *A Trick of the Light* (Birlinn, £9.99). Arthur Conan Doyle, Edinburgh-born in 1859, was probably familiar with the exploits of the real McLevy. In *A Trick of the Light* he meets and even assists the inspector. How so? Well, David Ashton's McLevy isn't quite the McLevy of history. Mr Ashton has moved him forward three decades, and made him a native Scot instead of an Irish immigrant. The real and the fictional detectives are alike, though, in being sardonic, dogged and intelligent. Echoes of a violent death in 1864 awake with the arrival of the beautiful American spiritualist medium Sophia Adler, but McLevy never has the chance to concentrate on just one case. The recently widowed Muriel Grierson's house is burgled, and her friend Mrs Doyle's son is keen to assist in the investigation. And, as always, there's trouble with Jean Brash, proprietress of the Just Land, a high class 'bawdy hoose'. David Ashton, like Robert Louis Stevenson or Ian Rankin, is inspired by the beauty-and-beast nature of Edinburgh. His interpretation of James McLevy is worthy of the original man.

The Shadow of Evil, the third of the Baker Street Mysteries by **Tim Pigott-Smith**, was published in October by Hodder Children's Books (338 Euston Road, London NW1 3BH) at £5.99. The people at Hodder seem uninterested in promoting Mr Pigott-Smith's books, and they should be ashamed of themselves. These tales of Sam Wiggins and the Baker Street Irregulars are first-rate reading for all ages.

The indefatigable **Brian Pugh** and **Paul Spiring** have collaborated with Devon historian **Sadru Bhanji** on *Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and Devon: A Complete Tour Guide and Companion*, due on 15 June by MX Publishing (10 Kingfisher Close, Stanstead Abbots, Herts. SG12 8LQ) at £9.99. On 16 February MX will publish a new edition of *Rugby Football* by **Bertram Fletcher Robinson**, edited by Paul Spiring and retitled *Rugby Football During the Nineteenth Century* (£14.99). You can pre-order both books from www.amazon.co.uk.

Recently titles from Dover Publications (31 East 2nd Street, Mineola, NY 11501-3582) include *Sherlock Holmes Paper Dolls* by **Tom Tierney** (\$9.99) and *Sherlock Holmes Activity Book* by **David Schimmel** (\$4.99). The Dover Bookshop (18 Earlham Street, London WC2H 9LG) has a website at www.doverbooks.co.uk/.

Amanda Field reports that Middlesex University Press will close at the end of the year. The good news is that her book *England's Secret Weapon: The Wartime Films of Sherlock Holmes* (£11.99) can still be ordered through bookshops or from www.amazon.co.uk. Signed copies are available from the author at amandafield@ntlworld.com.

M C Black notes that Bibliophile Ltd (Unit 5 Datapoint, South Crescent, London E16 4TL; www.bibliophilebooks.com) currently offers *The Man Created Sherlock Holmes: the Life and Times of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* by **Andrew Lycett** at £8.00, and *Conan Doyle: Detective* by **Peter Costello** at £4.50. Please quote reference 1045 if you order.

The December issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times*, the catalogue-magazine of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com), which you'll find at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times09-12.htm, offers *For the Record: My Name Is Hammer*, the latest book from **David Hammer**, BSI, which 'contains dozens of brief, interesting, amusing and true-life anecdotes arising from his life as a practicing attorney in Dubuque' (\$20.00).

At <http://vook.com> you'll find *The Sherlock Holmes Experience*, 'a revolutionary new way to read about the exploits of Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary creation: Sherlock Holmes. The vook features two classic stories by Doyle – *The Man with the Twisted Lip* and *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* – and enhances them with videos that

delve into the history and legend surrounding the character of Holmes.' **Catherine Cooke** and **Nicholas Utechin** provide the Holmesian expertise, and the whole thing is very nicely done. You can buy the 'vook' as an iPhone application or buy access to it online. It's cheap either way at \$2.99.

This month Big Finish (PO Box 3787, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 3TF) release *Sherlock Holmes – The Death and Life*, **Roger Llewellyn's** second audio recording of a play by David Stuart Davies. Thanks to **Nicholas Briggs**, who directed the two plays for Big Finish (and who plays the detective himself in the forthcoming *Holmes and the Ripper* by Brian Clemens), I can offer two copies as prizes. Just tell me in which story Dr Watson's wife apparently refers to him as 'James'. Send answers to me by 14 January, and the two correct answers drawn from the hat will win the CDs. The winners of the *Sherlock Holmes – The Last Act!* CDs were Philip J Attwell and Michael Cox. Congratulations!

Walter Campbell tells us that he's producing, in instalments, an audio play entitled *The Man Who Would Be Sherlock Holmes*. You'll find it at <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/viewPodcast?id=343705134>, where it's accessible free of charge.

Two more plays recorded by **The Old Court Radio Theatre Company** can now be heard or downloaded free on the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk. This time M J Elliott's splendid scripts venture into apocryphal territory in 'The Man with the Watches' and 'The Lost Special'. The two plays are available from me on CD for £5.00, €9.00 or \$12.00, postpaid (sterling cheques payable to me, US dollar checks to Jean Upton; Euros in cash, please).

On the Guardian website at www.guardian.co.uk/herlock-holmes-the-movie/the-real-sherlock-holmes you can download, also free, a four-part *Sherlock Holmes Audiowalk*, taking in the Whitehall-Northumberland Avenue area and ending appropriately at the Sherlock Holmes pub.

Two years ago **Peter Egan** and **Philip Franks** toured in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. In February they'll start touring again, this time with *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*, the play that **Jeremy Paul** wrote for Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke. The venues are: 8–20 February: **Mercury Theatre**, Colchester (01206 573948); 22–27 February: **Theatre Royal**, Windsor (01753 853888); 1–6 March: **Richmond Theatre**, Richmond (0844 871 7651); 8–13 March: **Theatre Royal**, Bath (01225 448844); 15–20 March: **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre**, Guildford (01483 440000); 22–27 March: **Theatre Royal**, York (01904 623568); 29 March – 3 April: **Kings Theatre**, Edinburgh (0131 529 6000); 5–10 April: **Malvern Theatres**, Malvern (01684 892277); 12–17 April: **Palace Theatre**, Westcliff on Sea (01702 351135); 19–24 April: **Arts Theatre**, Cambridge (01223 503333).

The five surviving episodes from the 1968 BBC series with **Peter Cushing** and **Nigel Stock** as Holmes and Watson have at last been released in America, by A&E Home Video (<http://store.aetv.com/>) at \$29.95. It was an uneven series, but *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in particular is superb, and North American viewers get a bonus documentary, *The Great Detective*, denied to the British.

John Addy reminds me that Billy Wilder and I A L Diamond's script for *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* is accessible free of charge at www.imsdb.com/scripts/Private-Life-of-Sherlock-Holmes-The.html.

Our member **Richard Burnip** leads the regular 'Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes' walk for the excellent London Walks, which starts every Friday except Christmas Day from Embankment Underground station at 2.00pm. On Sunday 10 January he'll conduct two special walks: 'What Ho, Jeeves! The London of P G Wodehouse' (Marble Arch Underground, exit 2, 10.45am) and 'The Arthur Conan Doyle Walk: The Adventures of Sherlock's Creator' (Piccadilly Circus, by the Eros statue, 2.30pm). If you take along a copy of the DM you'll be entitled to the student rate of £5.00 for Richard's walks. More information is on the website at www.walks.com, or e-mail richardburnip@yahoo.co.uk.

Thanks to the publicity generated by and for Guy Ritchie's film *Sherlock Holmes*, the great detective has returned to **Madame Tussauds** after an absence of some fifty years. The likeness is, naturally, of Robert Downey Jr. The wax museum's original London home was in Baker Street, where it was visited by the young Arthur Conan Doyle (in those days they knew how to spell 'Tussaud's' correctly). The present premises in Marylebone Road opened in 1894.

Aleš Kolodrubec reports that **Prague Municipal Library** has launched at <http://www.sherlockholmes.cz/index2.php?page=aktuality> its *Sherlock Holmes On-line* project. Besides most of the Canon, there's an obituary of Conan Doyle written by Karel Čapek, a biography of Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes comics for children written by Rudolf Cechura – and more to come. It's all in Czech, of course.

John Daw has contacted us: 'The **Sporebook Project** is an organisation for the promotion of classical literature in electronic form. A forum for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle/Sherlock Holmes is now available at www.sporebook.org/forums. There is no charge for using this forum.'

Visitors to the late lamented Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company will probably have seen artwork by our member **Christopher Jones**. He now has his own website at www.sherlockholmespage.co.uk/ and hopes to offer prints for sale in the New Year.

Timothy Bateson, who died on 16 September aged eighty-three, was a versatile, reliable and prolific character actor, whose professional career began in 1947, as Lord Frederick Verisopht in Cavalcanti's film *Nicholas Nickleby*. Fifty years later he played White Mason in Bert Coules' radio play *The Valley of Fear*.

In 1980 **Denys Hawthorne** played Holmes in Michael Hardwick's *The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes*, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Conan Doyle's death. In 1984 he was James Barclay in the Granada TV production of *The Crooked Man*, and in 1993 he returned to Radio 4 as Hilton Soames in his own dramatisation of *The Three Students*. He died on 16 October aged seventy-seven.

In the 1962 film *The Longest Day*, **Richard Todd**, who had served in the Parachute Regiment and helped secure Pegasus Bridge, had the curious experience of playing his own commanding officer. He'll be best remembered for playing another war hero, Wing Commander Guy Gibson, in *The Dam Busters*. In 1992 he was Field Marshal Lord Roberts in the television film *Sherlock Holmes: Incident at Victoria Falls*. He died on 3 December, at the age of ninety.

The Cimbrian Friends of Baker Street will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of their society on 17 July 2010. *Til lykke!*

E J Wagner will chair *The Sherlock Holmes Effect: How the Arthur Conan Doyle Classics Influence Contemporary Mysteries*, organised by the New York Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America at Mid-Manhattan Library on the evening of 26 January. The panellists include **Lyndsay Faye** and **Andrew Peck**. Phone 212 340 0837 for details.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Autumn 2009 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). *Communication*, no. 295 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, November 2009 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, December 2009 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *The Magic Door*, Fall 2009 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). *Mayday Mayday*, December 2009, *C-Extra* no. 1, and *The Log of the SS May Day* vol. 1 no. 3 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcaner Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Moor: Magasin för Sherlockianer*, November 2009 (**The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden**, Anders Wiggström, Byggmästarvägen 29, 168 32 Bromma, Sweden). *The Torr*, Autumn 2009 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Reggie Musgrave, Drummond Cottage, Old Tavern Yard, Westbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO10 8TA). *The Vermissa Herald* vol. 8 no. 1 (**The Scowlers and Molly Maguire of San Francisco**, Carol Russell, 314 Laurel Court, Cloverdale, CA 95425, USA).

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

The Compliments of the Season
Roger Johnson