

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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We may deal in nostalgia, but we are forward-looking! Thanks to Carrie Chandler and Jonny Hough, there's now a **Sherlock Holmes Society of London Facebook Group**. To join this global virtual community, go to <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=300160368842>.

We're still recruiting for the two teams of four to challenge the Society's Eggheads [**or Eggspoons – 'What ineffable twaddle!'*]* at the AGM on Thursday 13 May. If you fancy your chances, contact **Nick Utechin** at highfieldfarmhouse@yahoo.co.uk, and remember: you'll be up against a team that *lost* to the BBC's Eggheads!

The Big Finish audio production of *Sherlock Holmes – The Death and Life*, written by **David Stuart Davies** and performed by **Roger Lewellyn**, is every bit as good as its predecessor, *Sherlock Holmes – The Last Act!* (Big Finish, PO Box 3787, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 3TF; www.bigfinish.com/ranges/sherlock-holmes). With the subtlety of adjustments, author, actor and producer ensure that the drama is as effective in sound alone as in the theatre. This second play is less overtly realistic and more humorous than the first, but no less sharp. Conan Doyle, as we all know, created Professor Moriarty specifically to rid himself of Sherlock Holmes. But what if Moriarty had a mind of his own and refused to follow the author's intentions? What if he made Holmes aware of their situation...? Conan Doyle's experience with spiritualist mediums hasn't prepared him for this! The production is a tour de force for all concerned. Full details of the CDs are on the Sherlock Holmes site at <http://holmesaudios.com/>.

The third Holmes recording from Big Finish is due this month. *Holmes and the Ripper* by **Brian Clemens** stars **Nicholas Briggs**, who also adapted the play for audio. The winners of the third Big Finish/District Messenger competition are Tony Medawar and Oscar Ross, whose copies of *Holmes and the Ripper* will be sent direct from Big Finish, to whom our profound thanks!

In *Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle and The Bookman* (Gasogene Books, Wessex Press, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; \$29.95) **S E Dahlinger** and **Leslie Klingner** present a cornucopia of material, much of it substantial, from the pages of the magazine that H L Mencken called 'the best literary monthly the United States has ever seen'. From the very start the editors, Harry Thurston Peck and Arthur Bartlett Maurice, were devotees of Holmes and Conan Doyle (Peck appears to have coined the word 'Sherlockian' to describe himself) and their joyful enthusiasm resulted in the many reviews, comments, essays and parodies they published between 1895 and 1933. Besides Peck and Maurice, this wonderful collection features material by Stephen Vincent Benét, Valentine Williams, Vincent Starrett (whose pieces would form the basis of his book *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*), Edmund Pearson (whose 'Sherlock Holmes Among the Illustrators' is an invaluable early survey of the subject), Hugh Kingsmill and other luminaries of early twentieth century literature (including Arthur Conan Doyle, with a 1927 article, 'The Alleged Posthumous Writings of Known Authors'). We know that there were Holmesian scholars before the Baker Street Irregulars and the Sherlock Holmes Society were founded in 1934, but we tend to remember those who became associated with the societies. This lovely book introduces others, equally worthy, who were commenting on the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes as they were first published. Highly recommended!

Last May the BSI marked the 150th birthday of Arthur Conan Doyle with a symposium at Harvard University, whose Houghton Library held an exhibition called 'Ever Westward: Arthur Conan Doyle and American Culture'. The fourteen papers delivered that weekend are now published as *Papers at an Exhibition - Arthur Conan Doyle: A Sesquicentennial Assessment*, edited by **Peter X Accardo, John**

Bergquist and **Dan Posnansky** (The Baker Street Irregulars, Michael H. Kean, 3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953-2837, USA; \$35.00). Wisely, the programme planners chose a wide range of subject and approach. We have, for instance, Eve Mayer on Conan Doyle's depiction of the Mormons; Charles J Rzepka on a Homeric influence in the Canon, echoed in Conan Doyle's own life; John Bergquist on the process of publishing a Conan Doyle manuscript in facsimile; Andrew Lycett on life as a biographer; Daniel Stashower on the influence of Poe; Randall Stock on compiling a census of Holmesian manuscripts and incunabula; Steven Rothman and Peter Accardo on two fathers of the Sherlockian movement, Christopher Morley and H W Bell; Leslie Klingner's on the correspondence between Dr Watson and Dr Conan Doyle. These fourteen articles help to increase our understanding of Arthur Conan Doyle and his greatest literary legacy.

The sixtieth running of the Chicago 'Silver Blaze' on 31 October was a joint venture with the BSI, and the Irregulars have published a very nicely produced sixty-eight-page paperback, *Two Celebrations: The Fiftieth Annual Running of the Chicago Blaze and the Triennial Silver Blaze of the Baker Street Irregulars*, edited by **Candace Lewis** and priced at \$12.95. Art Levine recounts the history of the New York Silver Blaze, Roger Donway analyses the story that gave race its name, and Candace Lewis looks at flat-racing in nineteenth century art. Even if you haven't attended a Silver Blaze race you'll find lots of interest here.

The Case of the Missing Stradivarius (Irregular Special Press, Baker Street Studios Ltd, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB2 4DX; £15.99) is the second new Sherlock Holmes story by **Emanuel E Garcia**. A quarter of this attractive hardback's 160 pages are taken up with notes on the text, which is unusual but not unwelcome: The story's title gives us the essential situation. It's actually not too hard to work out who stole Donato Del Nero's priceless violin, the 'Medici' Stradivarius, once the property of Paganini himself. The real revelation is not who or how, but *why*, and the answer to that question is intellectually and psychologically satisfying. As fascinating as the narrative is the information about music and musicians – but not all the 'facts' in the story are reliable, which is why the notes are essential to separate clearly the true from the false. Holmes's violin is as integral to his image as the pipe and the magnifying lens, so it's rather surprising that this novel is the first Holmes fiction to concentrate on this aspect of his character. For that alone it would deserve our attention, but it's a jolly good read as well!

Arthur Conan Doyle and **Bertram Fletcher Robinson** shared a passion for sport. Robinson's game was Rugby Union, and his obituary in the Daily Express claimed that he 'only missed an international cap by an accident'. His major contribution was an informative and entertaining book, *Rugby Football*, written by Robinson with contributions from other players, and published by the Isthmian Library in 1896. Long out of print, it's now available again in facsimile as *Rugby Football During the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Paul R Spiring and introduced by Patrick Casey and Hugh Cooke (MX Publishing, 335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX; www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £9.99/\$15.99/€12.99). We didn't play rigger at my school, and Dr Watson's game has long been a mystery to me. Thanks to Messrs Robinson and Spiring the mystery is now less mysterious.

David Grann, author of *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes: Tales of Murder, Madness and Obsession* (Simon & Schuster, 1st Floor, 222 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8HN; £12.99) wrote *The Lost City of Z*, an acclaimed account of the search for Colonel Fawcett, who may have inspired the creation of Professor Challenger. The articles in *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes*, most of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*, concern real-life mysteries, each in its own way as curious as the

disappearance of Percy Fawcett in the Amazon jungle. The first piece, the one that involves Sherlock Holmes, is entitled 'Mysterious Circumstances'. As you may have guessed, it concerns the tragic death of Richard Lancelyn Green, former Chairman of our Society and the world's foremost authority on Arthur Conan Doyle. There's nothing here of the distasteful excesses that Richard's demise provoked in the British press. The circumstances remain mysterious, but Mr Grann's article demolishes the myths and presents the established facts as clearly as possible. The same qualities are evident in the other eleven pieces, on subjects as diverse as the search for the giant squid, the abuse of capital punishment in Texas and the 'sandhogs' – the men who dig the vast system of tunnels beneath New York for the city's water supply.

Dreams of Future Past: The Science Fiction Worlds of Arthur Conan Doyle and H G Wells (Wessex Press; \$13.95) contains fifteen insightful and engaging essays by **Dana Martin Batory**, a prolific writer on Holmesian and Doylean matters. I rather wish that Mr Batory had covered more of the two authors' works. I'd like to know, for instance, what he has to say about *The Lost World*, 'The Time Machine', 'The Horror of the Heights' and *The First Men in the Moon*.

Back to the Drawing Board: The Memoirs of a Backbencher (T M Ernest, 88 Lexham Gardens, London W8 5JB; £15.00 + £3.00 postage [UK]; cheques payable to T M Ernest) is the autobiography of our distinguished Honorary Member **Sir Sydney Chapman** – and the Society is mentioned among his political experiences.

Like Michael Hardwick's highly regarded *Prisoner of the Devil*, **Lawrence Fischman's** *The French Artillery Officer* involves Holmes and Watson in the notorious Dreyfus case. It's available for \$24.99 hardback or \$14.99 paperback from www.thefrenchartilleryofficer.com/.

Our good friend **Vosper Arthur** wishes to sell his collection of *The Strand Magazine*. He has volumes 1 to 23, 25, 26, 28, and 31 to 34, all in the publisher's blue binding and in average to good condition. Please contact Vosper if you're interested, at Spynishlake, Doddyscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR (phone 01647 252472).

Volume 3 of *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine* is now available from Wildside Press (9710 Traville Gateway Drive #234, Rockville, MD 20850, USA; http://www.wildsidebooks.com/sherlock-holmes-mystery-magazine-3_p_3871.html); \$10.00).

Daniel Elton Harmon has had deserved success with his short stories of Harper and MacTavish, separate series about two crime reporters in late nineteenth century South Carolina. Now he offers *The Illustrated Harper & MacTavish Reader*, published quarterly as pdf files. Details are at www.danieleltonharmon.com, and it all looks very attractive.

At <http://elisanonline.com/sublibrarians/libraries.html> The Sub-Librarians Scion of the BSI provides a useful list of libraries that have Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle collections. One of the newest is **The Richard and Joshua Green Sherlock Holmes Collection** at Birmingham Southern College in Birmingham, Alabama. Not yet listed is the collection at the Rare Books Library at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, donated by **Peter H Wood**.

From Florida **Jill Emery** invites offers for the Gasogene [*actually a seltzogene if I remember correctly**] that was used as a prop in Martyn Read's play *221B* in which Nigel Stock toured in the mid 1980s. Contact her at emeritus_books@yahoo.com.

On 25 April **Ian Young** will run in the London Marathon, to raise money for Sparks, a charity dedicated to funding research into conditions and illnesses affecting children, babies and expectant mothers. Ian will run dressed as Sherlock Holmes in a bid to break the world record for Fastest Iconic Book Character. You can sponsor him at <http://www.justgiving.com/Ian-Young0>.

In their sale on 9 March **Cameo Auctioneers** (Kennet Holme Farm, Bath Road, Midgham, Berks. RG7 5UX) will offer costumes worn by Jeremy Brett and Michael Caine as Sherlock Holmes and a tailcoat worn by Nigel Bruce in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Details and photos are at www.cameo-auctioneers.co.uk/2010-03-09/.

The Marlbourne Point Mystery, a two-part adventure of Sherlock Holmes, will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 5 and 6 April. Clive Merrison and Andrew Sachs return as Holmes and Watson, with Pik-Sen Lim, Richard Dillane and James Laurensen, who plays Mycroft Holmes. The writer is **Bert Coules** and the producer is Patrick Rayner. On 8 April BBC Audiobooks will release *The Further Adventures of Sherlock*

Holmes volume four, containing the new play together with *The Remarkable Performance of Mr Frederick Merridew* and *The Eyes of Horus*. You can pre-order via www.bertcoules.co.uk/cassette.htm.

LipService – **Maggie Fox** and **Sue Ryding** – are currently touring with their deliciously barmy Holmes spoof *Move Over Moriarty*. Details are on their website at www.lip-service.net/home.php.

The musical *The Baskerville Beast* by **Teddy Hayes** will be staged at The Rose Theatre, Bankside from 24 May to 6 June, in repertory with Mr Hayes' musical *Great Expectations*. John Elnaugh, Paul Engers and John Pyle return as Holmes, Watson and Barrymore. Details are on the theatre website at www.rosetheatre.org.uk, or phone 020 7261 9565.

Fraser Heston's 1991 film *The Crucifer of Blood*, starring his father **Charlton Heston** as Holmes, with Richard Johnson as Watson, will be released on DVD by Warner Home Video on 30 March – but only in the USA, in NTSC format.

Anthony D P Mann, Canadian director and star of a not-terribly-well-regarded short film *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, promises *Sherlock Holmes and the Shadow Watchers* for summer release. See www.sherlockholmesadventures.ca/Main.html.

The Asylum's production *Sherlock Holmes*, starring **Ben Syder** and **Gareth David-Lloyd** as Holmes and Watson, with **Dominic Keating**, will be released on DVD in the UK by Revolver Entertainment (10 Lambton Place, Notting Hill Gate, London W11 2SH). The film is cheaply made, barking mad, and surprisingly entertaining.

There's a current planning application to convert **Undershaw**, Conan Doyle's house at Hindhead, into flats, but it may still be possible to retain the house as a single family home. Information is regularly updated at <http://undershawhelp.blogspot.com>. Objections to the application can be registered with Waverley Borough Council at <http://waverweb.waverley.gov.uk/live/wbc/pwl.nsf/%28RefNoLU%29/WA20100173?OpenDocument>.

Donald Pickering had a very good line in cold supercilious types. In 1994 he was Sir Edward Grey in *His Last Bow* on Radio 4, returning in 1995 to play Sir Robert Norberton in *Shoscombe Old Place*, but his good performance as Dr Watson in the 1980 TV series *Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson*, with Geoffrey Whitehead, has never been shown in Britain – and rarely shown elsewhere. He died on 19 December aged seventy-six.

Sir John Dankworth, who died on 6 February aged eighty-two, was one of Britain few giants of jazz, as alto-saxophonist, bandleader and composer. In 1981 he wrote an oratorio for the City of Birmingham Choir, *The Diamond and the Goose*, with libretto by Benny Green, based on 'The Blue Carbuncle'. He is survived by his wife, Dame Cleo Laine.

Periodicals received. *Canadian Holmes*, Winter 2009/10 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada). *Communication*, no. 296 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, December 2009 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, January 2010 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, March 2010 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Irregular Newsletter*, February 2010 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). *Mayday Mayday*, February 2010 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Petrel Flyer*, Spring 2010 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Prescott's Press*, December 2009 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *The School Report*, Spring 2010 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY). *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring 2010 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, January 2010 and February 2010 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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