A couple of years ago, Brian Pugh and Paul Spring broke new ground with *On the Trail of Arthur Conan Doyle: An Illustrated Devon Tour*, of which their latest book, *Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and Devon: A Complete Tour Guide and Companion* (MX Publishing, 335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX; £12.99/ $19.95/ €14.99) is essentially an enlarged and improved version, benefiting greatly from the participation of a distinguished Devon historian, Sadru Bhanji. We knew that Conan Doyle was briefly in practice in Plymouth with the volatile Dr George Turnavine Budd, and that he later visited Dartmoor in company with his friend Bertram Fletcher Robinson to research local colour for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, but Devon can claim another man, no less important to the success of the author and his immortal character – Sir George Newnes, founder and publisher of *The Strand Magazine*. Each man’s life and career, and his contribution to the life of the county, are summarised in the first hundred pages, with well-chosen illustrations. Then some 220 pages are devoted to the much-expanded Devon tour. Even without the literary interest the tour would be worth undertaking, as the county is so remarkably varied and beautiful, but the chance to walk in the footsteps of Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes is almost irresistible. The book’s easy readability belies the awe-inspiring amount of research that’s gone into it.

MX Publishing has compiled a *Fletcher Robinson Collection*, comprising *Bertram Fletcher Robinson: A Footnote to ‘The Hound of the Baskervilles’* by Messrs Pugh & Spring; *Aside Arthur Conan Doyle: Twenty Original Tales* by Robinson; *The World of Vanity Fair* by Robinson; *Bobbles & Plum*, four satirical Playlets by Robinson & P G Wodehouse; and *Rugby Football During the Nineteenth Century* by Robinson. Members of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London can get a hefty £50.00 discount by ordering using the code ‘bfr’ at www.mxpublishing.co.uk/engine/shop/category/Sherlock+Holmes+Books/Bertram+Fletcher+Robinson+Books.

Last year the German society Von Herder Airguns Ltd held a Sherlock Holmes short story competition, and the seven best entries have been published as *Das Gifbuch des Sherlock Holmes* (Baskerville Bücher, Hermeskeiler Platz 14, 50935 Köln, Germany; €19.95). It’s a very attractive 120-page hardback, illustrated by Anke and Dirk Seliger. (The society’s newsletter is at www.sherlock-holmes-kurier.de.)

Oscar Wilde and Arthur Conan Doyle were acquainted, of course, and several writers have described what might have happened had Wilde and Sherlock Holmes met. The latest such imagining, *The Case of the Ill-Fated Playwright* by Fred W Edmundston (CreateSpace; $13.99), is one of the best. Apart from introducing Holmes and Watson, initially to investigate a plausible minor mystery and then a rather more serious one, Mr Edmundston adores pretty fairly to the facts of Oscar Wilde’s life and his fall from grace – a tragedy in the true Aristotelian sense. First-person narrative would have demanded too much obvious artifice, so, unlike his fall from grace – a tragedy in the true Aristotelian sense. First-person of the best. Apart from introducing Holmes and Watson, initially to Fated Playwright Sherlock Holmes met. The latest such imagining, *Last year the German society Von Herder Airguns Ltd held a Sherlock Holmes short story competition, and the seven best entries have been published as *Das Gifbuch des Sherlock Holmes* (Baskerville Bücher, Hermeskeiler Platz 14, 50935 Köln, Germany; €19.95). It’s a very attractive 120-page hardback, illustrated by Anke and Dirk Seliger. (The society’s newsletter is at www.sherlock-holmes-kurier.de.)

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At 6:00pm that same day Laurie R King will be at Heffer’s bookshop in Cambridge, where she commences a promotional tour for her latest Mary Russell/Sherlock Holmes novel The God of the Hive. At 5.30pm on 15 July she’ll be at Marylebone Library. The tour continues: 17 July: Waterstone’s, Eastbourne at 11.00am; 18 July: Portsmouth Central Library, 2.00pm; 20 July: Castle Bookshop, Ludlow, 6.00pm, in conversation with Kate Charles (reserved seating; phone 01584 872562); 22 July: Waterstone’s Reading Oracle, Reading, 11.00am; 27 July: Bedminster Library, Bristol, 2.00pm; 30 July: Blackwell’s, Edinburgh, 6.00pm (limited seating: phone Ann Landman on 0131 622 8222); 2 August: Newcastle upon Tyne Lit & Phil Library, 7.00pm.

Laurie King has created a remarkable phenomenon with the Russell and Holmes series. In January this year she received the Irregular Shilling from the BSI, with the investiture ‘The Red Circle’. She’s particularly keen to meet fellow-Holmesians during her tour of the UK.

Just out on DVD from Wienerworld (Unit 7, Freetrade House, Lowther Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1EP) is a documentary, Just out on DVD from Wienerworld (Unit 7, Freetrade House, Lowther Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1EP) is a documentary, created by Owen Dudley Edwards, Dr Allan Mackaill, Catherine Cooke, Antony Richards, and, er, me. In Edinburgh and London, writer-presenter Richard Jones brings an intelligent, enquiring mind to the problem: why did the author kill off the character who had made him rich and respected? There are more answers to that question than you might think. Well worth a look!

David Timson’s recording of the complete Sherlock Holmes canon for Naxos AudioBooks is justly celebrated. Since then Glen McCready has recorded The Lost World and The Poison Belt, and now Rupert Degas brings to life another of Conan Doyle’s immortal creations in The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard (Naxos AudioBooks, 2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts, AL6 9EQ). Gerard, an officer in Napoleon’s Grande Armée, is brave, handsome, gallant, patriotic — and entirely unaware of how absurd he can be. It’s a trait he shares with Charles Pooter and many other comic heroes. The unusual feature of these accounts is that the humour, often arising from Gerard’s misunderstanding of foreign mores, is seasoned with genuine excitement. He faces real danger, and he does so with great courage. We don’t usually think of Conan Doyle as a satirist, but through the Brigadier he pokes fun at both the English and the French, to charming effect. Rupert Degas employs a French accent that chimes perfectly with the text. The Gerard stories aren’t as well known as they should be; I hope that these excellent readings will help to remedy that situation.

I knew that David Warner had played Sherlock Holmes in a good radio adaptation of William Gillette’s play for California Artists Radio. The performance was still pretty good, and so was his portrayal of Jack London as an伪 writer till recently he’d also played Mycroft Holmes, in a Bernie Summerfield adventure for Big Finish audio play (PO Box 3787, Maiden-head, Berkshire, SL6 3TF). The Adventure of the Diogenes Damsel is written by Jim Smith and stars Lisa Bowerman as the time-travelling Professor Summerfield.

Music featured prominently in last year’s Conan Doyle Symposium at Harvard University. Now Henry Boote, who has taken on the role of music master to the Baker Street Irregulars, has recorded the various songs and tunes that were performed over that weekend. Doyle at 150: A Sesquicentennial Assessment includes ‘Oh! Mister Sherlock Holmes’, ‘Sir Nigel March’, ‘Sherlock Holmes, DT’, ‘The Lost World’, ‘The Amateur Detective’, ‘Sherlock Holmes Waltzes’ and ‘The Ghost of Sherlock Holmes’. I’ve had like some informative notes about these pieces, all of which, as far as I can discover, date from about 1895-1914. Even so, it’s a real treat to have recordings of these unusual early musical tributes to Sir Arthur, especially when the performances are so good. The CD costs $9.95 plus postage, either online at www.bakerstreetjournal.com/doyleet150.html or from Michael H Kean, The Baker Street Irregulars, 3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953-2837, USA.

The lead article in issue 58 of Geoff Bradley’s admirable magazine CADS: Crime and Detective Stories is ‘Sherlock Holmes and the Bankers’ by George Bellairs, whose day job, under his real name of Harold Blundell, was as a bank manager. This entertaining piece appeared in the spring 1954 issue of Martin’s Bank Magazine, and is reprinted for the first time in CADS (G H Bradley, 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA; GeoffBradley@aol.com).

Lee Ann Borgia makes miniature books in approximately 1/12th scale. They’re real books, with real tiny print, and they include fifty volumes of the Sherlock Holmes Canon at prices from $11.75 to $19.50 each, or $430.00 for the set. See www.picturerecital.com/sfx.album/view/319486. http://fumettiartgallery.blogspot.com/ will take you to a site offering an original painting of Holmes and Watson, done in acrylic on board by the Italian illustrator Giorgio Trevisan. The asking price is €5,000 plus postage.

David Rowlands has sent a copy of the summer issue of Festival Times, the newsletter/journal of the Festival of Britain Society, which contains a good article on the Sherlock Holmes Exhibition mounted at Abbey House in Baker Street. It includes the only photograph I’ve seen of the designer Michael Weight — also, of course, responsible for the reconstruction of Holmes and Watson’s study at the Sherlock Holmes pub at 10-11 Northumberland Street, Charing Cross. The website address www.festivalofbritain.org appears to be inactive, but you can access the Society’s site at www.whisttableyer.com/fob/index.html.


As you may know, Waverley Borough Council has granted planning permission for Undershaw, the house that Conan Doyle had built at Hindhead in Surrey, to be converted into flats. This move would preserve the building but would entail radical changes to those aspects that make it unique. See also http://undershawhelp.blogspot.com/. The MP for South West Surrey, Jeremy Hunt, is also Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media & Sport, and he’s keen that the house should remain a single entity, accessible to the public. If you agree, then please write to Mr Hunt at 2 Royal Parade, Tilsford Road, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 7TD, and ask whether the council’s decision can be overturned.

On 11 September, while the Sherlock Holmes Society of London explore Surrey and Hampshire, The Musgraves will be at the University of Huddersfield for a Forensic Science Day. It looks quite fascinating, and at £36.00 each (£30.00 for under-eigh tens) is well priced. Places are limited, so if you’re interested, write now to Anne Jordan, Halls Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP.

Alan Plater, who died on 25 June aged seventy-five, wrote nearly three hundred scripts for theatre, television, film and radio. He’s probably best-known as a writer for Z Cars and Softly, Softly, for The Beiderbecker Affair and its sequels, and for Close the Courthouse Door. He contributed two excellent scripts to Granada TV’s Sherlock Holmes series: The Solitary Cyclist and The Man with the Twisted Lip.

Periodicals received.

Canadian Holmes, Summer 2010 (The Bootmakers of Toronto, Mark & JoAn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada).

Communication, no. 299 (The Pleasant Places of Florida, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). Ineffable Twaddle, June 2010 and July 2010 (The Sound of the Baskervilles, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98329-8981, USA). The Morning Echo, St George’s Day number, St Perran’s Day special number, Special Unscrupulous Rascal issue, and June Meeting edition (The Sherlock Holmes Society of Victoria: The Eminent Victorians, Steve Duke, P.O. Box 340, Reservoir, Victoria 3073, Australia).


Roger Johnson