

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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At the British Academy of Film & Television Arts' TV awards last week, *Sherlock* won the Bafta for Best Drama Series, and **Martin Freeman** won for Best Supporting Actor. **Benedict Cumberbatch**, Matt Smith and Jim Broadbent were beaten to the Best Actor award by Daniel Rigby, who played Eric Morecambe in *Eric & Ernie*.

The three films in the second series of *Sherlock* will be *A Scandal In Belgravia* (written by Steven Moffat), *The Hounds Of Baskerville* (Mark Gatiss) and *The Reichenbach Fall* (Stephen Thompson).

At our Society's Annual General Meeting on 19 May the third Tony & Freda Howlett Literary Award was presented to **Alistair Duncan** for his book *The Norwood Author: Arthur Conan Doyle & the Norwood Years (1891-1894)* (MX Publishing, 335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX; £9.99/\$16.95/€14.99). Alistair's eagerly awaited next book is *An Entirely New Country - Arthur Conan Doyle, Undershaw and the Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes* (MX, 5 December; £12.99).

At the same event, **Nicholas Utechin** launched *The Best of The Sherlock Holmes Journal, Volume Two* (UK £25.00; Europe €27.00; elsewhere £30.00/US\$60.00 – prices include postage). The 316 pages contain a wonderful variety of scholarship, reviews, Society reports, tributes and whimsy, all chosen by Nick from the years 1969 to 1990. There's much in this lovely hardback that's enlightening, some that's essential, and some that's simply entertaining. Pamela Bruxner has contributed an enthusiastic foreword, and I'm happy to give the book an enthusiastic recommendation. Whether or not you have Volume One, you will want Volume Two! It's available through the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, or from Bob Ellis at 13 Crofton Avenue, Orpington, Kent BR6 8DU.

William Gillette last played Sherlock Holmes on stage in 1932. The silent film of his play is long since lost, like his two performances on American radio. Only one short scene survives in a recording. But Helen Hayes spoke for many when she said, 'William Gillette is the only real Sherlock Holmes for me, or for anyone else who ever saw him.' Now we have *William Gillette: America's Sherlock Holmes* by **Henry Zecher** (Xlibris, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403, USA; £23.00 hardback; £14.00 paperback). Gillette was 'one of the modern theatre's pioneering dramatists, one of its most majestic actors and one of its most fascinating personalities', and his theory of 'the illusion of the first time' led to a fundamental change in acting styles. Mr Zecher's fourteen years' research has uncovered no scandal, no sensation, just the fascinating life of a brilliant, chivalrous, witty gentleman, and he's done Gillette proud.

A few years ago an essay in the SHJ, 'Time Lines and the Trust' by **John E Weber**, identified both place and time of 'The Musgrave Ritual'. In *Under the Darkling Sky: A Chrono-Geographic Odyssey through the Holmesian Canon* (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, PO Box 50, RR #4, Eugenia, Ontario, Canada N0C 1E0; www.batteredbox.com/index.html; Cdn\$40.00) Mr Weber applies the same meticulous research, rigorous logic and sound common sense to the entire Canon. He is the first, I think, to give equal emphasis to both chronology and topography in all sixty stories. He's familiar with every important commentary, and happily accepts a predecessor's conclusion if it seems right. Moreover he explains why he agrees or disagrees, and his standards are high. *Under the Darkling Sky* is an outstanding work of Holmesian scholarship.

Michael Duke, author of *Victorian Holmes* (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box; Cdn\$24.00), heads the Sherlock Holmes Society of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Here are fifty articles, none longer than eleven pages, and some much shorter. Often an important point can be effectively made with concision as well as precision. If the book has a theme, says Dr Duke, 'it may be that of considering the unconsidered people in the stories'. Some, naturally, are Australian, but, for instance, Tonga, Beryl Stapleton, Mrs Godfrey Staunton, Steve Dixie and Mrs Josiah Amberley are all appraised, intelligently and sympathetically. The essays also cover topics

such as Gypsies, first aid, the Dacre Hotel, leprosy and chess. *Victorian Holmes* is literate, readable and full of stimulating insights.

Solar Pons knows that he is not Sherlock Holmes, and he knows that we know it, but his exploits capture the essence of Holmes better than almost any direct pastiche. *The Dragnet Solar Pons et al.* by **August W Derleth**. (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box; Cdn\$25.00) may be the last collection of uncollected material about 'the Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street'. Here are the texts of the first five tales as they appeared in *The Dragnet Magazine* or *Detective Trails* in 1929-30, before the market collapsed in the aftermath of the Wall Street crash, plus original versions of six more written in that same period. It's fascinating to compare these texts with the revised versions in the series that began publication in 1945 with *In Re: Sherlock Holmes – The Adventures of Solar Pons*. Mark Wardecker's numerous perceptive annotations are a real bonus.

David Hammer, who has written much excellent material, says that *Realms of Conjecture* (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box; Cdn\$20.00) is his final Holmesian book, but in truth there's little about Holmes in its 146 pages. Here are anecdotes, reminiscences, accounts of psychic experiences, memories of Michael Harrison, some light verse, a thought-provoking mystery novella... But what lingers, sadly, is the impression of bitterness at the perceived sorry condition of the BSI, and 'sadness at the state of Sherlockian scholarship'. I'm in no position to comment on that first point, but the latter complaint, at least, seems to me wilfully blind.

Also from The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box: *G K Chesterton on Detective Fiction: Everything the 'Father of the Whodunit' Wrote on the Mystery Story* edited by **John Peterson** (Cdn\$30.00). Most of what GKC wrote is worth reading, and this collection is very welcome in the centenary year of the first book about the immortal Father Brown. And *Another 101 Sherlock Holmes Puzzles: Crosswords & Acrostix* by **Franklin Saksena** (Cdn\$30.00) containing some pretty fiendish problems.

The Sherlock Holmes novels of **Larry Millett**, though well regarded in America, are little known in Britain. I rather hope that changes, now that they're being reissued by the University of Minnesota Press (111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520, USA), because Mr Millett writes well, and he writes of what he knows – not London but the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St Paul. The latest book is called *The Magic Bullet: A Locked Room Mystery featuring Shadwell Rafferty and Sherlock Holmes* (hardback, \$24.95), but Holmes has only a minor rôle. The principal character is the detective-turned-saloonkeeper, who first appeared in the second novel, *Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders* – newly republished in paperback at \$14.95, along with the first, *Sherlock Holmes and the Red Demon*. Rafferty is an engaging character, but all of them are vivid and memorable, and the picture Mr Millett gives us of St Paul in 1917 is fascinating. The mysterious murder of a tycoon, alone in his fortified penthouse at the top of the city's tallest building, is a real cracker – and it's a nice touch to name one of the suspects J D Carr.

Vithal Rajan takes Holmes even further from London, but in the opposite direction, in his new novel *The Year of High Treason* (Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd, 7/16 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002, India; US\$10.00 from www.rupapublications.com/client/Book/THE-YEAR-OF-HIGH-TREASON-.aspx). Holmes and Watson are sent by Winston Churchill to protect King George V at his Coronation Durbar in Delhi, and if Dr Rajan is to be believed, the King needs protection. The Imperial Crown of India must surely be an irresistible temptation to A J Raffles and Arsène Lupin. Mikhail Strogoff is there on behalf of the Tsar, but Dr Fu Manchu has his own agenda, while Lord Greystoke has quite a different one. Other notable persons, historical and fantastical, play their part, though their aims may not be quite what we expect. The complacent splendour of the Durbar, like the humour of the novel, is muted rather for us because we are aware of the impending war, which will signal the

beginning of the end for the British Empire. *The Year of High Treason* can be enjoyed on many levels.

In the first chapter of *Shadowfall* by **Tracy Revels** (MX Publishing, 335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX; www.mxpublishing.co.uk and www.mxpublishing.com; £9.99/ €12.99/\$16.95) a visitor arrives at 221B Baker Street – Titania, Queen of the Fairies. It’s a strange beginning to a very strange adventure, in which Irene Adler is a soul-stealing monster, young Stamford a zombie, and John Brown a supernatural guardian. The abduction of a body from Highgate Cemetery and the disappearance of the London Stone are merely the prelude to the theft of England’s most sacred relic, the heart of St George. Dr Revels has researched deeply into English legend, and *Shadowfall* has a delirious, almost surrealist quality, like an enjoyable nightmare.

Also from MX: a new edition of *The Outstanding Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes* by **Gerard Kelly** (£12.99); *Murder in the Library* by **Felicia Carparelli** (£10.99); *Rendezvous at the Populaire* by **Kate Workman** (£9.99); and *Baker Street Beat* by **Dan Andriacco** (20 June, £9.99).

A review of *No Place Like Holmes* by **Jason Lethcoe** (Thomas Nelson, PO Box 141000, Nashville, TN 37214, USA; \$9.99) must wait till the next issue. Apologies!

Just out from Amanda Field’s Chaplin Books (1 Eliza Place, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 4UN; www.chaplinbooks.co.uk) is *The Future Revisited: Jules Verne on Screen in 1950s America* by **Françoise Schiltz** (£14.99) – not strictly Holmesian but of interest none the less. Reported due in September is *Moriarty: The Hound of the D’Urbervilles* by **Kim Newman** (Titan Books, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP). *Houdini and Conan Doyle* by **Christopher Sandford** is due on 20 October from Gerald Duckworth (90-93 Cowcross Street London EC1M 6BF; £20.00).

Arthur Conan Doyle’s first novel *The Narrative of John Smith* was lost in the post in 1883, but he rewrote it the next year. The manuscript is owned by the British Library, which will publish the book in September, introduced and annotated by Daniel Stashower, Rachel Foss and Jon Lellenberg (The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB; <http://publishing.bl.uk/>; £9.95). There’ll also be an audiobook edition, read by Robert Lindsay (£20.00). British Library books are distributed in North America by the University of Chicago Press.

Jeff Falkingham has made his Minnesota Sherlockian pastiches (favourably reviewed in the DM), *The County Courthouse Capers* and *In Search of the Source*, available as eBooks – details at cccaper.com. If you prefer real books, Classic Specialties (www.sherlock-holmes.com) still have a few autographed copies. *Mrs Hudson and the Irish Invincibles*, the second Mrs Hudson novel by **Barry S Brown**, is just out from Sunstone Press (Box 2321, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2321, USA) priced at \$22.95. The first novel, an entertaining romp called *The Unpleasantness at Parkerton Manor*, is still available.

Peggy Perdue reports: ‘**Bento Comics**, an independent group of comic creators, is featuring an eclectic series of Holmes-inspired short comics online. www.bentocomics.com/. A printed collection will be available in their online store soon as well.’

From **E J Wagner**: ‘Happy to tell you that a new audio version of *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* is available. The original had a few technical glitches now repaired. Audible.com will replace the old version free of charge if you contact them. Sample of audio is here; <http://www.audible.com/pd/?asin=B0044TJZL8&source=PPPP0001WS011910>.’ [**E J’s book, in whatever form, is superb.**]

Those who experienced **Laurence Owen’s** audio production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* during our Diamond Jubilation weekend will know that it’s ingenious, atmospheric, exciting – and intelligent. The recording is available to download on a pay-what-you-like (including free) basis at <http://corporaterecords.co.uk/artists/Laurence+Owen/The+Hound+Of+The+Baskervilles/>. In August BBC Audiobooks (AudioGO Ltd, St James House, The Square, Lower Bristol Road, Bath BA2 3BH) will release a second CD set of twelve Sherlock Holmes plays starring **Carleton Hobbs** & **Norman Shelley**, with new introductions by Nicholas Utechin.

At www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times11-5.htm is the May issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times*, the catalogue-magazine of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com). April’s is at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times11-4.htm.

News from **The Sydney Passengers**: ‘A bound copy of *Beeton’s Christmas Annual* for 1887, the publication that introduced Sherlock Holmes to the world in *A Study in Scarlet*, is going up for auction in Armadale, Victoria on 30 May. It’s the only copy of *Beeton’s 1887* known

to be in any collection (public or private) in Australia. It is from the collection of Dr John Loder, retired Principal Research Scientist with the CSIRO. **Randall Stock** also keeps a list of all confirmed existing copies of *Beeton’s 1887* and this is a new copy to him (the count now is 32 copies).’ See www.bestofsherlock.com/ref/australia-2011-beetons.htm.

Brian Scrivener reports: ‘**The Langham Hotel** is celebrating its 146th anniversary on 10 June with a *Wonderland Tea* for just 7p – the equivalent to 1/6d, which is what it would have cost for afternoon tea when the hotel opened in 1865. Apply by Tuesday 31 May at www.palm-court.co.uk/1865/. The anniversary tea will be served at 11.30 only.’

At Essex Police Museum, at 7.30pm on 2 June, ex-Inspector **Martyn Lockwood** will speak about Victorian policing in *A Policeman’s Lot*. Tickets cost £3 per person and include light refreshments. To book, phone Becky Wash on 01245 457150, or email museum@essex.pnn.police.uk. Details are at www.essex.police.uk/museum.

The same evening there’s a lecture and discussion at the Bishopsgate Institute on *Crime and the City*, including a presentation by **Andrew Lane** on Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes. See www.bishopsgate.org.uk/events_detail.aspx?ID=4&Keyword=&TypeID=.

At 8.30pm on 10 June at the Lexi Cinema, Kensal Rise, **Mark Gatiss** will introduce Billy Wilder’s film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. See <http://thelexicinema.co.uk/2011/05/23/the-private-life-of-sherlock-holmes/>.

Richard Burnip will give a free lunchtime lecture at the National Army Museum (Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HT) on 30 June: *Reading Around the Home Fires: The Strand Magazine in the Great War*. Details are at www.nam.ac.uk/whats-on/lunchtime-lectures.

In 1988 **Angela Scoular**, who died on 11 April aged sixty-five, played the clairvoyant Catherine Mead in the original production of *Holmes and the Ripper* with Francis Matthews and Frank Windsor as Holmes and Watson. **Nicholas Selby** died on 15 April aged eighty-five. In 1974-75 he was a splendid Jim Larrabee in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of Gillette’s *Sherlock Holmes*, masking vicious greed with superficial charm.

Jeremy Paul was a principal writer for Granada TV’s *Sherlock Holmes* series, later writing the play *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes* for Jeremy Brett. His script for *The Musgrave Ritual* deservedly won him an Edgar Award from the MWA. He died on 3 May, aged seventy-one.

Less than two weeks later, on 16 May, we lost **Edward Hardwicke**, at the age of seventy-eight. Taking over as Jeremy Brett’s Watson in 1986, he consolidated David Burke’s achievement, finally establishing Dr Watson in the public imagination as an intelligent gentleman, courageous, astute, honest and admirable. After Brett’s death, he recorded half a dozen or so excellent readings from the Sherlock Holmes canon. One of his early television performances was as Mr Davenport in the 1968 BBC production of *The Greek Interpreter*, with Peter Cushing and Nigel Stock. To our great benefit he never severed his connection with Holmes and Watson.

Periodicals received. *The Camden House Journal*, April 2011 and May 2011 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, no. 303 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, May 2011 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, May 2011 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *The Magic Door*, Spring 2011 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). *Mayday Mayday*, May 2011 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarney Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *Mémoires et Documents 2011 (Société d’Études Holmésiennes de la Suisse Romande)*, (Vincent Delay, chemin de Valdezia 3, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland). *The Scion*, Autumn 2010 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Soft-Nosed Bullet-in & Striking (T)Rifles*, Winter 2010/11 (**Von Herder Airguns Ltd**, Jan Kipping, Schürbeker Str. 2, 22087 Hamburg, Germany). *Studies of the Nippon Sherlock Holmes Club*, 1 December 2010 [**sic**] (**The Sherlock Holmes Research Committee**, Mr Saburo Hiraga, 3-6-24 Uenohigashi, Toyonaka City, Osaka 560-0013, Japan).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, April 2011 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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