

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Arthur Conan Doyle lost the manuscript of his first novel, and later professed horror at the thought that it should be found and published. As we now know, he rewrote much of it from memory, and *The Narrative of John Smith* has indeed been published. As it stands, it's not a long book, and next to nothing happens. I doubt it would have seen print in the 1880s, but now we're familiar with the author's life and work, and we're interested to follow his development as a writer, a thinker and a person. John Smith, perhaps Conan Doyle's vision of himself as an older man, is confined to his room by gout; the narrative consists of his reflections on life and his conversations with his doctor, his neighbours, his landlady, and the local curate – characters who are depicted with a lively authenticity. Nowhere else in his fiction does Conan Doyle discourse on such a range of topics – politics, religion, philosophy and much more – with the boldness of youth and often with the wisdom of maturity. Perhaps it's not a novel so much as a series of sketches: I was reminded of the *Sketches by Boz*, which is no bad thing. *The Narrative* is a precursor of *The Stark Munro Letters* and *A Duet*, rather than *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The White Company* or *The Lost World*, but there are details here that would become important elements in the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Nigel and Professor Challenger. The admirable notes are by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Rachel Foss. (The British Library; £10.00; limited edition in slip-case £100.00; audiobook read by Robert Lindsay £19.59.)

In 1939 Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce played Holmes and Watson in two outstanding films for Fox, the first to set the characters in their true historical period. In 1942 Universal cast them in *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, the first of twelve films set in the present day. Amanda Field's recent book *England's Secret Weapon* examines the films in the context of their time. Now **Michael A Hoey**, whose father Dennis was the unforgettable Lestrade to Rathbone's Holmes, takes a different and equally interesting approach in *Sherlock Holmes & the Fabulous Faces: The Universal Pictures Repertory Company* (BearManor Media, <http://bearmanormedia.bizland.com/>; \$19.95). His personal acquaintance with many of the artistes who contributed to these and other Universal productions gives his biographical sketches an unusually engaging immediacy. It's fascinating to follow the careers of actors such as Reginald Denny, Mary Gordon, Olaf Hytten and Frederick Worlock. The critical summaries of the films themselves are perceptive, pertinent and equally engrossing. Michael Hoey has given us a book that's both important and entertaining.

Thomas Bruce Wheeler has devoted much time and energy to researching our capital city. After 2009's admirable *The New Finding Sherlock's London* comes *The London of Sherlock Holmes* (MX Publishing; www.mxpublishing.com; £13.99/\$22.95/€17.99), which updates the earlier book to a degree that no other guide, I think, has seriously considered. As before, we're directed to more than 300 sites, each of whose significance is clearly and pithily stated. You can visit the locations of a specific adventure, explore the sites near each of a hundred railway or Underground stations, or take any of six walking tours in the footsteps of Holmes and Watson. But *The London of Sherlock Holmes* is ideally used in its e-book format where the map references are hyperlinked to Google Maps and over 400 photographs. As a step-by-step guide to the London of the Canon, it's unbeatable.

Exploring London with Sherlock Holmes: A TravelGhosts Guide by **John Sykes**, published by travel diary.de Reiseliteratur-Verlag (http://shop.traveldiary.de/product_info.php?products_id=113; €9.95) is an unexpected and very charming little volume. The pursuit of a mysterious criminal takes Holmes and Watson on an erratic journey across London, taking in Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, the

Houses of Parliament and other famous locations, where they are helped – or hindered – by certain people, not all of them living, who were intimately associated with those places. The conversations with, say, the boxer Ben Caunt, César Ritz and Sir Horace Jones provide a delightful way of learning about Big Ben, the Savoy Hotel and Tower Bridge – all in the course of an exciting adventure. The book is also available in German as *Mit Sherlock Holmes durch London*.

The Moriarty Papers, compiled by Colonel Sebastian Moran (New Holland; www.ivypress.co.uk/books/the-moriarty-papers/; £7.99) is a delicious spoof, purporting to be a facsimile of the random documents found after the mysterious disappearance of Moriarty in 1914 and published a year later by Moran in an attempt to stave off bankruptcy. If we're to believe these records, Moriarty controlled Watson, Mycroft Holmes, Mrs Hudson, Irene Adler, and pretty much the entire Metropolitan Police. Oh, and Florence Nightingale. And he was the instigator of just about every mystery investigated by Sherlock Holmes. The diary extracts, letters, photographs, diagrams of his mad inventions, and so forth are ingenious and very funny, as are Moran's laconic comments; they also show a considerable knowledge of the Canon. *The Moriarty Papers* is (are?) great fun.

Fire Storm is the fourth of **Andrew Lane's** *Young Sherlock Holmes* novels for young adults (Macmillan Children's Books; www.youngsherlock.com; £12.99). As we've come to expect, it's breathlessly exciting and intelligent. The fourteen-year-old Sherlock's schooling is dangerous but efficient: the lessons taught by the American bounty-hunter Amyus Crowe and the violin-playing spy (yes, honestly) Rufus Stone are preparing him for the unique career that he will create for himself. Crowe and his daughter Virginia have abruptly left Farnham, leaving an enigmatic clue that directs Sherlock and his friend Matty Arnatt to Edinburgh. Almost incidentally, Sherlock destroys Mrs Eglantine's hold over the Holmes family, but there are stronger forces ranged against them. A madman is determined to kill Virginia Crowe, and a powerful clan of thieves has Edinburgh under its thumb. Just two points: the Queen of the Night appears in *The Magic Flute*, not in *Three Oranges*, and the Admiralty Arch wasn't built until after Queen Victoria died.

The Breath of God by **Guy Adams** (Titan Books; www.titanbooks.com; £7.99) is on a higher level entirely than his disappointing book *The Case Notes of Sherlock Holmes*. A mysterious and apparently supernatural murder brings John Silence, a so-called 'psychic doctor', to Baker Street. Despite Holmes's scepticism, subsequent attacks indicate the deployment of occult forces by members of the Order of the Golden Dawn. Joined by Thomas Carnacki, a bumptious young ghost-hunter, Holmes, Watson and Silence make their way to Scotland, where their help is eagerly awaited by Aleister Crowley... *The Breath of God* is thrilling, at times really spooky, and well-written, with obvious knowledge of the work of Algernon Blackwood, William Hope Hodgson, M R James and Arthur Conan Doyle. It really is a ripping yarn.

The earliest dated piece to depict Sherlock Holmes investigating the Whitechapel murders of 1888 is probably a French play, *Jack l'Éventreur* by **Gaston Marot** and **Louis Péricaud**, in 1889, now adapted into English by **Frank J Morlock** as *Sherlock Holmes vs Jack the Ripper* (Black Coat Press; www.blackcoatpress.com; £12.99/\$20.95). To be accurate, as Jean-Marc Lofficier says in his introduction, 'the original play did not feature Sherlock Holmes and Nick Carter, but identifiable facsimiles thereof, for an audience that was already familiar with the Great English Detective and his indomitable American counterpart.' If Mr Morlock's version is faithful,

then the characters clearly do represent Holmes and Carter – which is remarkable, as in 1889 the former had appeared only in *A Study in Scarlet*. The play, like the anonymous 1908 short story that accompanies it, is fascinating as an example of late Victorian melodrama, and unintentionally hilarious in its complete disregard of anything resembling the facts of the case.

Jacquelyn Applegate, in her novel *Selena Jones: Trial and Error* (CreateSpace; selenajonesmysteries.weebly.com/; \$13.00), ventures into Mary Russell territory, creating a young woman who is so much the equal of Sherlock Holmes that their relationship promises to become romantic. Whether that promise will be fulfilled, we shall no doubt learn from future chronicles of Lady Selena Jones. In this first novel the characterisation is good, and the historical detail is generally acceptable, though the dialogue is often anachronistic (perhaps I'm nit-picking, but this is a specialist field). The plotting is adequate, but the real interest is in the characters, especially Jones and Holmes.

The Punishment of Sherlock Holmes: Selected Sherlockian Puns edited by **Bob Burr** and **Philip K Jones** (MX Publishing; £11.99/\$18.95/€12.99) is a deliberately and successfully funny assemblage of what must be several hundred short and short-short shaggy dog stories about Holmes and Watson. The book is dedicated to John Bennett Shaw, who would have loved it.

The House of Silk by **Anthony Horowitz**, the first Holmes novel for adults to be commissioned by the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd, (Orion; www.orionbooks.co.uk; £18.99) must wait till the next DM. So must **Tracy Revels'** *Shadowblood* and *The Case of the Russian Chessboard* by **Charlie Roxburgh**, both from MX Publishing.

Molly Carr has extensively revised and updated her book *In Search of Dr Watson* (MX; £9.99/\$16.95/€12.99). The new edition actually is the valuable contribution to Holmesian, or Watsonian, scholarship that the first promised to be, giving us a rounded, balanced and accurate picture of the man. All that's missing is an index.

Leslie Klinger notes that a signed, limited hardback edition of *A Study in Sherlock* (see DM 315) is available from Poisoned Pen Press at <http://www.poisonedpen.com/products/hfiction/9781590585498/?searchterm=study%20in%20sherlock>.

More new books. *The Legends of Sherlock Holmes: New Adventures of the World's Greatest Detective* by **M J Elliott** (Kenwood Press; Kindle e-book, 86p from Amazon). *Sherlock's Missing Files* by **Stan Graham** (np; Kindle e-book; £1.14 from Amazon). *The Papers of Sherlock Holmes* by **David Marcum** (Battered Silicon Dispatch Box; www.batteredbox.com/SherlockianPastiche/PapersofSH.htm; Can\$25.00). *Mr S.* by **Daniel Adams** (Alleycat Publishing, Kindle e-book; 86p from Amazon). *Sherlock Holmes and Philosophy: The Footprints of a Gigantic Mind* edited by **Josef Steiff** (Open Court Publishing; www.opencourtbooks.com/books_n/sherlock.htm; \$19.95).

At www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times11-9.htm is the September issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times*, the catalogue-magazine of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com). It's full of good things, as always.

A Traveller's Notebook by **Grant Eustace** (Authors OnLine Ltd; www.authorsonline.co.uk/book/1107/Traveller%27s+Notebook/; £10.99/\$15.95/€12.97) is non-Holmesian but worth a look – as, I hope is my own *In the Night – In the Dark: Tales of Ghosts and Less Welcome Visitors*, due from MX on 30 November.

AudioGO ('the home of BBC Audiobooks'; www.audiogo.co.uk) has released *His Last Bow*, the latest in the excellent series of readings by **Derek Jacobi**, complete on eight CDs. His mellow voice, so perfect for the reassuring personality of Watson the narrator, can instantly become harsh, sinister, authoritative – his versatility seems endless, but it's always under control. There's a wonderful range of characters here, in some first-rate stories – 'The Bruce-Partington Plans' is one of the very best – and Sir Derek does them proud.

Julian Finnegan & Dominic Goodwin are touring in *Holmes & Watson: The Farewell Tour* by Stuart Fortey. The itinerary is on-line at www.angusandrosstheatre.co.uk/tour.html. Kings Langley Players' production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by **Simon Williams** is on stage at the Community Centre, Kings Langley from Thursday, October 20 to Saturday, October 22 at 7.45pm. Call the box office on 07906 695959 for tickets.

Wienerworld (www.wienerworld.com/index.php) has released a highly idiosyncratic documentary on DVD: *Elementary My Dear Watson: The Man Behind Sherlock Holmes*, written and presented by **Philip Gardiner**, whose usual topics include secret societies, the Holy Grail, and the mind of God. Mr Gardiner distinguishes sensibly between the Watson that Conan Doyle created and the Watson of film and TV. Some of his statements are questionable. He says that Watson 'was born in the north of England on August the 25th 1852' – and where are the early manuscripts in which Holmes has two assistants? The disc also includes Mr Gardiner's *The Madness of Sherlock Holmes*; it all makes for entertaining, often instructive, and decidedly odd viewing.

It's reported from Hollywood that CBS is 'developing a modern-day take' on Sherlock Holmes for television. **Steven Moffat** tweeted: 'Dear CBS. A modern day Sherlock Holmes? Where, oh where, did you get THAT idea? We'll be watching!'

Sherlockology at www.sherlockology.com/ is an excellent fansite dedicated to the BBC series *Sherlock*.

Meanwhile a new Russian TV series is in production in St Petersburg, with 34-year-old **Igor Petrenko** as Holmes and **Andrey Panin** as Watson. If it's as good as the Lenfilms series it will be superb.

You can follow the progress of *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* at <http://sherlockholmes2.warnerbros.com/index.html>.

John Addy reports that a new British Mensa Special Interest Group (SIG) 'Sherlock Holmes' has been formed. For information, email enquiries@mensa.org.uk or phone 01902-772771.

Take a look at www.bakerstreetdiorama.com, where you'll see photos of a beautiful 1/6th scale model of the sitting-room at 221B, the work of our Australian member **Craig Calvert**.

Pia Trona, an Italian admirer, has generously donated funds to endow a scholarship awards programme in honour of **Jeremy Brett** at the Central School of Speech & Drama. Sally Thomas notes that until 31 October members of Sherlock Holmes societies and cultural organisations can still sign the petition for a posthumous BAFTA Award for Jeremy Brett.

Charlotte Walters, author of *Barefoot on Baker Street*, has set herself the task of reviewing all fifty-six short stories, one a day, starting here: <http://barefootonbakerstreet.wordpress.com/2011/09/17/56-sherlock-holmes-stories-in-56-days/>. On 10 November at 8.00pm GMT MX Publishing will host a live on-line debate about the 'traditional' Holmes, the Guy Ritchie Holmes, and *Sherlock*. Details are at www.facebook.com/pages/The-Great-Sherlock-Holmes-Debate/161705877248289 and <http://twitter.com/#!/holmesdebate>.

Dr Bryce L Crawford Jr, the last surviving founder of the Norwegian Explorers of Minneapolis, who died on 16 September aged ninety-six, was the brains behind the plaque unveiled at the Reichenbach Falls in 1957. He became 'The Solitary Cyclist', BSI in 1985.

Periodicals received. *The Camden House Journal*, August 2011 and September 2011 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *The Cri Bar Crier*, October 2011 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, September 2011 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, October 2011 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *The Magic Door*, Fall 2011 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). *Mayday Mayday*, October 2011 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardearn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *3-Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, September 2011 & October 2011 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three-Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net). *The Serpentine Muse*, Fall 2011 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA).

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

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