

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

Roger Johnson, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

e-mail: shjournal@btinternet.com

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At our Annual Dinner at the House of Commons, the announcement that our Membership Secretary (and Holmes tribute artiste) **David Jones** was the recipient this year of the Tony Howlett Award was greeted with unanimous approbation, though circumstances unfortunately prevented David and Audrey from attending the dinner.

In New York, Wiggins announced eight investitures into the Baker Street Irregulars: **Rosane McNamara** ('Lady Mary Brackenstall'), **Tom Horrocks** ('Colonel Sebastian Moran'), **Mark Levy** ('Don Murillo'), **Daniel Moss** ('Culverton Smith'), **Stefano Guerrero** ('Count Negretto Sylvius'), **Philip Cunningham** (Abe Slaney'), **Jan Burke** ('The Most Winning Woman') and **Franklin Saksena** ('Jonathan Small'). The Two-Shilling Award was presented to **Michael H Kean**.

Many thanks to Simon & Schuster for generously sponsoring our anniversary competition by providing six signed copies of *Dead Man's Land* by **Robert Ryan** (www.simonandschuster.co.uk/; £12.99).. We know Dr Watson served as a medical officer in the Great War because towards the end of 'His Last Bow', when conflict is clearly inevitable, Holmes says, 'As to you, Watson, you are joining up with your old service, as I understand, so London won't be out of your way.' (Or as some texts have it, 'joining us with your old service'.) The names drawn from the deerstalker were: **MC Black**, **Molly Carr**, **Greg Darak**, **Susan Z Diamond**, **Oscar Ross** and **Nick Utechin**. Congrats to all!

In 'The Sign of the Broken Sword' Father Brown asked, 'Where does a wise man hide a pebble?' The answer: 'On the beach.' And where better to hide a corpse than a battlefield? When, amid the slaughter of the Western Front, Major Watson of the Army Medical Corps notices that one body bears unusual wounds, his curiosity is piqued. So is his desire to redress an evident injustice. Sherlock Holmes is far away, but Watson still has it in him to be an irregular investigator when more bodies are found with similar injuries. He has experienced warfare before, in Afghanistan, but that was more than thirty years ago, and things in Flanders are unimaginably worse, even without the prospect of a vicious killer with a personal agenda. The characterisation in *Dead Man's Land* is utterly credible, as is the description of life in the trenches – and the necessary concentration on the medical service is a fascinating bonus. This is both a first-rate crime story and a considerable novel.

Of all the BSI's publishing ventures, aside from the ever-fascinating History Project and, of course, the BSJ, the most important, it seems to me, is the Baker Street Irregulars Manuscript Series. Only rarely do we have the chance to study one of Conan Doyle's actual manuscripts, but the growing number of facsimile editions provides us each with a direct link to the author's original thoughts and enables us to appreciate, with the help of perceptive commentaries, how those thoughts matured and changed. The latest in the BSI series is *The Wrong Passage: A Facsimile of the Original Manuscript of 'The Golden Pince-Nez'*, edited and introduced by **Robert Katz** and **Andrew Solberg** (The Baker Street Irregulars, Michael H Kean, 3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953-2837, USA; www.bakerstreetjournal.com/; \$35.00 plus postage). The annotations by Phillip Bergem and the essays on topics including politics, religion and forensic medicine do justice to an underrated story.

Also new from the BSI is *The e-Baker Street Journal* version 2, now covering the first sixty-five years as fully-searchable pdf files (\$149.95 plus postage). I'm deeply impressed by the quality of the scans and the ease of use. Even though I have quite a long run of the BSJ on my shelves, I find the electronic version invaluable for reference and

research. The sheer quantity of excellent material here is amazing. Details are at www.bakerstreetjournal.com/ebooks/ebsj.html, including the fact that until 1 May 2013 owners of the original eBSJ can save \$100 on the deal! www.bakerstreetjournal.com/pdf/ebsj-cd-trade-in.pdf

The Strand Magazine & Sherlock Holmes: The Two Fixed Points in a Changing Age by **Robert Veld** (Gasogene Books, www.wessexpress.com/; \$24.95) is revised and expanded from a series of articles in *The Passengers' Log*, the admirable journal of the Sydney Passengers. Because he concentrates on the magazine's relationship with its single most important contributor, Mr Veld covers a shorter length of time than Reginald Pound did in *The Strand Magazine, 1891-1950*, and in greater depth. Also he's able to draw on material, such as Conan Doyle's letters, that simply wasn't available before. The result is an attractive, well illustrated book that's both enlightening and engaging. I love the cover picture, which blends G H Haite's classic drawing with a modern photograph. All the book lacks, really, is an index.

It's always a pleasure to welcome *Beaten's Christmas Annual*, the yearly collection of scholarship and whimsy from **The Sound of the Baskervilles**. The 2012 edition is available from Terri Haugen (6710-51st Street Court West, University Place, WA 98467, USA; terri@soundofthebaskervilles.com) for \$13.00 postpaid to US addresses or \$18.00 postpaid outside the US.

In *Sherlock in the Spring Time: Some Idle Thoughts on Holmes and Watson* (MX Publishing, www.mxpublishing.co.uk/; £6.99/ \$9.95/ €7.99), **Molly Carr** has gathered some forty short and short-short essays, along with a couple of quirky stories. She is, I think, the first to have noticed the curious links between the Canon and a memorial at Beverley Minster – in the part of Yorkshire called Holderness. It commemorates the men of the East Yorkshire Regiment who died while marching from Quetta to Kandahar in the immediate aftermath of the battle of Maiwand. Several of the names seem oddly familiar.

Masters of Crime: Fiction's Finest Villains and their Real-Life Inspirations, a handsome and very entertaining volume by **Adam Nightingale** (The History Press, www.thehistorypress.co.uk/; £18.99), looks at people whose criminal careers contributed to the creation of Macheath, Fagin, Bill Sikes, Raffles, Oliver Haddo, Mr Mocata - and of course Professor Moriarty. Sherlock Holmes compared Moriarty to Jonathan Wild, and I'm inclined to agree with Mr Nightingale that Wild was the main inspiration for the Napoleon of Crime. Unfortunately names are misspelt throughout, there are some false assertions (Jean Baptiste Greuze did exist, and he did paint 'Jeune Fille à l'Agneau' – which does not mean 'young woman from Agneau'), and there are no references. Enjoy the book, but double check the facts.

Also from the History Press comes *The Dracula Secrets: Jack the Ripper and the Darkest Sources of Bram Stoker* (£20.00), whose author **Neil R Storey** is a scrupulous historian and a damn' good writer. Bram Stoker, as an author and as Henry Irving's manager at the Lyceum Theatre, knew pretty much everyone of importance in the 1890s, including Arthur Conan Doyle and Oscar Wilde – and the hugely popular novelist Hall Caine, to whom he dedicated *Dracula*. And Caine had once been close to Francis Tumblety, an Irish quack who had a record of gross indecency and who was seriously suspected of the Whitechapel murders. Mr Storey's researches uncover some very suggestive possibilities about the inspiration for Count Dracula.

Mystery at St Andrews by **W P Lawler** (Uncle Wilson's Productions, 208 Hilltop Drive, West Wyoming, PA 18644, USA; \$14.95) like *Dead Man's Land* sees Watson coping without Holmes, but this exploit takes place in early 1894, when Holmes was thought to have been killed in Switzerland. At his wife's insistence, Watson takes a break at the famous home of golf, where all is not as tranquil as he might have hoped, and the

woman needs his help. The author's love of both the Holmes Canon and of golf ensures authenticity and appeal.

One of the most charming volumes of Holmes pastiche I've encountered is *Sherlock Holmes and the Folk Tale Mysteries* by **Gayle Lange Puhl** (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, PO Box 50, RR #4, Eugenia, Ontario, Canada N0C 1E0; www.batteredbox.com; Cdn\$20.00). It's also exceptionally clever, as Ms Puhl strips thirteen traditional stories to the core, from 'The Three Bears' to 'Little Bo Peep', and refashions each as a mystery for Holmes and Watson to investigate. Her amusing cartoon-like illustrations might suggest that this is a book of jokes; in fact it's a collection of perfectly sound detective stories.

Equally charming – and I think I've mentioned it before – is *Sherlock Holmes and the Missing Snowman* written by **David Ruffle** and illustrated by **Rikey Austin** (MX Publishing, £6.99/ \$9.95/ €7.99), a sweet little story with delightful full-colour pictures.

Sherlock Holmes and the Bulgarian Codex by **Tim Symonds** (MX Publishing; £7.99/ \$12.95/ €8.99), a rattling good yarn of political and personal intrigue in the Balkans. The masked visitor who calls at 221B in 1900 puts Watson in mind of the King of Bohemia. In fact he is Ferdinand, Prince Regnant of a small nation threatened by three great empires, and he begs Holmes to investigate the disappearance of an ancient and vitally sacred manuscript. During their mission to Sofia Holmes and Watson encounter murder, treason, corruption and something very like vampirism. The Prince, later Tsar of Bulgaria, was known as Foxy Ferdinand, and the epithet was well deserved.

Sherlock Holmes & the Case of the Crystal Blue Bottle by **Luke Benjamin Kuhns** (£6.99/ \$9.95/ €7.99) is, I think, MX's first graphic novel – or, rather, novella. The three parts of this short, sad story are nicely illustrated in two contrasting styles, and as a bonus there's a dozen or so individual drawings and paintings, or 'pinups' – all in colour and the work of too many artists to list here.

Also from MX are *Sherlock Holmes and the Texas Adventure* by **Dicky Neely**, edited by **Clair Ellul** (£6.99/ \$9.95/ €7.99) in which Holmes and Watson investigate the disappearance of the heir to a great estate in the Wild Horse Desert; *Sherlock Holmes & Young Winston: The Deadwood Stage* by **Mike Hogan** (£9.99/ \$16.95/ €12.99), in which Holmes and Watson have to look after the twelve-year-old Winston Churchill and soon find themselves deeply involved with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show and murder; and a new edition of *The Lost Stories of Sherlock Holmes* by **Tony Reynolds**, with outstandingly good illustrations by **Chris Coady**, favourably reviewed in DM 308 (£9.99/ \$16.95/ €12.99).

More new books. *The Great Detective: His Further Adventures* edited by **Gary Lovisi** (Borgo/Wildside Press, www.wildsidebooks.com; \$15.00 plus postage). *Sherlock Holmes: The Plagues of London* by **Kelvin Jones**, one of twenty-five Holmes/Doyle titles now available in Kindle format from Amazon.co.uk. Also on Kindle, from Piccadilly Publishing, is *The Tangled Skein*, **David Stuart Davies's** now-classic sequel to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, in which Holmes and Watson oppose Count Dracula (£1.95).

The latest *Sherlockian E-Times*, the catalogue-magazine of **Classic Specialties**, is online at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times13-1.html, and you can read **David Marcum's** story 'Descent into Madness: the Truth about Mary Russell', mentioned in the last DM, at www.sherlock-holmes.com/Marcum_Descent.html.

Vincent Delay recently bought twelve copies in mint condition – effectively brand new – of the first edition of *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: l'Homme et l'Oeuvre* by **Pierre Nordon**, published by Didier in 1964. He has a few left which he's offering at £25.00 each, postpaid (Chaumière 1, 1010 Lausanne, Switzerland).

Amanda Randall has twenty individual issues of *The Strand Magazine* for sale, including the one for December 1893, containing 'The Final Problem'. She invites offers for the entire collection from £550. Interested parties should contact her at amandarandall99@gmail.com.

At least one Holmes story has been translated into Cornish (see DM 328). Now Roy Upton Holder tells me that **The Deerstalkers of Welshpool** are raising funds to have 'The Speckled Band' translated and published in Welsh. For details see the website at www.sherlockholmeswelshpool.com. It's worth a look in any case!

The handsome, informative and very funny calendar created by Thierry Saint-Joanis for **La Société Sherlock Holmes de France** is available as a

free download if you register at the website: www.sshf.com/. I'm attaching the pages for January and February as a taster.

Ken Ross has made his video recordings of our Society's outings to Cornwall in 1998 and Gloucestershire in 1999, and the 2001 Victorian Cricket Match available to watch on YouTube. Type **kennethross100** in the search bar to bring up his page. (This year's Victorian Cricket Match against the Gentlemen of the P G Wodehouse Society is will be held as usual at West Wycombe, on 23 June. Our captain, **Peter Horrocks**, reports that there'll also be a match on 4 May, against Eton College. Keep an eye on the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk.)

John Addy notes that at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWMIOBj-wsM> is the 1981 Williamstown Theatre Festival production of William Gillette's play *Sherlock Holmes*, with **Frank Langella** excellent as Holmes and a fine cast including Susan Clark and Christian Slater.

The latest in the splendid Canadian detective series **The Murdoch Mysteries**, set in late Victorian Toronto, begins transmission on the digital station Alibi (Sky 032, Virgin 130) at 9pm on 4 February. In previous programmes, William Murdoch (Yannick Bisson) met Arthur Conan Doyle – who turns up again in this series when it appears that Sherlock Holmes is involved in a violent robbery.

An exhibition called *Murder in the Library: An A-Z of Crime Fiction* is at **The British Library** until 12 May. The website at www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/murder/index.html has basic details but doesn't mention that the exhibition includes the original manuscript of 'The Retired Colourman'. [*Thanks to April Carlucci.*]

'FOCUS is a unique community for expats and international professionals living in the UK.' The current issue of *Focus: The Magazine*, at www.focus-info.org/about_us/publications/default.aspx, includes an article, 'May I Introduce You to Mr Sherlock Holmes?' by **Jean Upton**.

At the BSI Weekend last month, H George Fletcher, Jon Lellenberg, Donald Pollock and Philip A Shreffler launched a new annual with an old name, *The Saturday Review of Literature*. I think copies may still be available at \$5.00 each from 521 College Avenue, Niagara Falls, NY 14305, USA. It's beautifully presented, but the articles and reviews, not all by the editors, are a disconcerting mixture of deeply knowledgeable enthusiasm and something like self-destructive puritan intolerance.

Hot on the Scent by Arthur M Alexander may well be the best guide yet written to the London of Sherlock Holmes. The author, whose real name was **Arthur M Axelrad**, died on 15 January. He was a highly respected English literature scholar, a cat-lover, and a nice guy.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Winter 2012 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 583, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Bohemian Newsletter No. 1* (České společnosti Sherlocka Holmese, Aleš Kolodrubec, <http://www.sherlockholmes.cz/>). *The Camden House Journal*, December 2012 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Canadian Holmes*, Winter 2012/2013 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, December 2012 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, February 2013 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, www.soundofthebaskervilles.com). *Mayday Mayday*, January 2013 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarne Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Passengers' Log*, Spring 2012 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O'Neill, 24 Karuah Street, Strathfield, NSW 2135, Australia). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, 17 January 2013 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *The Scion*, Spring 2013 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Serpentine Muse*, Winter 2012 (**The Adventureesses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). *Mémoires et Documents 2012* (**Société d'Études Holmésiennes de la Suisse Romande**, Vincent Delay, Chaumière 1, 1010 Lausanne, Switzerland)

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, December 2012 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson