

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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I'm delighted and relieved to say that, after thirty-two years, this will be my last issue of the DM. From no. 351 you'll be in the more than capable hands of **Carrie Chandler**, who represents the Society with such panache on Facebook and Twitter.

Mr Showsaku Mashimo spotted a careless error in the last DM. It was **Kiyoshi Arai** who was invested as 'Shoso-in' at the BSI Annual Dinner, not Kiyoshi Tanaka, who has been 'The Japanese Cabinet' since 1987.

The 'lost Sherlock Holmes story', published in *The Book of the Brig* in 1903, to help fund the building of a new bridge in Selkirk, is amusing and has some historic interest, but it ain't by Conan Doyle. **Mattias Boström** explains at www.ihearofsherlock.com/2015/02/conan-doyle-didnt-write-lost-sherlock.html#.VOnH1i5cqAp on *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere*.

Robert Graham alerts us to *Forensics: The Anatomy of Crime*, a free exhibition now at the **Wellcome Collection** at 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE. Details are at <http://wellcomecollection.org/forensics>.

You'll know, of course, that ITV's three-part film *Arthur & George*, based on Julian Barnes's novel about Conan Doyle's struggle to prove **George Edalji** innocent of horse-maiming and poison-pen letters, begins on Monday evening. On 18 March a series of thirty autograph letters relating to the Edalji Case, signed 'Arthur Conan Doyle', twenty-four of them to Captain Anson, Chief Constable of Staffordshire, will form Lot 134 at Bonhams in Knightsbridge – www.bonhams.com/auctions/22713/lot/134/. The estimate is £20,000-£40,000.

And Thomas Toughill, whose book *Oscar Slater: The Immortal Case of Arthur Conan Doyle* is strongly recommended, reports that Lot 397 at Mellors & Kirk's Fine Art Sale on 4-5 March is a group of official documents, original letters and religious tracts sent to **Oscar Slater** when in prison awaiting execution (The Auction House Gregory Street Nottingham NG7 2NL; www.mellorsandkirk.com). There's nothing of Conan Doyle's, so the estimate is £500-£700.

Maureen Whittaker sends word that there'll be a gathering at Clapham Common on 12 September, the twentieth anniversary of the death of **Jeremy Brett**, who lived beside the Common for the last ten years of his life. A memorial is to be unveiled, supplementing the tree planted in 2007. **David Burke** and **David Stuart Davies** intend to be there. Unfortunately the date coincides with our Society's planned weekend away, but we'll pass on the news as it reaches us.

Mattias Boström and **Matt Laffey** have taken advantage of the wider availability of daily and weekly newspaper archives to compile an excellent anthology of cuttings – a huge one too, evidently, as *Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle in the Newspapers, Volume I: 1881-1892* (Gasogene Books; www.wessexpress.com; \$32.95 + postage) runs to 320 pages! The book covers aspects of Conan Doyle's life other than his writing, but at this stage it's the writing that's likely to interest most of us, and it is fascinating to read the first reviews of works that we know so well. 'A *Study in Scarlet* ... is not at all a bad imitation, but it would never have been written but for Poe, Gaboriau, and Mr RL Stevenson. The hero of the tale is simply the hero of "The Murder in the Rue Morgue"...' 'Mr Conan Doyle has done better than in *The Sign of Four*, still, as a specimen of purely detective fiction, the tale has its merits...' Poe and Stevenson have lasted, but who reads Gaboriau for pleasure these days? I look forward keenly to subsequent volumes in the series.

The Strange Case of Dr Doyle: A Journey into Madness & Mayhem by **Daniel Friedman, MD** and **Eugene Friedman, MD** (SquareOne Publishers; www.squareonepublishers.com; £26.00) is a very odd fish indeed. The authors alternate a factual account of Arthur Conan Doyle's life and career up to the time of the Whitechapel murders of 1888 with a fictional story of a tour of the murder sites by members of Our Society, otherwise the Crimes Club, led by Conan Doyle. The Ripper has been identified as Sherlock Holmes, Athelney Jones, Dr Watson's brother, Mycroft Holmes... so you can probably guess where the Friedmans place the blame. (I'd like to know the specific sources for some of their statements.) Nearly twenty years ago Richard Lancelyn Green expressed his disillusionment with Conan Doyle, concluding: 'Everything he did smacked of opportunism and superficiality.' I didn't believe that then and I don't believe it now. As for *The Strange Case of Dr Doyle*, it's like claiming that Anthony Boucher was the Zodiac Killer. Not for me.

For the Paris première of the newly restored silent film *Sherlock Holmes*, the only complete recording of William Gillette in his own play, **Thierry Saint-Joanis**, President of La Société Sherlock Holmes de France, compiled a beautiful 64-page book, *Le guide du film Sherlock Holmes (1916)* (www.sshf.com/boutique.php; €20.00 – which I think doesn't include postage). The text is in French, though nearly all the reviews and articles reproduced are in English. Direct enquiries to sshf@sshf.com.

It's a rare author who bothers to write a book about his own novel. There's Umberto Eco's *Reflections on 'The Name of the Rose'* and, er... **Jon Lellenberg** is entirely justified in writing *Sources and Methods: A companion volume to the novel 'Baker Street Irregular'* (Hazelbaker & Lellenberg Inc; <http://bsihistoryblog.blogspot.co.uk>; \$20.00 + postage outside the USA). In DM 306 I described *Baker Street Irregular* as 'an ambitious novel and a very considerable achievement' – which it is.

Thomas Bruce Wheeler has updated his guide to Holmesian London. *The Mapped London of Sherlock Holmes* (£2.62 as an e-book from Amazon.co.uk) identifies the 400 London sites mentioned in the canon, listing them in adventure context and locating them on an interactive map created by the author. Also, each site's GPS address is hyperlinked to a street view photo, allowing the reader to 'visit' Holmes's London from their home computer. London visitors with a GPS app on their smart phone or tablet can use the GPS addresses to get turn-by-turn walking instructions from one site to the next, making the book both a travel guide and a computer app. It's amazingly cheap and very impressive.

Michael Hoey died last August, not long before the launch of *The Drury Lane Theatre Mystery: An Original Sherlock Holmes Screen Treatment* by **Dennis Hoey**, *Inspector Lestrade of Universal's Sherlock Holmes, with an Introduction and Additional Comments by His Son Michael A Hoey* (Gasogene Books; \$12.95). Dennis Hoey is destined, more than Rathbone and Bruce, to be identified with one character, which is unfortunate, as his son's full and most interesting introduction makes it clear that he was far from limited as an actor – and now we discover that he was a writer as well! *The Drury Lane Theatre Mystery* was written with Rathbone, Bruce and himself in mind, as the dialogue makes plain, but unlike the twelve films that Universal did make it's set in the late Victorian period. As Michael Hoey says, 'one must approach it as a curiosity piece,' and a very unusual and entertaining one it is.

The creators of *Sherlock* have, perhaps sensibly, vetoed the idea of spin-off novels, but *Elementary*, with its stable of writers and 65-plus episodes, is a different animal. The first novel is *Elementary: The Ghost Line* by **Adam Christopher** (Titan; titanbooks.com; £7.99), a perfectly decent adventure that takes Holmes and Joan Watson into the

New York Subway in search of clues to an apparent gangland murder in Hell's Kitchen – or rather, Holmes and Marcus Bell go underground while Watson and Gregson investigate on the surface. Adam Christopher writes well, and he evidently knows the characters and the New York setting intimately.

Here's a new idea (at least, I think it is). Sherlock Holmes faked the business at Reichenbach because of a momentous discovery: the great detective has reached the conclusion that he is actually a fictional character with no real existence. That's just one curious aspect of *The Fifth Heart*, by **Dan Simmons** (Sphere; www.littlebrown.co.uk; 5 March; £18.99 hardback, £6.99 paperback). As usual with this author, it's what in Holmes's time would have been a three-volume novel – more than 600 pages – and there's a lot going on that isn't always easy to make sense of. In Paris, where he's living as Sigerson, Holmes prevents Henry James from committing suicide, and persuades him to go to America, to help in investigating the death eight years before of Marian Hooper Adams, known as 'Clover', a friend of James and wife of the historian Henry Adams. Clover Adams is believed to have killed herself, but Holmes thinks otherwise. If her death is not what it seemed, thinks James, what about Sherlock Holmes? Fact and fiction intertwine to make a novel that at times is bewildering but is always compelling.

More new and forthcoming books. *The Death of Sherlock Holmes* by **Trevor Marriott**, a retired Murder Squad detective, has Holmes's secret daughter Emma join forces with Dr Watson to avenge her father's murder (£4.60 as a Kindle from Amazon.co.uk). Followers of Mary Russell's exploits will already be aware of *Dreaming Spies* by **Laurie R King** (Allison & Busby; www.allisonandbusby.com; £13.99). *How To Instantly Size Up Strangers Like Sherlock Holmes* by **Mark A Williams Sr** (Real Deal Publishing; £15.42 on Amazon.co.uk) looks interesting, though the title is a touch ambiguous. Then there are *Sherlock Holmes and the Four Corners of Hell* by **Séamas Duffy** (Robert Hale; 31 March; £17.45), *The Mammoth Book Of Sherlock Holmes Abroad* edited by **Simon Clark** (Robinson; 2 April; £9.99), *Sherlock Holmes – Tangled Skeins: Stories from the Notebooks of Dr John H Watson* by David Marcum (MX Publishing; 12 April; £8.20 on Amazon.co.uk) – and a couple of items that strike me as particularly interesting: *I Believe in Sherlock Holmes: Early Fan Fiction from the Very First Fandom* ed. **Douglas G Greene** (Dover; 19 August; £7.34) and *The Valley of Fear (A Book at Bedtime)* by **Arthur Conan Doyle** read by **Ian McKellen** (BBC Physical Audio; abridged edition; 20 August; £10.73).

From 12 June **Chapterhouse Theatre Company** will be touring Great Britain and Ireland with their open-air production of *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*. Dates, times and places are on their website at www.chapterhouse.org/show5.html.

At Chorley Little Theatre in Lancashire, from 15 to 20 June, you can see *The Final Problem*, written and directed by **Mark Jones**, with Dave Reid as Holmes – www.chorleylittletheatre.com/chorleytheatre.

At the Park Square Theatre in St Paul, MN, *Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders* by **Jeffrey Hatcher**, based on the novel by Larry Millett, will be staged from 19 June to 19 July – <http://parksquaretheatre.org/box-office/shows/sherlock-holmes-and-the-ice-palace-murders-june-19-july-19-2015/>.

Don't forget that there are still two opportunities to go to the **Barbican Centre** in London and see some of the rare classic silent films from 1922-23, starring **Eille Norwood** as Sherlock Holmes, very much in the Gillette tradition. On 8 March at 4.00pm there's *a Scandal in Bohemia* and other episodes, and on 29 March at 4.00pm is *The Sign of Four*, both with live piano accompaniment – www.barbican.org.uk/film/series.asp?id=1397 or phone 020 7638 4141.

And of course the exhibition *Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die* continues at **The Museum of London** until 12 April, with a programme of associated events – www.museumoflondon.org.uk.

Last week Jean Upton, Nick Utechin and I went back to the Museum to join our distinguished Honorary Member **Douglas Wilmer** in exploring the exhibition, guided by **Alex Werner**, who more than anyone else was responsible for its existence. There's a set of photos accessible via the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk – click on 'Gallery'.

Ross Philpot of the Unscrupulous Rascals (otherwise the Sherlock Holmes Society of South Australia) asks whether there are any doctors of a Holmesian bent who might wish to correspond with him, as a fellow medico. His e-mail address is Ross.Philpot@health.sa.gov.au.

Sad news from Joel & Carolyn Senter: 'We are distressed to report the passing over Reichenbach, February 10, 2015, of **Jody (Josiah) Baker** (Inspector Baynes). Jody was the founder and leader of what we believe to be the only Sherlockian society in a senior citizens' community. Friends of the Soldier Named Murray, located near Chattanooga, began with 10 members but grew, over the years, to 80! Our communication with Jody dates back to when he was an active contributor to an early on-line Sherlockian bulletin board, The Wigmore Street Post Office, which predated both The Hounds of the Internet and Welcome Holmes. Jody's passing occurred exactly one month, to the hour, following his wife's death on January 10. RIP, old friend – you will be sorely missed.'

That fine actor **Alan Howard**, whom you'll remember as the Duke of Holderness in Granada TV's *The Priory School*, died on 14 February, aged seventy-seven. His father, Arthur Howard, also an actor, was the younger brother of the more famous Leslie – to many the definitive Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion* – so Alan was first cousin to Ronald Howard, who played Holmes in the 1954-55 television series and was only eight years younger than his uncle Arthur. Alan Howard was one of that wonderful Royal Shakespeare Company in the late 1960s and early 1970s that also included Ian Richardson, Michael Williams, Eric Porter, Barrie Ingham, Donald Sinden and Judi Dench.

Just yesterday we had the news that **Leonard Nimoy** has died at the age of eighty-three. There were Holmesian aspects, some of them very strong, to his best known character, Mr Spock, the half-Vulcan First Officer of the Star Ship *Enterprise* in the original *Star Trek* series, a rôle he reprised in several of the feature films, including the latest, *Star Trek – Into Darkness*. Few of the obituaries mention that he played Holmes as well. The RSC's production of William Gillette's play *Sherlock Holmes* had a much longer run in North America than it did in the UK. The original Holmes, John Wood, was succeeded by Patrick Horgan, John Neville, Robert Stephens and, from February to December 1976, Leonard Nimoy. That same year he also appeared as Holmes in an educational TV programme called *The Interior Motive*.

Charlie Phillips, who won two Baftas for his work editing *Sherlock*, died recently in his mid-fifties. Reece Shearsmith posted a tribute on Twitter: 'RIP Charlie Phillips - our amazing editor of Psychoville; BAFTA for his work on Sherlock and one of the loveliest people I've known.'

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Summer 2014 and Autumn 2014 (Steven Rothman, www.bakerstreetjournal.com; subscriptions, PO Box 583, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *The Bilge Pump*, February 2015 (**The Crew of the Barque Lone Star**, Steve Mason, www.dfw-sherlock.org). *Canadian Holmes*, Winter 2014/2015 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, www.torontobootmakers.com). *The Formulary*, January 2015 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, dr_watsons_surgery@hotmail.co.uk) [**A very welcome return! We've missed you.**]. *Gaslight Gazette*, January & February 1895 [**sic**] (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott**, David J Milner, 6 Crowndale Drive, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, USA). *Mayday Mayday*, January-February 2015 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, www.thessmayday.org.uk). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, February 2015 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *Report from the Unscrupulous Rascals*, February 2015 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of South Australia**, Mark Chellew, 50 Richmond Ave, Colonel Light Gardens, SA 5041, Australia). *Sherlockian E-Times*, January 2015 (**Classic Specialties**, Carolyn & Joel Senter, www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times15-1.html and February 2015 www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times15-2.html).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermacti Press*, February 2015 (Peter E Blau; <http://redcircledc.org/index.php?id=39>).

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