

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Everyone needs a hiatus sometimes, and now, like Holmes in disguise, *The District Messenger* returns with not just books to tempt you, but also news and reviews of all sorts of items, occurrences and whimsy. If you are prone to fainting, please make sure you are well placed for a soft landing. The Napoleon of Crime, it seems, may also be back. Released this week is the paperback edition of **Anthony Horowitz's *Moriarty***. According to the blurb:

*Sherlock Holmes is dead.*

*Days after Holmes and his arch-enemy Moriarty fall to their doom at the Reichenbach Falls, Pinkerton agent Frederick Chase arrives from New York. The death of Moriarty has created a poisonous vacuum which has been swiftly filled by a fiendish new criminal mastermind. Ably assisted by Inspector Athelney Jones, a devoted student of Holmes's methods of investigation and deduction, Chase must hunt down this shadowy figure, a man much feared but seldom seen, a man determined to engulf London in a tide of murder and menace.*

*The game is afoot . . .*

Orion books are offering readers of *The DM* the opportunity to win copies of this edition. If you would like to be in with a chance, simply answer the following question:

Inspector Athelney Jones originally appears in which Canonical adventure?

- a) *A Study in Scarlet*
- b) *The Sign of Four*
- c) *The Valley of Fear*

Send your answer in the subject heading of an email to the following address: [competitions@orionbooks.co.uk](mailto:competitions@orionbooks.co.uk). **Deadline for entries is 8<sup>th</sup> November.**

Winter is coming, Mrs. Oakshott is fattening the geese, and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London **Christmas card** is on sale. This year, it features Sidney Paget's portrait of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and is available to purchase in packs of ten for £7.50. See our website for more details if you wish to make a purchase: <http://goo.gl/5xUJUE>.

If you are looking for presents as well as cards, you may also like to take a look at the **merchandise range** on our website, which includes a newly-created soft-skin notebook featuring the Society's logo: <http://goo.gl/9K118S>.

The clocks have gone back, and the Society will be celebrating dark (k)night at our annual **Film Evening** on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November. On the programme this year is the 1982 version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* starring Tom Baker, and *Trials of the Demon* in which Batman travels back in time to team up with Holmes and Watson. Members should have received details via email or mail-out, but further information can also be found on our website: <http://goo.gl/7Z5XQw>.

Members can expect to receive reminders about **membership renewal**. If you receive *The DM* but are not yet a member of the

Society, do think about joining us. You can find more details about subscription options here: <http://goo.gl/9fYOCG>.

The details for our next **Annual Dinner** have been released. In 2016, it takes place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January, and we are honoured to be joined by Special Guest Beryl Vertue OBE and Guest Speaker Sue Vertue. Again, members should have already received communication regarding this, but details can be found on our website: <http://goo.gl/BSGLJn>.

Beryl and Sue Vertue are, of course, known for being producers of the BBC's *Sherlock*. As has been well publicised, the special Victorian episode will air on **New Year's Day 2016** and is titled 'The Abominable Bride.' The extended trailer can be viewed here: <https://goo.gl/yCRJwI>. 'The Abominable Bride' will be shown on BBC One and on PBS in America at the same time, and will also be shown in cinemas. Sherlockology have produced a useful list of venues in the UK with confirmed screenings, tickets go on sale this week: <http://goo.gl/FZTxAv>.

Roger Johnson is currently hard at work completing the Society's Winter Journal, which should contain reports on some of our recent adventures, including the study weekend in Tunbridge Wells of which I have heard wonderful things though was sadly unable to attend. Our most recent event was the Richard Lancelyn Green Lecture, given this year by Dr. John McNabb and titled '**Evolution by Gaslight**.' Dr. McNabb considered Holmes's ideas about human origins throughout the Canon and compared this to the concurrent development of theories and academic debate in the wider Victorian and Edwardian world. It was a fascinating talk, offering alternative readings of the Canon – including a number of moments that showed Watson was likely a better scientist than Holmes! A fuller report should feature in a future Journal. You can find pictures from the evening on our Flickr page, including a Piltdown skull that Dr. McNabb brought along for the occasion: <https://goo.gl/D90L8U>.

The *Sherlock Holmes: A Musical Mind* concert – or Prom 41 to regular promenaders – took place on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August at the Royal Albert Hall, only days after the last *DM*. It was a glorious afternoon of Sherlockian indulgence, and delightful to see the bust of Prom's founder, Henry Wood, sporting a deerstalker. The programme featured a mixture of pieces with Canonical connections and highlights from various movie and TV soundtracks. Matthew Sweet and Mark Gatiss guided the audience through proceedings – Mark Gatiss gave stirring performances of the 'Voice of Terror' and the 'East Wind Coming' speech during a medley of themes from the Basil Rathbone movies. It was very much a BBC affair, with *Elementary* noticeably ignored during montage of screenshots. The running order was, at times, illogical: to end on the *Sherlock* theme, beloved though it is, was ill-considered, as it was noticeably the weakest item on the programme and sadly sounded limp after 'Ride of the Valkyries.' The strongest moments were in the first half, which opened with a rousing medley from Hans Zimmer's *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) score, and included performances from mezzo-soprano Christine Rice and violinist Jack Liebeck – whose rendition of Patrick Gowers' Granada themes moved me to tears of joy. The full concert is not currently available online, but you can listen to edited highlights on the Proms website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/events/egnrzc>.

**Jon Lellenberg** has sent word of the reactivation of his BSI Archival History website, which you can find here: <http://goo.gl/VZCtll>.

**Nick Utechin**, who has a Watsonian passion for certain sports, noted the following: 'in Saturday's (10th October) confrontation between Wales and Australia in the Rugby World Cup at Twickenham, Australia brought on Greg Holmes as a substitute, shortly followed by Ross Moriarty for Wales. Australia beat Wales 15 points to 6.' Nick also remembered that 'in the early 1980s, Terry Holmes and Richard Moriarty played in the same Wales team several times.' As far as we are aware, no three-quarters were lost.

In other, and equally unexpected, sporting news, there was an exciting pairing during the **President's Cup** (golf) in South Korea on 8<sup>th</sup> October when Bubba Watson and JB Holmes were put together: <http://goo.gl/Us2Yjw>

Bonnie MacBird has been incredibly busy promoting her new novel *Art in the Blood* which was released by HarperCollins in September. It is a proper Holmesian romp, well researched, with Doylean verve, and is full of adventure and peril - if you like Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* then this is a pastiche I would recommend. It is set in 1888 after a failed Ripper investigation, and sees Holmes and Watson travel to France in connection with an art theft and a kidnap. With its focus on Holmes's artistic side, addictions, and early years, it had the ambience of those iconic 70s movies such as *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Seven Per Cent Solution* and *Murder by Decree*. The greatest compliment I can give is to say that it was a pastiche I was able to relax into, without being shaken back out into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Bonnie MacBird is a writer who loves and knows her Holmes.

There were a series of wonderful events to celebrate the release of *Art in the Blood*, including an art contest run in association with the Baker Street Babes that culminated in a celebratory party and presentation at The Sherlock Holmes Hotel on Baker Street. The contest was won by our very own **Jean Upton**, who created a beautiful and inventive painting combining her love of both the Canon and the Beatles! The BSBs have produced a podcast with Bonnie which you can listen to via this link: <http://goo.gl/7ayrFt>.

As a school librarian, I am a huge fan of Dorling Kindersley's 'Big Ideas' range and was thrilled to hear that they were producing a Sherlock Holmes book as part of the series. The Big Ideas books are concise but thorough introductory guides to different subjects for novices, and best suited to a teenaged audience. *The Sherlock Holmes Book* (RRP £16.99), which was released on 1<sup>st</sup> October, is stunning. The herringbone cover adorned with gold titles and a discerning collection of quotes would attract any Sherlockian, novice or master. Like all the best DK books, it is strong on visuals and works best when you want to browse rather than read cover to cover. As well as sections of general background and history, Doylean biography, and a consideration of Holmes on screen, every story in the Canon is treated to a few pages of considered analysis. David Stuart Davies and Barry Forshaw were consulted as co-editors and this is evident in the breadth of knowledge and attention to detail demonstrated throughout the volume. It has its faults: at times, it is rather dogmatic in the presentation of debatable points (confidently stating that Dr. Watson studied at Barts, for example, when many of us would argue for UCL). Nevertheless, if you are looking for a guide to inspire a young Sherlockian in your life, or if you simply wish to add an attractive book to your own shelves, I recommend this to you.

Also attractive is *Sherlock Holmes's London* by Rose Shepherd (CICO Books, RRP £16.99). This book is a guide to London as featured in the Canon and in screen adaptations (with noticeable attention given to the BBC's *Sherlock* and Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes*). It features some arresting reproductions of Victorian photographs of London which are beautifully presented. Unfortunately, the accompanying prose is often rather clunky, and made even more so by the unnecessary and distracting inclusion of hidden references to the Canon within the text, which are jarring to read. Parts of the book are arranged around walks, but these seem somewhat arbitrary in their composition, not being structured around

any particular story or theme. Nevertheless, it is clear that a lot of research has gone into this book and it contains some interesting facts about the great cesspool. A pleasant introduction for the budding *Sherlock* fan who is unfamiliar with the Victorian world, but not a necessity for the seasoned Holmesian.

*The Big Book of Sherlock Holmes Stories* (Vintage Crime, RRP \$25.00/£16.48), edited and with an introduction by Otto Penzler, was released on 27<sup>th</sup> October. This is an excellent collection of pastiches and parodies compiled by a man who knows what he is doing. The book contains 83 short stories, from Doyle's own 'The Field Bazaar' though to more recent works by Neil Gaiman, Tanith Lee, and David Stuart Davies. There are not any new commissions here, and if you have an extensive collection of your own then you might already be familiar with a lot of the titles from different publications, but it is very well curated and Otto Penzler's introductions to each story and its author are masterful. I am certainly looking forward to spending more time with this book as the winter nights draw in.

If you have a huge appetite for new Sherlockian pastiche then MX Publishing have produced a veritable feast for you in the form of their three-volume *MX Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories*. Each volume represents different ages of Holmes: *Part I* is 1881 to 1889, *Part II* is 1890 to 1895, and *Part III* is 1896 to 1929. Each volume in hardback retails at £28.99 and all royalties are contributed to the restoration of Undershaw, Doyle's former home at Hindhead which is now being transformed into a school (more details on the school's website, here: <http://goo.gl/h47J9R>). You can purchase directly from MX here: <http://goo.gl/2syeIP>.

**William Gillette's Sherlock Holmes (1916)** finally had its London premiere at BFI Southbank on 18<sup>th</sup> October. There he was, on screen, the man we all know by sight and yet never imagined we would see in action. There was the iconic dressing gown. There was the face that was further immortalised by Frederic Dorr Steele. The plot, of course, is terrible, and the romance inexplicable – though perhaps it says something for Gillette's magnetism that Doyle was happy for him to murder or marry his creation, whereas he rejected Herbert Beerbohm Tree's wish to play Holmes with a beard! It is for the spectacle and not for the story that this film is precious.

**Flicker Alley** are releasing a Bluray/DVD of *Sherlock Holmes (1916)* this week. It is an American release, so if you are purchasing outside the States do check that you have an appropriate player. Details if you want to order can be found here: <http://goo.gl/3jkswm> and you can watch a trailer here: <https://goo.gl/kB4op5>.

*Elementary* is set to return to CBS for Season 4 this week. Air date on Sky Living in the UK is yet to be confirmed.

Sir Ian McKellen's *Mr Holmes* (2015) is now available on DVD.

The Baroque Theatre Company are touring the UK over the coming months with their festive offering *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol* by John Longenbaugh. For further description, and a list of dates and venues, see their website: <http://goo.gl/YXgvF4>.

The Museum of London's *Crime Museum Uncovered* exhibition, featuring items from the Scotland Yard Museum on public display for the first time, is now open and runs until 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016. More details on their website: <http://goo.gl/c22S5f>.

**E J Wagner** sends news that *Sherlock Holmes: The International Exhibition*, for which she served as forensic consultant, has moved to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Denver Colorado. Follow this link for a video she made for the museum's volunteers: <https://goo.gl/OgrcqE>

And finally...**Roger Johnson** spotted this recent article on the *New York Times* website with links to contemporary reviews of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories that showed some critics were less than impressed: <http://goo.gl/wcmlFa>.