

“I AM AN OMNIVOROUS READER”

Book reviews by DAN ANDRIACCO, LISA BURSCHIEDT, CATHERINE COOKE, SARAH OBERMULLER-BENNETT, JEAN UPTON, NICHOLAS UTECHIN and ROGER JOHNSON

Twentieth-Century Victorian: Arthur Conan Doyle and the *Strand Magazine*, 1891-1930 by Jonathan Cranfield. *Edinburgh University Press*, 2017. 272pp. £75.00 (hbk), £24.99 (pbk)

This book is from a series whose stated purpose is to work from original sources, primary documents and recent theory, to push the boundaries of research into the Victorian period and at times to redraw them. The author has drawn on original material in collections such as those in Toronto and Portsmouth, and provides numerous footnotes detailing his sources. The book also has an extensive bibliography covering the stories, novels and articles discussed from *The Strand Magazine* as well as critical texts, some familiar to Sherlockians and Doyleans, and some more familiar in the academic world. Cranfield divides the story of *The Strand Magazine* into six periods, from 1891 through to 1930, and sets Conan Doyle's contribution into each. He thus ends with the death of Conan Doyle, in the year when Greenhough Smith stepped down as Editor, and does not continue to the actual end of the magazine in 1950. The book is in a sense layered — *The Strand Magazine* itself is set in the general historical and political climate of each period, assessing how it responded to opportunities and challenges; the work of other writers, both fiction and non-fiction is discussed; and Conan Doyle's work and views in that period. The author does seem to have sat down and read the magazine in its entirety. Grounding the discussion in current events in this way, charting the ups and down of magazine publishing, gives a fresh view of Conan Doyle's work. We do not end as many do with a rather embarrassed look at Spiritualism and works such as *The Land of Mist*, but see how Challenger was brought back from Spiritualism in “When the World Screamed” and “The Disintegration Machine”, and with two little known stories, “Spedegue's Dropper” and “The Parish Magazine”. Conan Doyle had decided, or had been persuaded, that a popular magazine was no place for propaganda. The book repays what is quite a dense read, and is invaluable for anyone wanting to know more of the social context in which Conan Doyle was writing.

CC

Trenches: The War Service of Sherlock Holmes – A Facsimile of the Partial Original Manuscript of “His Last Bow” edited by Robert Katz and Andrew Solberg. *The Baker Street Irregulars*. 2017. xi + 274pp. \$39.95 (hbk)

This was one of the more challenging projects in the excellent Baker Street Irregulars Manuscript Series, for there isn't much of the manuscript extant. Only the first two pages are intact, with twelve other pieces of exercise book (or otherwise lined paper) varying in length from ten to twenty-four lines of Doyle's writing. Thus, as well as providing his usual excellent notes on the elements that

exist of the MS, Philip Bergem has had to do a complex stitching-job from various printed texts to accommodate the eleven pages that are not present.

There is an added delightful element: this was originally going to be a book about Holmes and the First World War and potential contributors were approached on that basis. Then suddenly the owner of the MS — who remains unknown to the editors and almost everybody else — permitted the fourteen leaves to be scanned. Irregular Michael Kean owns the MS of Doyle's poem “Ypres September 1925”, Irregular and major collector Constantine Rossakis owns four of the original Steele illustrations for “His Last Bow” in *Collier's Magazine* — and thus a great book was created.

As always in this series, there are fascinating associated articles: Glen Miranker has an extraordinary collection of 1st World War trench magazines (of which *The Wipers Times* is the most famous) — many of which have Holmes parodies; Catherine Cooke explains the significance of two of Doyle's lesser known short stories presaging the War; Greg Ruby goes interestingly off-piste with detailed descriptions of the war service records of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce; and there are articles on relevant historical aspects by Burt Wolder, Marina Stajic and Ross Davies, and many others.

This is a benchmark series.

NU

70 Years By Gas Lamp: The Illustrious Clients' Sixth Casebook edited by Mary Ann Bradley BSI, Louise Haskett & Melanie Hoffman. *The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis*, 2018. x + 244pp. \$21.95 (pbk)

Amid the friendship and the socialising, Sherlock Holmes scion societies have always been primarily literary associations. Members read stories, they take quizzes about stories, and they often present and hear scholarly papers. Some scion societies also publish. Perhaps the most published is the Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis. In celebration of the club's seventieth anniversary, comes *70 Years by Gas Lamp*. The first “casebook” was published in 1948, just two years after the club was founded by a precocious teenager named Jerry Williamson. The twenty-three entries in *70 Years* are impressive for their scope as well as their erudition. Ann Margaret Lewis writes on the polyphonic motets of Lassus, Don Curtis on “Plumes, Pipes, and Lens,” Pat Ward on sex and violence in Sherlock Holmes, Pam Wampler on Holmes and Freud, Michael Whalen on “Rex Stout: Hoosier Heretic,” and Steven Doyle on the history behind what many believe is the worst story in the Canon. As before, not all the authors are Clients. Some chapters were originally talks delivered to the Clients. I particularly enjoyed Patrick Bennett Shaw's reminiscences of his father, the great John Bennett Shaw;

Leslie Klinger on “The Vampire and the Detective,” a Halloween talk; and Michael W Homer on “Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and the Mormons.” After all these years the game is still afoot, and as lively as ever.

DA

Sherlock Holmes: The Lost Radio Scripts by Leslie Charteris & Denis Green, edited by Ian Dickerson. *Purview Press*, 2017. 396pp. £19.74 (pbk)

Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce made such an impression in the 1939 film *The Hound of the Baskervilles* that they were quickly signed up by NBC Radio, and proved to be entirely at home on the air, with scripts by Edith Meiser. Five years later two new writers were hired — Denis Green, a British actor and dramatist, good at dialogue, and Bruce Taylor, deviser of ingenious plots. That latter name, derived from those of Nigel Bruce and the producer Glenhall Taylor, hid the identity of Leslie Charteris, who was trying to sell his own crime series *The Saint* to radio and didn't want to muddy the waters. Thirty-four plays, each supposedly based on a canonical incident or reference, as required by ACD's heirs (the link was often tenuous or even invisible) were broadcast before Charteris bowed out to be replaced by Anthony Boucher. Few recordings of the Charteris-Green plays survive, but Ian Dickerson, Secretary of the Saint Club, uncovered a stack of scripts among Charteris' papers and got the family's permission to publish them. This enticing book contains twelve, with an informative introduction and notes, and I'm assured that there's more to come. Excellent!

RJ

Imagination Theatre's Sherlock Holmes: A Collection of Scripts from *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* edited by David Marcum. *MX Publishing*, 2017. 412pp. £26.99 (hbk), £14.99 (pbk)

I've welcomed two earlier volumes of Sherlock Holmes scripts from the late Jim French's Seattle-based company. This new collection shows that the standards of American radio's golden age live on in *Imagination Theatre*. Here are fifteen plays, by authors from both sides of the pond, including Jim French, M.J. Elliott, David Marcum, John Hall, Matthew Booth and the excellent leading actors, John Patrick Lowrie and Lawrence Albert. All are exciting, suspenseful, inventive — and faithful to the spirit of the canon, thanks partly to an internal consistency with an agreed chronology. As if the quality of the scripts and the introductory material wasn't enough, all royalties go to Stepping Stones school, housed at Conan Doyle's former home, Undershaw.

RJ

The Adventures of Two British Gentlemen in Germany: In the Footsteps of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes edited by Nicole Glücklich. *Deutsche Sherlock-Holmes-Gesellschaft*. 2018. 586pp. €29.00 + €7.00 postage (hbk)

This beautifully produced sequel to *The Adventures of Two British Gentlemen in Switzerland* naturally concentrates largely on Conan Doyle's experiences,

including his trip to Berlin in 1890 to learn about a claimed cure for tuberculosis, his participation in the 1911 Prince Henry Automobile Rally, and his last visit to Germany in the late 1920s. Both he and Holmes played their part in the Great War, of course, and Holmes encountered many German characters, not all admirable, in his career. There are fascinating chapters on German Holmes societies (a Sherlock Holmes-Club in 1902 may have been the world's first), presentations of Holmes on stage, screen and radio, and the publishing history of Holmes in Germany.

As before, this is two books in one: 298 pages of *Die Abenteuer zweier britischer Gentleman in Deutschland* and 286 of a good English translation, all attractively presented and splendidly illustrated. The book can be ordered from: Deutsche Sherlock-Holmes-Gesellschaft, c/o Olaf Maurer, Wanderstraße 31, D-67071 Ludwigshafen, Germany (e-mail dshc221b@yahoo.com). The price is the same for all countries, but add €2.00 if paying via PayPal.

RJ

“A Woman of Mystery”: Helene Yuhasova, Poetess Laureate of *The Baker Street Irregulars (The Baker Street Journal 2017 Christmas Annual)* by Sonia Fetherston and Julie McKuras. *The Baker Street Irregulars*, 2017. 70pp (pbk)

A woman of extreme mystery, indeed, and this tale of Yuhasova (actually Helen Yuhas) is the result of outstanding research by the two authors. The name will be far better known to older Holmesians and American readers of very early issues of *The Baker Street Journal*, but the story travels well. Twelve sonnets and other forms of poem appeared beneath her name from 1944 to 1947, several of them collected into *A Lauriston Garden of Verses*, published by Edgar W Smith in one of his Pamphlet House publications (1946). The versification was fine indeed: this from “Sonnet: John H Watson to Sherlock Holmes”:

*You are a benefactor of the race;
Warrant and symbol of our land's content:
A sword that strikes in evil's darkest place,
The law's oblique, incisive instrument...*

But did she write the stuff herself? Or was it penned by Smith? For years, Sherlockians were unsure whether she even *existed* — not helped when Smith in 1960 referred to her name as a *nom-de-plume* of his. Senior US Sherlockians have investigated this matter: Bliss Austin, John Nieminski, Dan Posnansky and Peter Blau among them. Fetherston and McKuras are unable to reach a final position but every last piece of evidence is laid before readers.

Yuhas herself was a reticent character: she cut herself off from *Irregulars* and was very difficult when contacted by them over the years: “If my name is on it, I wrote it,” she commented to Posnansky. At various times, she worked for the Dept of Agriculture, for Eleanor Roosevelt, for the State Department and the Soviet Embassy. She may have passed information to the Soviets, she may have been groomed by them, she may have been entirely innocent of such charges. An extraordinary person, well worth this

excellent investigation — which, as ever, can only be read by *BSJ* subscribers.

NU

Sherlock Holmes Through the Microscope by Carl L Heifetz. *MX Publishing*, 2018. 214pp. £10.99 (pbk)

Mr Heifetz, a senior officer of the Pleasant Places of Florida and a distinguished microbiologist, applies his scientific expertise to some problems, anomalies and features of interest in the canon. There are thirty-one pieces here, long and short, one or two frivolous (nothing wrong with that!), many thought-provoking and even eye-opening. Holmes's scientific methods are examined; an interesting alternative is proposed to Watson's impossible date for "Wisteria Lodge"; the true nature of Godfrey Emsworth's affliction is considered... It's a worthwhile collection, though a contents list would be helpful, as scholarly articles, stories and one amusing verse appear to have been dropped into the mix at random.

RJ

The Ardlamont Mystery: The Real-Life Story Behind the Creation of Sherlock Holmes by Daniel Smith. *Michael O'Mara*, 2018. 254pp. £18.99 (hbk)

Although Joseph Bell was never officially attached to the police, he did assist his friend Henry Littlejohn, who served as Edinburgh's Police Surgeon, as well as lecturing at the University Medical School. Conan Doyle never said so, but there can be no doubt that Littlejohn, like Bell, was an essential inspiration for the creation of Sherlock Holmes. In 1893 the two helped investigate the death of Cecil Hambrough, a young Englishman, while out shooting with two others on a remote estate in Argyllshire. His former tutor, Alfred Monson, was an upper-class fraud who had recently taken out insurance on Cecil's life, and their companion, who vanished before the police appeared, turned out to be an unscrupulous bookie. What had appeared to be an accident now looked like murder. Monson was arrested and charged, but despite the evidence of Littlejohn and Bell at the trial, the verdict was the peculiarly Scottish *Not Proven*. "These are very deep waters", and the mystery remains. Daniel Smith's book is a gripping read.

RJ

About Being a Sherlockian: 60 Essays Celebrating the Sherlock Holmes Community edited by Christopher Redmond. *Wildside Press*, 2017. 252pp. £11.99 (pbk)

What is it about Sherlock Holmes that so attracts us? There may be as many answers as there are Sherlockians. You'll recognise at least some of the names of the sixty who tell their own stories here. To pick some more or less at random: Mattias Boström, David Stuart Davies, Michael Dirda, Alistair Duncan, Steve Emecz, Lyndsay Faye, Maria Fleischhack, Wendy C Fries, Jayantika Ganguly, Elinor Gray, David Marcum, Julie McKuras, Nicholas Meyer, Scott Monty, Crystal Noll, Susan Rice, Doug Wrigglesworth... Different people with different experiences, but important to us because we too are part of

a wonderful international, inclusive and *intelligent* community.

RJ

Mobile Holmes: Transportation in the Sherlockian Canon edited by Walter Jaffee, BSI. *The Baker Street Irregulars*, 2017. 270pp. \$21.96 (pbk)

The *Gloria Scott* was taking convicts to a penal colony in Australia. That's what the Victorians meant by "transportation", and Captain Jaffee writes about the ill-fated barque in his paper on ships and boats. But the subject of this book, as far as British readers are concerned, is *transport*, by land, sea and air. The farther we are from 1895, the more we need information about things that were then mundane but are now rare curiosities. As always, the BSI has experts to call on: Catherine Cooke on London for the pedestrian; Guy Marriott on the different kinds of cabs and carriages; John Baesch on railways; Marcus Geisser on automobiles; Philip and Jane Weller on submarines; Mark Mower on airships... Fifteen papers altogether in a very timely and useful book. [*Of the Sophy Anderson, Walter Jaffee writes, "As the ship can't be found in any of the shipping journals, we must conclude that it was named after a childhood sweetheart of Watson's." Must we? Good grief!]*

RJ

Baker Street Reveries: Sherlockian Writings 2006-2016 by Leslie S Klinger. *Gasogene Books*, 2018. x+228pp. \$23.95 (pbk)

This follow-up to *Baker Street Rambles* (2008) is, as you'd expect from a leading Holmes scholar, full of good things. How can one resist a book that starts with "A Checklist of Sherlockian Pornography" and concludes with an account of how Les Klinger created *two* essential annotated editions of the canon? In between, he considers Conan Doyle's extant manuscripts, the British public's taste for "horrible murder", the relation between the detective story and the tale of terror, Holmes as a precursor of Philip Marlowe, and much more. I'm less keen on his insistence on "playing the game" almost to the limit, but I'm sure he would endorse Christopher Morley's true opinion of Arthur Conan Doyle: "Merely knighted? He should have been sainted!"

RJ

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Illustrated and Enhanced by N.R. Reekie. *N.R. Reekie*, 2017. 352pp. £24.95 including UK postage (hbk)

This is a very handsome A4-size book published in a limited edition of 500, signed and numbered by the artist. The stories are accompanied by 300 illustrations: period photographs and reproductions of relevant documents, along with Mr Reekie's own impressive pen and ink pointillist artwork, reminiscent in technique of the great Virgil Finlay. It is an imaginative presentation that would make a nice addition to the collection of *The Sherlockian Who Has Everything*. You can buy it on eBay, where you can also see some of Nick Reekie's illustrations.

JU

Sherlock Holmes: The Master of Blackstone Grange by Jonathan Barnes. *Big Finish*. 2018. 4 CDs. £25.00 or download £20.00

Welcome back to Nicholas Briggs and Richard Earl as Holmes and Watson! Like Effie Munro and Elsie Cubitt, Horace Grigg's wife is reticent about her past. When she disappears, Grigg calls at Baker Street, but Holmes is too occupied with the unexpected release of Colonel Sebastian Moran from prison, and Watson undertakes the case. Moran has gone to meet a charismatic businessman, "Honest" Jim Sheedy, recently returned from America, but Mycroft Holmes forbids Sherlock to investigate further. Watson's search takes him to the remote and sinister Blackstone Grange, whose new owner is Jim Sheedy — and the two cases converge, in an entirely unexpected way. The fourth disc contains a bonus story, *The Adventure of the Fleet Street Transparency*. Holmes is initially reluctant to help an acerbic journalist whose column is apparently being tampered with, but a mysterious encounter in a Turkish bath changes his mind.

This is intelligent, suspenseful entertainment, with first-rate contributions from all concerned.

RJ

The MX Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories — Part IX: 2018 Annual (1879-1895) and Part X: 2018 Annual (1896-1916) edited by David Marcum. *MX Publishing*. 2018. 400pp (Part IX), 436pp (Part X). Each £28.99 (hbk), £17.99 (pbk)

These two latest volumes maintain the high standard set three years ago by editor and publisher. Parts IX and X between them contain thirty-seven new stories, all as faithful as possible to the canonical tradition and style. The authors include Sonia Fetherston, S.F. Bennett, Mark Mower, Kelvin Jones, Jayantika Ganguly, Daniel D Victor, Hugh Ashton, Tim Symonds and David Marcum himself. There's also a play by the late Jim French, and another by Leslie Charteris and Denis Green — a nice addendum to *Sherlock Holmes: The Lost Radio Scripts*. Nicholas Meyer, whose novel *The Seven-per-Cent Solution* effectively began the age of quality Holmes pastiche, contributes a foreword. Neither editor nor authors will benefit financially, as all royalties go towards the conservation of Undershaw, Conan Doyle's former Surrey home, which now houses Stepping Stones School. The books are treasurable and the cause is admirable.

RJ

House of the Doomed: An Adventure of Sherlock Holmes by Dan Andriacco. *Gasogene Books*, 2018. 126pp. \$19.95 (pbk)

Dan Andriacco is well established as a formidable detective story writer and a formidable Holmesian. Now he has turned his hand to a full-length exploit of the sage of Baker Street — and it's a cracker. Shortly after the Queen's death brings an end to the Victorian era, Holmes is asked to investigate an apparent vendetta against a young woman in Surrey. He and Dr Watson have often visited the county, but the scene of the attacks is an area even more familiar to one Arthur Conan Doyle, who in 1897 had moved his family

from London to a small town near Haslemere, in an area already popular among writers and artists. Rumours of ghosts and occult rituals add an extra frisson to the atmosphere of mystery and suspense as the screw remorselessly tightens. And as a nice bonus we meet an old friend, the one police detective who is undeniably on the same level as Holmes himself. Capital!

RJ

Sherlock Holmes: The Australian Casebook edited by Christopher Sequeira. *Echo, Bonnier Publishing Australia*, 2017. 370pp. AUS\$26.24/£37.03* (hbk)

More of the "cases that Watson wrote down but that were never published until now", this time based on theories that the pair spent the year of 1890 in Australia. There are sixteen stories, each set in one state or territory of Australia plus one in New Zealand. I liked those best that exploit the concept of Holmes and Watson being a bit out of their depth in Australia, or focus on specifically Australian issues. Raymond Gates' "The Sung Man" addresses morbid and harmful superstitions harboured by Europeans about the Aboriginal tribes. T.S.P. Sweeney's "The Case of the Vanishing Fraternity" delivers an indictment of colonialism. Lucy Sussex's "The Story of the Remarkable Woman" has Holmes and Watson meet a lady campaigning for female suffrage — which New Zealand achieved in the 1890s, decades before England. The stand-out story for me was Kerry Greenwood (creator of the fabulous Phryne Fisher books) and Lindy Cameron's "A Wild Colonial", which presents Holmes and Watson as we know and love them, but also conveys a sense of them having to navigate unfamiliar people and surroundings.

In most stories the Australian setting was either unimportant or unexplored. Mention of the challenges it presents to two English gentlemen would have been welcome and more context for each story would have been nice.

On the whole, I had expected the stories to focus more on adventure, action and peril. Exciting things tend to happen, in Conan Doyle or pastiches, once Holmes and Watson leave London, and I wanted more excitement. I'm never not going to recommend an anthology of canon short stories written from Watson's point of view, but this book is not for everyone. If you like the puzzle and mystery aspect, you will find lots here to delight you. If you're all about the action, you may want to pass it by in favour of rewatching *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*.

LB

* Amazon price, dispatched from USA.

The Papers of Solar Pons: New Adventures of the Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street by David Marcum. *Belanger Books*, 2017. 462pp. £22.95 (pbk)

Solar Pons was created by August Derleth in 1929 as a loving tribute to the Master; six volumes were published before Derleth's death in 1971, and another four posthumously. In 1976 his estate authorised Basil Copper to continue the series, but it was not until four years after Copper's death that his definitive texts were published by PS Publishing. It was a rare case of an imitation imitated,

and possibly unique at the time. Unique no longer, because meanwhile, the astonishingly industrious David Marcum had started writing more tales of Solar Pons and his friend Dr Parker, which gained the approval of Derleth's heirs. *The Papers of Solar Pons* is the immediate result: twelve stories, set like the originals in the inter-war years, plus "a bonus Sherlock Holmes adventure, the author's Solar Pons origin story" (David and I disagree on the authenticity of Baring-Gould's "biography" of Holmes, but let that pass). As a long-time admirer of the Praed Street sleuth, I know no one better to chronicle his further exploits.

RJ

Sherlock Holmes: A String to his Bow by Nigel Scott. *Melrose Books*, 2017. 294pp. £6.99 (pbk)

The cover promises "eleven exciting new adventures", and the content does not disappoint. From the familiar environs of London to Wales, Norway and America, Scott weaves his mysteries with a flair for detail and description, and a feeling for the characters, both principals and supporting cast, to produce convincing solutions to seemingly impossible crimes. The collection ends with a novella that employs the idea of basing the investigation around train journeys, in a story that sees Holmes and Watson travelling the length and breadth of the country for a mystery that begins with a hint of menace being brought to the very door of 221B. My personal favourite of the collection involves Holmes solving two seemingly paranormal railway mysteries from the comfort of his chair; the consummate ease with which he dismisses the other-worldly suggestions is a pleasure to read. Overall, a thoroughly enjoyable read, from start to finish.

SO-B

Murder in Minnesota! Two Sherlockian Tales by Jeff Falkingham. *AuthorCentrix*, 2018. 274pp. £12.24 (pbk)

Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper is set in 1886: Holmes has come to America, where Dr Watson is studying the latest surgical techniques — and getting married. That's from Baring-Gould, not Conan Doyle, but it gets Holmes to Brown's Valley, to investigate the true source of the Mississippi. He refuses a commission to help settle the town's dispute with neighbouring Wheaton as to which should be the capital of Traverse County — until his native guide is brutally murdered. Many of the people we meet did exist, and the others, including the narrator, twelve-year-old Petey Smith, are as real as Holmes himself — who returns ten years later in *Sherlock Holmes: In Search of the Source*. Where he goes there will be crime, of course. Murder is universal, but this particular murder arises directly from the story of the city

of St Paul. Peter Smith, as likable at twenty-two as he was at twelve, is an amiable, intelligent and enthusiastic storyteller, with an easy and natural authority.

RJ

In brief

Thomas Bruce Wheeler has published an updated edition of *The Mapped London of Sherlock Holmes* (£9.80 pbk, £4.04 Kindle). We're directed to some 400 sites, each of whose significance is clearly and pithily stated. You can visit the locations of a specific adventure, follow Watson's movements, or take any of six walking tours in the footsteps of Holmes and Watson. But the book is ideally used in its Kindle 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. Check the website at www.sherlockslondon.com.

Watson: My Life by **David Ruffle** (MX Publishing; £8.99) isn't the first book of its kind, but the good Doctor has attracted little attention compared with Sherlock Holmes. Here we have a transcript of recordings made by Watson on wax cylinders in 1936, as preparation for an autobiography that never materialised — a clever ploy by Mr Ruffle. The narrative is engaging, as is the narrator, and the events generally fit well with what we know from the canon. Yes, I like it!

Daniel D Victor follows his admirable "Sherlock Holmes and the American Literati" quartet with *Sherlock Holmes and the Shadows of St Petersburg*. A double homicide in London's East End is appallingly reminiscent of the violent murders described by Fyodor Dostoyevsky in his novel *Crime and Punishment* — but Holmes and Watson differ as to the possible significance of the fact. Humour, horror and humanity play their part in a tale of intrigue and ingenuity.

The Floor Plans of Baker Street, Residence of Sherlock Holmes by **Edward S Smith, Jr** (CreateSpace, £10.02) is a revised version of an interesting slim book first privately published in 1996. Mr Smith has thought hard about the layout of 221B — not just Holmes's flat but the whole house. (Too hard when it comes to the legendary bow window, as there were none in late Victorian Baker Street.)

The Serpentine Muse, journal of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes, may not be one of the essential Holmesian periodicals, but it is always a worthwhile read. Every issue of the first forty years, 1975-2015, is now available on a CD, fully indexed and searchable. The price is \$15.00 including postage (in USA only?). Details are on the website: ash-nyc.com/the-digital-muse.

RJ