

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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I give such addresses and prices as I have; if I don't provide details of importers or agents, it's because I don't have those details.

I didn't really expect to enjoy *Sherlock Holmes & The Heir of Albion* by Ronan Coghlan (Xiphos Books, 1 Hillside Gardens, Bangor BT19 6SJ; £7.99 or \$11.25). The cover picture is of (I think) a velociraptor, and the blurb promises Holmes's 'most incredible adventure ever, battling otherworldly entities of which his imagination had never dreamed' – not to mention his 'most astounding secret, of which Watson never had an inkling' ... In fact it's a very entertaining romp, involving a frustrated Professor Moriarty, granted a pardon on condition that he cares for a rather special baby, a mind-boggling revelation about the Giant Rat of Sumatra, skulduggery in the royal family, and, well, a good deal else. It's funny, exciting and fast-paced – and Mr Coghlan has wisely chosen to have as narrator a young journalist named Hector Wace, so dispensing with the need to imitate the Watson style. The book can be ordered direct from the publisher. Cheques should be payable to Ronan Coghlan.

A by-product of *Conan Doyle & Joseph Bell: The Real Sherlock Holmes*, the recent exhibition at Surgeons Hall Museum in Edinburgh, is a book with the same title, written by Alan Mackaill and Dawn Kemp and published by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DW; www.rcsed.ac.uk; www.edinburgh.surgeonshall.museum) at £8.00. It's not a large book – 98 pages, approximately 8" x 6" – and it doesn't aim to replace Ely Liebow's *Dr Joe Bell: Model for Sherlock Holmes* (see DM 272). Instead it provides an invaluable companion to Dr Liebow's biography, with a clear, succinct text, beautifully reproduced pictures and documents from the College archives and elsewhere, and a select catalogue of objects from the exhibition. I can't agree that the portrait Walter Paget placed in Holmes's bedroom in 'The Dying Detective' is of Arthur Conan Doyle: the face is fat, smug and cruel – one of the 'pictures of celebrated criminals with which every wall was adorned'. But that's a quibble. Anyone with a serious interest in Holmes, Bell or Doyle will want a copy of this excellent book.

The Discreet Interventions of Verdon James by Julian Roach (Harbour Books Ltd, 20 Castlegate, York YO1 9RP; £9.99) comes with a recommendation from Francis Wheen, which is encouraging and thoroughly deserved. These five novellas, which span the mid-twentieth century, are in the grand tradition of the great spy thriller. Verdon James manages, with ingenuity and diplomacy, to uncover the truth in certain very complex situations, and to cover it up, when necessary. There's nothing directly Holmesian here, so I'll just add that the settings – the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, the Cold War – are evoked with easy authority, and that Julian Roach's writing is a pleasure to read. Verdon James has the potential to join Richard Hannay and James Bond in the pantheon of British espionage fiction.

In the last DM (and in the Summer issue of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*) I mistakenly gave the publication date of *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters*, edited by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Charles Foley, as 1 October. In fact it will be published by

HarperPress (Westerhill Road, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 0QT) on 17 September, at £25.00. And from 24 to 28 September it will be the BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week, with five 15-minute readings broadcast at 9.45 am each day. The details are on the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/arts/book_week.shtml.

www.filmsofthegoldenage.com/articles/2006/12/18/current_issue/hoey.txt will take you to an interview with writer-director-producer Michael A Hoey, about his father Dennis Hoey, who will forever be remembered as Inspector Lestrade to Basil Rathbone's Holmes in the Universal films of the 1940s. Michael Hoey's memoirs *Elvis, Sherlock and Me: How I Survived Growing Up in Hollywood* will be published in September. (Thanks to Laura Kuhn.)

A paperback edition of *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* by E J Wagner (see DM 263) was published this month by John Wiley & Sons (The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester PO19 8SQ) at £10.99. The book is shortlisted for an Anthony award at this year's Bouchercon, as is Dan Stashower's *The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers, Edgar Allan Poe and the Invention of Murder*.

Due on 1 September from Wordsworth Editions (8B East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ) at the remarkable price of £3.99 is a paperback edition of Arthur Conan Doyle's autobiography *Memories and Adventures*, with an introduction by David Stuart Davies. A revised edition of Mark Campbell's *The Pocket Essential Sherlock Holmes* (see DM 212) is due on 20 September, at £9.99 (Pocket Essentials, 18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ). And on 26 October Titan Books (Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP) will publish a revised edition of *Starring Sherlock Holmes* by David Stuart Davies (see DM 213), priced at £24.99. And on 13 December comes *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Nick Rennison (No Exit Press, 18 Coleswood Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 1EQ; £7.99). There have been at least three major anthologies of the adventures of Holmes's contemporaries, drawn from *The Strand Magazine* and elsewhere. This promises to be good, but I could wish that Mr Rennison hadn't chosen a title that's been used by two previous editors...

Dumitru Scortanu informs me that **les éditions Fides** (based in Iasi, Romania) have published *La Malle de l'Ingénieur*, a Sherlock Holmes adventure by a new French author, Luc Zana. If you want to find out more, you can contact editura_fides@yahoo.fr.

Dorothy Stix is selling her extensive library of foreign-language editions of Holmes, and has prepared a 48-page catalogue, which she'll e-mail if you contact her at dorothystix@aol.com. Besides the obvious, there are books in Catalan, Croatian, Galician, Hebrew, Korean, Pig Latin, Serbian, Swahili, Ukrainian... Amazing!

Wessex Press, incorporating **Gasogene Books**, now has its own website at www.wessexpress.com, where you can consult the catalogue and buy direct from the publisher. Gasogene publishes *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* edition of the Canon, edited by Leslie Klinger. Enough said!

There's always something informative, amusing, or both in *The Sherlockian E-Times* (**Classic Specialties**, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA; www.sherlock-holmes.com/e-times14.htm). **Nigel Williams Rare Books** also has a new catalogue out (25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4HE; nwrarebook@tcp.co.uk).

With *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes 1* (Naxos AudioBooks, 2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ; £16.99) David Timson has almost completed his unabridged reading of the entire

Sherlock Holmes Canon – and what a triumph it is! As fine an achievement in its way as the complete BBC Radio 4 dramatisation. Once again Mr Timson proves that he is the equal of any of our great ‘voice men’, capable of creating a living character by the pitch of his voice and the rhythm of his speech. As an example, there are bellicose old autocrats in four of the six stories here (‘Thor Bridge’, ‘The Mazarin Stone’, ‘The Creeping Man’, and ‘The Blanched Soldier’) but each comes across as a unique individual. The stories themselves vary considerably in quality; Mr Timson has treated the worst as seriously as the best – and so unintentionally made me aware while listening of just how poor the writing is in ‘The Mazarin Stone! As usual, David Timson himself has provided perceptive and informative notes to the stories, and Sarah Butcher has chosen thoroughly appropriate music, this time by Saint-Saens, Grieg and Borodin. The complete catalogue is online, by the way, at www.naxosaudiobooks.com.

Another remarkable recording of the complete Holmes Canon should now be available as *One Voice Chronological: The Consummate Holmes Collections* at www.audible.com. The One Voice is that of the strikingly versatile David Ian Davies – who has so impressed the distinguished cartoonist Tom Richmond that Mr Richmond has provided the artwork for the recordings!

Matthew Elliott points out that two of the three Sherlock Holmes plays recorded by the One-Act Players (see DM 225) can be downloaded at www.podcastirectory.com/podcasts/224, and the scripts of all three are online at www.oneact.org. (I can’t check right now, but the plays were all online at www.mp3.com/oneact.)

Illyria’s production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* continues to tour open-air venues. Dates for August are: 1 **Lanhydrock**, Bodmin (01208 265950); 2 **Ecos Amphitheatre, Merlin Theatre**, Frome (01373 465949); 3-4 **Northwood House**, Cowes (01983 289842); 5 **Bodiam Castle**, Robertsbridge (0870 2404068); 10 **Tatton Park**, Knutsford (01625 534400); 11 **Gibside**, Newcastle upon Tyne (01670 773939); 12 **Fyvie Castle**, Aberdeenshire (01651 891266); 15 **Narberth Castle** (01834 869323); 16 **Welsh Wildlife Centre**, Cilgerran (01239 621200); 17-18 **Conwy Castle** (02920 880011); 19 **Lytham Hall**, Lytham St Annes (01253 658666); 23-24 **Newstead Abbey**, Nottingham (0115 989 5555); 25 **Sutton Hoo**, Woodbridge (01394 389737); 26 **Folkestone Amphitheatre** (free event); 29 **Althorp**, Northampton (01604 770107); 30 **Corfe Castle**, Wareham (0870 300 0579); 31 **Packwood House**, Solihull (01564 783294). See also www.illyria.uk.com.

I understand that Peepolykus have no plans to travel further with their production of *The Hound*, but that the Clive Francis play will begin touring again in autumn 2008.

The National Library of Scotland (George IV Bridge, Edinburgh) has opened a new permanent exhibition drawing on the treasures in the **John Murray Archive**. Now owned by Hodder Headline, the company was founded in Edinburgh and over more than two centuries was run by seven successive John Murrays, who numbered Byron, Scott, Austen, Darwin, Livingstone, Melville and Conan Doyle among their authors. £5 million is still needed to complete the purchase of the archive.

Caen in Normandy is twinned with the English city of Portsmouth, where the **Lancelyn Green Bequest** forms the core of the Conan Doyle Collection. Arrangements are being discussed for the introductory exhibition created in Portsmouth in 2006 to be displayed in Caen from October 2007 to May 2008, as one of a series of events to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the twinning. (Thanks to **Le Société Sherlock Holmes de France** – see the website at www.sshf.com.)

Scott Monty notes that the exhibition *Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas* continues until 20 August at the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota’s Elmer L Andersen Library in Minneapolis. Go to Scott’s Baker Street Blog at www.bakerstreetblog.com, and click on “My Collection of M’s is a Fine One”. In the article is a link to the complete exhibition catalogue, downloadable as a PDF file. Note the Blog’s correct address, by the way.

Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas was also a major conference. Wessex Press are sponsoring another conference, *From Gillette to Brett II*, at the Hilton Indianapolis North Hotel (8181 N Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana) from 16 to 18 November. Special guests Jeremy Paul (dramatist: author of *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*) and Patricia Garwood (actress: Kate Whitney in Granada’s *The Man with the Twisted Lip*) will be augmented by Michael A Hoey (son of Dennis) and Jenny O’Hara (female lead in *The Return of the World’s Greatest Detective*). You can get full details and a registration form at www.wessexpress.com — or contact Steve Doyle at sdoyle221@sbcglobal.net.

Enjoy the Café Royal while you can. Apparently the Crown Estate wants to ‘revitalise’ the ‘scruffy wedge of buildings to the north-west of Piccadilly Circus’ according to the Evening Standard for 21 June, and plans to turn the Café Royal block, ‘which includes some of London’s finest Victorian interiors’, into a five-star hotel.

Gordon Gostelow, who died on 3 June aged eighty-two, was an actor of integrity and empathy. I remember him on BBC TV in the 1960s – as Perks in *The Railway Children*, as Bardolph in *An Age of Kings*, and as Mr Sidney Johnson in *The Bruce-Partington Plans*, with Douglas Wilmer and Nigel Stock.

Andrew Gulli of *The Strand Magazine* reports the death on 10 June of **Barrie Roberts**, one of the select few whose Sherlock Holmes stories have the consistent ring of authenticity. He used to be a folk singer, and I have a vague memory of meeting him in the 1960s when I was helping to run a folk club in Birmingham. Small world!

Fred Saberhagen died on 29 June. Probably best known for his *Berserker* science-fantasy novels, his other writings include an uneven series that began with *The Dracula Tape*, in which the vampire Count tells the story from his point of view. Then came *The Holmes-Dracula File*, which claimed a blood relationship [*sic*!] between the vampire and the detective, and others, less good, followed.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Summer 2007 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). *The Camden House Journal*, May 2007, June 2007 and July 2007 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, no. 273 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, March 2007 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, July 2007 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, July 2007 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *The Petrel Flyer*, Summer 2007 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Prescott’s Press*, June 2007 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *The Serpentine Muse*, Summer 2007 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). *Sherlockiana*, nr. 1, 2007 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Bjarne Rother Jensen, Højbovangen 24, 9200 Aalborg SV, Denmark).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, June 2007 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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