

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Jon Lellenberg, whose many responsibilities include that of historian to the Baker Street Irregulars, has created a website for his work on the BSI Archival History. You'll find it at www.bsiarchivalhistory.org. There's an associated blog at <http://bsihistoryblog.blogspot.com>. Both are fascinating!

In *Arthur, Louise and the True Hound of the Baskervilles* (Logaston Press, Little Logaston, Wootton, Almeley, Herefordshire HR3 6QH; £10.00) **Margaret Newman Turner** provides a useful summary of the legend of the phantom hound of the Vaughans of Hergest Court in the Welsh Marches, and of Arthur Conan Doyle's connection with the Baskervilles of nearby Clyro Court, together with some material from her own family about the hound. The first Lady Conan Doyle, Louise, owned land in the area, though she may never have visited it, but Sir Arthur is believed to have visited Clyro – now renamed Baskerville Hall Hotel – and it seems likely that the ghost-dog of the Vaughan family was an influence on his most famous novel. I'm not convinced that it was the only source, however. The discussions with Fletcher Robinson that gave rise to the novel took place on a golfing holiday at Cromer, where the tale of Black Shuck has persisted since Viking times, the evidence for the Dartmoor legend of Sir Richard Cabell is pretty strong – and it's well-known that the Robinsons' coachman, who drove the two around the moor in search of local colour, was named Baskerville. It seems increasingly likely that there was no one inspiration for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. (Incidentally, Mrs Turner twice misquotes the inscription in the copy given to the coachman, and attributes it to the wrong person. It actually reads: 'To Harry Baskerville from B. Fletcher Robinson. With apologies for using the name.' There are other errors also that should have been corrected before publication.)

The Cimbrian Friends of Baker Street must be among the smallest and most exclusive Holmesian societies. All members must have a firm connection with the city of Aalborg in northern Denmark, and unless I've miscounted there are currently just four, of whom Aage Rieck Sørensen has been active since the beginning in 1960. Another founder was the great illustrator, cartoonist and writer Henry Lauritzen, who established not one but two annual horse races, the Silver Blaze Sweepstake and the Professor Moriarty Memorial. Now, as if to prove that the society has never been idle, **Jens Byskov Jensen** has published *Fifty Years in Baker Street: A Chronological History of the Oldest and Most Singular Sherlockian Scion Society in Denmark* (The Baker Street Irregulars & The Cimbrian Friends of Baker Street; \$11.95 plus postage from www.bakerstreetjournal.com). It's different in many ways from the story of our own Society – different from the BSI, for that matter – but the name includes the words that sum up the essence of our world-wide sodality: Baker Street, of course, and, vitally, *Friends*.

In DM 288 I welcomed the first volume of *The File on Colonel Moran* by **Vernon Meador**. The second volume, subtitled *Sherlock Holmes Takes a Hand*, has now been published by Weirdbook at £3.62 plus postage (the only source appears to be <http://stores.lulu.com/weirdbook>). These three exploits continue the series that, we're assured, 'first appeared in *The Daily News* in the sprint of 1894': that is, after Moran's arrest for the murder of the Hon Ronald Adair. We learned in the previous book that in January 1881 he rented the basement flat at 221 Baker Street, so it was inevitable that he and Sherlock Holmes would soon meet – and Moran would be ideally placed to spy on Holmes and to feed him such misleading information as Professor Moriarty thought suitable. In these very clever and suspenseful stories we discover how he came to be appointed Moriarty's chief of staff and how Holmes was able to foil two of the professor's most ingenious plans. I hope we shan't have so long to wait for volume three of *The File on Colonel Moran*!

Like Mr Meador, **R Wolfgang Schramm** is a member of our Society, and his book *The Apocryphal Cases of Sherlock Holmes* also comprises three novellas (Xlibris Corporation, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403, USA; \$10.00). In each, Holmes investigates a real mystery – the Turin Shroud, the Loch Ness Monster, and the Tunguska Event – and the suggested explanations are informed by Professor Schramm's specialist scientific knowledge. The science, to a layman like me, is fascinating, and the imitation of Dr Watson's style is brave, though I winced rather at the supposed 'Scots' dialect, and I can't help thinking that the doctor and the detective shouldn't be calling each other 'Sherlock' and 'James' [**sic**]. And why would Mycroft Holmes address his brother as 'Holmes'? But this is my specialist field, and perhaps I'm being too picky. The stories are clever and engaging. *The Apocryphal Cases of Sherlock Holmes* is available at \$10.00 plus postage from the author at Schramm Studio, PO Box 209, West Liberty, WV 26074, USA.

The Baker Street Phantom by **Fabrice Bourland** (Gallic Books, Worlds End Studios, 134 Lots Road, London SW10 0RJ; 5 August; £7.99) is the most satisfyingly fantastic novel to have come my way in some time – since Gilbert Adair's *And Then There Was No One*, at any rate – but then the French have a genius for this sort of thing. When they set up their detective agency in 1932, Andrew Singleton and James Trelawney could hardly have expected that their first client would be the widow of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, nor that she would commission them to investigate an apparent haunting at the house that had only recently been allocated the number 221 Baker Street. Lady Conan Doyle is desperately concerned to know if there is a link between the disturbances in Baker Street and the brutal murders that have cast a pall of fear over London. M. Bourland is not the first to use the ghost of Sherlock Holmes as the premise of a story, but he has a bolder imagination than most. Holmes isn't the only phantom that our novice detectives must face... *The Baker Street Phantom* is the first Singleton and Trelawney mystery. I look forward to the second!

The Sign of the Four is the third Sherlock Holmes graphic novel to be adapted by **Ian Edginton**, illustrated by **INJ Culbard** and published by SelfMadeHero (5 Upper Wimpole Street, London W1G 6BP; £14.99). Somehow I missed the second, *A Study in Scarlet*, but I shall make a point of seeking it out. Messrs Edginton and Culbard present the stories in an intelligent, almost cinematic way, so it's appropriate that this one should be enthusiastically introduced by Alan Barnes, author of the excellent *Sherlock Holmes on Screen*. It's all rather splendid, and I'm particularly pleased to see that Mr Culbard has based his paintings of Pondicherry Lodge on Kilravock, identified as Major Sholto's house by Bernard Davies in his 1990 paper 'Dr Watson's Deuteronomy'.

Andrew Lycett, author of an outstanding biography of Arthur Conan Doyle, has contributed the introduction to a new edition of *The Lost World* from the Folio Society (44 Eagle Street, London WC1R 4FS; £24.95). As you'd expect from this publisher, the book as an object is beautiful, and it includes all the illustrations, three in colour and the rest in black and white, from the 1912 'large paper' edition. You can join the Folio Society at www.foliosociety.com/book/LWR/lost-world. Or ask Catherine Cooke to introduce you, as she's a member. Her e-mail address is ccooke@westminster.gov.uk.

New from Gasogene Books (Wessex Press, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA) are *Murder in the Vatican: The Church Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes* by **Ann Margaret Lewis** (\$18.99), and *Sherlockian Heresies* by **Léo Sauvage**, edited and introduced by Julie McKuras & Susan Vizoskie (\$19.95). I hope to review these books shortly.

John Patrick Bray's play *Hound* is now published by Next Stage Press (www.shop.nextstagepress.net/product.sc?productId=68&categoryId=1); \$8.00).

Not exactly Holmesian but well worth reading is *Mr Dickens & Master Betty*, the new novel by **Alan Stockwell** (Vesper Hawk Publishing, Vesper Cottage, Vesper Hawk Lane, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8PU; £7.95, \$12.95 or €8.95), enthusiastically commended by both Donald Sinden and Simon Callow. You can find out more at <http://vesperhawk.com/MrDickensandMasterBetty.aspx>. Look out also for *Dracula's Guest: A Connoisseur's Collection of Victorian Vampire Stories* edited and introduced by **Michael Sims** (Walker & Co, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA; \$17.00). A British edition is due from Bloomsbury in October.

On 31 August Robert Hale (Clerkenwell House, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT) will publish *Sherlock Holmes and the Giant Rat of Sumatra* by **Paul D Gilbert**. You can order it direct from www.halebooks.com/index.asp?TAG=&CID= for £13.29, a saving of £5.70. Due in October from Hale is *Sherlock Holmes' Tibetan Adventure* by **John F Rice**.

Daniel Corey informs us of an interesting project: a graphic novel entitled *Moriarty: The Dark Chamber*, written by Mr Corey, with art by Anthony Diecidue, letters by Dave Lanphear and inspired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (DangerKatt Creative Studio). He's looking for financial backing for the book – you can find information at www.kickstarter.com/projects/dangerkatt/moriarty-the-dark-chamber-a-graphic-adventure, along with an animatic trailer.

The signed copy of *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for 1887, offered at Sotheby's in London on 15 July, failed to reach its reserve price of £250,000. Bidding stopped at £240,000. More accessible to most of us is first edition of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, unsigned but in very good condition, at the Penzance Auction House (Alverton, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 4RE) on 17 August. The estimate is £1,000-£2,000.

Mark Ubsdell points out that the DVD documentary *The Man Who Murdered Sherlock Holmes*, reviewed in DM 304, is available direct from the production company, Electric Theatre, for just £10.00 including postage. E-mail mark@electric-theatre.co.uk.

An actor new to me, **Jason Daniel Roberts**, has recorded *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for Coronation Audio, in what's described as a 'fully dramatized' audio book. In fact, Mr Roberts makes a very good job of reading an abridged version of the novel, with appropriately atmospheric music and sound effects. This two-CD set won't replace my copies of the recordings by David Timson or Tony Britton, but it provides a most entertaining couple of hours. I do wonder, though, why Mr Roberts pronounces 'alley' as 'allay'. You can buy *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on CD or as a download at www.coronationaudio.com.

Jim Ballinger reports that you can download free the recording that **Arthur Conan Doyle** made in 1930, talking briefly about Sherlock Holmes and then about spiritualism. Go to the CHARM website at www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/sound/sound_search.html, to the Sound File Search, change the term from Composer to Artist, and look for Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur.

At www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times10-7.htm you'll find the July issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times*, the catalogue-magazine of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com).

It's good to see that the Italian periodical *Sherlock Magazine* continues to flourish. See this link: www.sherlockmagazine.it/notizie/4035/ – kindly forwarded by the editor **Luigi Pachi**.

I gave the wrong link last time for **Giorgio Trevisan's** painting of Holmes and Watson. It's actually on offer, for €5,00 plus postage, at ruedutemple@libero.it. There's information about the artist's work at www.slumberland.it/contenuto.php?tipo=albo&id=297&nome=Sherlock_Holmes.

The BBC 1 series *Sherlock*, created by **Steven Moffat** and **Mark Gatiss**, and starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman as Holmes and Watson, far surpassed its inspiration, the Universal films of the 1940s that placed Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce in the mid twentieth century. All three *Sherlock* films, but especially the first and the last, repay watching again and again. Apparently a second series is

planned. Meanwhile the first will shortly be released on DVD, with commentaries and, I understand, with the unshown 60-minute pilot.

In the spring Peter Egan and Philip Franks toured in *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*, the play that **Jeremy Paul** wrote more than twenty years ago for Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke. Robin Herford's production is now at the Duchess Theatre in London, with Peter Egan as Holmes and Robert Daws taking over as Watson. The eight-week run ends on 11 September. You can book tickets on 0844 412 4659 or on-line at www.theseecretofsherlockholmes.com.

Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate until tomorrow, as part of Camden Fringe, is *Sherlock (Abridged)*, written and performed by **Matthew Woodcock** and **Peter Davis**. 'When Holmes and Watson feed the complete works of Arthur Conan Doyle's classic detective novels into a computer, the intrepid duo must solve all of the mysteries at once in what may turn out to be the definitive detective story, *The Case of the Porcelain Tongue...*' Box office: www.camdenfringe.org or phone 0844 477 1000.

'Sherlock Holmes', one of the many dozens of sculptures that added so much colour and humour to London during the **2010 Elephant Parade**, was bought for £9,750. The total raised to help save the Asian elephant from extinction in the wild was more than £4,000,000. [**I wonder who bought Sherlock Holmes...**]

Three years ago a giant rat was discovered in Papua. On 27 July this year the Daily Telegraph reported that the remains of an even bigger one that died about 2,000 years ago had been found in a cave in East Timor. We're gradually moving closer to Sumatra.

According to BBC News on 16 July, a 'confidential report suggests that the 200-year-old Dartmoor prison could be closed'. 'The Prison Reform Trust said earlier in July that Dartmoor Prison should eventually be closed because it was too isolated and too old.'

On 9 October at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford, **Kevin J Last** will present *detective Story: An Illustrated History of the Great Fictional Sleuths*. Other contributors are Michael O'Byrne on criminal profiling and, er, me, talking about Sherlock Holmes. Tickets are available from 01483 440000, or on-line at www.yvonne-arnaud.co.uk.

Periodicals received. *The Arthur Conan Doyle Newsletter and Birthday File XVII*, 22 May 2010 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). *The Baker Street Journal*, Summer 2010 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA). *The Camden House Journal*, May 2010 and July 2010 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, no. 300 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA).

For the Sake of the Trust: The Baker Street Irregulars Trust Newsletter, Spring 2010 (**The BSI Trust**, Marshall S Berdan, 2015 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, June 2010 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, June 2010 and July 2010 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, August 2010 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA).

Ironmongers Daily Echo and Franco-Midland Branches Advertiser, March 1910, April 1910, May 1910 and June 1910 [**yes, 1910**] (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, 15 rue Grande, 03370 Saint-Sauvier, France). *The Magic Door*, Spring 2010 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, June 2010 and July 2010 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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