

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Thanks to the publishers, SelfMadeHero (5 Upper Wimpole Street, London W1G 6BP), I can tell you that *A Study in Scarlet*, the second Sherlock Holmes graphic novel written by **Ian Edginton** and illustrated by **I N J Culbard**, is as good as the first and the third. The adaptation is exceptionally well done: the Mormon episode is given no more space than it needs, nor any less. The drawings – or more accurately, paintings – are curiously impressive. The faces are done in a broad and rather cartoonish style, which doesn't seem incongruous on the anatomically realistic bodies. The settings, from Bart's Hospital to the Great Alkali Plain, are beautifully depicted. These books would make an excellent introduction for the reluctant reader, but it will appeal to anyone who appreciates what's so rarely found in adult fiction these days – first-class illustration. *A Study in Scarlet* is priced at £14.99.

Two of our members have new books out from MX Publishing (335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX). *The Official Papers into the Matter Known as 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'* (£14.99/ \$22.95/ €17.99) purports to be the original case files from both Scotland Yard and Devon County Constabulary, all presented in facsimile. In fact this collection of witness statements, medical reports, and police reports is the work of **Kieron Freeburn**, a former member of the Metropolitan Police CID, now living in Devon. There are some careless errors: the post-mortem report on Sir Charles Baskerville has Sir Henry's name on the first page; Mrs Lyons is called 'Miss Lyons' throughout; Selden's name changes from Arthur to Albert; Barrymore once refers to his wife as his sister. Some apparent mistakes may be deliberate departures from the novel, though it seems unlikely: 'Lucy Lyons', 'the Yew Avenue' and 'Merripits House' for Laura Lyons, the Yew Alley and Merripit House. Those quibbles aside, the project is very nicely done, providing a fresh and completely valid view of the investigation. In particular it's good to know how the two police forces regarded the summoning of a Scotland Yard man without reference to the Devon Constabulary!

The Sign of Fear by **Molly Carr** (£12.99/ \$19.95/ €16.99) is just as clever. Its subtitle doesn't really indicate the tone of this very entertaining novel: *The adventures of Mrs Watson, with a supporting cast including Sherlock Holmes, Dr Watson and Moriarty*. Other dubious characters include A J Raffles, Bunny Manders, John Clay, Mrs Marple (mother of Jane), and M. Poirot (father of Hercule). Rather like M J Trow's stories of Inspector Lestrade, the book takes a distinctly revisionist approach to the Canon. The former Mary Morstan is a woman with a past, so perhaps it's natural that she should come within the orbit of the Napoleon of Crime. At least we can understand that she should occupy the time during Dr Watson's long absences by doing detective work herself. More surprising is the identity of her partner, a dangerous young woman to whom male costume is nothing new: 'Emily Fanshaw' is actually Mrs Neville St Clair, and still resents the fact that Sherlock Holmes cut short her husband's profitable scam by exposing him as the beggar with the twisted lip... There are more surprises in Mary Watson's memoirs, not least the revelation that John H Watson, who never qualified as a doctor, was born Ormond Sacker and changed his name by deed poll. *The Sign of Fear* is something of a guilty pleasure, perhaps, but a pleasure it certainly is.

Jon Lellenberg, author of *Baker Street Irregular* (Arkham House, Sauk City, WI 53585, USA; \$39.95) is a long-standing member of our Society. His scrupulous research, intelligent marshalling of facts, and clear presentation of conclusions have been demonstrated time and again. He worked for the Pentagon for some thirty-five years, and

since 1989 has been historian of the Baker Street Irregulars – all of which means that in this, his first novel, he's writing of things he knows intimately. In 1933, towards the end of Prohibition, a young New York lawyer named Woody Hazelbaker is obliged to take on a powerful gangster as a client. Working for Owey Madden, and having to keep the fact secret, opens his eyes to much that's bad in depression-hit America, and to much that's good and useful. Not long afterwards, Woody is introduced to Christopher Morley's fledgling Sherlockian society at Christ Cella's speakeasy, a meeting of kinsprits (Morley's term) that leads to lasting friendship with Basil Davenport, Earle Walbridge, Fletcher Pratt, Elmer Davis, Edgar Smith and other giants of the early BSI. Since Anthony Boucher's *The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars* in 1940, several fine, generally light-hearted detective stories have featured the BSI. There are mysteries in *Baker Street Irregular*, but it's something more than a detective story. Jon Lellenberg shows us, through Woody Hazelbaker's eyes, America's reaction to the rise of Nazi Germany and the outbreak of war. A group of Irregulars helps promote Anglo-American co-operation, in defiance of a strong isolationist movement, and when America enters the war, Woody joins military intelligence in Washington. While he is politically active in one direction, his wife is active in another; he doesn't learn the depth and purpose of her commitment until the end of the war, when the extent of Russian espionage in America is revealed, but his work and his search for the truth have taken him from Washington to London and on to the front line in Germany.

Fact and fiction sit so easily together that it's often hard to tell which is which. Real people, including those early Irregulars, come vividly and credibly to life. And through the sometimes extraordinary experiences of one man, Mr Lellenberg helps us to understand why things in America were as they were. *Baker Street Irregular* is an ambitious novel and a very considerable achievement.

I hope soon to be able to review *Sherlock Alive* by **Vincent Starrett**, compiled and edited by Karen Murdock (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, PO Box 50, RR #4, Eugenia, Ontario, Canada N0C 1E0; gav@cablerocket.com; Cdn\$35.00). Karen Murdock has extracted the Holmesian content from every one of Starrett's weekly 'Books Alive' columns in the Chicago Sunday Tribune from 1942 to 1967. She says, 'It is as though I discovered a new book about Sherlock Holmes from the pen of Vincent Starrett.' The publisher's website is at www.batteredbox.com/index.html.

Peter Blau notes that the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box has also published *Re Sherlock: A Collection of Observations and Commentaries* by **Hugh T Harrington**, reprinting Harrington's Holmesian writings in magazines and newsletters from 1987 to 1999 (\$12.00).

Young Sherlock Holmes: Red Leech, the second in the series of novels by **Andrew Lane**, will be published on 5 November by Macmillan Children's Books (Pan Macmillan, 20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR; £6.99). As with the first novel *Death Cloud*, there'll also be an audiobook, priced at £10.99. This is the official series, commissioned by the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.

On 1 December Markosia Enterprises will publish a graphic novel, *The Young Sherlock Holmes Adventures* by Drew Castalia & Huw-J Davies, illustrated by J L Straw & Owen Jollands (www.markosia.com; £10.95). Due in here next March, but already out in America, is *Muppet Sherlock Holmes no. 1*, written by **Patrick Storck** and illustrated by **Amy Mebberson**, a comic book in which Gonzo and Fozzie take on the rôles of Holmes and Watson (Boom!

Studios, 6310 San Vicente Blvd, Suite 404, Los Angeles, CA 90048, USA; £6.45).

If you've ever wondered where Conan Doyle's original manuscripts are, or how many copies of the 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual* are known to exist today, then take a look at **Randall Stock's** excellent website *The Best of Sherlock Holmes* at www.bestofsherlock.com, where you'll find that information and much, much more.

John Addy reports that the funny and deeply sad 'elderly Sherlock Holmes' sketch by David Mitchell and Robert Webb, broadcast in *That Mitchell and Webb Look* on BBC2, 18 August, can be seen on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZKWs7VA0IU.

Coronation Audio, whose recording of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was favourably reviewed in the last DM, has an interesting programme of classic literature on its website at www.coronationaudio.com. Next year's releases include *The Five Orange Pips* – an unusual and welcome choice – performed, like *The Hound*, by **Jason Daniel Roberts**.

I probably don't need to mention that the BBC's first, hugely successful series of *Sherlock*, created by **Steven Moffat** and **Mark Gatiss**, has been released as a two-DVD set. Extras are commentaries for first and third instalments, a background documentary, and the 60-minute pilot film, made to sell the idea to broadcast companies, despite what you may have read in the Murdoch press. It's fascinating to compare the pilot with the 90-minute broadcast version of *A Study in Pink*. All three films, especially *A Study in Pink* and *The Great Game*, repay watching again – and again. We're assured that the excellent **Benedict Cumberbatch** and **Martin Freeman** will return next year in three more 90-minute films. (I understand that the first series is being shown now in Canada, and will be broadcast in the USA from 24 October.)

The Beeb has set up three very entertaining fictional blogs: Sherlock Holmes's at www.thescienceofdeduction.co.uk, John Watson's at www.johnwatsonblog.co.uk, and Molly Hooper's at www.mollyhooper.co.uk, plus Connie Prince's website (no longer active since her untimely death) at www.connieprince.co.uk.

There's also a very good unofficial site, *Sherlocking* ('A community for fans of *Sherlock*') at www.sherlocking.org, where you'll find much more information (and, of course, opinion) about the series than on the BBC's site at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00t4pgh. And Oscar Ross points out that *Sherlocking* is running a fan fiction contest, inviting submissions of new short stories – very short at 1000 words maximum! Details are at www.sherlocking.org/?page_id=668.

My friend Ruth Jenkins, who works for Waterstone's in Chelmsford, tells me that sales of the Canon and other Holmesian material have greatly increased thanks to the transmission of *Sherlock*. An article in the 12 August issue of *The Bookseller* confirmed that the jump in sales is a national phenomenon. It'll be interesting to see what happens in North America.

Any gent in need of a good vintage-style hat should take a look at www.lairdlondon.co.uk – or, better, call in at one of **Laird London's** shops, either 23 New Row, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4LA or 128 Columbia Road, Shoreditch, London E2 7RG. The quality appears to be consistently good and the prices reasonable.

Kieron Freeburn, author of *The Official Papers into the Matter Known as 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'*, runs the Rolls Royce Picnic Company, which is just what the name implies. Of particular interest to us is **The Baskerville Picnic Experience**, for details of which see www.baskerville-experience.com/, or write to The Rolls Royce Picnic Company, Middle Merryfield, Holsworthy, Devon Ex22 7BN (phone 01409 257101). You can also buy the book through the website.

Calvert Markham reports that **Crowborough Beacon Golf Club** has a website, and that the history page at www.cbgc.co.uk/history.asp discusses Arthur Conan Doyle's connection with the club, as well as that of Bernard Darwin, whose essay 'The Faith of a Fundamentalist' you can read in James Edward Holroyd's 1967 anthology *17 Steps to 221B*.

Despite everything, the fight continues to save **Undershaw**, Conan Doyle's house at Hindhead, from unsympathetic 'development'. Paul Spiring has alerted me to the fact that there's now a good page on

Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Undershaw>, as well as the Undershaw Preservation Trust's site at www.saveundershaw.com/ and a blog at <http://undershawhelp.blogspot.com/>. I needn't detail the significance of the house in the life and career of Conan Doyle, but Julian Barnes, author of *Arthur & George*, makes a very important point: 'Apart from Thomas Hardy's house, Undershaw is the only writer's house in England in which the writer played a major part in the design. Given Doyle's enduring popularity it would be not just a shame, but a disgrace if it were now to be lost to development.'

Paul Spiring also passes on news of property in Devon. A nice little two-bedroom stone cottage, 3 Wesley Terrace, Ipplepen, near Newton Abbot, is on the market at a guide price of £210,000. The attraction for the cognoscenti is that it's the former home of **Harry Baskerville**, coachman to **Bertram Fletcher Robinson's** parents. Information and pictures are here: www.vebra.com/property/2946/20979077. Also Park Hill Lodge, the Robinson's former coach house, was recently sold. The asking price was £439,950. See www.primelocation.com/uk-property-for-sale/details/id/CMYJ6440715.

Peter Blau reports that the University of Minnesota has reached its \$1,000,000 goal for the E W McDiarmid Fund, enabling it to endow a curator for the Sherlock Holmes Collections – the largest and most comprehensive in the world. The first endowed curator is **Tim Johnson**.

Jens Byskov Jensen points out that in last issue's review of his book *Fifty Years in Baker Street* I carelessly misnamed his society as 'The Cimbrian Friends of Sherlock Holmes'. The correct name is **The Cimbrian Friends of Baker Street**. My apologies to Mr Jensen and to the Friends!

A particularly sad piece of news reached me just too late for the last DM. On 9 August, Jonathan McCafferty wrote: '*Our treasured member of long standing, Derek Hinrich, passed away earlier today. He had been ill for some while but had only just been readmitted to his local cottage hospital where he had a heart attack. I spoke to Jessie today as I had been arranging to see Derek and she advised me of what had happened. Jessie was not expecting it. They have been very active members for a long time and for a while Derek was the Associate Members secretary (during which period he personally paid the Subscription for members from Eastern Europe who either could not afford to be members or could not get the money to us). He had been a stalwart member for many years and will be greatly missed.*' I can only echo Jonathan's words, adding that Derek was a very intelligent and entertaining companion. His work for the Society was recognised in 2008 when he became the fifth recipient of the Tony Howlett Award.

Periodicals received. *The Camden House Journal*, August 2010 and September 2010 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, September 2010 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Irregular Newsletter*, August 2010 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). *The Moor: Magasin för Sherlockianer*, August 2010 (**The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden**, Anders Wiggström, Byggmästarvägen 29, 168 32 Bromma, Sweden). *The Petrel Flyer*, Summer 2010 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Practice Notes*, July 2010 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N20 8NL). *Prescott's Press*, June 2010 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *The School Report*, Autumn 2010 (**The Priory Scholars**, Horace L Coates, 21 Butcombe Road, Leicester LE4 0FY).

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

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