

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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In August (and I can't do better than to quote the organisers themselves) 'The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota and the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota' held a well-received conference to explore the many meanings of the word 'spirits' and how they relate to Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle, and the Victorian Era. It was called *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes*, which is also the title of the 58-page book, edited by Michael Eckman and given to all who attended. The featured essays are decidedly varied. Robert Brusica considers the most obscure of TS Eliot's three borrowings from Sherlock Holmes; Timothy Reich illuminates the working class characters in *The Sign of Four*; Pj Doyle glances at Conan Doyle's spiritualist faith; Karen Murdock examines repetition as rhetoric in the Canon; Lucy Brusica shows how Edith Meiser, perhaps more than anyone, was responsible for the regrettable but persistent image of Watson as mentally negligible – an excellent piece, this; finally, Michael Eckman's survey of Sherlockian parodies in *Mad* magazine falls rather flat, sadly, because EC wouldn't allow any of the *Mad* illustrations to be reprinted. Copies of this very nice little volume can be ordered from John Bergquist BSI (3556 Ashbury Road, Eagan, MN 55122, USA) for \$12.00 post-paid. Checks should be payable to The Norwegian Explorers. [*Non-US purchasers should perhaps contact John at john.bergquist@gmail.com and ask about foreign postage.*]

On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, the Kansai Branch of **The Japan Sherlock Holmes Club** has published *The Holmes Nandemo Jiten*, another volume in the Japanese *Encyclopedia Sherlockiana*, written by members of the Club and edited by Saburoh Hiraga. Mr Showasu Mashimo, who kindly sent me a copy of the book, has contributed several articles, on such diverse topics as Bow Street, Portsmouth, Scotland Yard, and Vincent Starrett. As you can see, the 103 essays cover a wide range of subjects, including some distinguished Japanese Holmesians. (I remember that Lord Donegall dubbed Kohki Naganuma "The Tokyo Mentor"...). The book is, of course, in Japanese, so I can't really say much about the contents, but I'm delighted to have a copy! It's available from Mr Saburoh Hiraga (3-6-24 Ueno-higashi, Toyonaka-shi, Osaka, 560-0013, Japan; JZB04100@nifty.ne.jp).

There's an interesting new booklet from the **Société d'études holmesiennes de la Suisse Romande** in its *Mémoires et Documents* series (Vincent Delay, chemin de Valdezia 3, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland). In *Edmond Locard, le Sherlock Holmes Français* Jean-Pierre Crauser gives a good account, in French, of the man who established the essential principle of forensic science, that every contact leaves a trace.

Last year I welcomed *The Strange Return of Sherlock Holmes* by **Barry Grant**. A paperback edition will be out in December from Severn House (9-15 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1DF; £11.99), who have just published *Sherlock Holmes and the Shakespeare Letter* (£18.99). The letter of the title, which just might end once and for all the controversy over the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, is stolen from a Bond Street auction house. Against Holmes's expectations the theft proves to be connected with a bizarre series of attacks on apparently unrelated people. The weapon in each case is a tiny but powerful bomb. The resurrected Holmes is on excellent form, and his new Boswell, James Wilson, is likeable and highly competent. They need all their skill to deal with a remarkable eccentric family, four beautiful women, an insane scientist, and a brilliant international criminal with links to Al Qaeda! It's a thrilling tale, and in a curious way more light-hearted than its predecessor, though the author's humanity is never far below the surface.

I've just received a copy of *Pursuing Sherlock Holmes* by **Bill Mason** (Xlibris, www.xlibris.com; hardback \$29.99; paperback \$19.99; e-book \$9.99 – prices exclude postage). I'll review this collection of essays in the next DM. Meanwhile, I can tell you that the book has been favourably reviewed in America, and that signed copies are available from the author for \$24.00 (hardback) and \$16.00 (paperback), postpaid in USA only. Send check or money order to Bill Mason, 2367 Lights Chapel Road, Greenbrier, TN 37073, USA.

Later this month **Dr Vithal Rajan** follows his collection *Holmes of the Raj* and his play *Sherlock Holmes and the Pirates of the Horn* – both unusual and excellent – with a novel, *The Year of High Treason* (Rupa & Co, 7/16, Ansari Road, Darya ganj, New Delhi – 110 002, India). The setting is Delhi in 1911, the year of King George V's Coronation Durbar, and the *dramatis personae* include Holmes and Watson, Winston Churchill, Arsène Lupin, AJ Raffles, Tarzan, Dr Fu-Manchu and Mikhail Strogoff. A heady mixture!

On 29 October, in their Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes series, Titan Books (144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP) will publish new editions of: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Holmes* by **Loren D Estleman** and *The Whitechapel Horrors* by **Edward B Hanna**. Already available are *Séance for a Vampire* by **Fred Saberhagen**, *The Ectoplasmic Man* by **Daniel Stashower**, *The Man from Hell* by **Barrie Roberts**, *The Scroll of the Dead* by **David Stuart Davies**, *The Seventh Bullet* by **Daniel D Victor**, *The Stalwart Companions* by **H Paul Jeffers**, *The Veiled Detective* by **David Stuart Davies**, and *The War of the Worlds* by Manly Wade Wellman and Wade Wellman. All are priced at £7.99.

Due from MX Publishing (335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX) in November are *A Study in Crimson* by **Molly Carr** (£12.99) and *The Lost Stories of Sherlock Holmes* by **Tony Reynolds**, illustrated by **Chris Coady** (£9.99).

The Baker Street Letters by **Michael Robertson** features brothers Reggie and Nigel Heath, lawyers who rent an office in Baker Street – and start to receive letters addressed to Sherlock Holmes. The hardback got good reviews, and a paperback is due on 26 October (Minotaur, Macmillan, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, USA). Amazon.co.uk is taking orders at £8.09. The sequel, *Brothers of Baker Street*, will be published in hardback next March.

Thomas Wheeler tells me that he has extensively revised and enlarged his admirable book *Finding Sherlock's London*, and is now looking for a publisher. If you can't wait, Amazon.co.uk has the second edition, *The New Finding Sherlock's London* (2009), at prices from £10.39.

Next spring or summer – they're not sure – *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle Locations* by **Allan Foster** will be published by McFarland (Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, USA; \$35.00). 'It chronicles each man's life by guiding the reader through Scotland and England, with entries arranged by county or unitary authority.' Mr Foster is a writer and tour operator in Edinburgh.

The Science of Sherlock Holmes, the superb survey of forensic science by **EJ Wagner**, is now available as an audiobook from www.audible.com, read by the author and Simon Prebble. Over eight hours for \$19.95.

Gael Stahl passes on news of a new DVD. *Sherlock Holmes & the Volcano Horror* is a play by **Hal Glatzer**, inspired by 'The Devil's Foot'. 'In November of 1890, Holmes and Watson were invited to visit the Kingdom of Hawaii. They stayed for several weeks in the hotel at the summit of active Kilauea Volcano, and were there drawn into a maelstrom of madness and murder...' The hotel is now an arts

centre, and the volcano is still active. Information about the play, the performance – recorded in Hilo, Hawaii – and the DVD can be found at <http://halglatzer.com/holmes/index.html>. Or e-mail Mr Glatzer at hal@halglatzer.com.

You may never be able to own the real thing, but various museums sell reproduction coins, including an 1887 ‘gold’ sovereign, cast in pewter and plated in 22 carat gold by Ancestors of Dover Ltd (Bowles Well Gardens, Dover Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 6PQ; www.ancestors.co.uk). Another company, Westair Reproductions (17 Seeleys Road, Tyseley Industrial Estate, Birmingham B11 2LQ; www.westair-reproductions.com) makes a Victorian half-sovereign.

This from Mr Anthony Hyde: ‘From 23 to 27 November **Radlett Light Opera Society** will present *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes* at the Radlett Centre (1 Aldenham Avenue, Radlett, Herts. WD7 8HL; phone 01923 859291; e-mail admin@radlettcentre.com). This original musical based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s characters has as its centrepiece the intellectual cat-and-mouse games between the two larger-than-life figures of Holmes and Moriarty. It will be well worth catching this winning formula of classic Holmesian action and great songs set against the lively background of Victorian London.’

And news from **Lyndsay Faye**: plans are in hand to adapt her fine Holmes-and-the-Ripper novel *Dust and Shadow* into a ‘dark musical thriller’. She’s working with composer/lyricist Jonathan Reid Gealt, book writer Kasey Marino, and developer/director Jonathan B. Howard. At the moment, she says, it’s ‘a gleam in the eye of a production team who’ve signed some paperwork together. But we’re thrilled to start!’

The as-yet-untitled sequel to Guy Ritchie’s film *Sherlock Holmes* continues to generate news. Robert Downey Jr’s illness has delayed shooting. Jared Harris – son of Richard Harris, and a leading actor in *Mad Men* – will apparently play Moriarty. And **Stephen Fry** himself announced, on Danny Baker’s BBC Five Live programme, that he has been cast as Mycroft Holmes. I couldn’t really imagine him as Sherlock, but Mycroft... I like the sound of that!

On 13 October, *Variety* reported that **Samuel L Jackson** is developing a detective drama for CWTW. ‘*Hawkshaw* centers on a mysterious man in his 20s who doesn’t know his real identity – but believes that he’s either a descendant of Sherlock Holmes or is actually the literary sleuth. Hawkshaw’s psychiatrist thinks he suffers from Dissociative Identity Disorder – but her sister, a young cop, soon discovers Hawkshaw’s British charm and powers of deduction can help her solve crimes. Both sisters soon find themselves drawn to him (and perhaps battling for his affection).’

Ars Praestigium offers a rather handsome cold-cast bronze bust of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle by the British sculptor **Peter Close**, in a signed and numbered edition of 1,000. The introductory price is \$390.00 or £246.50, plus \$35.20/£22.50 insured shipping. There are photos and full information and order details at www.ArsPraestigium.com.

At the Sherlock Holmes Hotel in Baker Street, on 13 November at 1.00pm, the former British Super-Middleweight Champion boxer, James Cook MBE, will launch a campaign to buy a minibus for **The Pedro Club** in Hackney. Founded in 1929, the club has been through hard times in a very tough area, but it survives as one of the oldest functioning youth clubs in London. Also present will be post-graduate historical analyst/researcher of crime, Pauline Anne Badger – dubbed ‘Mrs Sherlock Holmes’ by former FBI agent John Douglas.

Peter Blau notes that there’s an interesting and amusingly written *Encyclopedia Sherlockia* on the website of **Shahan Cheong**, an Australian graduate student: <http://scheong.wordpress.com/the-encyclopedia-sherlockia-a-work-in-progress/>. The rest of Mr Cheong’s site is worth exploring as well.

The Sherlock Holmes Society of Scotland held its inaugural meeting on 29 September. There hadn’t, amazingly, been a Holmes society in his creator’s native country since the dissolution of The Dancing Men of Edzell some twenty-five years ago. The new group is the brainchild of Barry Young, owner of Young’s Interesting Books in Skirving Street, Glasgow. The first official meeting of the society will be at 7.30pm on Monday, 25 October at the Boswell Hotel in Mansionhouse Road, Glasgow G41 3DN. There’s a website at <http://sherlockscotland.blogspot.com/>, and you can contact the

society at sherlockscotland@btinternet.com. (Thanks to Cindy Stevens for alerting me to this new society.)

‘When sorrows come, they come not single spies but in battalions.’ All too soon after the death of Derek Hinrich, we’ve lost two more great Holmesians.

Actor, author, and consummate Holmesian scholar **Bernard Davies** died on 21 September, aged eighty-six. In 1941, while waiting for his call-up papers, he worked for several months with Tod Slaughter, playing the classic melodramas. After the war, he went from Stars in Battledress to weekly rep, but his fluency in six languages led to appearances on film and television as German officers and the like. In 1958 he joined the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and quickly made his mark, establishing beyond any reasonable doubt the true location of 221B Baker Street. In all, he wrote about thirty major papers, which were collected in 2008 into two lovely volumes by the Society. *Holmes & Watson Country: Travels in Search of Solutions* deservedly won the first Tony & Freda Howlett Literary Award. Bernard had received the Irregular Shilling in 1984, with the title ‘A Study in Scarlet’; that investiture had been the very first given by the BSI, forty years before, when it was conferred upon the great Vincent Starrett. In 1985 he was given our Society’s highest honour, honorary membership. His specialism was literary-topographical detection, and he was beyond dispute the Master. Equally important, he was a dear friend and a good companion.

Pilgrims to Switzerland in the 1980s and early ’90s will remember the impressive and charming presence of the distinguished psychiatrist **Dr Tsukasa Kobayashi** and his wife Akane Higashiyama, joint founders in 1977 of the Japan Sherlock Holmes Club. Dr Kobayashi died on 27 September, having suffered for some time from myelodysplastic syndrome (a blood disorder caused by changes in the bone marrow). He was eighty-one years old. Most of his numerous Holmesian writings were published only in Japanese, but many of us treasure a copy of *Sherlock Holmes’s London: Following the Footsteps of London’s Master Detective* (1984), written in collaboration with his wife and featuring the lovely photographs of Masaharu Uemura. In 1989 Dr Kobayashi was invested into the Baker Street Irregulars as ‘Baritsu’.

Two more losses should be mentioned. **Kevin McCarthy**, who died on 11 September aged ninety-six, will always be famous for his portrayal of Dr Miles Bennell in Don Siegel’s superb 1956 science fiction chiller *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Of course, he did a great deal more in a long and well-regarded acting career, including half a dozen performances as Sherlock Holmes on CBS Radio Mystery Theater in the 1970s. **Sir Robert Mark** was Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police from 1966 to 1972 and Commissioner until 1977. His greatest achievement, among many, was to eliminate the widespread and deep-rooted corruption within the CID – in effect, to clean up Scotland Yard. In 1974 he was guest of honour at our annual dinner, and his speech was printed in full in the Winter 1973 *Sherlock Holmes Journal*. [**Yes, 1973. The publication schedule was a trifle erratic that year.**] Sir Robert died on 30 September at the age of ninety-three.

Periodicals received. *Communication*, no. 301 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, October/November 2010 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Mayday Mayday* and *The Look Out*, September 2010 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Passengers’ Log*, 7 August & 8 October 2010 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). *The Scion*, Autumn 2010 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Serpentine Muse*, Fall 2010 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA).

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

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