

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Arthur Conan Doyle sometimes acted as a detective. His best known and most controversial case was the conviction of George Edalji, a Birmingham solicitor, for brutally maiming horses in a Staffordshire village. In 2005 the events were retold as fiction in Julian Barnes' novel *Arthur & George*, and the next year saw *Conan Doyle and the Parson's Son*, a substantial investigation by Gordon Weaver. Now comes *Outrage: The Edalji Five and the Shadow of Sherlock Holmes* by **Roger Oldfield** (Vanguard Press, Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB3 0AX; £11.99 or €12.99). The controversy remains because opinions tend to be polarised – some think Edalji 'guilty as hell', even though he was cleared on appeal. His father, the Vicar of Great Wyrley, was born a Parsee in Bombay, and his mother came of an English family, but what difficulties arose through Shapurji Edalji's long incumbency in the parish were not great; they seem to have had more to do with his single-minded insistence on moral duty over compromise than with racial differences. Racism is evident in the story, but it doesn't always take the forms we might expect. The court that declared George innocent of the animal mutilations refused him compensation on the grounds that he was guilty of writing a series of vile anonymous letters – an offence of which he had never been accused, never tried and certainly never convicted. The amateur investigators working for Conan Doyle were sometimes inept, but they were at least matched in that respect by the police, who often seemed to have just one object in view – to arrest and convict George Edalji. Roger Oldfield became interested in the case when he taught history at Great Wyrley High School; he has pursued it with the zeal and rigour of a historian, and his book seems unlikely to be surpassed as a comprehensive, intelligent, balanced and intensely readable account.

Alistair Duncan's book *Close to Holmes* was, I think, the first to give equal consideration to the places associated with the great detective and to those frequented by his creator. Now we have *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle Locations; A Visitor's Guide* by **Allan Foster** (McFarland & Co, The Eurospan Group, (c/o Turpin Distribution), Pegasus Drive, Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 8TQ; £30.50), which looks at places throughout Scotland and England. The author is a tour operator in Edinburgh, and his book is clearly and conveniently laid out, starting in Conan Doyle's native city and ending in the city where he gave birth to Holmes. Naturally Edinburgh and London receive the most attention, and it's with the former that Mr Foster really scores, not only because he knows the place inside-out but because we've long lacked a proper guide to the sites associated with Conan Doyle's youth. I wish I'd had this book when our Society visited Edinburgh in 2009! Allan Foster has done his homework, as his bibliography and his well-chosen quotations attest (though I note that he repeats the Sherlock Holmes Museum's false claim to the address 221B Baker Street and an 'official heritage plaque'). The entries are engagingly written and nicely illustrated. For a 168-page paperback the book is very expensive, but otherwise, full marks!

Holmes, Watson and Sir Henry Baskerville appear briefly in *Phantom Hounds: Curse of the Baskervilles Returns* by **WR Park** (Black Rose Writing, PO Box 1540, Castroville, TX 78009, USA; \$16.95) but the protagonists are Matthew Ward and Jimmy Black, who, after returning from New York where they solved the mystery of Jack the Ripper (see Mr Park's earlier novel *Fatal Incision*) have resigned from Scotland Yard and set up a private detective agency at 221A Baker Street. Their first client is an American girl, bequeathed a house on Dartmoor by her relation, Sir Winston Weathers, who had bought it after the supposed death of its previous owner, one Jack Stapleton. Weathers' own recent death was suspicious, to say the least... From Devon, the investigation takes Ward and Black to Cairo, where they become entangled with a gang of grave-robbers. It's the sort of rip-roaring adventure story you'd find in the pulp magazines of the thirties and forties, and I'm sure it will find an appreciative American readership. Others, though, may have problems with the many historical and cultural anomalies. Matthew Ward's fiancée,

daughter of the New York Police Commissioner, is 'Special Detective Mary Nolan', surely an impossibility for a woman in 1890. Jimmy Black's betrothed, Sarah Dewers, is a Doctor of Criminal Psychology, though no university awarded degrees in that discipline then, even to men. The dead man should be 'Sir Winston', not 'Sir Weathers'. The Edison phonograph used a half-inch steel or wooden needle, not 'a sapphire or diamond the size of a grain of sand' – didn't those come in with stereo LPs sixty years later? *Phantom Hounds* is fun, but *caveat lector*.

The railways feature prominently in the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes. In *The Little Book of Steam* (G2 Entertainment Ltd, Studio 19, Waterhouse Business Centre, Cromar Way, Chelmsford CM1 2QE; £7.99) **Clive Groome** combines the expertise of a former engine driver and the passion of lifelong enthusiast to tell the story of the steam railway in Britain. It's a very nice pocket-sized 128-page hardback, well-written and splendidly illustrated. You could hardly do better for an authoritative potted history.

We've waited long for a full biography, and I'm delighted that *William Gillette: America's Sherlock Holmes* by **Henry Zecher** has finally been published (Xlibris, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403; www.xlibris.com; \$34.99 hbk or \$23.99 pbk). However, this DM is already, regrettably, later than I'd intended, so a review must wait till next time, along with ones of *The Magic Bullet: A Locked Room Mystery Featuring Shadwell Rafferty and Sherlock Holmes* by **Larry Millett** (University of Minnesota Press, 111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520; \$24.95) and *Shadowfall: A Novel of Sherlock Holmes* by **Tracy Revels** (MX Publishing, 335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX; www.mxpublishing.co.uk and www.mxpublishing.com; £9.99/ €12.99/ \$16.95).

Prospective Swiss pilgrims may be interested in *The Victorian Tailor: Techniques and Patterns* by **Jason Maclochlainn** (Batsford, Anova Books Group Limited, The Old Magistrates Court, 10 Southcombe Street, London W14 0RA £19.99). *The Mammoth Book of Best British Crime 8* edited by Maxim Jakubowski (Robinson, 3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; £7.99) includes a Holmes story by **M J Elliott**.

Anthony Horowitz's 'official' Holmes novel, *The House of Silk*, will be published on 1 November by Orion (Orion House, 5 Upper Saint Martin's Lane, London, WC2H 9EA) at £18.99. From MX Publishing on 5 December comes *An Entirely New Country: Arthur Conan Doyle, Undershaw and the Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes* by **Alistair Duncan**. Both books can be pre-ordered on Amazon.co.uk.

Other recent and forthcoming titles: *Sherlock Holmes and the Hilldrop Crescent Mystery* by **Val Andrews** (Irregular Special Press, Baker Street Studios Ltd, Endeavour House, 170 Woodland Road, Sawston, Cambridge CB22 3DX; £7.50). *The Valley of Fear* adapted by **Ian Edginton**, illustrated by **INJ Culbard** (Selfmadehero, 5 Upper Wimpole Street, London W1G 6BP; 19 May; £14.99). *The Sherlock Holmes School of Self-defence: The Manly Art of Bartitsu, as Used against Professor Moriarty* by **E W Barton-Wright** (Ivy Press, 210 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2NS; 27 May; £6.99). *Young Sherlock Holmes: Black Ice* by **Andrew Lane** (Macmillan Children's Books, 20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR; 3 June; £6.99). *Between the Thames and the Tiber: The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by **Ted Riccardi** (Pegasus Books, 80 Broad Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10004, USA; 15 June; £15.44). *The Oriental Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* by **Ted Riccardi** (Pegasus; 15th June; £9.23). *The Peerless Peer* by **Philip Jose Farmer** (Titan Books, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP; 24 June; £7.99). *A Brief History of Sherlock Holmes* by **Nigel Cawthorne** (Robinson, 3 The Lanchesters, 162 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER; 1 September; £8.99). *A Study in Sherlock* edited by **Laurie R King** and **Leslie S Klinger** (Bantam Books, 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019 USA; 25 Oct; £9.26).

Jeffrey Somers (finebooks.oriental@googlegmail.com) is trying to track down a Sherlock Holmes pastiche published by Penguin in the green-for-

crime covers, probably in the 1950s. He can't recall author or title, but says that the names of Holmes and Watson aren't in the title. Holmes doesn't appear till about chapter 4. Can anyone help, please?

Joseph J Eckrich needs the first three issues of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal* – Vol. 1, nos. 1, 2 & 3 – to complete his collection. If you have any of these issues for sale, please contact him at jeckrich@sbcglobal.net.

Undershaw Preservation Trust is selling a very handsome enamel badge, with a brooch-pin fastening, and bearing the Trust's logo. It's available on eBay for £7.99 plus postage. Keep your eyes on eBay, as there'll be other stuff for sale to help save Conan Doyle's Surrey home.

The A3 Hindhead Tunnel, to be opened later this year, takes the London-Portsmouth road away from Hindhead town centre and under the Devil's Punchbowl. On 14 May Hindhead Together will hold a **Tunnel Vision Community Walkthrough**, at which Undershaw Preservation Trust, with support from our Society, will be well represented. The Trust has designated it Undershaw Preservation Day. Tickets for the walk went on sale on 20 April and sold out that same day!

On 15 May at 3pm **Gyles Brandreth** will speak at the Victoria & Albert Museum on Oscar Wilde, Conan Doyle and their circle. Tickets for *Elementary, My Dear Oscar*, including wine reception and book signing, are £15.00 from 020 7942 2277. From 5 to 8 May Gyles will be at Riverside Studios, Hammersmith (020 8237 1111) with his dazzlingly funny *The One to One Show*. These are the only London dates.

From June to August, **Miracle Theatre Company** will tour Cornwall and the West Country, and parts of Wales with a new play, *The Death of Sherlock Holmes* by Bill Scott. 'Miracle stirs up all the ingredients of the best Sherlock Holmes mystery with a large measure of comedy to bring audiences of all ages a period thriller with a sting in its tail.' The information is all on the company's website at www.miracletheatre.co.uk.

The Ha Ha Boys are touring England with their 'elementary comedy thriller' *Ha Ha Holmes! The Beast of the Blistervilles* until 8 May. Check the venues at <http://jamiewilsonproductions.com/current-productions/ha-ha-holmes/ha-ha-holmes-tour-2011/>.

Our member **Richard Dinnick** has dramatised *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Tangled Skein* (David Stuart Davies's novel, I trust?) as audio dramas for Big Finish, who did such a splendid job with Roger Llewellyn's performances in DSD's one-man plays and with *Holmes and the Ripper*. The website at www.bigfinish.com/ranges/sherlock-holmes notes that *The Final Problem/The Empty House* will be released in October, followed by *The Reification of Hans Gerber* in November, *The Hound* in December and *The Tangled Skein* in January. Nick Briggs and Richard Earl will play Holmes and Watson, with Alan Cox as Moriarty.

Yesterday BBC Gloucestershire broadcast the fifth excellent Holmes spoof by **Mantelpiece Theatre**. *Sherlock Holmes and the Royal Wedding*, based loosely on 'A Scandal in Bohemia' and inspired by next week's marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton, can be heard on www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/radio/bbc_radio_gloucestershire until 29 April.

Spotted by Philip Attwell in the BBC Radio Drama e-newsletter: 'In production – *The Rivals*. Set in a Victorian world where Sherlock Holmes is King, four lesser-known detectives are pitted against one another. By the Sony Award winning writer Chris Harrald. Coming up in October.'

'Broadcasting exclusively on the internet, *The Blog of Dr Watson* is a comedy series based on the original Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It's the latest project from long-time Sherlock Holmes fans – **Neil Hunt** and **Stephen Harvey Johnson** who have been writing and performing comedy together since 1997. www.drwatsonsblog.com.'

Ross Dillet of the **Friends of The Heath House** reports that the house, a magnificent Victorian gothic mansion, which served as Granada TV's 'Baskerville Hall', is open to visitors. The house also caters for weddings, conferences and other events. It's in Tean, Staffordshire, just a couple of miles from Alton Towers. See www.theheathhouse.co.uk and www.friendsofheathhouse.co.uk.

Anthony D P Mann writes from Canada: 'We have just completed final edit of an original film production - *Sherlock Holmes and the Shadow Watchers*. This 70-minute feature is an authentic Holmes piece produced with the kind permission of the Conan Doyle Estate.' See the film's website at: www.sherlockholmesadventures.ca. 'In May of this year, I will be travelling to the UK (Manchester) for a short spell between the 6th and 15th, and am hoping that we might be able to arrange a viewing for a smaller audience. If a venue / equipment can be provided to do so, we are happy to offer this screening at no cost.' Interested Mancunians should contact Mr Mann at amann2@cogeco.ca.

You'll find lots of original, rare, and very expensive material for sale at www.SherlockHolmesPosters.com including many film posters that are new to me. See also www.SherlockHolmesCollectibles.com.

Mime artist **Ed Johnson** has toured the world as a Sherlock Holmes Living Statue, devised for a street festival in Indonesia. See www.thelivingstatuecompany.com/sherlockholmeslivingstatue1.html. He's available for functions and events, and can be contacted at info@thelivingstatuecompany.com.

Interesting websites and blogs include Rakshita Patel's **Umbrella Organisation** at <http://mycroft-brolly.livejournal.com/>, Martin Hickey's **Equinoctial Gales** at www.wix.com/martino1968/theequinoctialgales, and **Mycrofting** at <http://community.livejournal.com/mycrofting/>.

Derek Wood has founded **The Cambridge Deer Stalkers' Guild**, which he describes as 'An online Gentleman's clubroom, based in Cambridge UK, but open to any Holmes fan and anyone interested in Victoriana, or just good old-fashioned, no nonsense Chapishness'. See <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/deerstalkers/> or contact Mr Wood at holmes.mysteries@ntlworld.com.

The Society lost a good friend in **Theo Wyler**, who died in Zurich on 13 April. Having helped mastermind several Swiss Pilgrimages, he had been closely involved with preparations for the next one, scheduled for 2012. Jonathan McCafferty says, 'Theo was a very good chap. I well remember his astonishing impersonation of William Tell and a thousand quiet kindnesses.' He will be missed.

Michael Gough may be best known as Alfred Pennyworth in four *Batman* films, but he had a highly respected career on stage and screen, despite performances in many horror films of widely varying merit. In 1955 he played Russell Partridge in *The Case of the Perfect Husband*, one of the French-made TV series with Ronald Howard as Sherlock Holmes. He died on 17 March, aged ninety-four. **H R F Keating**, a giant in the field of detective fiction, died on 27 March; he was eighty-four. His many books include *Sherlock Holmes: The Man and his World*, he co-scripted *Sherlock Holmes and the Leading Lady*, the 1992 TV film starring Christopher Lee, and he wrote at least one excellent Holmesian short story. In 1988 Harry Keating was an admirable guest speaker at our Society's annual dinner.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Spring 2011 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 583, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *The Camden House Journal*, February 2011 and March 2011 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Canadian Holmes*, Winter 2010/2011 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada). *The Cri Bar Crier*, April 2011 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *The Formulary*, March 2011 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, Totteridge, London N20 8NL). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, March 2011 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, March 2011 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, April 2011 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Irregular Newsletter*, March 2011 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). *Mayday Mayday*, March 2011 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarne Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Moor: Magasin för Sherlockianer*, Mars 2011 (**The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden**, Anders Wiggström, Byggmästarvägen 29, 168 32 Bromma, Sweden). *The Passengers' Log*, January 2011 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Rosane McNamara, 4/2a Merlin Street, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089, Australia). *The Petrel Flyer*, Spring 2011 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring 2011 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). *Sherlockiana*, Nr 1 2011 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Bjarne Rother Jensen, Højbovangen 24, 9200 Aalborg SV, Denmark).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermacti Press*, February 2011 & March 2011 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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