

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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The lucky winner of the four Long Stories, unabridged on CD, read superbly by **Derek Jacobi**, is Ashley Mayo, who, like all the other entrants, knew that *The Valley of Fear* was illustrated in *The Strand Magazine* by **Frank Wiles**. Our thanks to AudioGO for kindly providing the prize. Please check the website at www.audiogo.co.uk.

This issue's capsule reviews are likely to be more capsule than usual, because so much is being published and so much is happening.

At about the same time as Jean and I were commissioned to write *The Sherlock Holmes Miscellany*, **Nick Utechin** was signing a contract for *Amazing & Extraordinary Facts: Sherlock Holmes* (David & Charles; www.davidandcharles.co.uk; 30 November; £9.99). Inevitably the two books cover a lot of the same ground, but in each case the treatment and the emphasis are individual. Nick's approach is broadly chronological, beginning with 'The Doyle Family' and concluding with 'Holmes in the 21st Century', and no passage (they aren't called chapters) is longer than three pages – but nothing is rushed and nothing is too condensed. Among the passages are illuminating snippets about, for instance, the Langham Hotel, portrayals of Mycroft Holmes, and Basil Rathbone's frustration at being typecast. The very brief observations on each of the sixty stories are pithy, pertinent and sometimes debatable – was the theft of part of the Beryl Coronet not a real crime? And how about the forced marriage in 'The Solitary Cyclist'? The writing throughout is, of course, exemplary. I'd never really thought deeply about the effect that the first short story must have had on its readers when it appeared in *The Strand Magazine*, but Nick Utechin has, and his assessment is masterly. (Watson tells us, though, that Irene Adler was a contralto, not a soprano. And, on a different matter, I'd love to know Nick's authority for giving Lestrade the first name George.) The illustrations, sadly, don't match the quality of the text. Otherwise this is as attractive a pocket volume as you could wish – an excellent introduction for the novice with plenty to engage and inform the experienced aficionado.

With *Sherlock: The Casebook* **Guy Adams** really comes into his own (BBC Books, www.eburypublishing.co.uk/bbcbooks.asp; 25 October; £14.99), though I suspect there's input from Messrs Moffat and Gatiss. Material from the six cases to date is presented in the form of John Watson's written notes, with photographs and other documents in full colour throughout – Mr Adams attempted something similar some years ago in *The Case Notes of Sherlock Holmes*, but this time it works. One reason is the sarcastic notes from Sherlock ('Only old ladies and pre-pubescent girls keep scrapbooks.') and John's replies ('It's not a scrapbook. And it was locked away in my desk drawer.'). If that were all, the book would be nothing more than a very handsome way of novelising the television series, but there's also an account of how the series came about, how each film relates to its source in the Canon, and how other dramatic presentations have treated the material. And I love the description of Sherlock as 'the Mozart of criminal investigation'.

In January I reviewed *Sherlock Holmes and Philosophy*. Now comes *The Philosophy of Sherlock Holmes* edited by **Philip Tallon** and **David Baggett** (University Press of Kentucky, www.kentuckypress.com; £35.50). Among the fifteen contributors I recognise just one, Dorothy L. Sayers. The others are all a) American and b) alive. Sayers included her paper 'Aristotle on Detective Fiction' among the 'Studies in Sherlock Holmes' in her 1946 book *Unpopular Opinions*, but it's been rather unfairly neglected since and its appearance here is welcome. Her light but authoritative touch is echoed and exaggerated in the book's

introduction, which, except for the brief abstract of each essay, is a complete spoof. It shows that the editors can take their subject seriously without being unnecessarily solemn or elitist, and it's good to see that all the essays that follow are both intelligent and accessible. The price is high, but until the end of the year DM readers can get a 20% discount at www.eurospanbookstore.com by entering the code: 'sherlock' at the checkout.

Our Society's latest book, published in conjunction with the recent momentous pilgrimage to Switzerland is *Return to the Reichenbach*, a collection of essays edited by **Carrie Chandler**, **Bob Ellis** and **Guy Marriott** (www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk; £17.50 UK/£20.00 or €50.00 Europe/\$25.00 elsewhere – prices include postage). This splendid volume, handsomely illustrated in colour and black & white, opens with Tony Howlett's 1948 account, reprinted from the SHJ, of how he found the true site of the fatal duel at Reichenbach, and Ronald De Waal's memories of a 1974 trip to Europe, reprinted from the BSJ. John Doubleday creates a statue of Holmes in ice. There are pieces on Alpine transport, Corporal Schiess VC, possible originals for Moriarty and Gruner, spies at Interlaken, 'The Final Problem' on the screen, and much more, concluding with a tale by Auberon Redfearn in which Holmes tells Watson what really happened at the Falls. *Return to the Reichenbach* maintains and enhances the tradition of excellence for which our handbooks are rightly loved and respected.

At the end of the fourth novel, *Fire Storm*, Sherlock woke from a drugged sleep to find himself on board a ship bound for China. *Young Sherlock Holmes: Snake Bite* by **Andrew Lane** (Macmillan Children's Books, www.panmacmillan.com; £10.99) sees him separated from his friends and family, a stranger in a strange land, facing baffling mystery and deadly danger. Mr Lane somehow devises adventures for the youngster that sit comfortably within the precise period setting, that are suspenseful, thrilling and intelligent, and that credibly contribute towards the development of his character. It's no mean feat to write so convincingly of young Holmes in Shanghai, solving the problem of apparently impossible murders by snake venom, foiling a plot to destroy an American warship, learning oriental martial arts the hard way, and confronting one of the vilest criminals imaginable – and we can believe that all this contributes towards his becoming the man Dr Watson will later meet at Bart's Hospital. A cracking good read, as ever.

Back in 2001 the Guest of Honour at our Annual Dinner was the brilliant writer and comedian **Barry Cryer**, who proved to be a real devotee of the great detective. He's proved it again with *Mrs Hudson's Diaries: A View from the Landing at 221B*, written with his son, actor and writer **Bob Cryer** (The Robson Press, www.therobsonpress.com; £12.99). Given Cryer senior's record, you might expect a farcical pun-fest, but that's not what this nice little book is about. (And it's not one of those that have Mrs H as the true Baker Street detective, either.) There's plenty of humour here, but it arises partly from the contrast between Mrs H's sometimes uncomprehending but always down-to-earth reports and our knowledge of events as recorded by Dr Watson, and partly from the self-important annotations by one 'Oliver Philpott' – who may be related to Charles Pooter. Sarah Hudson herself is not a comic character: she's a real and very likable personality, whose life extends beyond the pages of the Canon into the world outside. Her story is sensational only in passing and it's told with charm and affection.

The title of *The 1895 Murder* by **Dan Andriacco** (MX Publishing, www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £9.99/\$16.95/€12.99) refers neatly to a play based on 'The Bruce-Partington Plans', written by Professor Sebastian McCabe of St Benignus College, Erin, Ohio. As he proved in *No Police Like Holmes* and *Holmes Sweet Holmes*, Mac is a devoted Sherlockian and a highly skilled detective, so when a man is shot dead outside the theatre where he's playing Mycroft Holmes, he and his brother-in-law

Jeff Cody are pleased to help find the killer. Well, mostly. Jeff's mind, naturally, is on his impending wedding and the need for diplomacy with his fiancée's rather unpredictable parents. It's a pleasure to visit Erin again and to watch the solving of a particularly baffling mystery.

Also new from MX are *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Edinburgh Haunting* by **David Wilson** (£9.99/\$16.95/€12.99), in which Holmes and Watson visit the latter's cousin, the distinguished Edinburgh surgeon Dr Patrick Watson, and encounter corruption, murder, and Dr Joseph Bell, and *The Untold Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by **Luke Benjamin Kuhns** (£9.99/\$16.95/€12.99), seven cleverly plotted, engagingly sensational tales that would benefit from careful editing. There's also a new edition of *Barefoot on Baker Street* by **Charlotte Anne Walters**, which was enthusiastically reviewed by Alistair Duncan in the SHJ (£10.99/\$18.95/€12.99).

Miss Boston: La Seule Détective-femme du Monde Entier was not among the great creations of the *fin de siècle* French pulps – and she certainly wasn't the only female sleuth in detective fiction. The people at Black Coat Press have done their usual nice job with *The Adventures of Miss Boston: The First Female Detective* by **Antonin Reschal**, translated and introduced by **Nina Cooper** (www.blackcoatpress.com; \$22.95/£14.99), but whereas the exploits of, say, Fantômas, Judex and even Arsène Lupin may be deliberately fantastic, those of Ethel Boston, which take place in a New York that never existed, are unintentionally so, and they're important mainly as curios. Twenty were published in 1908 and 1909, of which eleven are translated here, including the first, 'The Murder of the World's Most Famous Detective'. Sherlock Holmes has been killed while investigating a kidnapping, and Miss B takes it upon herself to find his murderer.

Duckworth Overlook has issued a nice paperback edition of *Houdini and Conan Doyle* by **Christopher Sandford**, which I reviewed positively in DM 315 (www.ducknet.co.uk; £9.99). Next time I'll review *The Detective and The Woman: A Novel of Sherlock Holmes* by **Amy Thomas** (MX Publishing; £9.99/\$16.95/€12.99).

My Dear Watson by **Margaret Park Bridges**, reviewed positively in DM 319, has been recorded unabridged by Blackstone Audio, read by **Rosalyn Landor** – Helen Stoner to Jeremy Brett's Holmes in Granada TV's *The Speckled Band* (www.blackstoneaudio.com; \$17.47).

Doug Wrigglesworth recommends *Up and Down* by **Terry Fallis**, a novel of international PR whose protagonist is 'a serious Sherlockian and bibliophile' (Douglas Gibson, www.mcclelland.com; Cdn\$22.99).

Steve Emecz notes that *Sherlock's Home: The Empty House* (MX; £9.99), royalties from which go to the **Undershaw Preservation Trust**, is to be released in Russia by Amphora (www.amphora.ru).

The September *Sherlockian E-Times*, the on-line catalogue-magazine of **Classic Specialties**, is at www.sherlockholmes.com/e_times12-9.html.

Kevin Meade at meadekevin@eircom.net invites offers for a copy, 'in very good condition considering its age', of *The Strand Magazine*, January-June 1893, containing 'The Cardboard Box', 'The Yellow Face', 'The Stock-broker's Clerk', 'The Gloria Scott', 'The Musgrave Ritual' and 'The Reigate Squire'.

Douglas Johnstone notes that the classic 1937 German comedy *Der Mann der Sherlock Holmes War* will be released on DVD by Cornerstone Media on 29 October under the English title *The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes*. There's no indication of subtitles.

At the Devil's Punchbowl Hotel at Hindhead on 23 December, the company called **Don't Go Into the Cellar** will present *Ho Ho Holmes*, a new story of Sherlock Holmes with a seasonal touch. This free show will be in support of the Undershaw Preservation Trust. Donations to help the Trust's operating expenses will be gratefully accepted on the evening. In addition, The Devil's Punchbowl Hotel will generously donate a portion of proceeds from food and drink sales during the evening, as well as from the lodging reserved by attendees (be sure to mention *Ho Ho Holmes* when making the reservation). Auctions to benefit the campaign are also planned. See www.saveundershaw.com/.

In case you're not already aware, the **Baker Street Babes** have organised what should be a rather wonderful event for 17 November at the Prince Charles Cinema in London. **Sherlopalooza**, from 10.00am to 8.00pm, will include a screening of the entire *Sherlock* series II, with the chance to question the composer **Michael Price** and the writer of *Sherlock's*, *John's* and *Molly's* blogs, **Joe Lidster**, plus a cosplay competition and a raffle, both with some very desirable prizes.

Information is at <http://sherlopalooza.tumblr.com/>, or for help please contact events@bakerstreetbabes.com.

Adrian Cowdry (jbohms@aol.com) has some rare Sherlock Holmes film posters and lobby cards for sale, including two Rathbone one-sheet posters, *Pursuit to Algiers* and *The Pearl of Death*, and the only known copy of the one-sheet for the 1932 *Sign of Four*, with Arthur Wontner.

A *Sherlock* version of the classic board game **Cluedo** is available for pre-order on www.amazon.co.uk and www.bbcshop.com. Release date should be 21 October.

The website of the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd has been entirely overhauled. It's at www.conandoyleestate.co.uk/.

Elementary, starring **Jonny Lee Miller** & **Lucy Liu** as Holmes and Watson, will premiere in the UK on 23 October at 9pm on Sky Living.

We've recently learned of the death our member **Dr Steven Jackson**, former senior lecturer at the University of Natal. Living in South Africa, he rarely attended meetings, but he contributed articles on Holy Peters and on Bertillonage to *Rhe Sherlock Holmes Journal*. Dr Jackson died on 26 May, at the age of sixty-five.

Jerry Nelson, one of Jim Henson's Muppeteers, died on 23 August aged seventy-eight. Among the characters he created for *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street* is the Holmes spoof 'Sherlock Hemlock'.

Before marrying the Duke, **Nicole, Duchess of Bedford** had been a member of the French Resistance and a television producer. In 1954/55 she was, as Nicole Milinaire, Sheldon Reynolds' associate producer on the *Sherlock Holmes* series, with Ronald Howard and Howard Marion-Crawford. She died on 7 September aged ninety-two.

That fine actor **John Moffatt** died on 10 September, two weeks before his ninetieth birthday. With his mellifluous voice, he seemed a natural successor to John Gielgud when he played the detective on Radio 4 in *Sherlock Holmes vs Dracula*, but his major contribution was to be in a series by Grant Eustace, as Dr Watson to Roy Marsden's Holmes – a part he also played opposite Dinsdale Landen in *Sherlock's Last Case*. His other rôles included Thaddeus Sholto to Richard Hurndall's Holmes and Lysander Stark with Clive Merrison. In 1982 he directed Shaughan Seymour as Holmes in John Kane's play *Murder, Dear Watson*.

Michael Doyle, MBt, who died on 25 September aged eighty-two, was a stalwart of the Stormy Petrels of British Columbia and a member of our own Society, though I think he was only once able to attend a meeting. He was also a generous, intelligent and charming gentleman.

Periodicals received. *Cri Bar Crier*, October 2012 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Ave, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *The Baker Street Bugle*, September 2012 (**The Deerstalkers of Welshpool**, Joan & Roy Upton-Holder, Baskerville, 146 Little Henfaes Drive, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7BA). *The Formulary*, September 2012 and *Book Reviews* supplement (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N10 2EB). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, September 2012 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Gaslight Gazette*, October 2012 (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott**, David J Milner, 6 Crowndale Drive, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, September 2012 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, October 2012 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Ironmongers Daily News*, er, irregularly (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, www.sshf.com/inscription-sshf.php). *Mayday Mayday*, September 2012 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarne Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Petrel Flyer*, Late Summer 2012 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, September 2012 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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