

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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In 1971 our late Honorary Member **Peter Cushing** recorded an unabridged reading of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* for the Royal National Institute for the Blind. For forty years it was available only to registered blind and partially sighted people in the UK. Then in 2011 Cosmic Hobo released the first four stories on CD, with liner notes by David Stuart Davies. Cosmic Hobo is now called **Bafflegab**, and this month releases *The Return of Sherlock Holmes, Volume Two* (Bafflegab Productions, 24 Tanners Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 7JP; www.bafflegab.co.uk; £14.99). It's been said that you really need an actor who's played Dr Watson to narrate these tales – but however he may be identified in our minds with the Detective, Peter Cushing, in sound alone, is an entirely credible Doctor. And then there are the other characters, major and minor, all depicted as believable individual human beings... Cushing does full justice to the atmosphere, the excitement, the humour and the ingenuity of these tales. What a bonus for us that the recordings should at last become available to the general public! I hope we don't have to wait so long for Volume Three. (On the Bafflegab website you can buy Volumes One and Two together for £24.99 – a saving of £4.99.)

The first contribution by **Nicholas Utechin** to the Writings about the Writings was a letter to *The Sherlock Holmes Journal* in 1966. A whole succession of well-written, well-considered articles followed, in the SHJ, the BSJ, *Shades of Sherlock*, *Baker Street Miscellanea* and elsewhere – sometimes controversial, sometimes enlightening, always entertaining. He even found time to collaborate with Austen Mitchelson on two rather good Holmes novels, but his *magnum opus* is *Sherlock Holmes at Oxford*, a handsome chapbook which has run to, I think, three editions. It had its origins in 'This Charming Town', published in the BSJ in 1976, which you can read in Nick's new book, *'Occasionally to Embellish': Some Writings on Sherlock Holmes* (Gasogene Books, www.wessexpress.com/; \$18.95), with twenty-two other pieces. He's been a major player of our Game for more forty years, and this collection is, if anything, overdue!

The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual is no longer available for purchase separately, so it's yet another damn' good reason to take out a subscription to the BSJ – which you can do via the website at www.bakerstreetjournal.com/. The 2012 Annual, *Barrymore in Baker Street: 'The Great Profile' Meets 'The Great Detective,' and They Both Get Their Names Up in Lights* by **Sonia Fetherston**, is absolutely my glass of tea, relating how a potentially great film ended up as just quite good with some first-rate touches. Even if you don't usually bother with silent movies, Albert Parker's 1922 *Sherlock Holmes*, with John Barrymore is worth watching and re-watching. Ms Fetherston's book tells the troubled story of its creation, why it isn't a masterpiece, how it was lost, found and restored for our pleasure.

Our member **Richard Dinnick** is one of the contributors to an enjoyable anthology, *Encounters of Sherlock Holmes*, edited by **George Mann** (Titan Books; <http://titanbooks.com/brands/sherlock-holmes/>; £7.99). Several leading science fiction and fantasy writers have been enthusiastic Holmes devotees, and it's good to see that tradition continuing, with stories here from the likes of James Lovegrove, Mark Hodder, Cavan Scott, Paul Magrs and Steve Lockley. As you might guess, most of these tales involve the *outré*, the *recherché*, the improbable, and the downright fantastic. Among the phenomena that Holmes and Watson encounter are a living mummy haunting the London Underground, Dr Henry Jekyll, Victor Frankenstein's creature, HG Wells's Martian invaders... Wells himself has a part to play, as do AJ Raffles and Bunny Manders, Sir Richard Burton and Algernon Swinburne (an improbable detective duo

that flourishes in novels by Mark Hodder). Most of the authors achieve an acceptable likeness of the Watson/Doyle style, while some opt for a third-person narrative, and Mr Magrs tells his story through letters written to Dr Watson by Mrs Hudson. To be worth publishing, Sherlock Holmes pastiche doesn't have to be startlingly different, but it should be written with knowledge, imagination, affection and style. The fourteen tales in *Encounters of Sherlock Holmes* pass the test.

Steve Hayes and **David Whitehead**, separately and in partnership, are remarkably prolific writers. I was apprehensive when the duo's novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Queen of Diamonds* reached me a year ago. To my relief I found it a clever, exciting and well-written yarn, told with obvious respect and affection for the period and the characters. Its successor is, if anything, better. On at least two occasions, we know, Watson felt obliged to take Holmes away from London to recover from the curious excesses of his chosen way of life. In *Sherlock Holmes and the Knave of Hearts* (Robert Hale; www.halebooks.com; £19.99) we find the two in Paris, where inevitably, it seems, they encounter a vicious criminal conspiracy – 'the Knaves' – and thwart the attempted murder of Jules Verne. (If that last seems a little too rich, well, the attempt on Verne's life is historical fact, and the circumstances surrounding it were as odd as any fiction.) Grand stuff!

Our Swedish member **Peter Bevelin** has kindly sent a copy of *A Few Lessons from Sherlock Holmes*, an attractive spiral-bound 44-page volume in which Mr Bevelin has gathered pithy quotations from Holmes and others, arranged to illustrate important points. For instance, under 'The eye sees only what it is trained to see' we find observations from Jean-Martin Charcot, C Auguste Dupin, William Osler and Thomas McCrae, as well as Holmes himself. The book has been produced for the benefit of the author and a few friends, but if there's enough interest I fancy he'd like to make it more widely available. (Peter Bevelin, Gislövsgården, 231 91 Trelleborg, Sweden; pbevelin@gmail.com.)

Many scholars have applied their specialist expertise to illuminating an aspect of the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes. Bernard Davies on topography, Maurice Campbell on medicine, Madeline Stern on rare books, Patricia Guy on wine ... The list seems endless. With *The Sherlock Holmes Stories and Combustion Science*, **JC Jones** has chosen what may seem the most unlikely subject area. In fact the forty or so short essays, several reprinted from the SHJ, help us to appreciate many of the more curious details of the Canon. Copies of the 120-page book are available for £10.00 each from the author at j.c.jones@eng.abdn.ac.uk.

To complement *Sherlockian Picture Puzzles: A Monograph on Eliot Keen's 1905 Illustrations* (see DM 321), **John Addy** has devised *100 Sherlockian Word Puzzles* (John Addy, 184 Bradford Road, Otley LS21 3LT; john.addy22@btinternet.com; £6.50 including UK postage). He's taken place names, personal names and phrases from the Canon and disguised them within words, numbers and symbols.

MX Publishing and AudioGO have collaborated to record unabridged readings of several of the new Holmes books published by MX. Currently available from Amazon, Audible.com and elsewhere are *The Detective and The Woman* by **Amy Thomas**, read by **Stephanie Cannon**; *Sherlock Holmes and the Dead Boer at Scotney Castle* by **Tim Symonds**, read by **Simon Shepherd**; *Sherlock Holmes and the Murder at Lodore Falls* by **Charlotte Smith**, read by **Ric Jerrom**; *The Outstanding Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes* by **Gerard Kelly**, read by **Simon Shepherd**; *Sherlock Holmes and the Whitechapel Vampire* by **Dean P Turnbloom**, read by **Ric Jerrom**; and *The Lost Stories of Sherlock Holmes* by **Tony Reynolds**, read by **Simon Shepherd**.

Steve Merrifield writes: 'Your readers might be interested in knowing that I am releasing a Sherlock Holmes inspired series of free short stories, *The Darkwood Mysteries*, each month in 2013 and into 2014. Emily

Darkwood and her young servant companion, Jack Hobbs, investigate crime and the supernatural in Victorian England as she searches for answers to the mysterious fates of her parents. Monthly free short tales of horror and adventure at www.TheDarkwoodMysteries.co.uk – *Darkwood* can be liked on Facebook at The Darkwood Mysteries and followed on Twitter @FollowDarkwood.

At www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times13-2.html is the *Sherlockian E-times*, the catalogue-newsletter of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA) – interesting and entertaining, as always.

And at www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=201352 is a call for papers for a proposed collection of essays about the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon, to be edited by **Nadine Farghaly** and published by Humanities & Social Sciences Online. You can e-mail the editor at nadine.farghaly@gmx.net. [**Thanks to Jackie Speel.**]

Oscar Ross notes that the **Café Royal** in Regent Street has reopened as a luxury five-star hotel. The website at www.hotelcaferoyal.com says, ‘The iconic Grill Room (originally established in 1865) has been exquisitely restored to its original Louis XVI detailing and is now the place to enjoy Champagne, cocktails and a light menu of British dishes.’ The Café Royal features just once in Dr Watson’s narratives. After attacking Holmes in Regent Street, Baron Gruner’s thugs ‘escaped from the bystanders by passing through the Café Royal and out into Glasshouse Street behind it’. Conan Doyle knew it, as did all the artists, writers, musicians, actors and intelligentsia of the time, and no doubt Holmes and Watson dined there.

At 12.30pm on 11 April, the Lunchtime Lecture at the **National Army Museum** will be *Duty Before Fiction: Conan Doyle in the Boer and Great Wars*, given by our member **Richard Burnip**. Admission is free and tickets aren’t required. The Museum is in Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HT. The website is at www.nam.ac.uk/.

Hoxton Hall, built in 1863, is a remarkable survival from the early days of the Music Hall, only four years younger than the famous Wilton’s. From 10 April to 10 May it will be home to Morphic Graffiti’s production of *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes!* – a new version of *Sherlock Holmes: The Musical* by **Leslie Bricusse**, who ‘has worked with Morphic Graffiti to present this unique 2013 production of *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes!* The show will feature brand new songs and material, never before heard.’ Details are at www.hoxtonhall.co.uk/whatson/revenge-sherlock-holmes/, or phone 020 7684 0060. Hoxton Hall is at 130 Hoxton Street, London N1 6SH.

In possibly the most unlikely casting ever, the squeaky-voiced comedian **Joe Pasquale** will play Sherlock Holmes in an autumn tour of Ben Langley’s well-received spoof *Ha Ha Holmes! and the Hound of the Baskervilles*. The tour dates and other details are on the website at <http://hahaholmes.com/> – though I notice they’ve omitted the fact that it’ll be at the Civic Theatre in Chelmsford from 3 to 7 September.

The house at 12 Tennyson Road, Norwood, where Conan Doyle wrote *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, failed to sell at auction on Thursday. And the South Norwood Tourist Board indicates why: ‘The house is an absolute horror of a tip with no traces of the Victorian house left and divided into cell-like one room bedsits in a disgusting condition. Any attempt to save it would be worthless. To be honest it had an awful feel to it ... one wonders what happened to the company providing autistic care there who seem to have done a bunk a year go leaving the place empty for a year and now the sudden sale with lots of possibly interested parties not being informed.’ (<http://southnorwoodtouristboard.com/>) The estate agents now say that the house is ‘available at £750,000’ (www.barnettross.co.uk/details.php?adate=201302&page=52.html&id=5049). [**Thanks to Alistair Duncan**]

Leslie Klinger has filed a lawsuit against the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd, asking a federal court to rule that writers, filmmakers, and others are free to create new stories about Holmes and Watson without paying licence fees to the owners of the remaining copyrights on the stories. Les has a web-site at www.free-sherlock.com with more information about the suit. [**Thanks to Peter Blau**]

Nearer home there’s dissension at the **Sherlock Holmes Museum** at 239 Baker Street (not 221B!). Last Thursday, *The Times* reported, ‘The family that created and ran the Sherlock Holmes Museum in Baker Street has been torn apart over who is entitled to almost £2 million of admission fees collected in the past two years. Grace Aidiniantz, with and her daughter Jennifer Decoteau, with whom she runs The Sherlock Holmes International Society, is suing her son John over revenues from the museum, including items sold at the gift shop.’ And ‘Mr Aidiniantz, whose company owns the freehold to the museum, argues that his sisters

are responsible for the shortfall in the society’s accounts. He claims that although the society is responsible for collecting the revenue, it does not have the right to keep it.’ The case is due to be heard in May.

Those contemplating a visit to Meiringen and the Reichenbach Falls may like to avail themselves of the services of **Alps Travel** (‘The Prep School & Corporate Ski Holiday Specialists in Switzerland’), which offers a full and comprehensive tour service including flights, transfers, hotels and tour guides. The tour of particular interest to us has its own web page at www.alpstravel.co.uk/sherlock-holmes/.

The cricket fixtures for 2013 are settled, and you’ll find the details on the website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/events.php. On 4 May the Gentlemen of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London will take on a team from Eton College, and the Victorian Cricket Match against the ‘Gold Bats’ of the PG Wodehouse Society will be held on 23 June at West Wycombe. These events are free, and both venues are picturesque.

Pilgrims on the Society’s 1988 Swiss trip will remember Ted Schulz and his loud check suit, in character as Aloysius Doran. When Luther Norris introduced me to the Sherlockian world in the mid 1960s, he also introduced me to four of his friends, who quickly became my friends too. **Lt Col Theodore G Schulz**, invested in the BSI in 1961 as ‘The Amateur Mendicant Society’, really was an officer and a gentleman, as well as a dedicated Sherlockian. He died on 24 January aged eighty-nine, nearly five years after the death of his charming wife Mary. I’m rather pleased that some of my photos of them both are posted at www.tedschulz.com/.

Bernard Horsfall, who died on 28 January aged eighty-two, was never a star, but his versatility and sincerity as an actor ensured that he was rarely out of work. He played Sherlock Holmes in the original production of Royce Ryton’s play *To Kill a King* in 1981. In 1988 he played Frankland to Jeremy Brett’s Holmes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for Granada TV, and 1991 he was Mr Crawford in BBC TV’s original *Murder Rooms*.

Richard Briers was known and loved for his comedy rôles, particularly in *The Good Life* and *Monarch of the Glen*, but his association with Kenneth Branagh’s company gave him the chance to return to his roots in classic theatre. From 2007 to 2012 he and Stanley Baxter played William Parnes and Sandy Boyle, retired actors once famous as Holmes and Watson, in eleven comedy-dramas on Radio 4, starting with *A Two-Pipe Problem*. He died on 17 February, aged seventy-nine.

Periodicals received. *The Camden House Journal*, January 2013 and February 2013 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Cri Bar Crier*, March 2013 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Ave, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *For the Sake of the Trust: The Baker Street Irregulars Trust Newsletter*, Fall 2012 (**The BSI Trust**, Marshall S Berdan, 2015 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033, USA). *The Gaslight Gazette*, January/February 2012 (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott**, David J Milner, 6 Crowndale Drive, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, March 2013 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, www.soundofthebaskervilles.com). *Ironmongers Daily News*, er, frequently (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, www.sshf.com/inscription-sshf.php). *Irregular Newsletter*, February 2013 (**The Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, 20 Clare Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 1PN). *The Passengers’ Log*, Autumn & Winter 2012 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O’Neill, erin.index@gmail.com). *The Petrel Flyer*, February 2013 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Practice Notes*, February 2013 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N20 8NL). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, 21 February 2013 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *Report from the Unscrupulous Rascals*, February 2013 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of South Australia**, Mark Chellew, 50 Richmond Ave, Colonel Light Gardens, SA 5041, Australia). *Studies of the Nippon Sherlock Holmes Club*, volume 17 no. 1 (**The Sherlock Holmes Research Committee**, Saburoh Hiraga, 3-6-24 Uenohigashi, Toyonakashi, Osaka 560-0013, Japan).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, January 2013 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA). You can read it online at <http://redcircledc.org/index.php?id=39>.

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