

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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One of the best books about our late honorary member is *The Peter Cushing Companion* by **David Miller**. Now there's a better one, because Titan Books has (have?) published a revised edition for the actor's centenary, retitled *Peter Cushing: A Life in Film* (www.titanbooks.com; £18.99). Because of Cushing's reputation as a master of horror his films will be enjoyed by millions for decades to come, but that reputation has tended to overshadow his subtle and meticulous acting in other fields, most of them on stage or television. The 1954 BBC TV production of *1984* is available on DVD in America; Cushing's tortured performance as Winston Smith is superb. It's also worth seeking out his pre-Hammer films, such as *Alexander the Great*, *Moulin Rouge*, and especially Olivier's *Hamlet*. He played Sherlock Holmes seventeen times, from Hammer's flawed but entertaining *Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1958 to Tyburn's excellent *The Masks of Death* in 1984. Of the 1968 BBC TV series, only six episodes survive, but they include the two-part *Hound of the Baskervilles*, which many of us rate the finest screen version of the story. David Miller's book is a worthy tribute to a great actor.

In *The Scientific Sherlock Holmes: Cracking the Case with Science and Forensics* (Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, USA; \$29.95) **James O'Brien** demonstrates how Arthur Conan Doyle's own scientific knowledge enabled him to create a detective who was both credible and memorable. He points out that most of the science is in the earlier stories, concluding that the far greater popularity of those tales is 'surely no coincidence', and he shows us that Holmes was more advanced in the field of chemistry than some have suggested, even if his knowledge was not, perhaps, as profound as Watson thought. For all its good qualities, though – which do not include constant use of abbreviations for story titles – Professor O'Brien's book is both shallower and less accessible than *The Science of Sherlock Holmes* by **E J Wagner**.

Séamus Duffy, like Arthur Conan Doyle, is a Scotsman of Irish descent. In his collection *Sherlock Holmes in Paris* (Black Coat Press, www.blackcoatpress.com/sholmesinparis.htm; £12.99/\$20.95) he shows that he knows Dr Watson's chronicles, the literature that surrounds them, and the society that gave them birth. His own tales, a novella and two short stories, include all the essential elements for our pleasure: dazzling deductions, mysterious crimes, secret messages, references to untold cases, Lestrade, Mycroft, Mrs Hudson, breakfast at 221B, and the right relationship between Holmes and Watson. The long story, *The Adventure of the Nebrodi Sapphire*, takes the two to Paris to protect the famous jewel – but they find the sapphire secure and the man charged with guarding it dead in a locked room. Moriarty, François le Villard, Arsène Lupin and a Corsican secret society all play their part. The two short stories are likewise intriguing and enjoyable.

Other recent and forthcoming books. *Conan Doyle and the Crimes Club: The Creator of Sherlock Holmes and his Criminological Friends* by **Stephen Wade** (Fonthill Media, www.fonthillmedia.com; £17.29). *The Curse of Sherlock Holmes* by **Dhanil Ali** (MX Publishing, www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £7.99), the script of the play recently staged at the Unity Theatre, Liverpool. *Reasoning Backward: How Sherlock Holmes Can Make You a Better Problem Solver* by **Gregg Young** (Young Associates Inc, www.youngassocinc.com; £20.99). *East Wind Coming: A Sherlockian Study Book* by **Yuichi Hirayama & John**

Hall (MX Publishing; 15 May; £9.99). *Forgotten Stars: My Father and the British Silent Film World* by **Jonathan Croall** (Fantom Films, www.fantomfilms.co.uk; June; £16.99): Mr Croall, biographer of John Gielgud and Sybil Thorndike, is the son of John Stuart, a good Sir Henry Baskerville in the first sound film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, with Robert Rendel and Frederick Lloyd.

The Reichenbach Problem by **Martin Allison Booth** (Lion Hudson, www.lionhudson.com; £7.99), the first novel in the Reichenbach Trilogy, relating the adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle after he has disposed of Sherlock Holmes. *Sherlock Holmes: The Coils of Time and Other Stories* by **Ralph E Vaughan** (Dog In The Night Books; £6.58/\$9.95 pbk or £2.04/\$3.04 Kindle), a collection of fantastic and very entertaining adventures involving Martians, Wells's Time Traveller, ghosts, a sea serpent, a man who comes close to being Holmes, and a most remarkable dog. *The Amateur Executioner: Enoch Hale Meets Sherlock Holmes* by **Dan Andriacco & Kieran McMullen** (MX Publishing; 8 April; £7.99). *Sherlock Holmes in Pursuit* by **Matthew J Elliott** (MX; 15 April; £7.99). *Sherlock Holmes and the Needle's Eye: The World's Greatest Detective Tackles the Bible's Ultimate Mysteries* by **Len Bailey** (Thomas Nelson, www.christianbits.co.uk; 7 May; £10.88).

Readers in America (and perhaps elsewhere) can buy MX books direct from the publisher at www.sherlockholmesbookshop.com.

It's not, I think, Holmesian, but our Swiss member **Vincent Delay** has just published a novel called *Le Vampire des Grisons* (Les Éditions-Limitées, Lausanne, c/o Atelier Typo de la Cité, Rue Curtat 9, 1005 Lausanne, Switzerland; www.ateliertypo.ch).

Copies of *To Keep the Memory Green*, the book edited by **Nicholas Utechin & Steven Rothman** and published by The Quartering Press as a tribute to our late and much-honoured member **Richard Lancelyn Green**, are still, I think, available from the Society's Merchandising Officer at SHSL221B@aol.com. And Michael Kean notes that, for a limited time, the BSI offers copies at half price (\$15.00) via the *Baker Street Journal* website at www.bakerstreetjournal.com.

You'll find the current *Sherlockian E-times*, the enticing catalogue-newsletter of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA) at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times13-3.html.

Filming for Series 3 of *Sherlock* is well under way, and it's no secret that the first episode bears the inspired title of *The Empty Hearse*. Despite what you may have heard, it's not absolutely certain that there'll be a fourth series, though I predict a riot if there isn't. On 1 June at 1.40pm, **Crimefest: the international crime fiction convention**, held in Bristol from 30 May to 2 June, will feature *Creating Sherlock*, with panellists **Mark Gatiss**, **Steven Moffat** and **Sue Vertue**. Tickets are available via the website at www.crimefest.com/register.html.

Big Finish has recorded the audio plays for its next Holmes CDs, a four-adventure box set entitled *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes*, featuring the masterly team of **Nicholas Briggs** and **Richard Earl**, with guest artists including Tracey Childs, Blake Ritson and Andrew Fettes. Big Finish will also release for download some stories from the canon, performed by Nick Briggs and Richard Earl. Keep your eye on www.bigfinish.com/news/v/sherlock-holmes-series-3 - the release date is likely to be December

Andrew Fettes is one of the trio who'll be touring in the autumn in *Ha Ha Holmes!* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, the others being **Ben Langley** as Watson and **Joe Pasquale** as Holmes. It promises to be mad, silly and very funny. Full details are at <http://hahaholmes.com/> – but it doesn't mention that the tour begins at Chelmsford Civic

Theatre, 3 to 7 September (phone 01245 606505; website www.chelmsford.gov.uk/ha-ha-holmes-and-hound-baskervilles).

A reminder that *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes* by **Leslie Bricusse** will be at Hoxton Hall from 10 April to 10 May. Morphic Graffiti is thrilled to announce a stunning West End cast. Renowned performer **Tim Walton** will be playing the title role of Sherlock Holmes. Tim is a leading West End actor with credits that include *Matilda*, *Love Never Dies*, *Wicked* and most recently *Kiss Me Kate* at the Old Vic. Joining the Great Detective will be **John Cusworth** as his sidekick Dr. Watson, **Amanda Goldthorpe-Hall** as the villainous Mrs Moriarty, **Leonie Heath** as Bella Spellgrove, **Andrea Miller** as the ill-suffering Mrs Hudson and **Stephen Leask** as Inspector Lestrade. (130 Hoxton Street, N1 6SH; phone 020 7684 0060; website www.hoxtonhall.co.uk.)

From 18 May to 8 June, the Quarry Theatre at West Yorkshire Playhouse will be home to *Sherlock Holmes: The Best Kept Secret* by **Mark Catley** (phone 0113 213 7700; website <http://wyp.org.uk>).

And **Enter Stage Right Productions** has been commissioned to perform a brand new professional production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, dramatised by Claire Malcomson. It opens at The Festival Theatre, Hever Castle, 23 – 26 May before a small tour, including The Mill Studio at Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, 30 May – 1 June. Details at enterstageright.net/.

Robert Graham recently spent three days as a volunteer at Portsmouth City Library helping to catalogue the **Arthur Conan Doyle Collection: Lancelyn Green Bequest**. The library still needs volunteers. Even if you can't help, do take a look at the video on the local BBC news website at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-21928392>. If you *can* help, the person to contact is the Senior Archivist, Michael Gunton, whose e-mail address is Michael.Gunton@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

An interesting new venture – though rather a long way from us – is **221B Cellars** (221B Cellars, Santa Rosa, CA 95409, USA) a joint effort of Don Libey (author of *The Autobiography of Sherlock Holmes*), Don Yates, BSI, and Joanne Yates. The website at www.221bcellars.com is full of temptations. Mr Libey says: 'We are offering limited (200 bottles) First Edition and numbered bottles of Sonoma County wines each year named for a Holmes adventure and featuring on the label the first edition book covers. The first year is "A Study In Scarlet". These are to be purchased by Sherlockians as collectible editions and by Scion groups as items to be auctioned for fund raising.'

The ten-bedroom mansion called **Baskerville Hall** near Hay-on-Wye, originally Clyro Court, was built for the Baskerville-Mynors family, who claimed that *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was based on a legend told by them to Conan Doyle, a frequent visitor. The house, currently a hotel, is for sale. The agents are Russell, Baldwin & Bright, whose website is at <http://www.rbbproperty.co.uk/>, and the asking price is £3,000,000, according to a report by Wales Online at www.walesonline.co.uk/multimedia/2013/03/09/baskerville-hall-has-gone-on-the-market-for-3m-91466-32955621/#2, where photographs show it to be pretty spectacular..

A reminder that at 12.30pm on 11 April, our member **Richard Burnip** will give the Lunchtime Lecture at the National Army Museum in Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea SW3 4HT. His topic is *Duty Before Fiction: Arthur Conan Doyle and the Boer War*. Admission is free and tickets are not required.

Bob Byrne, who has been rather quiet lately, makes a very welcome return with issue 4 of his free online newsletter *Baker Street Essays*. He adds, 'I actually have Issue Five, which is about the illustrators of the Canon, just about done. I'll put it up this summer.' *Baker Street Essays* is actually much more substantial than a newsletter. Magazine or journal would be a more accurate term. Mr Byrne is a stimulating writer, and there's a good deal of satisfying material here. You'll find all four issues at www.solarpons.com/BakerStreetEssays.htm and a link to www.solarpons.com/, where Bob Byrne almost single-handedly maintains the traditions of **The Praed Street Irregulars**, celebrating Sherlock Holmes's worthy pupil.

At www.youtube.com/user/kennethross100/videos?view=0 you'll find several of the video recordings that our member **Ken Ross** has made of the Society's more extended activities. The latest is *Sherlock*

Holmes Society of London Russian Treaty Play, section 4 – the final part of the play performed by the Society's thespians during the Golden Anniversary cruise around the Baltic Sea in 2001. There are also recordings of the weekend visits to Cornwall in 1998 and to Gloucester in 1999, as well as highlights of the first Victorian Cricket Match in 2001.

The Society has taken on a considerable responsibility. Our entertainment after the formal business at the AGM next month will be a performance of a new radio play by **Jerome Coopersmith**, the award-winning dramatist and scriptwriter whose play *The Other Side*, about the Conan Doyles and the Houdinis, we staged a few years ago. Jerry Coopersmith is best known to Sherlockians as the author of the Broadway musical *Baker Street*. The new play, *Pipe Dream*, also features Sherlock Holmes, but another detective is the principal character. Our modest production will actually be the world premiere...

I learn from Peter Blau that the screenwriter **Jan Read** died on 29 November at the age of ninety-five. In a career that began with the famous Ealing film *The Blue Lamp*, his many scripts included two excellent ones for the BBC's 1965 *Sherlock Holmes* series with Douglas Wilmer: *The Man with the Twisted Lip* and *The Retired Colourman*.

Frank Thornton, who died on 16 March aged ninety-two, was a familiar figure in British TV and film comedies for several decades, achieving fame with *Are You Being Served?* and *Last of the Summer Wine*. In 1970 he appeared in Billy Wilder's film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* as the one-armed steward at the Diogenes Club.

Mr Patrick Leonard sends news that his father, **Patrick J Leonard Sr** of Braintree, Massachusetts, died on 19 March, aged ninety-five. Mr Leonard says, 'Please convey to all that my Father enjoyed the *Sherlock Holmes* stories all of his life and was always proud of his membership in the *Sherlock Holmes Society of London*. He delighted in receiving the bulletins and news and being a member of the Society was a very meaningful thing to him. He had one room in his home in Braintree which was his study. The walls were lined with books on all four sides and in front of the big window (with bookcases on each side) was his big oak, flat topped desk. Under the sheet of glass which covered the top of the desk he had a photo of himself, in tuxedo, speaking at a meeting of the *Sherlock Holmes Society of London*. How he did enjoy the privilege of speaking to the group! As I recall he brought and read citations to the Society from both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the Massachusetts State Senate.' Ave atque vale!

I've just been told, though I've yet to see an obituary, that **Basil Copper** died yesterday, aged eighty-nine. A prolific author, mainly of weird fiction, he wrote eight volumes continuing the chronicles of Solar Pons, the detective created by his friend and publisher August Derleth.

Periodicals received. *The Gaslight Gazette*, March 2012 (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott**, David J Milner, 6 Crowndale Drive, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, March 2013 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Alisa West, IllustClients@gmail.com). *Ineffable Twaddle*, April 2013 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, www.soundofthebaskervilles.com). *Ironmongers Daily News*, frequently (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, www.sshf.com/inscription-sshf.php). *Mayday Mayday*, March 2013 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardarn Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Passengers' Log*, 6 January 2013 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O'Neill, 24 Karuah Street, Strathfield, NSW 2135, Australia). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, 20 March 2013 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring 2013 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). *The Torr*, Spring 2013 (**The Poor Folk Upon The Moors**, Stephan Arthur, Camelot, Homburgstrasse 9, CH-4433 Ramlinsburg, Switzerland).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, March 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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