

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Today is apparently *Star Wars* Day, but only if you put the month before the day ('May the Fourth be with you...'). To me, and no doubt to you, it has a greater significance as Reichenbach Day.

A facet of Arthur Conan Doyle's life that is mentioned in only a couple of the more recent biographies, and then very briefly, is his membership of Our Society, otherwise the Crimes Club, founded in 1903 by HB Irving and five friends. Like his father Sir Henry, Irving was an actor; he was also a barrister with a keen interest in criminology. Members with a professional interest in crime have included Sir Edward Marshall Hall, QC and Sir Bernard Spilsbury. Conan Doyle, who joined in 1904, was one of the club's many authors, along with, for instance, EW Hornung, PG Wodehouse, Max Pemberton and Bertram Fletcher Robinson. In February Fonthill Media Ltd published the first book about this important but little-known side of his life: *Conan Doyle and the Crimes Club: The Creator of Sherlock Holmes and his Criminological Friends* by **Stephen Wade** (www.fonthillmedia.com; £17.29). Mr Wade gives us an account of how the Crimes Club came into being and what it was like in the early days, together with pen-portraits of a dozen members of the time, illustrating the different attitudes towards their common interest, and what they put into and took from the club. Despite the book's title, Conan Doyle gets no more space than George R Sims, and little more than AEW Mason or William Le Queux. There's an extensive bibliography, but a paucity of dates and other establishing details (Arthur Lambton claimed that a conversation with Conan Doyle inspired an important feature of *A Study in Scarlet*, but when did the conversation take place?). *Conan Doyle and the Crimes Club* is a good start, but it's far from the last word on the topic.

I was sceptical when I learned of a play that would tour the north-west in March: 'Somewhere between the fact and the fiction Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's greatest creation stole the soul of Jeremy Brett, the actor who would become the embodiment of the Baker Street Sleuth. *The Curse of Sherlock Holmes* follows Jeremy as he fights for his sanity... his life.' I've not seen any reviews, so don't know how it came across in performance, but the script by **Dhanil Ali** is now available from MX Publishing (www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £7.99), and it turns out to be thought-provoking and dramatic, without being unnecessarily sensational. Since the protagonist is Jeremy Brett, however, the disclaimer: 'All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental,' is decidedly disingenuous.

Last year MX released *Sherlock Holmes on the Air*, a selection of the best radio scripts by our own **Matthew J Elliott**. Now comes *Sherlock Holmes in Pursuit* (MX; £7.99), containing six first-rate stories in the Watson style, four originally published in the much-missed *Sherlock Magazine*. My only cavil is that it's often hard to tell where one paragraph ends and another begins, as the first lines aren't indented, nor are the paragraphs separated. The quality of the stories more than makes up for that inconvenience, though.

The second novel about Holmes and Irene Adler by **Amy Thomas**, *The Detective, the Woman and the Winking Tree* (MX; £9.99), uses the same narrative technique as the first, *The Detective and the Woman*: Miss Adler's chapters are told in the first person, and Holmes's in the third person. It works well, not least because the woman emerges as a strong, intelligent and entirely credible character, whom Holmes rightly comes to admire. The subject of this new joint investigation is the apparently

impossible disappearance of a Mr James Phillimore – who, as we remember from Dr Watson's guarded remark, 'stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world'. Amy Thomas is a Baker Street Babe – and that is a recommendation.

Another second novel in a promising series is *Sherlock Holmes & Young Winston: The Jubilee Plot* by **Mike Hogan** (MX; £9.99). In June 1887 the prospect of publication at last for *A Study in Scarlet* is overshadowed by the imminent crowning event of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee: a service at Westminster Abbey attended by her government ministers, peers of the realm and fifty foreign monarchs. Dynamite attacks by the Fenians are a very real threat. Lestrade has been seconded to Scotland Yard's new Special Irish Branch, but Holmes, Watson and the twelve-year-old Churchill face even worse danger.

There is the possibility of a Fenian attack also in *The Amateur Executioner: Enoch Hale Meets Sherlock Holmes*, the first collaboration between **Dan Andriacco** and **Kieran McMullen** (MX; £7.99). Hale, a native Bostonian, is a reporter for London's Central News Syndicate – where, in 1920, Horace Harker is still a familiar figure, though far from revered. It becomes evident that the apparent suicide of a Music Hall artiste was only the first of a series of murders by hanging. Hale's determination to find the link between the victims is variously helped and hindered by a cast of remarkable characters that includes his friend TS Eliot, WB Yeats, Bernard Shaw, Ezra Pound, Alfred Hitchcock and Winston Churchill – not to mention Chief Inspector Wiggins and Sherlock Holmes. In contrast to most tales involving Holmes, *The Amateur Executioner* takes us into an ambiguous and murky world where right and wrong aren't always distinguishable. I look forward to reading more about Enoch Hale.

The Art of Deduction compiled by **Hannah Rogers** and edited by **Steve Emezc** (MX; £9.99) is a bewilderingly varied collection of prose, verse and pictures, most but not all inspired by *Sherlock*, and all, I think, contributed by people who usually publish their work on-line. The proof-reading, it has to be said, is shockingly poor ('I road all the way to the jail with a not in my stomach'...) but the book's heart is in the right place. It was created both to raise awareness of the Undershaw Preservation Trust and to raise funds for Help for Heroes.

A new edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* from Pulp! The Classics (<http://pulptheclassics.com>; £5.99) contains the complete text, nicely laid out, but presented between covers that cleverly parody those of the sort of garish American paperbacks that we loved to find at the newsstands when I was a schoolboy. I quote: 'A desolate moor, a diabolical dog in need of a muzzle, and some inbred locals... Sherlock Holmes is really UP AGAINST IT.'

Richard Kellogg may be best known in our circles for his 1986 book *Sherlock Holmes and the Origins of Psychology*, but the previous year Magico had published his charming children's story *The Little Girl and Mister Holmes*, and now, after nearly three decades, comes his second Sherlockian story for young readers, *Barry Baskerville Solves a Case*, with colourful illustrations by **Gary Kato** (An Airship 27 Production, <http://Airship27Hangar.com>). Young Barry's family and friends are amused by his desire to emulate the great detective, until his sharp eye and quick mind save his father from falling victim to a con man. The 28-page book is available from Amazon.co.uk for £5.92, or as a Kindle edition for £1.34.

Sherlock Holmes, as we know, was only a fraction of Conan Doyle's literary output. His weird fiction, influenced in part by his admiration for Poe, includes a dozen or more excellent stories. Now Educated English Audiobooks has released a four-CD set, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Tales of Terror*, containing 'The Beetle-Hunter', 'The Case of

Lady Sannox', 'The New Catacomb', 'The Lift', 'The Brown Hand' and 'The Brazilian Cat', read with clarity, authority and feeling by **Peter Greenhalgh**, together with the full text in an attractive illustrated paperback book (www.speechandpronunciation.com; £19.50 + postage; digital download £14.50).

Due in June from MX Publishing is *Benedict Cumberbatch, In Transition: An Unauthorised Performance Biography* by **Lynnette Porter** (£12.99), and in September comes *A Few Lessons from Sherlock Holmes* by **Peter Bevelin** (£6.99) [*see DM 330*].

Out now as e-books from Endeavour Press are *Benedict Cumberbatch: Behind the Scenes* by **Neil Simpson** (www.endeavourpress.com; Kindle edition £1.99 from Amazon.co.uk), *The Great War: 1914, The British Campaign in France and Flanders, Vol. 1* by **Arthur Conan Doyle** (Kindle 99p from Amazon) and *The Best of The Strand Magazine*, thirteen pieces from early issues, including 'The Adventure of the Silver Blaze' [*sic*] (Kindle £2.99 from Amazon).

Not content with the splendid *Young Sherlock Holmes* series – the sixth novel, *Knife Edge*, is due in September – **Andrew Lane** has taken inspiration from Conan Doyle's next most famous hero in *Lost Worlds: Calum Challenger, Book 1* (Macmillan Children's Books, www.panmacmillan.com; £5.99). Calum, an eighteen-year-old paraplegic genius, is the great-grandson of George Edward Challenger, but his adventures owe much to Mr Lane's memories of reading Willard Price and EC Tubbs. A band of mis-matched heroes, computer hacking, a ruthless organisation called Nemor, and the search for a missing link in the Caucasus – this first adventure is deliriously exciting. There's a website at www.thelostworlds.co.uk.

Looking a long way ahead, *Sherlock Holmes FAQ: All You Need to Know about the World's Greatest Private Detective* by **Dave Thompson** is due from Applause Theatre Book Publishers in March 2014 (www.halleonardbooks.com/).

The latest *Sherlockian E-times*, the catalogue-newsletter of **Classic Specialties** (PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219, USA) is posted at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times13-4.html – full of good things!

As part of this year's **Essex Book Festival**, at 7.30pm on Friday 17 May **Barry Cryer** and **Bob Cryer** will be at Lion Walk United Reformed Church in Colchester to talk about their delightful book *Mrs Hudson's Diaries: A View from the Landing at 221B* [*see DM 326*]. The box office number is 01206 573948.

Fiona-Jane Brown, former Conan Doyle Projects Officer at Portsmouth, has launched a campaign to raise money to bring the **Don't Go Into the Cellar** company to a small community centre in the old fishing district of Torry, a suburb of Aberdeen, to stage *Holmes Alone* and *Warnings to the Curious*. She hopes to put the show on in the autumn. The fundraising site is at www.indiegogo.com/projects/taking-theatre-to-torry.

Chelmsford Theatre Workshop alumnus Duncan Cramphorn will play Holmes in **Burnside Amateur Theatrical Society's** production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by **F Andrew Leslie** at the Bryce Institute in Burnside, Cumbria from 30 May to 1 June (box office 07792 777213).

On 31 May and 1 June at the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds there'll be 'a new upbeat musical, presented by the award-winning Voice Squad Cadets – hilarity on a stick!' That's *The Sherlock Girls* by **Birgitta Kenyon** (01248 769505; www.theatreroyal.org).

At the amazingly Gothick Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham (www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/events.php) at 7.30pm on 4 June, you can enjoy *It's Sherlock Holmes!* – described as 'a dazzling recreation of the long-running American radio series featuring the stories of Sherlock Holmes'.

Sherlock Holmes: The Best Kept Secret by **Mark Catley** will be at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds 18 May to 8 June (phone 0113 213 7700; <http://wyp.org.uk/>), then at the New Victoria Theatre in Woking, 11-15 June (www.atgtickets.com/venues/new-victoria-theatre/), at the New Theatre in Cardiff 18-22 June (www.newtheatrecardiff.co.uk/), and finally, for the moment, at Manchester Opera House 25-29 June (www.manchestertheatres.com/operahouse.htm).

From 16 June to 22 August the quartet called **The Pantaloons** will take their play *Sherlock Holmes* to a score of picturesque outdoor locations around the country (www.thepantaloons.co.uk/shows/sh2013.asp). And from 23 June to 4 September **Chapterhouse Theatre Company** will

tour similar venues, in Britain and Ireland, with their own version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* dramatised by **Laura Turner** (www.chapterhouse.org/sherlock_2013.htm).

At www.bigfinish.com/ranges/coming_soon_reverse/sherlock-holmes you can pre-order Big Finish's 4-CD audio drama set *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes*, written by **Jonathan Barnes**, starring **Nicholas Briggs** and **Richard Earl**, and due for release in December [*see DM 331*].

CBS Interactive is introducing new online-only series, including an Internet show based on *Elementary*. This is *Baker Street Irregulars*, 'live-action skein' which follows crew of characters assisting the modern-day Sherlock in solving crimes. It will debut online in the fall.

At the 2013 Edgar Awards banquet on 2 May, the Mystery Writers of America chose *Sherlock: A Scandal in Belgravia*, written by **Steven Moffat**, as Best TV Episode (*Elementary: Child Predator*, written by **Peter Black**, was nominated) and *The Scientific Sherlock Holmes* by **James O'Brien** as Best Critical/ Biographical work.

Westminster City Council & Transport for London are upgrading all of their signposting as part of the Legible London campaign. The old signs, including four genuine (but non-Victorian) for Baker Street, will be offered at auction. Most will be sold on Tuesday 21 May at **Summers Place Auctions** in Billingshurst, West Sussex. This will be complemented by a sealed bid auction, which ends on 22 May. See www.summersplaceauctions.com or call 01403 331331.

The official **Peter Cushing** First Day Cover for last month's *Great Britons* Royal Mail stamps sold out very quickly. However, the other versions are, I think, still available from various dealers, and they all feature the full set of ten stamps. I settled for the Vivien Leigh cover.

Peter Blau reports: 'If you're planning a trip to Hungary: there's now a Sherlockian society in Budapest. Zsófia Marinczak zmarinczak@gmail.com is the contact for the **Hungarian Sherlock Holmes Club**.' And Don Libey says, 'We are pleased to announce the formation of the **John H. Watson Society** on 11 April, 2013. You will find extensive details at www.johnhwatsonociety.com.'

Patrick Garland, director, writer and actor, died on 20 April, aged seventy-eight. The major obituaries mentioned *Forty Years On*, *Underneath the Arches*, and his masterpiece, John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, but regrettably they ignored the original production of *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*, written by Jeremy Paul for Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke, and directed by Garland. As Michael Cox sadly observed, all four are gone now.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Spring 2013 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 583, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Canadian Holmes*, Spring 2013 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada). *Cri Bar Crier*, April 2013 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Ave, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, March 2013 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA).

The Illustrious Clients News, May 2013 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Alisa West, IllustClients@gmail.com). *Ironmongers Daily News*, er, frequently (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, www.sshf.com/inscription-sshf.php). *The Magic Door*, Spring 2013 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, 16 Sunset Street, Holland Landing, Ontario, Canada L9N 1H4). *The Passengers' Log*, Summer 2012 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O'Neill, 24 Karuah Street, Strathfield, NSW 2135, Australia). *The Petrel Flyer*, April 2013 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, 18 April 2013 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermacti Press*, April 2013 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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