

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 337 5 November 2013

*The subscription for postal subscribers who send money rather than stamped & self-addressed envelopes is (for 12 issues) £6.60 in the UK, and £11.00 or US\$18.00 overseas. Please make dollar checks payable to The Sherlock Holmes Society of London. An e-mail subscription costs nothing and pretty much guarantees instantaneous delivery.*

You wait ages for a book about the British popular fascination with murder in fact and fiction, and then two come along – well, not exactly at once, but pretty close together. *The Invention of Murder* by **Judith Flanders** was actually published in 2011, and Ms Flanders acted as a consultant to the recent fine BBC4 TV series *A Very British Murder: The Story of a National Obsession*, and the book of the same title by **Lucy Worsley** (BBC Books; [www.randomhouse.co.uk](http://www.randomhouse.co.uk); £20.00). As Chief Curator of Historic Royal Palaces, Dr Worsley is probably best known for her works on the monarchy and the development of the British home, but her interest in murder as a social phenomenon is genuine. In 1827 Thomas De Quincey's satirical essay 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' broached the idea of the English as 'Murder-Fanciers'. He was inspired by the brutal killing in 1811 of a shopkeeper and his family in Ratcliffe Highway, and the possible miscarriage of justice by which John Williams was speedily arrested, convicted and hanged. The Metropolitan Police, founded in 1829, developed in parallel with science and medicine. Detection of crime became gradually more sophisticated, but so did crime itself, including murder. Real-life detectives were immortalised in fiction – Inspector Field as Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*, Inspector Whicher as Sergeant Cuff in *The Moonstone* – and fictional murder became big business, not least when it was satisfactorily solved by a truly great detective, as too few factual murders were. Sherlock Holmes came on to the scene just as the police and scientific specialists were learning, as Dr Worsley puts it, to read a body. It was a timely arrival. *The Invention of Murder* is rightly recommended as the fuller, more comprehensive study, and *A Very British Murder* makes an admirable companion volume.

New from **Hugh Ashton**, author of *The Deed Box of John H Watson MD* and others, is *Sherlock Ferret and The Missing Necklace*, a charming story for children (Ted E Beans; [www.inknbeans.com](http://www.inknbeans.com); £3.73). Sherlock Ferret, who lives with his friend Watson Mouse in rooms underneath Mrs Hudson's bakery, is asked by Miss Leticia Rabbit to recover her gold necklace. Sherlock suspects Moriarty Magpie or his associate Sebastian Moorhen of stealing it. With the help of the police detective Lestrade (a rhinoceros, but not a very big one) and the Bakery Irregulars, Sherlock and Watson solve the mystery in a highly satisfactory manner. *Sherlock Ferret and The Missing Necklace* is a very handsome paperback, with illustrations by Andy Boerger that remind me rather of Paul Galdone's for the original *Basil of Baker Street* books by Eve Titus.

Reading *Sherlock Holmes: The Will of the Dead* by **George Mann** (Titan Books; [www.titanbooks.com](http://www.titanbooks.com); 8 November; £7.99) I realised that I'd encountered the story before. It was originally an audio play called *The Reification of Hans Gerber* – the first entirely new play, I think, produced by Big Finish, with the splendid team of Nicholas Briggs and Richard Earl as Holmes and Watson (see review in DM 318). The plot, a good one concerning the unsuspected new claimant to a murdered man's estate, is faithfully reproduced here, but it's neatly interwoven with a separate parallel mystery, possibly inspired by 'The Cybernauts', a classic episode of *The Avengers*. Who is behind the spate of robberies committed by 'iron men', steam-powered mechanical androids? The novel doesn't quite capture the Watson style, but it's clever and very entertaining.

*Doctor Watson's Charge*, the third novella in the series by MP and military historian **Patrick Mercer**, concerns the death of Lord Cardigan, who led the disastrous charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War. The book is published in Kindle format by Endeavour Press at £1.99 ([www.endeavourpress.com](http://www.endeavourpress.com)).

Stephen Norris notes that the graphic novel series *Watson and Holmes* by **Karl Bollers**, who goes beyond *Elementary* in reinventing the characters as African-Americans in present-day Harlem, has been successful enough to become a continuing series rather than its projected four issue run. (New Paradigm Studios; [www.newparadigmstudios.com/about/watson-and-holmes](http://www.newparadigmstudios.com/about/watson-and-holmes)).

**Daniel Corey** reports that *Moriarty Deluxe Edition HC* (Image Comics; [www.imagecomics.com](http://www.imagecomics.com); £22.50) gathers issues 1 to 9, the first and second story arcs, of his well-received graphic novel series, in a sumptuous hardback volume.

Doug Wrigglesworth recommends *Sherlock Holmes in the Hound of the Baskervilles: A BabyLit Sounds Primer* by **Jennifer Adams**, illustrated by **Alison Oliver** (Gibbs M Smith, Inc; [www.gibbs-smith.com](http://www.gibbs-smith.com); £5.99). 'Alison Oliver's bold illustrations correspond with Jennifer Adams' clever, simple text to create pairings little bibliophiles will love to have read to them, such as "hounds howl," "gates screech," and "stairs creak.'" (The publishers' words, not Doug's.)

A reminder that on Friday 8 November, at the Park Plaza Sherlock Holmes Hotel in Baker Street, **Matthew J Elliott** will launch his new book *The Immortals: An Unauthorized Guide to 'Sherlock' and 'Elementary'* (MX Publishing; [www.mxpublishing.co.uk](http://www.mxpublishing.co.uk); £9.99). There's no charge, and everyone's welcome. Matthew, as many already know, compiles and presents the Society's annual Film Evening. He's also a wonderfully versatile and intelligent scriptwriter and a very decent actor.

More new and forthcoming titles *Sherlock Holmes and the Horror of Frankenstein* by **Luke Benjamin Kuhns & Marcie Klinger** (MX; £7.99); *Sherlock Holmes and the Black Widow* by **Kieran McMullen** (MX; 11 November; £10.46); *The Perils of Sherlock Holmes* by **Loren D. Estleman** (Tyrus Books; [www.tyrusbooks.com](http://www.tyrusbooks.com); £9.87); *Sons of Moriarty and More Stories of Sherlock Holmes* by **Loren D. Estleman** (Tyrus Books; £15.43); *The Sherlock Holmes Quiz Book* by **Andrew Murray** (MX; 2 December; £8.99).

The newsletter catalogue of **Classic Specialties**, full of interest as always, is on-line at [http://sherlock-holmes.com/e\\_times13-10.html](http://sherlock-holmes.com/e_times13-10.html).

Disconcerting news passed on by Steve Emecz regarding **AudioGO**, the company that used to be BBC Audiobooks: 'Rachel Josephson, AudioGO's head of marketing and sales, told *The Bookseller*: "I can confirm that AudioGO has temporarily suspended business operations whilst we seek an investment or a sale of the business."'

**Charles Hall** (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW) writes: 'It has been some time since I have done anything relating to Sherlock Holmes. I am now selling off the remains of my stock.' Charles offers 30 different postcards for £6.00 and 16 Christmas cards, with envelopes, for £5.50. Prices include postage within the UK. With the nice cartoons by Ian Macgregor Fraser and by Charles Hall himself, each set is worth buying just to keep as a collectible.

Brenda Rossini notes some unique and attractive hand-made handbags at [www.NovelCreations.etsy.com](http://www.NovelCreations.etsy.com), recycling leather-binding from classic books – including, of course, Sherlock Holmes.

Oscar Ross reports a new digitally remastered release of that grand film *A Study in Terror* from Odeon Entertainment ([www.odeonent.co.uk](http://www.odeonent.co.uk); 11 November) on DVD (£11.99) and Blu Ray (£16.99).

Just in is the news that *The Empty Hearse*, the first instalment in series 3 of *Sherlock* will receive its première, followed by a Q&A session with cast and crew, at BFI Southbank (which to most of us will always be the National Film Theatre) at 1.00pm on 15 December. BFI members can book from 6 November, and non-members from 12 November. [www.bfi.org.uk](http://www.bfi.org.uk).

*Dr Watson in the Spotlight* - on 13 November, **Robert Ryan** will be at St Bartholomew's Hospital Pathology Museum to talk about his Dr Watson novel *Dead Man's Land*. There'll also be a screening of *Sherlock Holmes and the Stolen Emerald*, a short silent film recorded at the Museum earlier in the year. (see the trailer at <http://vimeo.com/68886273>.) Tweed/ fancy dress/ steam-punk attire is not only encouraged but ensures entry into a raffle to win a copy of the book and film. 6:30pm for 7pm; £6.50 inc. booking fee and wine reception. Book through Eventbrite: <http://bartsautumn6-09.eventbrite.co.uk/>.

Booking is now open for the one-day symposium to be held in the Haldane Room at University College London on 9 December, celebrating Conan Doyle's second most famous protagonist: [http://store.london.ac.uk/browse/extra\\_info.asp?compid=1&modid=5&deptid=179&catid=31&prodid=562](http://store.london.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=5&deptid=179&catid=31&prodid=562). This is *Challenger Unbound*.

From 29 November to 1 December, **Portsmouth Historic Dockyard** will host its *Victorian Festival of Christmas*. 'Festival favourites are set to return including our largest ever Christmas Market, Fagin's Real Ale Tavern, Dickensian-style snow covered streets, a traditional Father Christmas (dressed in green) stage show and a wonderland of Victorian characters and entertainment. New for this year we will also be highlighting Victorian character Sherlock Holmes whose author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, lived for a period and wrote some of his famous novels in Portsmouth.' There'll be input, I understand, from the Conan Doyle Collection, and the organisers ask whether any members of our Society would be interested in doing any readings or re-enactments. 'We really want the public to feel like they are part of a Sherlock Holmes adventure and thought this may be something that could be of interest?' If the idea appeals to you, please contact Georgia Carne at [Georgia@rem-events.com](mailto:Georgia@rem-events.com). The Festival website is at [www.christmasfestival.co.uk/](http://www.christmasfestival.co.uk/).

Milana Vibornova writes from rather further afield: 'I am happy to announce that **Sherlock Holmes' Birthday** event is going to be this year again! We will be pleased to see you in Riga, January 4th participating in our annual celebration of the World's most famous detective! Please follow information on the official celebration website <http://holmes.lv> for programme information of the event, videos, photos of the previous events, as well as on our page on Facebook/Sherlock Homes' Birthday. Event times and their final list may change.' This year's event, the first, was evidently a great success. Next year's should be just as good.

Earlier in the year you may have seen Jean Upton and me, with our team captain Jim Crozier, failing to disgrace ourselves on a certain TV quiz show. The latest news - about the series, not about our team, the Cat Lovers - is that '*Only Connect*, the hugely popular BBC Four quiz show in which teams compete to find connections between seemingly unrelated clues, is to move to BBC Two in 2014... BBC Four has tendered for a replacement show and following short-listing is currently seeing run-throughs of three contenders: *The Knowledge* from BBC In-House entertainment, *Enigma* from RDF-Parasol, the company behind *Only Connect*, and *Eliminate The Impossible* from Victory Television.' I like the sound of *Eliminate The Impossible*...

Talking of quizzes, Don Libey, 'Buttons' of **The John H Watson Society**, sends word that the weekly quiz is open to members and non-members alike. It's just for fun, but very competitive fun - be warned. Current and past quizzes are at [www.johnhwatsonociety.com/quiz-page.html](http://www.johnhwatsonociety.com/quiz-page.html). The whole website is worth a look.

Sad news, though not entirely unexpected, from John Addy, Membership Secretary of **The Musgraves**: 'It was announced in *The Scion* issue 25, Summer 2013, that after ten years, The Musgraves

Sherlock Holmes Society is to be wound up due to poor attendance at meetings and limited contributions to *The Scion*. Current members are being given free membership for a year in which final *Scions* will be published.'

But as one door closes another opens. There's a new society, whose website you'll find at <http://sherlockianviolinsociety.com/>. Founder Becky Simpson writes: 'The idea for the **Sherlockian Violin Society** began at a Sherlock meeting in London, when three Sherlockians met each other for the first time and discovered they were all violinists too. We came to the conclusion that there must be quite a few Sherlockians who play the violin and that it's a shame there wasn't some kind of group for them. Well...now there is!'

Something a little *recherché*, to use one of Holmes's favourite expressions, regarding the late **Jack Tracy**... this is from Billy Rawl, Spokesman of The Hansom Wheels of Columbia, SC. 'If you're like me you didn't know anything at all about the life and times of the author of *Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana* until Phil Dematteis's presentation at the HW meeting of Oct. 3rd. We've published it in its entirety here, and if you missed the meeting we think you'll find it an intriguing mystery and a look into the fascinating interior of this strange person. Even if you were there, due to the acoustics in the room and the fact that some of us don't hear as well as we used to, you may well find lots of stuff in this web version that you missed in the presentation: [www.hansomwheels.com/jack\\_tracy\\_prologue.htm](http://www.hansomwheels.com/jack_tracy_prologue.htm)'

**Anthony Hinds**, who died on 30 September aged ninety-one, will forever be identified with the great days of Hammer Films, the company co-founded by his father, whose stage name was Will Hammer. Anthony's first film as producer was *Who Killed Van Loon* in 1948, In 1959 he produced *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for Hammer, and in 1982 he wrote a good play based on the novel for his local amateur theatre company. Two years later he devised the story for the TV movie *The Masks of Death*, in which Peter Cushing played Holmes for the last time.

In his long, varied and distinguished acting career, **Nigel Davenport** played Arthur Conan Doyle in the 1972 BBC TV series *The Edwardians*, Lord Smithwick in the 1988 Holmesian farce *Without a Clue*, and the Duke of Holderness in the 1993 Radio 4 production of *The Priory School*. He was also seen, uncredited, as an old man in the 2003 martial arts comedy *Shanghai Knights*, which contains some bizarre Holmesian elements. Nigel Davenport died on 25 October aged eighty-five.

Periodicals received. *Canadian Holmes*, Fall 2013 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada). *Cri Bar Crier*, October 2013 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Ave, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *Gaslight Gazette*, October 2013 (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott**, David J Milner, 6 Crowndale Drive, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, USA).

*Ineffable Twaddle*, October 2013 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, [www.soundofthebaskervilles.com](http://www.soundofthebaskervilles.com)). *The Moor: Magasin för Sherlockianer*, Okt. 2013 (**The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden**, Anders Wiggström, Byggmästarvägen 29, 168 32 Bromma, Sweden). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, September 2013 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *The Scion*, Autumn 2013 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Watsonian*, Fall 2013 (**The John H Watson Society**, Dr Joanne Yates, [publisher@johnhwatsonociety.com](mailto:publisher@johnhwatsonociety.com)) [*\*the first issue, splendidly produced and full of interest\**].

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, October 2013 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; [blau7103@comcast.net](mailto:blau7103@comcast.net)).

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