

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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no. 338 16 December 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.*

Yesterday Jean and I attended the preview of *The Empty Hearse*, episode 1 of the third series of *Sherlock*, so we could tell you just how Sherlock Holmes survived that fall from the roof of Bart's Hospital, but we're not going to. Molly is involved, as everyone suspected, and there really was an obvious clue in *The Reichenbach Fall*. Sherlock's return to London doesn't go as smoothly as in 'The Empty House', and his reunion with John Watson, provokes a more assertive reaction than a mere faint – but that was to be expected. During his two-year absence the detective has been active overseas; his return is prompted by warning of an imminent terrorist attack on London. Mark Gatiss's script is what Margery Allingham called a plum-pudding, rich with excitement, tension and sparkling humour, some of it very dark. There are nods to *A Study in Terror*, *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* and, gloriously, *The Spider Woman* – oh, and to the fine Father Brown story 'The Queer Feet'. The director, Jeremy Lovering, rises to the challenge with style and verve, but so does everyone else – notably new girl Amanda Abbington. (I'm bowled over by designer Arwel Wyn Jones's beautiful creation of a Tube train...) It was worth the long wait! *Sherlock* is one of the UK's most successful television exports. To accommodate BBC Worldwide's guests there had to be a separate simultaneous screening...

That admirable society **The Poor Folk Upon the Moors** has issued the first in The Camelot Series, limited edition chapbooks edited by **Stephan Arthur**. The title *First Books of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* may be a little misleading, though 'books' is the word Conan Doyle used in his contribution to the series called 'My First Book' in *The Idler*, edited by his friend Jerome K Jerome. What we have here, introduced and annotated by the editor, are a childhood fragment, an account of the toxic effects of gelsiminum, and ACD's first two published stories, 'The Mystery of Sasassa Valley' and 'Selecting a Ghost'. Copies of this attractive booklet cost £6.00 (post-paid in the UK). Please e-mail Stephan at [stephan.arthur@gmx.ch](mailto:stephan.arthur@gmx.ch) or send a cheque, payable to Vosper Arthur, to Vosper at Spynishlake, Doddiscombsleigh, Exeter EX6 7PR.

The essays collected in *Watson Is Not an Idiot: An Opinionated Tour of the Sherlock Holmes Canon* by **Eddy Webb** (MX Publishing; [www.mxpublishing.co.uk](http://www.mxpublishing.co.uk); £9.99) were originally posted on Mr Webb's blog at <http://eddyfate.com>. They are necessarily opinionated, as they must be; they're also intelligent, incisive and well-written. The nearest equivalent to *Watson Is Not an Idiot* is probably Martin Dakin's *Sherlock Holmes Commentary*, but Mr Webb takes the line throughout that the chronicles of Sherlock Holmes are fiction, written by Arthur Conan Doyle. His book can help us appreciate just what is good in the stories, what isn't, and why they still appeal when so much contemporary work is forgotten. It would make an ideal present for the Holmesian neophyte or for the long-time scholar.

I first encountered **Matthew Elliott** as a fellow-contributor to *Sherlock* magazine, whose last issue appeared in 2006, the year in which Mark Gatiss told the Society of the mad idea he and Steven Moffat had for an updated Sherlock Holmes. Matthew has since established himself as a scriptwriter and occasional actor, and as the deviser and presenter of our annual Film Evening. There's no one better qualified to provide a survey of *Sherlock* – which he does in *The Immortals: An Unauthorised Guide to Sherlock and Elementary* (MX; £9.99). Cumberbatch or Miller? They're both fine actors, equally superb in Danny Boyle's

production of *Frankenstein*, and Matthew Elliott's guide is throughout perceptive, witty, affectionate and deeply knowledgeable.

Why, in the enlightened 1880s, is someone stealing the bodies of young women from London cemeteries? That's the starting point of *Sherlock Holmes and the Horror of Frankenstein*, the graphic novel by **Luke Benjamin Kuhns** and **Marcie Klinger** (MX; £7.99). Ms Klinger's splendidly atmospheric full-colour illustrations enhance Mr Kuhns's luridly exciting story, and the result is full-blooded gothic horror.

There's ideal material for a Holmesian quiz night in *The Sherlock Holmes Quiz Book* by **Andrew Murray** (MX; £8.99). The thousand questions, covering individual stories, stage, screen and radio adaptations, characters, crimes, disguises and more, range from the straightforward to the truly brain-teasing. Also written by **Andrew Murray**, *Is That My Holmes?* and *Is That My Watson?* (MX; each £6.99) are very slim booklets, but very attractive, with the neat little verses illustrated in full colour by **Deakin Brook**, parodying toddlers' board books such as *That's Not My Duck*.

**Marlene Aig** died in 1996, aged just forty-three. I don't know how old she was when she wrote *Sherlock Holmes and the Lufton Lady* (MX; £6.99). It's very much a young woman's story, a romantic tale that ignores, as so many do, Holmes's very clear statement, 'I have never loved.' But as one would expect, it's rather better written than most. Marlene circulated it to her Sherlockian friends and probably never expected it to be published. That it is, and nicely too, edited by Chris Redmond, is a tribute to much-missed friend and colleague.

In *The Death of Cardinal Tosca: From the Dispatch-Box of John H Watson MD* (Inknbeans Press; <http://221BeanBakerStreet.info>; £6.23) **Hugh Ashton** maintains his place as one of the best writers of new Sherlock Holmes stories, in both plotting and style.

Our member **Jayantika Ganguly**, General Secretary & Editor of the Sherlock Holmes Society of India, writes: 'Thanks to Steve Emecz, Tom Ue, Calvert Markham and Bob Gibson, my very first book, *The Holmes Sutra, a gift for Sherlock Holmes for his 160th birthday*, is about to come to life on January 6, 2014! To celebrate the event, Steve is throwing a party for *Sherlock Holmes* on January 9, 2014 (7 PM onwards) at the *Sherlock Holmes Hotel* on Baker Street, London. Details and registration at <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-holmes-sutra-celebrating-sherlock-holmes-160th-birthday-tickets-8990634229?aff=eorg>. It is an open event, and free, and Steve has Sherlockian goodies to give away!' This is nicely timed, just before our Annual Dinner on the 11th, so I'll hope to see some of you there. Calvert Markham contributed the foreword, by the way.

More new and forthcoming books: *Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of Einstein's Daughter* by **Tim Symonds** (MX; £8.99); *Sherlock Holmes and the Black Widower* by **Kieran McMullen** (MX; £9.99); *Sherlock Holmes The Spirit and the Letter: A chirographic and semiotic study* by **Z W Wolkowski** (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform; £15.45); *The Mammoth Book of the Lost Chronicles of Sherlock Holmes* by **Denis O Smith** (Constable & Robinson; 16 January 2014; £8.99);

*Le Boucher de la St-Martin* (Les Éditions-Limitées, rue Curtat 9-1005 Lausanne, Switzerland) is the fourth murder mystery by our Swiss member **Vincent Delay**, Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Museum at Lucens – Switzerland's (and, I think, the world's) first such museum.

On 31 December Penguin USA will publish a paperback edition of *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes* by **Maria Konnikova** ([www.us.penguin.com](http://www.us.penguin.com); \$16.00). They've offered three copies as prizes for the first correct answers to the question: To whom does Holmes say 'To a great mind nothing is little'? The winners

will be drawn from the hat on 2 January, so get entries in to me before then, please.

**Hugo Koch** has kindly sent four copies of his Christmas booklet, which I can offer to the first UK applicants for the cost of postage. This is *John Hugo Watson, MD: Some Brief Remarks Upon Victor Hugo and Upon the Identification and Origin of Dr Watson's Middle Name*.

**Gregory F A Ross** of British Columbia is looking to sell some of his Sherlock Holmes books, including some dating from around 1900. For details, please contact him at [alpinewriting@lycos.com](mailto:alpinewriting@lycos.com).

Congratulations to **Mattias Boström**, whose masterly *Från Holmes till Sherlock* (Piratförlaget; [www.piratforlaget.se/bocker](http://www.piratforlaget.se/bocker)) won the Swedish Crime Writers' Academy prize for Best Non-Fiction Book of 2013.

Admirers of **Solar Pons**, the 'Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street' will welcome this news from **Bob Byrne**: 'My long vacation from Praed Street has come to an end. I'm almost finished with a new *Solar Pons Gazette*. And I've got commentaries and summaries finished for about 90% of the original Derleth tales. If I can get those uploaded, [www.Solarpons.com](http://www.Solarpons.com) will become a Pons resource, rather than just the hosting site for the newsletter.'

**Thomas Bruce Wheeler** has completed his remarkable project: a map of the 747 official Blue Plaques that mark the homes of famous Londoners since the 18th Century. Tom notes: 'The map is interactive in that a click on a site marker will display the name of the personage, the year of their birth and death, and their street and GPS addresses. I plan to republish by Amazon/Nook book *Famous Londoners and their Blue Plaques*, to include this map. It will complement the book's current links to each person's Wikipedia page, and a street photograph of their home.' You'll find the map on-line at <https://mapsengine.google.com/map/viewer?gmp=msp&mid=zz7OCly2oDA4.kI46NrHEbLE>.

The latest issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times*, newsletter-catalogue of **Classic Specialties** of Cincinnati – which has a good claim to be the world's senior specialist dealer in Sherlockiana – is at [www.sherlock-holmes.com/e\\_times13-12.html](http://www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times13-12.html).

Something you may not (yet) be able to buy from Classic Specialties is a pair of *Sherlock* leggings. See [http://news.cnet.com/8301-17938\\_105-57615068-1/wrap-your-legs-in-sherlocks-wallpaper/](http://news.cnet.com/8301-17938_105-57615068-1/wrap-your-legs-in-sherlocks-wallpaper/)

From 19 March to 12 April Southwark Playhouse (77-85 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BD; phone 020 7407 0234) will present Tacit Theatre's production of *A Study in Scarlet*, dramatised by **Lila Whelan** and **Greg Freeman**. The theatre's website is at <http://southwarkplayhouse.co.uk/the-little-a-study-in-scarlet/>, and at Tacit's you'll shortly find a podcast: <http://www.tacittheatre.co.uk/>.

In March **The Pantaloons** will resume touring with their intelligent, entertaining and wildly funny play *Sherlock Holmes* - [www.thepantaloons.co.uk/shows/sh2014.asp](http://www.thepantaloons.co.uk/shows/sh2014.asp). They'll be at Harlow Playhouse on 12 & 14 March ([www.playhouseharlow.com](http://www.playhouseharlow.com)) moving to the Regal Theatre, Minehead on the 18th ([regaltheatre.co.uk](http://regaltheatre.co.uk)), the Gate Arts Centre, Cardiff on the 21st ([www.thegate.org.uk](http://www.thegate.org.uk)), the Pavilion Arts Centre, Buxton on the 16th ([buxtonoperahouse.org.uk/pavilion-arts-centre](http://buxtonoperahouse.org.uk/pavilion-arts-centre)), Fisher Theatre, Bungay on the 27th ([www.fishertheatre.org.uk](http://www.fishertheatre.org.uk)) – and on through till 27 April at Braintree Arts Theatre ([www.braintreearts theatre.com](http://www.braintreearts theatre.com)).

On Sunday 12 January the BBC1 programme *Countryfile* will visit **Undershaw** at Hindhead in Surrey, the house that Conan Doyle helped design for his family – which, had he been a less popular author, would surely by now be listed Grade I.

Jason Cooper of **South Norwood Tourist Board** reports on the Board's progress in commemorating Arthur Conan Doyle's residence there in the early 1890s: 'The lake in the country Park will be named *Conan Doyle Lake* on 1st February 2014. Currently we are doing this unofficially as I continue to hassle the council and MPs to help make it happen. We have also started up a fund to commission a sculpture of Conan Doyle to be displayed in the centre of South Norwood. <http://www.gofundme.com/5en97s> Whilst we cannot gain access to [ACD's former] house, the nearby Wetherspoons displays photos and a local community café wants to actually start up a Sherlock Holmes reading society. I am also trying to research any grants I can get to help raise any money.' <http://southnorwoodtouristboard.com/>

**Colin Bradbury**, a new member of our Society, writes: 'I am looking forward to participating in events when I am in London. However, as I live in Cornwall, I will not be able to get to as many events as I would like. On that basis, I was idly speculating on whether there might be a sufficient number of Holmesians in the county to justify setting up an informal group down here.' Colin lives at St Agnes. Holmesians living west of the Tamar – or east, for that matter – can contact him at [colin.bradburyhk@gmail.com](mailto:colin.bradburyhk@gmail.com).

And here's a plea from the Netherlands: 'My name is Kyra van Rijzingen and I'm a 20 year old student of English from the Netherlands. I'm also a massive Sherlock Holmes fan. Next semester I will start on my bachelor thesis and as my subject I have picked *Sherlock Holmes and Victorian Popular Culture*, focusing specifically on the Victorian Sherlock Holmes fans. I was sorry to see that not a lot of academic research has been done on this subject, so I will have to my own (not that I mind). However, to do this properly I will need access to some sources found only in the UK. I'm therefore attempting to fund a trip to London somewhere in March. Since I can't afford to pay for this myself, I have set up a fundraiser. I was wondering if the Sherlock Holmes Society would help me spread the word on my fundraising campaign so I might possibly reach people who would be willing to donate?' (<http://www.gofundme.com/5ebjrc>).

Congratulations to our member **Dr Wang Chong**, President-Elect of the Royal Society of Medicine's Pharmaceutical Medicine & Research Section. His two year presidency starts next September.

**Barbara Hicks**, who died on 6 September aged eighty-nine, was described by Mel Brooks as the funniest woman he'd ever met. A minor but notable role in her long career was as Emily Garrideb in Granada's unsatisfactory 1993 production of *The Mazarin Stone*.

Ken Ross has forwarded the sad news that **Lady Cottesloe** died on 8 November. Our thoughts are with Lord Cottesloe, a long-time member of the Society.

At his best – *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Becket*, *The Lion in Winter* – **Peter O'Toole** was superb. At his worst... Well, he voiced Sherlock Holmes in the early 1980s in four regrettable animated TV films, so it's probably as well that he didn't play Holmes with Peter Sellers as Watson, as was proposed, in Billy Wilder's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. He died on 14 December, aged eighty-one.

Periodicals received. *The Bilge Pump*, November 2013 (**The Crew of the Barque Lone Star**, Steve Mason, <http://barquelonestar.com>). *For the Sake of the Trust*, Fall 2013 (**BSI Trust**, Andrew Solberg BSI, 5612 Thicket Lane, Columbia, MD 21044, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, October 2013 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *Gaslight Gazette*, November 2013 & December 2013 (**The Survivors of the Gloria Scott**, David J Milner, 6 Crowndale Drive, Taylors, South Carolina 29687, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, November 2013 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, [www.soundofthebaskervilles.com](http://www.soundofthebaskervilles.com)). *Mayday Mayday*, November 2013 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarney Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Moor: Magasin för Sherlockianer*, Dec. 2013 (**The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden**, Anders Wiggström, Byggmästarvägen 29, 168 32 Bromma, Sweden). *The Passengers' Log*, 8 October 2013 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O'Neill, 24 Karuah Street, Strathfield, NSW 2135, Australia). *The Petrel Flyer*, Dec 2013 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, 1026 West Keith Road, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7P 3C6). *Proceedings of the Pondicherry Lodge*, December 2013 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of India**, Jayantika Ganguly, [shseditors@yahoo.in](mailto:shseditors@yahoo.in)). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, October 2013 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *Sherlockiana*, Nr 4 2013 (**Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark**, Svend Ranild, [sr@ranild.dk](mailto:sr@ranild.dk)).

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

## The Compliments of the Season

Roger Johnson