The subscription for postal subscribers who send money rather than stamped & self-addressed envelopes is (for 12 issues) £7.50 in the UK, and £12.00 or US$21.00 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.

Nothing’s ever straightforward, it seems. See the Undershaw Preservation Trust website at www.saveundershaw.com for the latest news in the sorry saga of the house that Conan Doyle built.

The Specsavers Crime Thriller Awards were announced on Monday. Amanda Abbington won the Dagger as Best Supporting Actress for her performance as Mary Morstan in Sherlock. Good!

The exhibition Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die opened at the Museum of London on 17 October. Members of the Society’s Council attended the launch party the previous evening, along with Catherine Beggs, Richard Doyle, Charles Foley, Jon Lellenberg, Bert Coules, Mark Gatiss, Steven Moffat, Sue Vertue, Louise Brealey, Anthony Horowitz et al – though press reports give the impression that the only guest with a Holmes connection was Sir Ian McKellen, who declared the exhibition open. (Natalie Dorman’s major role in Elementary was ignored.) We were privileged to explore the exhibition in the company of Constantine Rossakis and Glen Miranker, who have lent wonderful manuscripts and original artwork from their collections. It’s fascinating!

And Alex Werner, who put it together, has compiled a fascinating book. Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die (Ebury Press & the Museum of London; www.eburypublishing.co.uk www.museumoflondon.org; £25) opens with David Cannadine’s survey of Holmes’s profound knowledge of London, and Conan Doyle’s rather sketchier acquaintance with the city. John Stokes examines the detective’s ‘Bohemian soul’, as Watson calls it in, er, ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’. Alex Werner and Pat Hardy consider Holmes and London in art. Claire Pettit relates Conan Doyle’s vision of his creation as ephemeral trivia to the increasing influence of ephemera in his world. Nathalie Morris looks at early dramatic presentations of Holmes of his profound knowledge of London, and Conan Doyle’s rather sketchier acquaintance with the city. John Stokes examines the detective’s ‘Bohemian soul’, as Watson calls it in, er, ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’. Alex Werner and Pat Hardy consider Holmes and London in art. Claire Pettit relates Conan Doyle’s vision of his creation as ephemeral trivia to the increasing influence of ephemera in his world. Nathalie Morris looks at early dramatic presentations of Holmes. The book is sumptuously illustrated with photos, drawings and paintings, most of which feature in the exhibition; and a few unfortunate misspellings (‘John Dickinson Carr’, ‘Nicolas Utechin’) don’t detract from its appeal and its importance in relating the great detective to the great city that he made his home.

Holmes’s relationships with certain specific parts of London are at the core of another very handsome book: A Sherlock Holmes Monopoly: An Unofficial Guide and Outdoor Activity by JP Sperati (Irregular Special Press; www.baker-street-studios.com/shop/books/a-sherlock-holmes-monopoly/deluxe-full-colour-edition-£18.99). You may think there’s no obvious link between the detective and the standard London version of the game, but as you follow Holmes around the locations on the board, preferably walking in London with the book in your hand, you’ll find yourself entranced by the many curious connections that Mr Sperati has uncovered. Splendid photographs contrast the Victorian scene with today’s, and as a bonus there’s a cleverly devised Sherlock Holmes Monopoly treasure hunt, based on the board game, which I fancy will be great fun to play. The book is a winner!

The Elementary Sherlock Holmes: Things You Didn’t Know About Literature’s Greatest Detective (Portico; www.pavilionbooks.com; 6 November; £9.99) bears no author’s name, but it’s ‘based on The Sherlock Holmes Encyclopaedia’, and according to Amazon it’s the work of Matthew Bunson, whose Encyclopedia Sherlockiana (not to be confused with Jack Tracy’s superior Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana) was reissued under that name. The Elementary Sherlock Holmes is a nice little volume for dipping into, though the mention of ‘Mrs Beeton’s Christmas Annual’ and the assertion that the Sherlock Holmes Museum’s address at 239 Baker Street was officially changed to 221B show that it’s not wholly reliable.

Not a month goes by without several volumes of new Sherlock Holmes stories and an apparently unlimited number online, and most (to put it kindly) are not good. However, I look forward to reading Moriarty, by Anthony Horowitz (Orion; www.orionbooks.co.uk; £19.99), and meanwhile there’s Young Sherlock: Stone Cold, the seventh in the splendid series by Andrew Lane (Macmillan Children’s Books; www.panmacmillan.com; £12.99). After exotic adventures in China and decidedly weird ones in Ireland, Sherlock is packed off to Oxford to study logic under Mycroft’s friend Charles Dodgson. He also attends an anatomy lecture and learns that body parts are being stolen from the pathology laboratories. Unable to resist investigating, Sherlock is soon grateful for the courage and resourcefulness of his chum Mattie Arnatt. The mystery is ingenious, the adventure thrilling, and, just as we see Sherlock Holmes develop from a boy to the man we know, we also meet the young Reginald Musgrave, and learn something about Mortimer Maberley. Like its predecessors, Stone Cold is a cracker. [*The series used to be called Young Sherlock Holmes, but it’s all been rebranded. Gosh, I wonder why...*]

A Biased Judgement: The Sherlock Holmes Diaries, 1897 by Geri Schear (MX Publishing; www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £10.99) starts with a vicious attack on Holmes, and the action builds towards an attack on the Queen herself and civilisation as we know it. Moriarty is dead, but someone has revived his gang – does the name Porlock sound familiar? My problem (apart from Americanisms like ‘Go visit’) is with an essential element of the story, indicated in the title. Sherlock Holmes falls in love and marries. Lady Beatrice is a strong, attractive character – but Sherlock Holmes in love? What ineffable twaddle! Nevertheless, the book is exciting and well written.

More to my taste is Sherlock Holmes - The Golden Years: Five New Post-Retirement Adventures by Kim H Krisko (MX; £10.99, even though, in these linked tales, the detective shows disconcerting signs of romantic affection for a woman – and, almost inevitably, the woman. I’m happy to accept that Holmes was rather more active after leaving Baker Street than we’re given to understand in ‘The Lion’s Mane’ and ‘His Last Bow’, and that Watson took part in his late exploits. These adventures take them to the Scottish Highlands, the USA and South Africa, and involve, among others, GK Chesterton, Harry Houdini, Theodore Roosevelt, Leander Starr Jameson and Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as a worthy successor to Moriarty, one Ciaran Malastier.

Julie Cohen, the SHJ’s resident cartoonist, is one of fourteen contributors, along with familiar names like James Lovegrove and Guy Adams, to Two Hundred and Twenty-One Baker Streets edited by David Thomas Moore (Abaddon Books; www.abaddonbooks.com; £7.99). Each story reimagines Sherlock Holmes in a different way, and much more radically than Sherlock or even Elementary. Julie’s ‘The Adventure of the Speckled Bandana’ has Holmes as a New York gumshoe in the 1970s. In ‘A Scandal in Hobohemia’ by Jamie Wyman, Sanford Haus is the owner of a seedy travelling carnival in 1930s America. The third great title is ‘A Study in Scarborough’ by Guy Adams, in which Holmes and Watson are actors, former stars of a comedy series on BBC radio, in which they played detectives named Holmes and Watson. The book is a mixed bag, and won’t be to everyone’s taste, but the stories sparkle with imagination.

The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Devil’s Promise by David Stuart Davies is due from Titan on 21 November (http://titansbooks.com; £7.99). Meanwhile, let me recommend David’s little book of ghost stories, The Halloween Mask and Other Strange
In 2015 Chapterhouse Theatre Company will tour the UK and Ireland with an open-air production of The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes. No details yet, but keep an eye on www.chapterhouse.org/show5.html.


If when you’re visiting the Great Cesspool there are no meetings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, you needn’t be at a loose end. At http://londonsherlocksians.tumblr.com/ you can discover the London Sherlockians, ‘a group of London-based Sherlock Holmes fans. We host fan meetings on a fortnightly basis (look for details on our schedule page) and occasionally host viewing parties. Everyone is welcome to join us!’

From 2.00 to 5.30pm on 22 November, at the Union Chapel in Islington, the London Sherlockians and the Baker Street Babes will host The London Sherlockian Tea Party, ‘an afternoon of tea drinking, raffles, games and general Sherlockian shenanigans’. Unfortunately that’s the same afternoon as the launch party at the Sherlock Holmes Hotel! (Check out the Babes at http://bakerstreetbabes.tumblr.com/.)

Philip Howard, who died on 5 October aged eighty, accompanied our Society to the Reichenbach during the first Swiss Pilgrimage in 1968, and he was Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner in 1983. He was a former Literary Editor of The Times, whose obituary noted: ‘He had a passion for esoteric vocabulary, and his column on language, Lost Words, was for many years a feature of The Times’s Saturday edition.’

Alec Koldorubcev advises me of the death on 7 October of author, dramatist and dedicated Holmesian, Rudolph Čechura, a co-founder in 2000 of the Czech Society of Sherlock Holmes, and a member of our own Society since 1967 – and occasional contributor to the SHJ.

With the death of our Honorary Member Sir Sydney Chapman on 9 October, at the age of seventy-eight, the Society has lost a good friend. As Conservative MP for Chipping Barnet from 1979 to 2005, he happily sponsored many of our Annual Dinners at the House of Commons. He was the only qualified architect in the House.

Pilgrims to Switzerland in 1978 will remember with affection the tall, distinguished figure of Donald Redmond, in character as Inspector Moriarty. For decades he indexed The Baker Street Journal, and his BSI investiture, awarded in 1969, was ‘Good Old Index’. His books Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Sources and Sherlock Holmes Among the Pirates: Copyright and Conan Doyle in America 1890-1930 are major contributions to the literature. In his native Canada he was one of the first to be made a Master Bootmaker by the Bootmakers of Toronto Master Bootmakers. Donald Redmond died on 22 October, aged ninety.

A copy of The Baker Street Chronicle, issue 14, autumn 2014 (www.baker-street-chronicle.de) has been added to the Sherlock Holmes collection at Westminster Reference Library, 35, St. Martin’s Street.


Roger Johnson