

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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On 26 December, our Canadian member **Peter Calamai**, MBt, BSI was appointed to the Order of Canada, awarded 'for his achievements as a science journalist and for his contributions to the cause of literacy'.

At the Baker Street Irregulars' Annual Dinner on 9 January, Wiggins invested: **Bill Mason** ('White Mason'), **Chrys Kegley** ('Rachel Howells'), **Marino Alvarez** ('Hilton Soames'), **James O'Brien** ('Knowledge of Chemistry – Profound'), **Emily Miranker** ('Lady Hatty St. Simon'), **Jeffory Hart** ('Henry Baker'), **Kristina Manente** ('Grace Dunbar') and **Kiyoshi Tanaka** ('Shoso-In'). He presented the Two-Shilling Award to **Mary Ann Bradley**. Congratulations to all!

At our own Society's dinner on 17 January, it was a pleasure to welcome our newest Honorary Member, **Shirley Purves** – and an honour for me to receive the Tony Howlett Award.

Jonny Hough has completely redesigned the Society's website. There's still work to be done, but it's a great improvement. The URL is the same – www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk. Click on 'Gallery' and you'll see that I've added photos of the Annual Dinner and the Morning After, plus several albums of past activities. If you can help fill the gaps, please let me know!

In 1994 Jean Upton and I reproduced four pages of the MS of 'The Empty House' in the Society's book *Back to Baker Street*. It wasn't possible then to publish it all, but here is *Out of the Abyss: A Facsimile of the Original Manuscript of 'The Empty House' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with Annotations and Commentary on the Story*, edited by **Andrew Solberg, Steven Rothman & Robert Katz** (Baker Street Irregulars; www.bakerstreetjournal.com; \$39.95 + postage). Philip Bergem, Steve Rothman & Randall Stock write about the manuscript, its owners, and the publishing history of the story. Catherine Cooke deals with the geography. Nick Utechin considers Mycroft's rôle. Peter Calamai argues that Holmes devoted the decade after his return to government intelligence. Brent Morris examines card cheating. Ray Betzner's piece on 'The Final Problem' actually throws new light on 'The Empty House'. Holmes's 'resurrection' has parallels in religion and myth, as Lindsay Colwell & Chris Redmond show. Russell Merritt looks at Colonel Moran on screen. Maria Fleischhack surveys academic explorations of the story. Lyndsay Faye's short story is effective but seems out of place. But the essential thing is that we can all now examine the MS for ourselves!

Prince of the Realm: The Most Irregular James Bliss Austin by **Sonia Fetherston** (BSI; \$21.96 + postage) launches The Baker Street Irregulars Biographical Series. Morley and Starrett are well documented, and material can be found on Smith and Wolff, but there are important figures in the BSI's past whose lives and achievements are unknown to most of us. (Walter Klinefelter, Page Heldenbrand, and Luther Norris come immediately to mind.) Bliss Austin (1904-88) was a successful businessman, an authority on oriental art, a great Holmesian collector, and a generous mentor. His annual souvenir booklets were collected and published as *Austin's Sherlockian Studies*; they should be reprinted. In Sonia Fetherston's book, I almost feel that I've met the man.

Also from the BSI is *The Baker Street Journal 2014 Christmas Annual*, edited by **Elaine & Jonathan McCafferty**, and entitled *The Only Actor Who Ever Got It Right: Douglas Wilmer as Sherlock Holmes*. It's available only with a subscription to the BSJ, and there may not be copies left, but I'll tell you anyway that it's a first-rate 74-page book about Douglas's classic 1964-65 BBC TV series *Sherlock Holmes*. Contributors include Catherine Cooke, Russell Merritt, Philip Porter, Nick Utechin, Richard Lancelyn Green, David Stuart Davies, the editors, and Douglas himself – and me. There are messages from Mark Gatiss, Christopher Frayling and Roger Moore, and a dozen or more excellent photos.

The TV series is to be released here on DVD on 30 March (at last!) – not by the BBC but by the British Film Institute. 'This long-awaited release also includes an array of fascinating special features, including two

reconstructions of partially-surviving episodes, an alternative presentation of the *Detective* pilot, an alternative title sequence, an interview with Douglas Wilmer and a number of newly-recorded audio commentaries' plus an illustrated booklet with new essays and full episode credits. Several members of the Society have contributed to the booklet. It's not yet available for pre-order.

Arguably an even greater achievement is the BBC Radio 4 *Complete Sherlock Holmes*, starring Clive Merrison & Michael Williams. The principal writer, **Bert Coules**, has revised and greatly expanded the little book he wrote two decades ago for the Northern Musgraves. *221 BBC: Writing for the World's Only Complete Dramatised Canon & Beyond* (Gasogene Books; www.wessexpress.com; \$22.95 + postage) tells of the series' beginning, following the one-off *Hound of the Baskervilles* with Roger Rees & Crawford Logan; its development over nine years; the joys of working with great actors and producers; and the challenge of telling the stories without simply reproducing Conan Doyle's text. We're also guided through Bert's subsequent series, *The Further Adventures*, in which Andrew Sachs admirably replaced the late Michael Williams. A bonus is the script of the brilliant two-hander, *The Abergavenny Murder*.

The Oenologic Holmes: The Role of Wine in the Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes by **Steve Robinson** (Battered Silicon Dispatch Box; www.batteredbox.com; Cdn\$20.00 + postage) is a quite charming little book, beautifully illustrated with photos by Jack Winn. In 46 pages it can't go into the sort of detail covered, for instance, by Patricia Guy in her excellent *Bacchus at Baker Street*, but it does take a fresh, intelligent look at the part played by wine (and its consumption) in Watson's chronicles.

Anyone interested in that vital early case 'The Musgrave Ritual' should take note of the essays in *The Beeman's Christmas Annual 2014*, subtitled *The Shadow Knows: Wally and Hurlstone* (The Occupants of the Empty House, William R Cochran, 614 S Terrace Dr, Carbondale, IL 62901, USA). Building on a radical theory of their early member Wally Wathen, four Occupants examine the evidence for the true location of Hurlstone.

Conan Doyle and the Scientific Naturalists by **Professor Bernard Lightman** is the text of the 2013 Cameron Hollyer Memorial Lecture, published by the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at Toronto Public Library (info@acdfriends.org).

Last year Big Finish gave us *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes*, a powerful quartet of audio plays. Writer **Jonathan Barnes** and actors **Nicholas Briggs** and **Richard Earl** return in *The Judgement of Sherlock Holmes*, (www.bigfinish.com/ranges/released/sherlock-holmes; 4 CDs £30.00 / download £25.00). In 1921 Holmes tells Watson exactly what he did after the Reichenbach affair, why he went to Tibet, why he returned twice to London, the connection between a fanatical revolutionary cult and his own family, and the choices he is forced to make. We learn much more, including how and why Mary Watson died – and there are hints of more revelations to come. There's a topical relevance and a horrid plausibility which make *The Judgement* even more impressive than *The Ordeals*.

In 2012 I recommended *Sherlock Holmes at the Breakfast Table* by **LFE Coombs**, and I'm happy to recommend his second collection of short stories, *Sherlock Holmes Plays the Game* (MX Publishing; www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £9.99). The puzzles are ingenious, and the solutions likewise. The historical detail is just right, and, though the proof-reading could be better, the tales are enticingly told.

Hugh Ashton, author of nine earlier volumes, reproduces the Watson style very acceptably, and great care is taken over the appearance of his texts. One story in *The Last Notes: Three Untold Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Inkbeans Press; <http://221beanbakerstreet.info/>; £6.36 from Amazon.co.uk) tells why 'old Abrahams' was in mortal terror, another is the tale of the aggressive Mathews, and the third is the slight, agreeable case of a missing spoon. Mr Ashton also writes delightful tales for young readers, about

Sherlock Ferret and his friend Watson Mouse. *The Adventures of Sherlock Ferret*, illustrated by Andy Boerger, collects in one very nice hardback 'The Missing Necklace', 'The Multiplying Masterpieces' and 'The Poisoned Pond', along with the previously unpublished 'Vinnie the Visitor' (Ted & Beans; <http://sherlockferret.info/the-adventures.html>; £12.46).

At www.nplh.co.uk is *No Place Like Holmes*, a comedy-drama series by **Ross K Foad**, based on the premise that Holmes and Watson were frozen in a time-spell by the demonic Hugo Baskerville, emerging eventually in the year 2010. In *Of Shoes and Sherlock: The Diary of Miss Christine Blake* (Createspace; £3.99 from Amazon, or free download of Kindle) you'll see them as their uncomprehending 21st century housekeeper does. It's very funny!

More new fiction. *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes - The Devil's Promise* by **David Stuart Davies** (Titan; titanbooks.com; £7.99). *Sherlock Holmes and John Watson: The Day They Met (50 New Ways the World's Most Legendary Partnership Might Have Begun)* by **Wendy C Fries** (MX; £10.99). *The Best & Wisest Man: Being a Reprint of the Reminiscences of Mrs Mary Watson, née Morstan* by **Hamish Crawford** (MX; £9.99). *You Buy Bones: Sherlock Holmes and His London Through the Eyes of Scotland Yard* by **Marcia Wilson** (www.lulu.com; £11.53) – 'First in a collection of stories where criminal events involving Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson are told through the point of view of Scotland Yard and primarily Inspectors Lestrade, Bradstreet, and Gregson.' *Sherlock Holmes: The Pearl of Death & Other Early Stories* by **GC Rosenquist** (MX; £8.99). *The Case of the Spotted Band: Volume Two of the Case Books of Octavius Bear* by **Harry DeMaio** (MX; £12.99) – see also www.octaviusbearslair.com.

Aleš Kolodrubec recommends the Sherlock Holmes short stories of **Dick Gillman**, available from www.smashwords.com/profile/view/dickg29 as e-books.

Due in October from Titan Books is *Mycroft Holmes*, a novel by the legendary basketball player **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** and **Anna Waterhouse**.

The first official showing of the new film *Mr Holmes*, starring Ian McKellen and based on *A Slight Trick of the Mind* by **Mitch Cullen**, will be at the Berlin International Film Festival, held 5-15 February.

There's a good article about **William Gillette** on the BBC News Magazine website at www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30932322, with a brief clip from the newly restored 1916 film of his play *Sherlock Holmes*.

There's a dozen or more fascinating articles, mostly by **Howard Ostrom** and mostly about dramatic portrayals of Sherlock Holmes, posted online at www.nplh.co.uk/original-essays.html.

At www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN9QKhmh2yw&feature=youtu.be is a recording of the BSI's anthem 'We Never Mention Aunt Clara', sung by **Eileen 'Irish' O'Hara**. Thanks to LM Goode for posting it.

Following last week's 'Who's the Best Holmes?', the debate at 6.30pm on 27 February at the **Museum of London** will be 'Who's the Best Watson?' With Jean Upton in the chair, Nick Utechin, David Stuart Davies, Lisa Burscheidt and I will champion David Burke, Martin Freeman, Jude Law and Andre Morell, respectively. All the info you need is on the Society's website and at www.museumoflondon.org.uk/london-wall/whats-on/adult-events/talks-and-workshops.

Carrie Chandler notes that *Time Out* offers a 45% discount on tickets for the 'Sleeping With Sherlock' all-night event at the **Museum of London** on 14 February – but the offer expires at midnight on 4 February – <https://uk-offers.timeout.com/deals/experience-sleeping-with-sherlock?cid=TOL~NL~1400535705~experience-sleeping-with-sherlock~~CTA~2015-01-30>

Also from Carrie: **Andrew Lane & Steve Cole**, authors of the *Young Sherlock Holmes* and the *Young James Bond* novels, will go head-to-head at 4.30pm on 28 March, at the Oxford Literary Festival. Details are at <http://oxfordliteraryfestival.org/literature-events/2015/saturday-28/sherlock-holmes-versus-james-bond>.

The Guardian's article 'Sherlock World?' on 10 December reported that BBC Worldwide has struck a deal with Kuwait-backed London Resort Company Holdings to allow BBC programmes and characters to be 'brought to life' at a new £2 billion theme park and holiday resort planned for the north Kent coast, and due to open in 2020.

One door opens, another closes. The Savoy Hotel, which owns **Simpson's-in-the-Strand**, is seeking a new tenant to 'reinvigorate' the restaurant. Apparently the new owner *won't* be required to keep the famous name.

Michael Bragg forwards a link to a most interesting article at www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2015/01/15/377470376/carrying-the-torch-

for-londons-last-gas-lamps – about London's 1,500 gas lamps and the five lamplighters still employed by British Gas.

Al Gregory reports on this year's **Gaslight Gala**, held at Rosie's (The Manhattan Club) in New York during Holmes's birthday celebration. The buffet was excellent, and the organisers, Chris Zordan and Nick Martorelli, had arranged a talk on firearms by a sergeant of the NYC Police, a raffle, an auction, musical presentations, humorous skits, and a quiz. 'A swell time was had by the 69 participants. We're looking forward to next year's Gala, which promises to be even better.'

BJ Rahn invites offers for a programme of the 1979 production of *The Crucifer of Blood* at the Haymarket Theatre, starring Keith Michell, Susan Hampshire, Denis Lill and Edward Petherbridge. E-mail BJ at bjrahncrimecritic.com.

Michael Cox was the first to tell me of the death of **Patrick Gowers** on 30 December, aged seventy-eight. Michael adds: 'As you know, he wrote the music for all the films in the Granada series and his daughter Katharine played the vital violin part in all those scores. He was a joy to work with and his contribution was enormously valuable.'

Trevor Hancock had a small part in Granada's *The Cardboard Box* and played Selden in Simon Corble's play *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. He was a member of the Scandalous Bohemians, and was keen to take the part of Watson in a new play by David Stuart Davies. It seems he was severely bipolar. After being hospitalised following a suicide attempt he disappeared, and his body was found on 6 January in a quarry near his home in Derbyshire. He was forty-two. As David says, he'll be sadly missed in the Scandalous Bohemians.

In his long, successful career **Brian Clemens**, who died on 10 January aged eighty-three, helped create *The Avengers*, and did create *The New Avengers* and *The Professionals*. His stage plays include *Holmes and the Ripper*, based on the same conspiracy theory as *Murder by Decree*.

I saw **Barrie Ingham** in many plays at Stratford in the late 1960s. In 1965 he played the lead in *A Challenge for Robin Hood* – his only real starring rôle until Disney's *Basil the Great Mouse Detective* in 1986 – a deserved favourite with many. Barrie Ingham died on 23 January aged eighty-two.

Periodicals received. *The Alfalfa Gazette*, December 2014 (**Friends of the Soldier Named Murray**, Jody Baker, josiabaker@bkhcw.com). *The Baker Street Bugle*, December 2014 (**The Deerstalkers of Welshpool**, Roy Upton-Holder, <http://sherlockholmeswelshpool.com/>). *The Baker Street Journal*, Winter 2014 (Steven Rothman, www.bakerstreetjournal.com; subscriptions, PO Box 583, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *The Bilge Pump*, December 2014 & January 2015 (**The Crew of the Barque Lone Star**, Steve Mason, www.dfw-sherlock.org). *The Bootmakers' Winter Newsletter*, 2015 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Thelma Beam, www.torontobootmakers.com). *Cri Bar Crier*, December 2014 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Ave, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, December 2014 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, September 2014, October 2014 & December 2014 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Alisa West, IllustClients@gmail.com). *Ineffable Twaddle*, January 2014 & February 2015 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, www.soundofthebaskervilles.com). *The Magic Door*, Winter 2014 (**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection**, Doug Wrigglesworth, www.acdfriends.org). *Memoires et Documents 2014* (**Société d'Études Holmésiennes de la Suisse Romande**, Vincent Delay, Ch. De la Chaumière 1, 1010 Lausanne, Switzerland). *The Passengers' Log*, 8 October 2014 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O'Neill; erin.index@gmail.com). *The Petrel Flyer*, December 2014 and October 2014 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Krista Lee Munro, www.thestormypetrels.com). *Prescott's Press*, Winter 2014 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, January 2015 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *The Serpentine Muse*, Winter 2014 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, www.ash-nyc.com). *Sherlockian E-Times*, December 2014 & January 2015 (Classic Specialties, Carolyn & Joel Senter, www.sherlock-holmes.com).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, December 2014 and January 2015 (Peter E Blau; <http://redcircledc.org/index.php?id=39>).

Roger Johnson