

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

<http://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/>

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It has been a blazing hot week in July. London is like an oven, and I am curled up on the sofa, mulling over the month's Sherlockian news.

Nick Utechin reports that, despite his being one of the umpires for the cricket match against the P.G.Wodehouse Society, it had nothing to do with the fact that the Sherlock Holmes Society won. A lovely day at West Wycombe on Sunday 21st June saw the Society slowly and methodically chase down a Gold Bats' total of 216 to win by one run with *the last ball of the match!* This means that, of the 11 matches actually played since the fixture began in the halcyon days of 2001, the Society has won 4, the Wodehouseians 2 and there have been 5 draws. A fuller report may be read on the Society's website: <http://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/the-sherlock-holmes-society-of-london-v-the-gold-bats-sunday-21st-june-2015/>

Members should have received our Summer 2015 edition of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, featuring much joy inspired by William Gillette. **Roger Johnson** notes that, in his review of Jon Lellenberg's *Sources and Methods*, he said that his novel *Baker Street Irregular* is out of print. Jon Lellenberg has sent assurance that it is still available and copies can be ordered from the UK distributor, Cold Tonnage Books (22 Kings Lane, Windlesham GU20 6JQ; www.coldtonnage.com; phone 01276 475388) or via the BSI Archival History website at:

www.bsiarchivalhistory.org/BSI_Archival_History/Novel.html

The UK edition of *Sherlock Holmes in Japan* by Vasudev Murthy, featuring a foreword by our former Treasurer, Calvert Markham, is released on 16th July by Harper Collins (RRP £8.99). Featuring Professor Moriarty and some sinister goings on in the back alleys of Tokyo, Murthy's book follows in the tradition of the many 'missing years' novels that attempt to fill in the gap in Holmes's life after Reichenbach and before he re-emerges in London three years later. Roger Johnson calls it 'a well-written, cleverly plotted and very enjoyable thriller.' To celebrate the release, Harper Collins **have 5 copies to give away to readers** of the DM. To be in with a chance of winning, simply send an email to Publicity360@HarperCollins.co.uk with the subject heading 'Sigerson' **before Thursday 16th July.**

We lost some beloved British actors during the past month. **Richard Johnson** (30 July 1927 – 6 June 2015) featured regularly in crime dramas throughout his career, from *Magnum P.I.* to *Silent Witness*. In 1991, he played Dr Watson opposite Charlton Heston in the television adaptation of Paul Giovanni's *The Crucifer of Blood* (Jeremy Brett was Heston's Watson during the play's run in LA 10 years earlier).

Christopher Lee (27 May 1922 – 7 June 2015) was Dracula, Saruman, Scaramanga, and countless other iconic villains cherished by audiences throughout his career, which spanned over 65 years. He was also responsible for some memorable Sherlockian roles. He first played Sherlock Holmes in Terence Fisher's *Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace* in 1962, then 30 years later for the TV films *Sherlock Holmes and the Leading Lady* (1991) and *Incident at Victoria Falls* (1992). In 1959, with his great friend Peter Cushing in the role of Holmes, Lee took on the family curse, a heart condition, and a tarantula, as Sir Henry in Hammer's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (recently restored and released on Blu-ray). His Mycroft in *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* is a particular favourite. Acerbic, competitive with his younger brother, and embroiled in

unusual activities to protect government interests, Lee's Mycroft has been a huge influence on Mark Gatiss's interpretation in *Sherlock*.

Ron Moody (8 January 1924 – 11 June 2015) was famous and loved for his Oscar-nominated portrayal of Fagin in *Oliver!* (1968). He was also the lead in Leslie Bricusse's *Sherlock Holmes, the Musical* during its original run in 1988 and 1989 (and in which Roger Llewellyn played Inspector Lestrade).

During the 60s, Ron Moody and Christopher Lee both had guest roles in *The Avengers*, a TV series which starred **Patrick MacNee** (6 February 1922 – 25 June 2015) as John Steed. MacNee was Christopher Lee's Watson in *Sherlock Holmes and the Leading Lady* and *Incident at Victoria Falls*. It was a role he took on again opposite Roger Moore as Holmes in *Sherlock Holmes in New York* in 1976 (Moore as James Bond, of course, took on Lee as Scaramanga in *The Man with the Golden Gun* in 1974).

The Avengers was created by Brian Clemens, who passed away in January this year. As mentioned in previous issues, his play *Sherlock Holmes and the Ripper Mysteries* is currently touring, starring his son, Samuel. *The Wear Valley Advertiser* ran a poignant interview with Samuel Clemens on 30th June, during a recent run of the play in Darlington:

<http://www.wearvalleyadvertiser.co.uk/entertainment/13360739.Sherlock-Holmes-tribute-to-Brian-Clemens-at-Darlington/>

Roger Rees (5 May 1944 – 10 July 2015), who had memorable roles in *Cheers* and *The West Wing*, appeared in *Elementary* as Sherlock's friend, Alistair Moore. He also played Holmes in 1988 in a BBC radio adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* written by Bert Coules, preceding the adaptation of the Canon featuring Clive Merrison.

Worrying reports have been circulating with the news that **The Criterion** (224 Piccadilly, Piccadilly, London W1J 9HP) has gone into administration following a rent increase. Its Canonical importance is celebrated with a plaque which was unveiled in 1981, 100 years after Watson met Stamford at the Long Bar. Its future may be uncertain, but, having recently made one, I can confirm the restaurant is still taking bookings: call +44 (0)20 7930 0488 or see their website <http://www.criterionrestaurant.com/>.

Peter Blau notes that the **Royal Mail** have plans for a Sherlock Holmes plaque as part of a scheme celebrating 50 years of special stamps. One of 50 to be unveiled around the UK, the plaque will be installed on the post-box at 210 Baker Street, at the intersection with Melcombe Street, that being the post-box closest to 221B Baker Street. More details about the scheme can be found on their website: <https://www.myroyalmail.com/news/national/2015/06/postbox-plaques>

Jonathan Hopson notes that **Martin Edwards** has been elected President of the Detection Club. Martin was the after-dinner speaker at our Gladstone's Library weekend in 2013 and is author of the *New Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes*. He is the 9th President of the Club, adding his name to a prestigious list, the other names being: Simon Brett; H. R.F. Keating; Julian Symons; Lord Gorell; Agatha Christie; Dorothy L. Sayers; E.C.Bentley; and G. K. Chesterton.

More news has been released regarding the **Houdini and Doyle** drama planned for ITV. Stephen Mangan (*Green Wing, Episodes*) has been cast as Doyle, with Michael Weston (he played Sherlock's former dealer, Oscar Rankin, in two episodes of *Elementary*) as Houdini. It will be a 10-part series and is currently scheduled to air on ITV Encore some time in 2016.

The first stage of Gautier Cazenave's crowd funding exercise to launch production on his *Sherlock Holmes vs Frankenstein* movie has gone well, but more funds are still required. See the project's Indiegogo site for more details if you wish to contribute: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/sherlock-holmes-vs-frankenstein#/story>

I may indulge in light spoilers here, so skip to the next section if you are easily upset by such things. *Mr Holmes* was released on 19th June following a London premiere featuring a cobblestone carpet and a kiss between Sir Ian McKellan and Sir Patrick Stewart. Adapted from Mitch Cullin's novel *A Slight Trick of the Mind* (2005), McKellan stars as a 93 year old Holmes in retirement, grappling with the onset of dementia and the consequent failure of his powers while struggling to remember his last case, the one that prompted him to leave Baker Street behind for solitude and bees. Set in Sussex in 1947, he is not entirely alone with his hives, however, as he is living with a widowed housekeeper, Mrs Munro (Laura Linney, affecting a West Country accent) and her son, Roger (played beautifully by young actor, Milo Parker). Holmes as an ersatz father in this dynamic is mirrored in a subplot which shows Holmes searching for an elixir of life in Japan. McKellan gives a nuanced performance as a man at the end of his life, sadly diminished while the world remembers his legend. Within the film, Canonical mythology is generally debunked, with 221B revealed as a dummy address, the pipe and deerstalker derided, and people talking (talking!) in the Diogenes Club. There is a moment where McKellan's Holmes watches a version of himself played on screen (a marvellous cameo from Nicholas Rowe), and it is clear that this is sensational entertainment and not a true representation of the case portrayed. Though Holmes has not been shown in retirement very often on film, this conceit of Canonical inaccuracy and Watsonian fabrication is very familiar. The problem with *Mr Holmes* is, this trope is used to such an extent that the character we are left with becomes somewhat generic. McKellan gives an outstanding portrayal of a solitary man battling against the onslaught of time, but is he Sherlock Holmes? Though there are nods to the recent past with references to the Battle of Britain and a visit to Hiroshima, the significance of the time and the opportunity to question the relevance of Holmes's brand of heroism in a post-Victorian world is largely ignored. When these themes have been explored beautifully by writers such as Michael Chabon (*The Final Solution*, 2004), Neil Gaiman ('The Case of Death and Honey,' 2015), and Mitch Cullin himself (from whose novel this adaptation deviates significantly, cowardly, towards the end), the main crime in this film is its unfamiliarity with its content. Beautiful window dressing, but, much like the dummy 221B, Holmes isn't really there.

A society called **The Retired Beekeepers of Sussex** was founded earlier this year. They gather predominantly in Brighton and extend a particular invitation to members of the LGBTQIA+ community. They have been meeting monthly, and records of their discussion topics can be found on their Tumblr page <http://retiredbeekeepers.tumblr.com/> which I also recommend you use to subscribe to their newsletter. The first issue of their journal, *The Practical Handbook of Bee Culture*, can also be found on their Tumblr site: <http://retiredbeekeepers.tumblr.com/handbook>

Transformative Works and Cultures, an online-only Gold Open Access publication, have issued a **call for papers** for a special issue to be titled 'Sherlock Holmes Fandom, Sherlockiana, and The Great Game', the aspirations for which they describe as follows: 'This special issue seeks to engage both academics and fans in writing about the older, long established Sherlockian fandom. We welcome papers that address all fandoms of Sherlock Holmes and its adaptations, particularly those that trace the connections and similarities/differences among and between older and newer

fandoms.' The submission deadline is 16th March 2016, full details can be found on their website:

<http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/announcement/view/27>

Charles Miller has stumbled upon this **Old Time Radio Archive** site which features many episodes of *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce: <https://archive.org/details/oldtimeradio?and%5b%5d=subject:%22Sherlock%20Holmes%22>

The **John H Watson Society** have announced that their annual Canonical Treasure Hunt will begin soon on 1st August. In keeping with JHWS tradition, the 2015 Treasure Hunt will be a difficult 100-question quiz designed to challenge your knowledge of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. John Watson, and their greater world. In 2014, one individual, and teams from the USA, Italy and France earned honors in the competition. These quiz masters have set a high-bar for this year. Individual competitors and teams (up to five members) are invited to compete. The competition is open from 1st August through 1st September, 2015. While most answers will be no more than two to ten words, the questions will not be simple. The Treasure Hunt will involve obscure references, geographic and biologic inferences, people, objects, dates, unique terminology, and all manner of canonical knowledge. The JHWS have high hopes that participants will find the Treasure Hunt to be the definitive - and most enjoyable - canonical quiz. The first participant in each category to submit the most correct answers will receive a unique and distinctive award from the JHWS. A list of the rules for the competition, along with a list of recommended resources for competitors, can be found on the treasure hunt page at www.johnhwatsonssociety.com.

The International Sherlock Holmes Exhibition has now moved to the **Discovery Cube**, OC, CA, where it will remain until 7th September: <http://www.discoverycube.org/oc/exhibits/sherlock-holmes/>

In May's issue, I mentioned the GoGo Dragon Sherlock, resident in Norwich until 5th September. He now has a rival in the West: Bristol's **Shear-lock Holmes**. Shear-lock is part of a Shaun the Sheep trail called 'Shaun in the City', similar to one which took place in London this spring (but did not feature a Sherlock Holmes Shaun). Shear-lock will be on display until 31st August, details can be found on the Shaun in the City website: <http://shauninthecity.org.uk/>

Following on from the *Sherlock* panel at San Diego's Comic Con, a clip from the upcoming *Sherlock* Victorian special has been released featuring a significant homage to the Granada opening titles. The broadcast date has yet to be announced, but it has been confirmed that the special will be shown in cinemas at the same time. The teaser - and an amusing apology for absence message from Andrew Scott, Mark Gatiss and Benedict Cumberbatch - can be viewed on the *Telegraph* website:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/11730903/Sherlock-trailer-Comic-Con.html>

Something else to look forward to is the **Big Finish** adaptation of Andrew Lane's *All-Consuming Fire* (1994), in which Doctor Who teams up with Holmes and Watson to solve a crime with Lovecraftian undertones. Adapted by Guy Adams and starring Sylvester McCoy, Sophie Aldred, Lisa Bowerman, and Nicholas Briggs, this audio drama is due to be released in December: <http://www.bigfinish.com/releases/v/all-consuming-fire-1229>

Almost one year old, **The Fourth Garrideb** - a scion society of the BSI concerned with the numismatics of Sherlock Holmes - continue to maintained an interesting and varied website about Canonical coin collecting: <http://fourthgarrideb.com/>

And finally: Glasgow residents have been puzzled by the sudden and unexplained closure of one of their watering holes. The name of the pub: **Moriarty's** <http://www.cumbernauld-news.co.uk/what-s-on/pub-s-fate-a-case-for-sherlock-1-3807319>