

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Do keep visiting our website, which is being updated frequently with news, important information and many items of interest: www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk.

A belated happy birthday to actor **Vasily Livanov**, who turned 85 on 19th July. His appearance as Sherlock Holmes in the Russian television series of the 1970s and 80s is regarded as amongst the best, right up there with Douglas Wilmer and Jeremy Brett. In 2007 a few members of our Society had the opportunity to accompany Vasily on a whistle-stop tour of London landmarks, including refreshments at the Sherlock Holmes Pub. You can view photos of his visit on our website gallery:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/shsl/albums/72157640355894234>

Pantaloons Theatre Company are back up and running again, thanks to socially-distanced seating arrangements. Tickets are now available for *Sherlock Holmes* at the Roman Theatre of Verulamium, St Albans on **Sunday 16th August 2020 at 3:00PM and 6:00PM**. Click the link for further information and to secure your tickets. When booking, you will be shown a seating plan from which you can select your seats.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/st-albans/roman-theatre-of-verulamium/sherlock-holmes/e-treepy>

Don't Go Into the Cellar's recent live performance of *Strictly Professor Challenger* was video recorded and is now available to view on YouTube. It is free to see, but donations are welcomed.

https://mxpublishing.com/blogs/news/strictly-professor-challenger-live-performance?fbclid=IwAR3Uq4tsDYjbV2u7v2SH-VXitj9JuQjmQqOYa_FKf9eEDQEyYeS63AvQgHI

From **Peter Blau**: “**Nick Utechin** will be Zooming in as guest speaker at the Red Circle's virtual meeting on Saturday, September 5. Details are available at our web-site now: www.redcircledc.org. Everyone is welcome, and all that's needed is to go to our web-site at the end of August and sign up for the Zoom meeting. A message will be sent to everyone with the meeting link. We also welcome questions for the guest speaker (via chat), and your members might be amused by what folks over here don't know. Video of our June meeting is available at our web-site (Laurie R. King was our guest speaker) so people can see what goes on at our (virtual) gatherings.”

If you simply can't wait until September to see Nick Utechin, just go to the video podcast of **The Fortnightly**

Dispatch, which features him discussing the origin of our hobby, the seminal "*Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes*," by Ronald Knox.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBnmPEHwPtg&feature=youtu.be>.

The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland will be holding their second Zoom lecture on 3rd September, at 7:00pm UK time. Michael Meer will present *The Other War Service of Sherlock Holmes: The Master Detective in World War I Prison Camps*. The Irregulars' inaugural lecture took place in June with Marcus Geisser presenting *Travel in the Blood and The Problem of the Missing Third Continent*. Anyone who is interested in joining, please get in touch with Marcus Geisser by sending an email to reichenbachirregulars@gmail.com.

If you happen to be in Switzerland, the **Sherlock Holmes Museum in Meiringen** is open again, according to current Swiss Covid-19 regulations. Their website provides more information: <https://sherlockholmes.ch/en/Info/Museum>

The Museum of London, who presented the Sherlock Holmes exhibition in 2014, has been seeking a newer, larger home for some time. On 23rd June the City of London Corporation's Planning and Transportation Committee gave the green light to its planning application to create a new museum for London in West Smithfield. You can learn about their plans here:

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/west-smithfield>

Royal Mail's new **Sherlock Holmes stamps** go on sale on 18th August. Six stamps depict characters from *Sherlock*, including Sherlock and John, Mary Watson, Jim Moriarty, Irene Adler and Mycroft Holmes. When UV light is shone over the stamps, hidden details from a mystery storyline are revealed. A further four stamps, presented in a miniature sheet, feature new illustrations of other stories written by Conan Doyle: *The Adventure Of The Speckled Band*; *The Red-Headed League*; *The Adventure Of The Second Stain*; and *The Adventure Of The Dancing Men*. You can place an advance order at:

<https://shop.royalmail.com/special-stamp-issues/sherlock>

Hemisphere Designs, who trade on Etsy, are selling **Book Nooks** – kits to make three-dimensional sculptures of your favourite fictional location, to display on your bookshelf. Their Baker Street kit sells for £72.24. It should be noted that this is the *Sherlock* version with Speedy's café. <https://mymodernmet.com/hemisphere-design-book-nooks/>

Christie's offered the manuscript of *The Land of Mist* in a recent auction which closed on 30th July. The estimate was £50,000 - £80,000, with a starting bid of £35,000. The lot sold for £47,500. www.tinyurl.com/ybp7g8tw

If you'd like something a bit more affordable, **Gudrun Sjöden's** autumn catalogue is featuring an attractive little brooch made of silver-plated zinc, in the shape of a violin, for £19.

<https://www.gudrunsjoden.com/en-gb/clothes/accessories/product-98000-grey-one-size>

Or, as **Catherine Cooke** suggests: "Here's something for bored Sherlockians stuck at home - make your own paper violin!"

https://creativepark.canon/en/contents/CNT-0010055/index.html?utm_source=mc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0133-cc287_02062020&m_id=27f188b146f18b053515ff20c955d01a&utm_id=0133-cc287&utm_content=hq_gb-en_a_6_discovermiddle_m3a-b

Books of Interest

Jeremy Brett – Playing a Part by Maureen Whitaker (MX Publishing, 468 pp, hbk and pbk) At 8½ x 11 inches and 468 pages, this is a real door-step of a book! A mammoth undertaking carried out over a number of years, the author has managed to combine both biography and a seemingly exhaustive inventory of Brett's entire career. Scrupulously researched and fact-checked, with a foreword by David Burke, this sets a very high standard for any future biographers. It is lavishly illustrated with hundreds of photos, many rare and some that are pleasingly familiar. MX Publishing launched a Kickstarter campaign for the book, which offers different versions of the book according to the level of support. For details and prices go to <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/mxpublishing/playin-g-a-part-jeremy-brett>

More Than an Actor – The Story of Peter H. by W. Grey Champion (Page Publishing, 346pp pbk £13.95/\$17.95) In Granada TV's version of 'The Solitary Cyclist,' Watson (David Burke) enquires of Holmes (Jeremy Brett), "Did I really do remarkably badly?" The response is an emphatic "Yes!" If the author of this book posed the same question to Jeremy Brett, I fear the reply would be identical. Written in the style of a Barbara Cartland romance, this is a fictional treatment of a biography of Brett (the Peter H. refers to his real name of Peter Jeremy William Huggins). Replete with imagined conversations and situations, as well as careless research, it leaves much to be desired in terms of factuality. For example, in a description of an imaginary meeting with producer Michael Cox, we are told that there are fifty-two stories in the canon. The author also appears to hold a rather uninformed view of the Sherlockian/Holmesian community; we are assured that 'The appeal of Conan Doyle's detective has always been masculine. The innumerable clubs and societies, for example, that sprang up worldwide among his myriad fans were men only. A woman wanting to attend would need to go in drag.' Although *Bending the Willow* by David Stuart Davies gets plenty of reference, it is dismissed as

simply being useful for chronology and quotes. Oddly, there is no mention of Michael Cox's fascinating *A Study in Celluloid*, which chronicles the making of the television series. Champion is clearly a fan and admirer of Brett and writing the book must have served as a form of catharsis.

If you want to read more about Jeremy Brett, *Bending the Willow* is available on Amazon in a Kindle edition for £7.69 (the print version is difficult to access), and *A Study in Celluloid* can be purchased from Gasogene Books <http://www.wessexpress.com/html/studyincelluloid.html>

Obituaries

Olivia de Havilland died on 26th July, age 104. Best remembered as the saint-like Melanie Hamilton in *Gone With the Wind* (1939), she appeared with Basil Rathbone, Lionel Atwill and Errol Flynn in *Captain Blood* (1935) and in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), as Maid Marian to Flynn's Robin Hood, with Rathbone as the nefarious Guy of Gisbourne. Although appearing vulnerable on screen, she was intelligent and tough. In 1943 she took on the autocratic Hollywood studio system, which made life miserable for actors, in a legal challenge against Warner Bros. It was a landmark case, which she won. Although it improved the working practices for actors, it resulted in de Havilland being blackballed for two years. However, her bravery won her the unstinting love and respect of the acting community. The decision came to be known as the De Havilland Law.

Periodicals Received

Baker Street in Baltimore, July 2020 (**The Six Napoleons of Baltimore**, Greg Ruby, SixNapoleonsOfBaltimore@gmail.com)

Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections, June 2020 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, USA)

The Illustrious Clients News, August 2020 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, Indiana 46077, USA; IllustClients@gmail.com)

The Passengers' Log, May 2020 (**The Sydney Passengers**, Erin O'Neill, editor; erin.index@gmail.com)

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, July 2020 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net, <http://redcircledc.org/index.php?id=39>)

The Watsonian, Spring 2020 (**The John H Watson Society**; selena@johnwatsonsociety.com)

Jean Upton