

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

Jean Upton, Mole End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

e-mail: district.messenger@yahoo.com

No. 421 March 2022

As COVID restrictions are undergoing changes, please check the Society's website for news and updates on activities: www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk.

Of Particular Interest to Members: The Society is looking for a member to take over the post of **Honorary Treasurer** with effect from the AGM in May. Full training will be given, and the out-going Treasurer will work with the incoming Treasurer for the rest of this calendar year, to complete the year's accounting cycle. The Honorary Treasurer is an elected member of the Society's Council, taking a particular responsibility for the financial affairs of the Society. The Society is in good financial health and the main task of the Treasurer is to preserve this. Working with the other members of Council, the Treasurer oversees the main sources of operational income and expenditure which are: for the Society's events; for membership and *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*; and for merchandise. The Society also incurs overhead costs, such as for the maintenance of its web site. The Honorary Treasurer is expected to attend Council meetings roughly 6 times a year and the AGM, held in Central London in the evening. For the full job description see: <https://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/the-honorary-treasurer/>.

If you're interested in taking on the role, please contact the Chair at c.cooke@dsl.pipex.com with a brief resumé of your relevant experience.

If you are trying to fill in the gaps in your collection of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, an archive of back issues is now available on the Society's website shop.

<https://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/shop/archives/journal-archive/>

John Morewood, the mastermind behind our online **Gazetteer**, provides an update: 'Our webmaster just has seven more contemporary illustrations of Sherlockian sites to load up and then my task is complete.' This was a monumental undertaking by John and others; it's well worth taking time to explore: <https://gazetteer.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/>

Paul Thomas Miller reminds us that 11th March is *International Hug-a-Holmesian Day*. He provides an entertaining message at https://youtu.be/LfwN9b_S2jY

Burt Wolder gives an update on the **Frederic Dorr Steele Memorial**: 'While Covid restrictions prevented an event at the Albany Rural Cemetery in 2021, we have begun planning an in-person dedication for the late spring or early summer of 2022. As we develop the program we will identify potential speakers, including Steele's descendants.'

In December 2021 we began a new project to purchase and place a suitable stone bench for visitors on or near the Steele family plot, which will require additional fundraising. In the event of further pandemic-related delays on public gatherings, we will develop an online event featuring works by Steele, with the participation of several institutions. We are creating a PowerPoint program about Steele for all audiences, which will include a biography and overview of his work. We also continue to work on our website, along with acknowledgements and mementoes for our donors.'

The play *Watson: The Final Problem*, written by our member **Bert Coules, BSI**, in collaboration with Tim Marriott, who plays Dr Watson, will be at the Chelsea Theatre on 31st March – 1st April and 7th – 9th April (all performances at 7.30pm). The standard ticket price is £15.00 - but up to 15 seats at every performance will be available to members of this Society for only £10.00 each! Book online at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/kings-road/the-chelsea-theatre/watson-the-final-problem/e-qjgrjo> and if you're a member, quote the password **M0R14RTY** to claim your discount.

The Northern Opera Group is working on a new operatic adaptation of *The Sign of Four* by Scottish composer and librettist Liam Paterson. A week of research and development will be undertaken in April at Beverley's East Riding Theatre. The intention is to tour the finished piece to theatres in towns and cities across the North of England where there is little access to live opera. A special preview performance will include scenes from the opera, a discussion with the audience, and a screening of the 2015 film *Mr Holmes*. Friday 8 April 2022, 7pm, East Riding Theatre, Beverley, HU17 9BE All tickets are £5 and available to book now at:

<https://www.northernoperagroup.co.uk/sherlockholmes>

The Théâtre Sans Frontières will begin to tour their production of *Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band* beginning at the Queen's Hall Arts Centre in Hexham, Northumberland on 8th March. For more information and to book tickets go to www.tsf.org.uk

The Museum of Power, near Maldon in Essex, is holding a Sherlock Holmes Murder Mystery Evening on Friday 22nd April. **The Irregular Special Players**, run by our member **Antony Richards**, will be providing the clues and entertainment. And mark your calendars; there's another one planned for Friday 16th September. For more information and to book tickets go to:

<http://www.museumofpower.org.uk/Calendar-2022V1.html#MURD122>

Benedict Cumberbatch was honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on 28th February. It is located at 6918 Hollywood Boulevard, across the road from the famous Chinese Theatre. You can watch a video of the unveiling ceremony at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfkjN4_4NiE

Sherlock: The Official Live Game is offering members of the SHSL a discount on their Private Escape Experience: 'The code is **sherlocksoc15** - it is exclusive for your members only and is redeemable on our Private Escape Experience for 4, 5 or 6 people. Our website to book through is: www.thegameisnow.com'

Penguin books recently carried out a '21 Questions' interview with author **Margaret Atwood**. When asked 'What was your favourite book when you were a teenager?' her response was: 'I was in love with Sherlock Holmes, if that's what you mean. You could depend on him never to be lecherous on a date. In fact, you could depend on him never to ask you on a date. Like pop stars, he could be admired from a distance. Suited both of us.' www.penguin.co.uk

Cliff Goldfarb provides the following: '**The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection** at the Toronto Public Library and the **Bootmakers of Toronto** are holding a Conference, **Jubilee@221B**, to celebrate the 50th anniversaries of the opening of the Collection and the founding of The Bootmakers. The Conference will take place at the Toronto Reference Library from Friday, September 23 to Sunday, September 25. There will be a guided walking tour of Conan Doyle's Toronto and a banquet on Saturday evening. We are still working on details of speakers, accommodations and other matters. People may ask to be put on our mailing list by going to <http://www.acdfriends.org/events.html>. Click on the link or send an email to jubilee_registration@acdfriends.org. We will advise as soon as registration opens.'

Books of Interest

Sonia Fetherston is gathering reminiscences about **Thomas L. Stix** (Wiggins of the Baker Street Irregulars), and would appreciate hearing from anyone who is willing to share first-person anecdotes about Tom for a new book to be published by the BSI Press. You can contact her at soniafetherston@comcast.net.

Alexis Barquin says: 'I published on Amazon recently *My Own Story: The Narrative of Eighteen Years' Persecution* by **George Edalji**. This story, serialised in the 1907 *Pearson's Weekly* was not published in book form since then. It's not related to Sherlock Holmes directly, but related to ACD as he is mentioned many times in it. I think it's valuable for ACD devotees.'

<https://www.amazon.com/My-Own-Story-Narrative-Persecution/dp/B09RG1CT4Z>

Obituaries

Beryl Vertue died on 12th February, age 90. Held in the highest regard throughout the entertainment industry, she

began as a secretary at Associated London Scripts, then becoming a business manager and eventually a prominent television producer. In 1979 she founded Hartswood Films, which created many popular series, and was executive producer of the critically acclaimed *Sherlock* for the BBC. In 2004 she received Bafta's Alan Clarke Award for outstanding creative contribution to television and in 2012 she was honoured by the Royal Television Society with a lifetime achievement award. She was appointed OBE in 2000 and CBE in 2016 for her work in the television industry. Her daughter Sue Vertue, who followed her into the TV industry as a producer, is married to Steven Moffat, the former showrunner of *Doctor Who* and co-creator of *Sherlock*. Beryl was Special Guest at our Society's 2016 Annual Dinner, at which Sue was guest speaker.

Bamber Gascoigne died on 8th February, age 87. Best known as the host of the long-running television quiz *University Challenge*, he wrote books and plays on a variety of topics and also appeared in the *Gorgon's Wood* (2004) episode of *Jonathan Creek*. In the film *Starter for Ten* (2006) he was played with uncanny accuracy by Mark Gatiss, with Benedict Cumberbatch as an excruciatingly annoying captain of one of the university teams.

Stewart Bevan died on 21 February age 73. One of his earliest roles was as a schoolboy in *To Sir With Love* (1967). He went on to play Professor Clifford Jones alongside Jon Pertwee's Doctor Who in *The Green Death* (1973). In *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Silk Stocking* (2004) he played the role of 'Proprietor'.

Periodicals Received:

Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections, December 2021 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, USA)

The Illustrious Clients News, January 2022 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, Indiana 46077, USA; IllustClients@gmail.com)

Ineffable Twaddle, March 2022 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen; terri@soundofthebaskervilles.com)

Plugs and Dottles, January, February, March 2022 (**The Nashville Scholars**, Jim Hawkins and Dean Richardson; seniorhawk@gmail.com)

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press, February 2022 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA: blau7103@comcast.net)

The Tankerville Times, Winter 2022, (**The Tankerville Club**, Cincinnati, Ohio; Dan Andriacco tankervilleclub@gmail.com)

Timeline, February 2022, (The Official Newsletter of the **Sherlockian Chronologist Guild**; Brad Keefauver bkeefauver@gmail.com)

The Whaling News, February 2022 (**The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn**, St. Charles, MO; J Andrew Basford; pcairmes26@outlook.com)

Jean Upton