

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Brian Pugh and **Paul Spiring** worked long and hard researching and writing *On the Trail of Arthur Conan Doyle: An Illustrated Devon Tour* (The Book Guild Ltd, Pavilion View, 19 New Road, Brighton BN1 1UF; £12.99). The result is not a big book — 136 pages — but it is most attractively presented. Its succinct account of Conan Doyle's association with Devon and with George Turnavine Budd and Bertram Fletcher Robinson is invaluable, and just to follow the Devon Tour on paper is fascinating. I must declare an interest, as I read through an early draft; I also provided the foreword, which I should not have done if I didn't think the book worthwhile. It's remarkable that, despite the recent publication of ACD's letters and Andrew Lycett's formidable biography, there's still a place (that's not strong enough: there's still a need) for carefully researched and well-presented books that concentrate on specific aspects of ACD's life. *On the Trail of Arthur Conan Doyle* has a proud place alongside Geoffrey Stavert's *A Study in Southsea* and Owen Dudley Edwards' *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes*.

As 'Anthony Boucher', William A P White (1911-1968) was a leading writer, editor and critic in the fields of mystery, fantasy and science fiction (Bouchercon, otherwise the Anthony Boucher Memorial World Mystery Convention, perpetuates his memory). His 1940 novel *The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars* had members of the BSI wondering whether one of their colleagues had written it under a pseudonym. Boucher was not yet an Irregular, but he received his investiture in 1949 as 'The Valley of Fear', having meanwhile helped establish The Scowlers and Molly Maguires as a scion society in northern California. He had also, in partnership with Denis Green, written over seventy scripts for the radio show *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, truer to the Canonical spirit than most of what had gone before, and more ingenious, literate and witty. Recordings of those plays, with Basil Rathbone (later replaced by Tom Conway) and Nigel Bruce, are available, and now *Anthony Boucher: A Bibliography* by Jeffrey Marks (McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, USA; www.mcfarlandpub.com; order line 800 253 2187; \$35.00) gives us an insight into the man and his work. Mr Marks' style is not graceful (Boucher's name is repeated far too often when a simple personal pronoun would suffice), and the proof reading leaves something to be desired (*The Case of the Seven of Calvary* becomes *The Case of the Seven of Cavalry*), but the book is a very welcome study of an important figure in the world of Holmesiana.

In *Without Conscience*, the third Johnny One Eye novel by David Stuart Davies (Robert Hale, Clerkenwell House, 45-47 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT; £18.99), Johnny Hawke's investigation of a philandering husband takes him beyond sexual intrigue to murder — and dirty work at the War Office. Meanwhile he becomes entangled in the search for a psychopathic killer, on the loose in wartime London. Time, place and character all ring true, and the wartime atmosphere is cunningly evoked. Isn't it time that the Johnny One Eye novels were published in paperback?

David Stuart Davies has also edited *The Game's Afoot*, an anthology of new Sherlock Holmes stories, published by Wordsworth Editions (8B East Street, Ware, Herts. SG12 9HJ) at just £2.99 — a remarkable price for 400 pages. The writers are all familiar names: June Thomson, Denis O Smith, M J Elliott, John Hall, Matthew Booth, Mark Valentine, Christopher Sequeira, Rafe McGregor, Alan Stockwell, John Howard,

and David Stuart Davies himself. And there isn't a dud among their twenty offerings. Holmes and Watson were always at their best in the shorter format, and this is one of the best collections I've encountered.

In *Revenge of the Judoon* (BBC Books Quick Reads; £1.99), the latest of nearly seventy Doctor Who titles from Terrance Dicks, the Doctor meets Arthur Conan Doyle, whom he last encountered, I think, in John Peel's *Evolution*. Former scriptwriter and script editor for the TV series, Terrance Dicks is also the author of, among much else, the 'Baker Street Irregulars' novels, in which a likeable bunch of modern schoolchildren successfully apply the methods of Sherlock Holmes.

Michael Sims tells me that his anthology *The Penguin Book of Great Thieves: Confidence Tricksters, Burglars, Rogues and Scoundrels from the Time of Sherlock Holmes* is due for publication next winter. The stories, by the likes of Grant Allen, Guy Boothby, William Le Queux, O Henry, R Austin Freeman, and Edgar Wallace — and, inevitably, E W Hornung and Maurice Leblanc — range from 1896 to 1924.

Next month sees the triumphant conclusion of **David Timson's** reading of the complete Sherlock Holmes stories for Naxos AudioBooks (2nd Floor, 40A High Street, Welwyn, Herts. AL6 9EQ; £16.99). *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes II* contains the last six stories as published in *The Strand Magazine* plus as a bonus a story written by Mr Timson himself. I hope to review this four-CD set in the next DM.

Several authors have imagined a melding of the world of Sherlock Holmes and that of H P Lovecraft's 'Cthulhu Mythos'. Few have been as successful as **Neil Gaiman** in his Hugo Award-winning short story 'A Study in Emerald', first published in the anthology *Shadows over Baker Street* and then in Mr Gaiman's own collection *Fragile Things*. Now, thanks to the author and his publishers, HarperCollins, you can freely download both a splendidly ornate copy of the text (<http://www.neilgaiman.com/p/Cool%20Stuff/Short%20Stories>) and an MP3 recording of Neil Gaiman reading it, which he does beautifully (<http://www.harpercollinsebooks.com/3F7BC868-242B-46FE-AF3E-D40D471C5400/10/125/en/Gaiman-download.htm>).

Peter Blau notes that copies of *Sir Hugo's Literary Companion: A Compendium of the Writings of Hugo's Companions, Chicago, on the Subject of Mr. Sherlock Holmes* signed by the editor, David C Humphrey, are available from 1843 Winnetka Avenue, Northfield, IL 60093, USA for \$28.95. And Joseph & Elaine Coppola have edited *Voices from the Strangers' Room* (Aventine Press, 1023 4th Avenue, #204, San Diego, CA 92101, USA; \$14.00), a collection of writings by members of **The Mycroft Holmes Society**.

The number of known copies of *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for 1887, containing the first printing of *A Study in Scarlet*, has just increased by one! On 29 March the *Knaresborough Post* reported that a copy has been found among a pile of donations at the Oxfam bookshop in Harrogate. It will be auctioned on 20 May at Bonhams' Oxford salerooms (39 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1JD; 01865 723524; oxford@bonhams.com). Apparently the book has lost its original covers and advertisements, and the news article suggests that it's bound in with other material, a not uncommon practice.

On 18 March at Bonhams in Bond Street an undated one-page autograph letter, signed 'A Conan Doyle', to 'Dear Sir', was sold for £3,700. Concerning the origins of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Conan Doyle wrote: '...My story was really based on nothing save a remark of my friend Fletcher Robinson's that there was a legend about a dog on the Moor connected with some old family. I had no place in my eye. What you say is interesting & extraordinary...'

Peter Cushing was not only a fine actor and a great Sherlock Holmes: he was a talented painter, who studied under the great watercolourist

Edward Seago. At Canterbury Auction Galleries on 18 March twenty-five of his paintings fetched a total of more than £20,000. The results aren't yet on the auctioneers' website, but the fully illustrated catalogue can be viewed at http://www.catalogue-host.co.uk/canterbury/2008-03-18/category_4_page_1, and there are good reproductions of all Cushing's pictures.

Michele Andina of swissinfo.ch, who made a video record of our Society's trip to Switzerland in 2005, reports that it can now be seen on YouTube at <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=gOluwowGsgU>. Enjoy!

Roger Llewellyn is now touring in David Stuart Davies's new play *The Death and Life of Sherlock Holmes*. His schedule for the next couple of months is: 3- 5 April **Baby Grand, Grand Opera House**, Belfast (028 9024 1919); 12 April **Garrick Theatre**, Lichfield (the play here is *Sherlock Holmes — The Last Act!*) (01543 412 121; www.lichfieldgarrick.com); 15 April **Greenwich Theatre**, London (020 8858 7755; boxoffice@greenwichtheatre.org.uk); 17 April **Maltings Arts Theatre**, St Albans (01727 844222; maltings.arts@stalbens.gov.uk); 19 April **Theatre Royal**, Margate (01227 787787; admin@theatreroyalargate.co.uk); 24 April **Arlington Arts Centre**, Newbury (01635 244246; boxoffice@arlingtonarts.co.uk); 26 April **Forest Arts Centre**, New Milton, Hants (01425 612393; forest.arts@hants.gov.uk); 30 April **Middlesbrough Theatre** (01642 81 51 81; boxoffice@middlesbrough.gov.uk); 2 May **Playhouse**, Alnwick (01665 510785; info@alnwickplayhouse.co.uk); 14 & 15 May **McCarthy Studio, Stephen Joseph Theatre**, Scarborough (01723 370541; tickets@sjt.uk.com); 17 May **Number 8 Community Arts Centre**, Pershore (01386 555488); 21 & 22 May **Nightingale Theatre**, Brighton (01273 709709; www.brightonticketshop.com); 27 May **Cramphorn Theatre**, Chelmsford (01245 606505; <http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=14684>); 29 May **Trinity Arts Centre**, Tunbridge Wells (01892 678678; info@trinitytheatre.net).

From 23 to 26 April, Thistles Musical Theatre Company will stage *The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes* by Leslie Bricusse at **The Kenneth More Theatre**, Oakfield Road, Ilford, Essex (box office phone 020 8553 4466, e-mail kmttheatre@aol.com). This play was first staged professionally under the title *Sherlock Holmes: The Musical* with Ron Moody and Derek Waring as Holmes and Watson, and there was a later short-lived touring production with Robert Powell and Roy Barraclough.

Offers are invited for a considerable collection of Holmesiana. **Nate Lucyk** at nate.lucyk@mohawkcollege.ca can provide interested parties with a list and pictures. (Mohawk College is in Hamilton, Ontario, so you may want to think about the cost of postage from Canada.)

Andrew Parker notes that *Hansard*, the official record of Parliamentary proceedings, includes for 19 March 2008 the ministerial reply to an MP's question about jellyfish and their effect on coastal aquaculture. It seems that there are six species of jellyfish that occur in UK coastal waters: Mauve stinger (*Pelagia noctiluca*), Compass jellyfish (*Chrysaora hysoscella*), Blue jellyfish (*Cyanea lamarckii*), Moon jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*), Barrel jellyfish (*Rhizostoma octopus*)... and, yes, our old friend Lion's Mane jellyfish (*Cyanea capillata*).

The website of **The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem** at <http://www.nashvillescholars.net/nashvillescholars/index.html> is worth a look. It's a new site, still growing. The Webmaster is Jim Hawkins (jim_hawkins@comcast.net).

The seventh annual combined **STUD/Watsonian Weekend** will begin on Friday 11 April with the sixteenth annual STUD dinner at the Sheraton Four Points at Schiller Park, Illinois. Julie McKuras will speak on 'Edith Meiser: From Broadway to BSI', and the traditional toasts and awards will be given. Saturday will see the 49th annual running of the Chicago Silver Blaze, sponsored by the Watsonians, at Hawthorne Race Course, and the STUD 'fun(d)raiser' pizza party at the house of Susan Diamond and Allan Devitt in Bensenville, IL. On Sunday the weekend concludes with the Fortescue Honours Brunch. To participate in the Watsonians' Fortescue Scholarship Program (a series of three examinations in matters Canonical and Sherlockian) contact Susan Diamond at sdiamond@comcast.net. Information about the weekend can be had from Bill Sawisch at wmsawisch@sbcglobal.net.

A reminder that the 2008 **Annual Victorian Cricket Match** between the Gentlemen of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and the Gentlemen of the P G Wodehouse Society will be held on Sunday 22 June at West Wycombe Cricket Ground. These events are quite delightful — and free! All are welcome, and Victorian costume and appurtenances are encouraged.

Barry Morse, who died on 2 February aged eighty-eight, is probably best remembered as Lt Philip Gerard, spending four years in pursuit of Dr Richard Kimble in the television series *The Fugitive*. Born in Bethnal Green, he studied at RADA and worked mainly in British theatre till 1951, when he moved to Canada, establishing himself there and in the USA as an actor and director on stage and screen. A devoted Shavian, he revived the flagging Shaw Festival at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and after his return to England in 1976 became President of the Shaw Society. His many less consequential rôles included Carter Morstan in the fun 1986 TV movie *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, with Michael Pennington and Margaret Colin.

Peter Blau reports the death on 8 February of **Shirley Dickensheet** ('Ivy Douglas', BSI), a leading member of The Trained Cormorants and later The Scowlers and Molly Maguires. 'She was working for the Fireman's Fund when they insured the Loch Ness Monster in 1969, and paid off when it sank during the filming of *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (the submersible is now at the bottom of the Loch, waiting to be found by one of the many people who still pursue 'Nessie').'

Novelist and historian **Julian Rathbone**, twice shortlisted for the Booker Prize, highly regarded for his thrillers, was a great-nephew of Basil Rathbone. In 1998 he presented the inaugural Sherlock Awards for crime writing. Peter Blau notes that his story 'Baz' ('about a thoroughly modern Holmes and Watson') was published in Maxim Jakubowski's *New Crimes* 3 in 1991. He died on 28 February aged seventy-three.

Tony Church, one of our finest classical actors, died on 25 March aged seventy-seven. He was a founding member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, first director of Exeter's Northcott Theatre, dean of the Denver Center's National Theatre Conservatory graduate program, and director of drama at the Guildhall School. His radio rôles included Charles Augustus Milverton to Carleton Hobbs' Holmes in 1961, and Jephro Rucastle opposite Barry Foster in 1978.

Periodicals received. *Bohemian Newsletter*, no. 86 (České společnost **Sherlocka Holmese**, Aleš Kolodrubec, Milešovská 1, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic). *The Camden House Journal*, March 2008 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Cobwebby Bottles*, March 2008 (**The Musgraves**, Rafe McGregor, 62 Willow Park Road, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PS; RafeG@aol.com). *Communication*, no. 279 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *The Illustrious Clients News*, March 2008 (**The Illustrious Clients**, Steven T Doyle, 9 Calumet Court, Zionsville, IN 46077, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, April 2008 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA). *Ironmongers Daily Echo and Franco-Midland Branches Advertiser*, March 1908 [*sic*] (**La Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, 36 avenue Jean-Jaurès, 63500 Issoire, France). *Mayday Mayday*, March 2008 (**The Crew of the SS May Day**, Oscar Ross, 19 Ardcarney Way, Belfast BT5 7RP). *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring 2008 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA). *3 Pipe Problem Plugs and Dottles*, January & February 2008 (**The Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem**, Kay Blocker, 5017 Maywood Drive, Nashville, TN 37211, USA pkblocker@comcast.net) [*a welcome return after an unexpected long hiatus*].

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, February 2008 and March 2008 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

Roger Johnson