

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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At the 75th anniversary dinner of **The Baker Street Irregulars** on 9 January, Wiggins awarded twelve investitures: **Bill Barnes** ('The *Gloria Scott*'), **Susan Dahlinger** ('The Bruce-Partington Plans'), **Robert Ellis** ('The Illustrious Client'), **Walter Jaffee** ('The Resident Patient'), **Allan Devitt** ('The Dancing Men'), **Greg Darak** ('The Engineer's Thumb'), **Jeff Bradway** ('A Case of Identity'), **Michael Pollak** ('The Blue Carbuncle'), **Sebastien le Page** ('The Six Napoleons'), **Jens Byskov Jensen** ('The Blanched Soldier'), **Joel Schwartz** ('The Three Students'), and **Barbara Rusch** ('The Mazarin Stone'). **Dan Posnansky** received the Two-Shilling Award, and Editors' Medals were presented to **Hirayama Yuichi**, **Doug Elliott**, **Bill Barnes**, **John Bergquist**, **Susan Rice** and **Nicholas Utechin**.

At our Society's annual dinner on 17 January, Freda Howlett presented the Tony Howlett Award to **Anna Smyth**.

The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual 2008 is called *Reading the Signs: Some Observations and Aperçus on Film and Television Adaptations of The Sign of The Four* by **David Morrill** (The Baker Street Irregulars, Michael H Kean, 3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953-2837, USA; www.bakerstreetjournal.com/; US \$11.00 postpaid; elsewhere \$12.00 postpaid). Mr Morrill's expert knowledge of Sherlockian film is evident throughout this very informative and readable 68-page monograph, which covers all the English-language screen productions since the introduction of sound. The Granada TV film, I think, has yet to be equalled as a screen adaptation of a Canonical story. Mr Morrill is less impressed, and his enthusiasm for the Mapleton production persuades me that I should watch it again.

Australia and Sherlock Holmes edited by **Doug Elliott** and **Bill Barnes** is the third volume in the BSI International Series (address & website as above; US \$43.90 postpaid; elsewhere \$52.90 postpaid). An introductory account of Sherlockians in Australia is followed by two essays on Conan Doyle's 1921 tour of Australia — one by Alec Chisholm, whose memories are of the man rather than the Spiritualist mission. Arthur Williams, Richard Hughes and Dick Hughes look more closely at the Holmesian phenomenon in Australia. Hughes Senior was a lifelong devotee, who applied the Master's methods to remarkable effect in a career that stretched well beyond his ostensible profession as a journalist. Then there are papers on specifically Australian aspects of the Canon. Philip Cornell's identification of the snake in 'The Speckled Band' seems to me definitive, and Rosane McNamara's solution to the chronological paradox of 'The *Gloria Scott*' almost so. Finally there are ten less geographically restricted articles by Australian scholars — among them Mark Doyle, Michael Duke, James Eedle, Kerry Murphy, Alan Olding, Robert Veld and Bill Barnes — which prove that Holmesian scholarship is alive and well Down Under. The many illustrations include a plentiful scattering of Philip Cornell's delightful cartoons.

In 'Certain Rites, and Also Certain Duties': *Unexpected Sources of Baker Street Irregularity*, Volume Seven of the BSI Archival Histories, (Hazelbaker & Lellenberg, 211 East Delaware Place, suite 605, Chicago, IL 60611, USA; jonlellenberg@gmail.com; US \$14.00, Canada \$15.00, UK & Europe \$19.50 — prices in US dollars, postpaid) **Jon Lellenberg** looks at Christ Cella's speakeasy on East 45th Street, where the BSI was conceived; at that great journalist Elmer Holmes Davis and the curious origin of the Constitution and Buy Laws (*sic*) that are his lasting contribution to the Irregulars; at Frank Morley, deviser of the crossword puzzle whose solving his brother Christopher lightly adopted as the criterion for Irregularity; and at Basil Davenport, Edgar W Smith, Ronald Mansbridge, and James Ramsay Hunt Jr — all, I think, mentioned in earlier volumes in the series, but all deserving of further study, both as Sherlockians and as remarkable men (the information, far from complete, about Smith's formative years has only recently come to

light). A bitterly funny account of the problems caused for Doubleday & Co in 1959 by Adrian Conan Doyle's insistence on a US edition of the Conan Doyle Centenary Album, a very expensive vanity project, is followed by 'The BSI at Seventy-Five' a passionate but well-balanced summary of the state of the society today. The BSI history series makes for fascinating reading, largely because of the excellence of the editors and writers who contribute to it, but also because of what the BSI is — and it's very different from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London! These books help us to understand and to enjoy the difference.

The tenth volume in the Sherlock Holmes Reference Library, *The Apocrypha of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, edited and annotated by **Leslie S Klinger** (Gasogene Books, Wessex Press LLC, PO Box 68308, Indianapolis, IN 46268, USA; www.wessexpress.com/; \$19.95), contains two self-parodies, 'The Field Bazaar' and 'How Watson Learned the Trick'; two possible Holmes cases, 'The Man with the Watches' and 'The Lost Special' (the former the basis for one of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in Bert Coules' recent BBC Radio 4 series); three plays, *The Stonor Case* (Jack Tracy had a slightly different version, *The Speckled Band*, in his 1980 volume *Sherlock Holmes: The Published Apocrypha*), *The Crown Diamond* and *Angels of Darkness*; and a plot outline called 'The Tall Man'. The decision to play the great Holmesian game with these writings results in a book that's somehow less satisfactory than the others in the series, particularly when it comes to *Angels of Darkness*, a tale so wildly different from the events of *A Study in Scarlet* that suspension of disbelief is impossible. *The Stonor Case* is an exciting melodrama. *The Crown Diamond* is an efficient short thriller. *Angels of Darkness* is a sprawling mess, full of racial and cultural stereotypes and unspeakable dialogue; it's a curiosity that shouldn't be considered alongside the true Canon. That said, we're indebted to Mr Klinger for the light he throws on these addenda to the Canon; his scholarship is, exemplary (though it should be mentioned that county cricket matches were amateur fixtures; there were professional cricketers, but they were very much looked down on, as the chronicles of A J Raffles show). Volumes One to Nine of the Sherlock Holmes Reference Library are, to the scholar and researcher, essential, but Volume Ten is only very desirable.

Also from Wessex Press is *Voices from Baker Street* (\$18.95), all four LP recordings, most of them made by Bill Rabe between the early 1950s and the late 1970s, digitally remastered and released on two CDs. For the first time in decades, we can hear Vincent Starrett reciting his poem '221B', Felix Morley recalling his brother Christopher, James Montgomery singing 'We Never Mention Aunt Clara'... plus the voices of Rex Stout, Edgar W Smith, John Bennett Shaw, Anthony Boucher, Basil Davenport, Julian Wolff, Isaac Asimov, Nathan Bengis, Basil Rathbone and a cast of what seems like hundreds. Newly recorded introductions by Mark Gagen put each recording in its context. It's an entertainment and a scholarly resource.

Each year since 1983 the USA's most north-westerly group has published a journal of scholarship and frivolity. *The Best of The Sound of the Baskervilles' Beaten's Christmas Annual: Our First Quarter Century (The Sound of the Baskervilles*, 3606 Harborcrest Court NW, Gig Harbor, WA 9832-8981, USA; \$19.95 plus postage) is a fine chunky 296-page collection that exemplifies just those qualities. Most of the contents run to no more than a couple of pages, but they prove that Sherlockian commentary can be both brief and valuable: random instances are Terri Haugen on Eille Norwood, Stu Shiffman on Sexton Blake, Jean Macdonald on Dorothy L Sayers, and Lloyd Hedberg on the nature of Sherlockians. The dozen or so pastiches vary in quality, most being helped by a slightly skewed approach. The humour embraces parody, jokes, comic verse and all sorts: I particularly like David

Haugen's lampoons of the old radio plays. There are recipes and essays on Victorian food and drink, and finally a section headed 'Miscellany', which is definitely *le mot juste!* Just out is *Beaten's Christmas Annual* for 2008 – 42 pages of the same, for \$10.00.

Many authors, ignoring Holmes's remark, 'No ghosts need apply,' have set him face to face with the supernatural. There have been several anthologies of such stories, but few, I think, as good as *Gaslight Grimoire: Dark Tales of Sherlock Holmes* edited by **J R Campbell & Charles Prepolec** (EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing, Inc., PO Box 1714, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2L7; \$16.95), which contains eleven of the most ingenious, imaginative and inspired exploits yet committed to paper. Holmes meets vampires, revenants, demons and things less definable. He accompanies Professor Challenger to the Lost World, and collaborates with two celebrated ghost-hunters. He even meets Peter Pan! But the best is 'The Red Planet League' by Kim Newman, a tale inspired by the work of H G Wells, whose protagonist is not Holmes but Moriarty. It's a dazzlingly clever and beautifully written demonic joke.

Jeff Falkingham's *Sherlock Holmes: In Search of the Source* (Xlibris, International Plaza II, Suite 410, Philadelphia, PA 19113-1513, USA; www2.xlibris.com/bookstore; \$29.99 hardback, \$19.99 paperback) takes Holmes back to Minnesota, ten years after the events of *Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper*. Where Holmes goes there will be crime, of course. Murder is universal, but this particular murder arises directly from the story of the city of St Paul – a story conveyed with an easy and natural authority. The narrator Peter Smith, as likable at twenty-two as he was at twelve, is an amiable, intelligent and enthusiastic narrator, who shares Dr Watson's talent for telling a story in English that's literate without being in the least precious.

Seventy-six issues of that excellent journal *Baker Street Miscellanea* were published between 1975 and 1993, rivalling the BSI and the SHJ. The complete run is now available on CD as fully searchable PDF files for \$40.00 from Donald Pollock (521 College Avenue, Niagara Falls, NY 14305, USA). E-mail donaldkpollock@gmail.com for details of payment by PayPal.

Three titles from Black Coat Press (Hollywood Comics.com LLC, PO Box 17270, Encino, CA 91416, USA; www.blackcoatpress.com) must wait till the next issue for review: *Sherlock Holmes vs Fantômas* by **Pierre de Wattyne & Yorrill Walter**, adapted by Frank J Morlock (£10.99); *Sherlock Holmes: The Vampires of Eternity* by **Brian Stableford** (£16.99); *Tales of the Shadowmen: The Vampires of Paris* edited by **Jean-Marc & Randy Lofficier** (£14.99). So must *Great British Fictional Detectives* by **Russell James** (Remember When, Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 47 Church Street, Barnsley S70 2AS; £19.99).

Arthur Conan Doyle: Sherlock Holmes et au-delà by Marianne Stjepanovic-Paully is published by Éditions du Jasmin (4 rue Valiton, 92 110 Clichy, France; €16.00). *Aside Arthur Conan Doyle: Twenty Original Tales* by **Bertram Fletcher Robinson**, compiled by Paul Spiring, is due from MX Publishing (10 Kingfisher Close, Stanstead Abbots, Herts. SG12 8LQ; £12.99). *Dust and Shadow* by **Lyndsay Faye**, pitting Holmes and Watson against Jack the Ripper, has attracted exceptional prepublication notices (Simon & Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, USA; 28 April 2009; \$25.00). On 25 June comes *The Penguin Book of Gaslight Crime: Con Artists, Burglars, Rogues, and Scoundrels from the Time of Sherlock Holmes* edited by **Michael Sims** (80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL; £9.99).

Paul Spiring will be at Waterstone's Bookshop in Plymouth on 21 February from noon to 2.00pm to sign copies of *On the Trail of Arthur Conan Doyle: An Illustrated Devon Tour*, and at 7.00pm on 23 February he'll be at Plymouth Central Library to talk about *aside Arthur Conan Doyle* (for details of both events phone 01752 256699).

Hugo Koch has kindly sent me four copies of his latest booklet *The Adventures of John Wilkes Holmes*, which are free to the first four applicants within the UK (a 'large letter' stamp would be appreciated).

As always, there's lots of interest in the January *Sherlockian E-Times* at http://www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times09-1.htm. (Classic Specialties, PO Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH, 45219, USA; sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com.)

From 11 to 28 February the **Pentameters Theatre** (Oriel Place, 28 Heath Street, Hampstead NW3 6TE; 020 7435 3648) will stage *Sherlock*

Holmes and the Hound of the Baskervilles by Harry Meacher, who also plays Holmes. Judi Bowker and Roger Sansom are also in the cast.

The Diamond Murders is yet another Sherlock Holmes film, based on *The Sign of Four* – but Holmes is not the principal sleuth. Ashoke Viswanathan is directing it in India, and most of the dialogue is in Hindi. Holmes, played by **Simon Wilson**, British Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta, appears briefly to advise the detective Prasant Sehgal, played by Rajat Kapoor.

On 16 February the Stamp Issuing Office of the Principality of Monaco will issue a €0.85 stamp to mark the 150th anniversary of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's birth and a €1.70 stamp to mark the 200th anniversary of Edgar Allan Poe's birth. Details are at <http://www.oetp-monaco.com/webkit/jsp/actu02.jsp?idCateg=0&idActu=141&langue=EN>.

The Original London Walks offers *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes*, which starts every Friday at 2.00pm, regardless of the weather, at Embankment Underground Station, and lasting about two hours. The regular guides are Corinna and Richard (our member **Richard Burnip**). The normal adult price is £7.00, but if you take along a copy of *The District Messenger* you'll pay only £5.00. The website at www.londonwalks.com is well worth a look.

So is **Rafe McGregor's** site at www.rafecmcgregor.co.uk. On his blog at www.rafecmcgregor.blogspot.com you can enter a free competition to win a hamper of signed Sherlockian and weird fiction.

On 30 December that highly dubious source *The Daily Star* reported that Guy Ritchie is buying the *Sherlock Holmes* pub in Edmonton, Alberta for Jude Law – Dr Watson in his film *Sherlock Holmes*.

The Nobel laureate **Harold Pinter**, who died on 24 December aged seventy-eight, was a noted actor as well as a dramatist. Dominic Dromgoole, Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe, reported that in 1958, under the name David Baron, he appeared with Carleton Hobbs and Norman Shelley in the serial *The Hound of the Baskervilles* on BBC Radio. The producer was Dominic's father Patrick Dromgoole. **Kathleen Byron** died 18 January aged eighty-eight, after an acting career that included the neurotic Sister Ruth in *Black Narcissus* and old Mrs Ryan in *Saving Private Ryan*. In Granada TV's 1994 production of *The Golden Pince-Nez*, she played Mrs Marker.

Periodicals received. *The Baker Street Journal*, Winter 2008 (Steven Rothman, 220, West Rittenhouse Square, #15-D, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA; subscriptions, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331, USA; correspondence for **The Baker Street Irregulars** should go to Michael Whelan, 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA). *The Camden House Journal*, January 2009 & February 2009 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Communication*, no. 285 and no. 286 (**The Pleasant Places of Florida**, Wanda & Jeff Dow, 1737 Santa Anna Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698, USA). *For the Sake of the Trust*, Fall 2008 (**The Baker Street Irregulars Trust**, Julie McKuras, 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124, USA). *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections*, December 2008 (Suite 111, Elmer L Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, 222 21st Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA). *Ineffable Twaddle*, January 2009 and February 2009 (**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*, December 1908 (**Société Sherlock Holmes de France**, Thierry Saint-Joanis, 15 rue Grande, 03370 Saint-Sauvier, France). *Practice Notes*, December 2008 (**The Friends of Dr Watson**, Nino Cirone, Highcroft Cottage, 14 Totteridge Common, London N20 8NL). *The Moor: Magasin für Sherlockianer*, December 2008 (**The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden**, Anders Wiggström, Byggmästarvägen 29, 169 Bromma, Sweden). *Prescott's Press*, December 2008 (**The Three Garridebs**, Warren Randall, 15 Fawn Lane West, South Setauket, NY 11720-1346, USA). *The Scion*, Winter 2008 (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Serpentine Muse*, Winter 2008 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, 301 Warren Ave, #203, Baltimore, MD 21203, USA).

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

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