

Sherlockians (and Holmesians) gathered in New York to celebrate the Great Detective's 170th birthday during the (very) long weekend from Jan. 10 to 14, and reports on many of the goings-on will be posted soon at the Baker Street Irregulars' web-site <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/tag/reports>. In the meantime, here are a few brief paragraphs to tide you over, and you can also listen to Scott Monty and Burt Wolder discuss the festivities at their "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog at <www.tinyurl.com/yv5a6w2m>. Scott's report on the weekend is at <www.tinyurl.com/y3wtfcv7>. Michael Dirda also reported on the birthday festivities in the Washington Post on Jan. 28 <www.tinyurl.com/y3r9m8nh>.

Locals and early arrivals enjoyed the ASH Wednesday dinner, and on Thursday morning the ACD Society's Doylean Awards Ceremony and a running of the Wessex Cup were held at the Mysterious Bookshop; the society's web-site is at <www.acdsociety.com>. The BSI's Distinguished Speaker that evening was author Tess Gerritsen, who explained in detail why the worst thing a Victorian could do when ill was to go to a hospital; her entertaining paper will be published in the Baker Street Journal later this year.

On Friday the William Gillette Memorial Luncheon featured performances of two skits: Ray Betzner's "Mrs. Hudson and the Return of Sherlock Holmes" (with Curtis Armstrong as Holmes, Ashley Polasek as Mrs. Hudson, and Ken Ludwig as the narrator and Sherlock's bust); and Andrew Joffe's "Quantum of Sherlock" (with Paul Singleton as Holmes, Sarah Montague as Mrs. Monypenny, Andrew Joffe as Q, and Lee Shackelford as Blofeld. And the Susan Rice Mentorship Award (recognizing "commitment to mentoring Sherlockians as a means of keeping green the memory of Sherlock Holmes") was presented to Francine Kitts.

Irregulars and guests gathered for dinner at the Yale Club, where Mark Gagen offered the traditional first toast to Pamela Wampler as "The Woman". The dinner agenda included the usual toasts, and rituals, and spectacular presentations by Curtis Armstrong (about grade-B villains in the Canon), and Ray Betzner, Steve Doyle, and Steve Rothman (on Alexander Woollcott's qualifications as a member of the BSI). And Eric Scace was announced as the winner of annual Morley-Montgomery Award (for the best contribution to the Baker Street Journal in 2023) was presented to Eric Scace, for his article "Five Quarter-Centuries of Confusion over 'The Missing Three-Quarter'" in the spring 2023 issue. You can subscribe to the BSJ (four issues and a Christmas Annual) at <www.tinyurl.com/3vxncdhd>.

The BSI's new Birthday Honours were awarded to Rudy Altergott ("Old Patrick"), Derrick Belanger ("The Board Schools"), Thomas Brydges ("Waterloo Bridge"), Fabienne Courouge ("Henri Fournaye"), Daniel Friedman ("Sir Leslie Oakshott"), Chuck Kovacic ("Baker Street"), Stephen Chahn Lee ("Alec MacDonald"), Danna Mancini ("McMurdo"), Maxine Reneker ("The Whole Art of Detection"), Olivia Rutigliano ("Lady Alicia Whittington"), Jessica Schilling ("The Queen's Shilling"), George Schwartz ("The Alpha Inn"), Robert Sharfman ("Killer Evans"), and Liese Sherwood-Fabre ("Mrs. Farintosh"). And the BSI's prestigious Two-Shilling Award was bestowed on Otto Penzler.

Jan 24 #2 Friday evening also saw the revival ("Out of the Abyss") of the Gaslight Gala, at Slattery's Midtown Pub, with cocktails, dinner, toasts, songs, a skit, a quiz, a raffle, and (of course) conversation. Planning for 2025 is under way.

On Saturday morning Covent Garden West offered the usual opportunity for dealers to help those who wanted to add to their collections, and the Saturday luncheon and reception included the Dr. John H. Watson Fund's auction, which attracted enthusiastic bidders; the raffle prizes were a set of brass and leather coasters and etched glasses, and an attractive "Mus-grave Ritual" shadow box, all hand-crafted by Danna Mancini. Finally, for those who lasted that long, the last event of the birthday festivities was the Adventuresses' Brunch on Sunday.

You can plan ahead: the next annual dinner of the Baker Street Irregulars is scheduled for Jan. 17, 2025. You can also plan much farther ahead: the BSI's next special conference (similar to "Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire" at Bear Mountain in 2022) is scheduled for the summer of 2027. If you'd like to have information about future events (and much more) you are welcome to sign up for "News from the BSI" at <www.tinyurl.com/yc5tsz27>.

One of the added features of the birthday festivities was a performance of Hal Glatzer's new one-act play "FlatFinders 1881" (a humorous exploration of Holmes and Watson's search for a flat they could share), at the Coffee House Club, and it's grand that it was recorded and available on-line at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_51MLXZHPU>.

The Yale Club kindly displayed some of the history of the Baker Street Irregulars in glass cases in the Club's library: the BSI's official gavel, made from wood from 221B, presented to Edgar W. Smith by the Six Napoleons; remnants from the cloth used to make the BSI's first official necktie, made for and worn by Christopher Morley; inscribed books; photographs and minutes from early annual dinners, and much more.

Another nice feature of the festivities was the opportunity to visit the N.Y. Public Library to view their exhibition "Max Beerbohm: The Price of Celebrity" and Beerbohm's caricature of Conan Doyle. The exhibition has closed, but the caricature's on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/5xwyv5jk>.

Coming to auction at Potter & Potter on Feb. 15: the second half of Robert Hess' collection (including the only known copy of the first British edition of *The Lost World* in dust jacket, and Sidney Paget's personal robe), and Roy Pilot's library (including the manuscript of *Uncle Bernac*). Their web-site's at <www.tinyurl.com/2rnd6ds7>.

There are two interesting Paget items on offer at Chorley's in Gloucestershire on Feb. 6: an artist's sketchbook that was owned by Henry Marriott Paget (1856-1936) <www.tinyurl.com/vtxhx2uz>, and another owned by Walter Stanley Paget (1862-1935) <www.tinyurl.com/mpmr8br8>, each with an estimate of £200-£300. Both men were brothers of Sidney Paget, and all three were artists (and illustrated stories by Conan Doyle).

Jan 24 #3 Mark Gatiss' dramatization of "Lot No. 249" aired on BBC Two on Dec. 24 and was streamed on the BBC's iPlayer, for viewers in Britain. As with so many other things on the Internet, there are work-arounds, many of them involving copyright infringement, and (sure enough) that has happened with "Lot No. 249", which is still available at the Dailymotion web-site <www.dailymotion.com>, which is owned by the French media company Vivendi. No spoilers here, for those who haven't seen the show, but Gatiss had fun with the story, adding a new character (with some nice Canonical echoes), and providing a different ending. Conan Doyle's story is of course readily available on-line, in case you'd like to read what inspired Mark Gatiss.

Al Gregory <gaslightandfog@verizon.net> kindly offers (via e-mail) his new edition of "The ABC of the BSI" (an alphabetical listing of Investitures, with recipients, from "Abbey Grange" to "Young Stamford") and "The Florin Society" (couples in which both spouses are Investitured Irregulars).

Hal Glatzer's *The Sign of Five* (2023; 283 pp., \$25.00) is a collection of five pastiches (reprinted from earlier anthologies) tied to his interests in Hawaii, Gilbert & Sullivan, and much more. His web-site, which is on-line at <www.halglatzer.com>, offers more information about his book, and about his play "Sherlock Holmes and the Volcano Horror" (along with a link to video of the play).

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London is planning their next excursion, to India, Feb. 22-Mar. 9, 2025; details, as well as a link to a downloadable and colorful brochure, are at <www.tinyurl.com/mhzn7u9>, with a request for expressions of interest.

Four pages (all that are known to have survived) of the manuscript of "The Crooked Man" were sold at auction at Sotheby's in New York last year for \$95,250 (including the buyer's premium) (Jul 23 #3), and the new owner has sent one of the four pages to auction at RR Auction in Amherst, N.H., on Feb. 22, with an estimate of \$40,000+ <www.tinyurl.com/3mefsu8s>. Randall Stock discusses the manuscript on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/382c5925>.

RR Auction also is offering, on Feb. 14, a 34-page notebook in which Conan Doyle wrote about Spiritualism <www.tinyurl.com/mtsjkja2>, with an estimate of \$8,000+. The web-site has a detailed description of the contents, and images of the pages.

The Brattleboro Reformer reported (Jan. 23) <www.tinyurl.com/yyvscd24> on the Landmark Trust USA's "Snow Golf" skills competition to be held on Feb. 25. The Trust manages Naulakha, Rudyard Kipling's home in Dummerston, Vt., where he is credited with inventing snow golf after being introduced to the game by Conan Doyle in 1894. You can stay at Naulakha for a night (or a week) <www.landmarktrustusa.org/rudyard-kiplings-naulakha>.

"Lion's Mane Mushrooms Make This Crab-Inspired Fried Rice Roar with Flavor" was the headline on Joe Yonan's article in the Washington Post food section on Jan. 10; there was no mention of Sherlock Holmes, but you can read the article (and get the recipe) at <www.tinyurl.com/2jatxpt9>.

Jan 24 #4 "Find your fit as we explore the streets of London and the infamous 221B Baker Street" is the suggestion from Yes.Fit, a company that offers to make running (and walking and bicycling) interesting <yes.fit/races/Sherlock>. Alas, Sherlock no longer is available, but you might still be able to buy the reward merchandise.

Greg Darak has noted a nicely Sherlockian book available from Blackwell's Rare Books in Oxford <www.tinyurl.com/yc5prmkj>: a copy of the first edition of Christina Rossetti's *The Prince's Progress, and Other Poems* (1866) illustrated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who inscribed the book to Charles A. Howell, "from his affectionate friend." (£7,500). According to the cataloguer, Charles Augustus Howell "was one of the most notorious figures of his day, thinly fictionalized and roundly vilified by Arthur Conan Doyle in his story 'The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton', where he was damned 'the worst man in London.'" And so he was, and there's much more said about Howell and Rossetti and others in the catalog.

The new film "The Color Purple" got a lot of publicity for having the second-highest Christmas Day opening of all time (with \$18.15 million in box-office receipts. Robert Downey Jr.'s "Sherlock Holmes" (2009) holds the all-time record (\$24.6 million) <www.tinyurl.com/mwbkeh2d>.

Sherlockians aren't the only people who celebrate on Jan. 6, according to Country Life <www.tinyurl.com/pz5rbkmc> and <www.tinyurl.com/mrx47htw>.

The manuscript of "The Bully of Brocas Court" is available from Antiquariat Inlibris in Vienna for €75.000 <www.inlibris.com/item/bn60378>. There is a detailed history of the ms. at Randall Stock's "The Best of Sherlock Holmes" web-site <www.bestofsherlock.com/mss/bully-brocas-court-2023.htm>.

Tom Smothers died on Dec. 26. He played the naïve half of the two Smothers Brothers and became a star when their off-beat television series was launched on CBS-TV in 1967. He appeared dressed as Sherlock Holmes in the "Mistaken Identity" episode of television series "Hotel" on Feb. 1, 1984, but (alas) the episode seems not to be available on the Internet.

The Beacon Society continues to administer the Fortescue Scholarship Honours Program, and more than 120 people have completed all three exams and have received a Doctorate in Sherlockiana. The 2024 Recertification Exam is available on request from Steve Mason <mason.steve8080@gmail.com>, and there's more information about the program at <www.tinyurl.com/2vt9saym>.

Robert Stek's *An Ancestor of Mine ...* (2022) is a pleasant pastiche revealing that Star Trek's Mr. Spock was the biological father of Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes; you can read it on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/3w7vyh8j>.

Maryann B. Murray's *Coda* (Ocean Park: CSan Communications, 2023; 302 pp., \$16.95) is set in Montpellier in 1894; Elizabeth Devereaux is in dire peril in a thriller that involves murder, missing documents, and a mysterious Norwegian named Sigerson, who will be familiar to those who remember what Sherlock Holmes was doing in 1894.

Jan 24 #5 Robert Downey Jr. has won this year's Golden Globe award for best supporting actor in a film for his role as Lewis Strauss in "Oppenheimer". Downey has won other Golden Globe awards in the past, including best actor in a musical or comedy, for "Sherlock Holmes" (2009). Indeed, the film was considered to be a musical or comedy. Jeff Bridges won the award that year for best actor in a drama for "Crazy Heart".

A collection of treasures from Queen Mary's Dolls' House will be on display at Windsor Castle this year to celebrate the centenary of its creation <www.tinyurl.com/4j8btf9m>, and there will be an on-line lecture on Apr. 16 <www.tinyurl.com/3ufnsx7e> that may (or may not) mention or show Conan Doyle's manuscript for "How Watson Learned the Trick". Fine Books & Collections (Jan. 24) <www.tinyurl.com/474pr8cf> has a nicely illustrated article about the Doll's House's library.

Jean Upton, the editor of the always-interesting District Messenger (the long-running monthly newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London), has an attractive business card that proclaims that she is a librocubicularist. If you're not familiar with the word, Merriam-Webster has a nice definition <www.tinyurl.com/25uynr33> that credits Christopher Morley (in *The Haunted Bookshop*) for inventing the word.

The China Global Television Network reported on Jan. 4 on a new Sherlock Holmes-themed exhibition at the Hebei Museum in Shijiazhuang (in northern China <www.tinyurl.com/29hvfsrc> though Mar. 31. This isn't the International Sherlock Holmes Exhibition that has been seen in many museums and science centers since it opened in Columbus, Ohio, in 2014.

According to Variety (Jan. 3) <www.tinyurl.com/44w2a63r> CBS-TV has given a straight-to-series order for "Watson" (expected to air during the 2024-2025 season). The series is set one year after Holmes' death at the Reichenbach, with Morris Chestnut as Watson, who had resumed his medical career as head of a clinic devoted to treating rare disorders, but "Watson's old life isn't done with him." Craig Sweeny created the series and will be the showrunner and executive producer; he was an executive producer and writer on the "Elementary" series that ran for seven seasons on CBS, and it's obvious that the network is hoping for another success.

According to a story at Crunchyroll (Jan. 24) <www.tinyurl.com/yf7emtmd>, Sherlock Hound will celebrate his 40th anniversary this year. Two digitally remastered compilation films of the 1984 anime series that was directed by Hayao Miyazaki and Kyosuke Mikuriya will be screened throughout Japan beginning on Mar. 22. "His name is Sherlock Hound. It's his business to know what other woofs don't know."

Sherlocktron (Oct 87 #5) was launched by Willis G. Frick in the long-ago era of dial-up phone-line access to the Internet as an electronic bulletin board, and Willis has announced that "time and technology pass all of us by, and Sherlocktron has reached the end of its effective life and has retired to a small farm on the Sussex Downs to keep bees." Sherlocktron was older than the World Wide Web (which was invented in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee, and opened to the public in 1991). Ave atque vale to Sherlocktron.

Jan 24 #6 The Norwegian Explorers' Christmas Annual for 2023 celebrates the 75th anniversary of the society, with a nice mix of articles essays, pastiches, poetry, artwork, and a puzzle; only a few copies of the 112-page booklet, edited by Ray Riethmeier and Phillip Bergem, are available (\$12.00 postpaid); ask Phillip <pgbergem@gmail.com> if you're in time to order, and he'll tell you how to pay. Back issues for some earlier years, and conference books, also are available.

Theatrical news: Rick Robinson's "Sherlock Holmes and the Final Problem" is running at the Theatre on the Ridge in Paradise, Calif., through Feb. 4 <www.totr.org>.

Kate Hamill's "Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson--Apt. 2B" is scheduled at the Uptown Theatre in Mount Vernon, Iowa, Feb. 2-10 <www.mvlct.com>.

Kyle Gallagher's "The Man in the Shadows: An Original Telling of Sherlock Holmes" will have its world premiere at the Halifax Playhouse in Halifax, W. Yorks., Feb. 5-9 <www.halifaxplayhouse.org.uk>.

Zoe Drew-King's new play "We Can But Try" is scheduled at the Youth Initiative High School in Viroqua, Wis., Feb. 9-17 <www.yihs.net>.

Nick Lane's "The Valley of Fear" will tour in Great Britain, Mar. 9-Apr. 20 <www.blackeyedtheatre.co.uk>.

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville" will be performed at the Ocala Civic Theatre in Ocala, Fla., Mar. 21-Apr. 7 <www.ocalacivictheatre.com>. It's also due at the Huronia Players Community Theatre in Midland, Ont., on Apr. 26-May 11 <www.huronplayers.ca>.

Christopher M. Walsh's "Miss Holmes" is due at the Parsons Stage at Northglenn Arts in Northglenn, Colo., Mar. 21-Apr. 7 <www.phamaly.org>. Also at the Fells Point Corner Theatre in Baltimore, Md., from Apr. 25 to May 19 <www.fpct.org>.

David MacGregor's "The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes and the Fallen Soufflé" will be performed at the Sullivan Theater in Baton Rouge, La., Apr. 5-14 <www.sullivantheater.com>.

Max Bush's "Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of Abbey Grange" and "Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Capper Beeches" will be produced at the Patsy Miller Studio Theatre in St. Paul, Minn., Apr. 25-May 4; their web-site's at <www.tinyurl.com/mps28he7>.

Brian Guehring's "Sherlock Holmes & the First Baker Street Irregular" will be performed at the Warrenton Cultural Center in Warrenton, Ga., May 10-12 <www.areachildrenstheatre.org>.

Margaret Raether's "Sherlock Holmes & the Precarious Position" is due at coming up at the Taproot Theatre in Seattle, Wash., May 15-June 15; web-site at <www.taproottheatre.org>.

The Spermaceti Press: Peter E. Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401 (301-229-5669) <blau7103@comcast.net>

The Baker Street Irregulars Press has published two new titles: *Clutches of a Fiend* is the new addition to the Manuscript Series (179 pp., \$49.95); edited by Steven T. Doyle, it offers a facsimile of the manuscript of "The Illustrious Client", with an annotated transcription and scholarly commentary on the manuscript and on various aspects of the story (the Manuscript Series continues to offer readers an opportunity to come close to the moment when the stories were written, and the commentary is delightful).

Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire, edited by Ross E. Davies (211 pp., \$29.95), offers the proceedings and papers of the BSI's conference at the Bear Mountain Inn in 2022, with colorful images of the performers, and all of their scholarship. Both of the new titles (and many others) can be ordered at <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/tag/books>.

Further to the item about Queen Mary's Doll's House (Jan 14 #5): The Royal Family announced on Jan. 30 that Queen Camilla hosted a reception at Windsor Castle for authors, illustrators, and binders involved in creating a new Modern-Day Miniature Library collection that will be displayed alongside the Dolls' House <www.tinyurl.com/yvsxxuz2>. The 20 authors of the new miniature books include Anthony Horowitz (who has contributed "A Tiny Ghost Story"). The Queen has said that the Dolls' House's library (which has Conan Doyle's manuscript for "How Watson Learned the Trick") is "the most breath-taking space in the house." <www.bbc.com/news/uk-68139937>.

The 34-page notebook in which Conan Doyle wrote about spiritualism, up for bids this month at RR Auction <www.tinyurl.com/ysa6znrj> (Jan 24 #3), estimated at \$8,000, sold for \$12,378 (including the buyer's premium).

CBS' "Watson" (Jan 24 #5) isn't the only Sherlockian television series in the works: according to Variety (Feb. 15) <www.tinyurl.com/kavtm8px>, David Thewlis is due as Holmes in "Sherlock & Daughter" (Nov 23 #1) on the CW channel with Blu Hunt as his daughter Amelia and Dougray Scott as Moriarty.

Howard Ostrom's "A-Z List of Sherlock Holmes Performers" now has more than 9,200 entries (with more than 20,000 images), covering stage, screen, radio, television, the Internet, and much more; the list's available on-line at <www.nplh.co.uk/a-z-index.html>.

The Jeremy Brett Sherlock Holmes Podcast has announced Brettcon 2024: The 40th Anniversary Celebration <www.tinyurl.com/mpw9zz3e>, scheduled for May 25 in Guildford (Surrey). The podcast <www.sherlockpodcast.com> was created by Gus and Luke Holwerda in 2019, and they've now hosted more than 40 episodes that will be of interest to fans of the Granada series. Episode 41 is a delightful interview with now-94-year-old June Wyndham Davies, who produced the series and tells great stories about it; episode 40 provides a discussion of and a link to video of "The Adventure of the Abbey Treasure" (filmed by Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke in 1988 for the Abbey National Bank). The podcast is well worth exploring, and there's a handsome video trailer for the convention.

Feb 24 #2 An interesting look at the use of artificial intelligence to do research: <www.tinyurl.com/2rweutv2>. From Google Bard or some other AI program, and it's a grand example of how hilarious (and awful) the results can be. Alexander Orlov suggests that you try researching yourself to determine how good an AI program is.

Ray Betzner's "Mrs. Hudson and the Return of Sherlock Holmes" (with Curtis Armstrong as Holmes, Ashley Polasek as Mrs. Hudson, and Ken Ludwig as the narrator and the bust), performed at the William Gillette Luncheon in New York on Jan. 12, is now on-line in the Inner Circle at the Red Circle of Washington's web-site <www.redcircledc.org>.

The Beacon Society has announced its 2024 R. Joel Senter Sr. Memorial Essay Contest for students in grades 4 through 12; the deadline for submissions is Apr. 1, and details on the contest (and its history) can be found at <www.beaconsociety.com/joel-senter-essay-contest.html>.

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London reports that there has been enough interest in their next excursion, to India, Feb. 22-Mar. 9, 2025 (Jan 24 #3) for them to proceed with planning; details, and a link to a downloadable and colorful brochure, are at <www.tinyurl.com/44s9fks7>, and there's still time to register interest at their web-site. A more detailed brochure will be available in March.

Wanda Dow has found James Moriarty amongst the staff at Utica University <www.utica.edu/people/james-moriarty>. She also offers a chemistry quiz: what do you get when you combine tungsten, astatine, sulphur, oxygen, and nitrogen?

The Southern Daily Echo has reported (Feb 19) <tinyurl.com/y4629unh> that most of the Lyndhurst Park Hotel has been demolished, and showed an image of the planned new development. Conan Doyle is said to have designed the entrance of the hotel and its battlement-style terraces in 1912; the Daily Telegraph said on Mar. 20, 2021, that a local historian had found a sketch that showed that his design for the front façade "was based on the spiritual view of the journey of the soul."

If you don't remember Groucho Marx's "You Bet Your Life" series on NBC-TV, here's a nice excuse to watch it: the final question on Jan. 23, 1958, was Sherlockian <www.youtube.com/watch?v=beTpo2KCSFw> (kindly reported by Ann Marlowe).

Rodger Garrick-Steele died on Dec. 10, 2020, receiving far less publicity when he died than when he was alive and accusing Conan Doyle of murdering Bertram Fletcher Robinson (and having an affair with Fletcher Robinson's wife); he worked hard, and unsuccessfully, to arrange for an exhumation of Fletcher Robinson, hoping to prove the murder, and he wrote *The House of the Baskervilles*, a book which was translated and published in Japan before it was published in Britain in 2005. If you would like to know more about him, you can run a word-search for his name in Steve Mason's compilation of the text of this newsletter from March 1985 onward; it's on-line at <www.beaconsociety.com/scuttlebutt-from-the-spermacetti-press.html>.

Feb 24 #3 The Salmagundi Club, in addition to hosting the Coffee House Club's presentation of Hal Glatzer's "FlatFinders 1881" during the birthday festivities in New York, also hosted the "6th International Figure Painting Competition", which included Sierk van Meeuwen's attractive "The Coffee Trader's Dilemma" which can be seen at the artist's website <www.sierk.art>. The inspiration for the painting was Derrick Belanger's pastiche, published in David Marcum's anthology *The MX Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories, Part VI* (2017), and reprinted, together with van Meeuwen's artwork, in Phil Growick's anthology *The Art of Sherlock Holmes Global Edition 1* (2020).

Further to the report (Dec 23 #7) on plans for an "Immersive Fort Tokyo" theme park to open in Tokyo on Mar. 4, there's much more about the theme park, and its Sherlockian features, at <www.tinyurl.com/bdzk3bb8>.

"And here's my tao about happiness. If you want to be happy for an hour, smoke some grass. If you want to be happy for a month, fall in love. If you want to be happy forever, take up book collecting." Mark Hime, in the latest on-line catalog from Biblioctopus <www.biblioctopus.com>.

Sorry about that: the International Sherlock Holmes Exhibition (Jan 24 #5) actually opened in Portland, Ore., on Oct. 10, 2013.

The envelope in which the Sept. 1964 issue of the Baker Street Journal arrived also contained a copy of a 100-question Sherlockian quiz prepared by Elliot Kimball, recommended by Bob Schutz, as one of the most remarkable quizzes ever penned. Now the quiz is being reoffered as part of the Beacon Society's Fortescue Scholarship exam program, and if you would like to see (or take) this remarkable quiz, it is available by e-mail from Steve Mason <mason.steve8080@gmail.com>.

Art and Chip Sansom's "The Born Loser" comic strip was nicely Sherlockian on Jan. 20 <www.gocomics.com/the-born-loser/2024/01/20>; kindly reported by Les Klinger.

A warning for people who buy things from Acorn <www.acrononline.com>: they have a 30-day policy for returns (not stated in their catalog or at their website); I ordered a present from Acorn for someone months ago, and last month learned it was damaged, and they refused to replace it. So if you do order anything from Acorn, don't delay checking for damage.

Wanda Dow asked: what do you get when you combine tungsten, astatine, sulphur, oxygen, and nitrogen? The answer's elementary: W-At-S-O-N. You're welcome to subscribe to her monthly two-page on-line newsletter Papers on the Sundial; it's free, and she's at <hal0tot@verizon.net>.

Fiona Maher, author of *The Secret of the Cottingley Fairies* (Feb 18 #6), has followed up the book with a play: "Sherlock Holmes & the Man Who Believed in Fairies" (which features Holmes, Watson, and Conan Doyle). The play is scheduled for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe later this year, and her Crowdfunder web-site <www.tinyurl.com/2d8465r5> offers video of this month's script-in-hand performance this month.

Feb 24 #4 The Beacon Society continues to publish its "quarterly gazette for younger Sherlockians everywhere," and the winter issue of Sherlock's Spotlight is available at their web-site (check the menu at the left) <www.beaconsociety.com>; the contents include material both by and for younger followers of the Great Detective, and the gazette is intended to provide younger Sherlockians with information and entertainment.

The single page of the manuscript of "The Crooked Man" (Jan 24 #3) offered at RR Auction on Feb. 22 (with an estimate of \$40,000+), went unsold when bidding (\$32,120 including the buyer's premium) didn't reach the reserve. Randall Stock discusses the manuscript at <www.tinyurl.com/382c5925>.

The Clients of Adrian Mulliner are planning a meeting on Sept. 26 during the upcoming annual meeting of the Wodehouse Society in Nashville, Tenn. More information is available from Elaine Coppola <emcoppola@syr.edu> or Curtis Armstrong <isle14cj@gmail.com>. The annual meetings of the Wodehouse Society can be (they claim) "binges on a scale calculated to stagger humanity" <www.wodehouse.org/conventionsinfo.html>. Adrian Mulliner will be found in Wodehouse's pastiche "From a Detective's Notebook", first published in Punch in 1959 and now on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/3sfbhp96>.

Canonical Cornerstones: Foundational Books of a Sherlockian Library, edited by Peter Eckrich and Rob Nunn (Indianapolis: Gasogene, 2023; 125 pp., \$24.95), is a collection of essays by Sherlockians who explain in detail why the 17 books they recommend are both useful and enjoyable.

And *The Sherlock Holmes Review: 2023 Sherlockian Annual* (Gasogene, 2024; 76 pp., \$26.95) celebrates 40 years of Granada's "Sherlock Holmes" series with articles and interviews, plus Ray Betzner's warm tribute to Old Ir-regular Charles E. Honce, and much more.

Also: *Sherlock Holmes: Immortal Detective: Selected Writings of Donald A. Redmond, Volume 1* (Gasogene, 2024; 216 pp., \$28.95), edited by Christopher Redmond, is a welcome collection of his father's articles, notes, and essays, from 1964 to 1998, both published and unpublished, offering a welcome opportunity to see just how much fun can be had in the world of Sherlock Holmes. Gasogene's web-site's at <www.wessexpress.com>.

Country Life continues to publish interesting articles about stately homes in Britain, including one (on Jan. 28) on Madresfield Court (in Worcestershire) <www.tinyurl.com/yxzv8kyv>; a house that has been owned by the same family for more than 900 years.

Historical Dictionary of Sherlock Holmes, by Neil McCaw (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019; 425 pp., \$116.99 cloth/\$50.00 paper), offers more than 1,000 entries on the life and times of Holmes and Conan Doyle, as well as a chronology and bibliography; McCaw, who died in 2020, was a professor of Victorian literature and culture at Winchester University, and the academic director of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection in Portsmouth, and wrote that his "idea in writing a historical dictionary on a collection of what are ostensibly fictional stories" has been to help readers "begin thinking about the stories from other perspectives," and he has done just that.

Feb 24 #5 The Public Domain Review web-site has published a splendid article about J. M. Barrie's *My Lady Nicotine*, in which he told his readers how wonderful it was to smoke the Arcadia mixture in his pipe. Barrie was a friend of Conan Doyle, and it's surely no accident that Sherlock Holmes mentions the Arcadia mixture (in "The Crooked Man") (Barrie's Arcadia mixture actually was Carrera's Craven mixture, and Carrera happily advertised that). The article (and the book) are conveniently available on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/2h8ssnhf>.

It should be noted that Surbrug, in the U.S., marketed an Arcadia mixture, quoting Barrie on its tins and cans, quite likely without permission from Barrie. You can find their tins easily at eBay and elsewhere.

It's unique, and advertised at £224,850, Country Life reported on Feb. 1: a Land Rover Range Rover that was owned (and used) by Queen Elizabeth II <www.tinyurl.com/2jx3x6kk>. The Duke of Edinburgh drove the car, accompanied by the Queen, in 2016 to greet President Obama and the First Lady when their helicopter Marine One landed on the grounds of Windsor Castle, and then drove them all back to the castle.

Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes and the Mark of the Mongoose* (Nov 23 #1) has been nominated for an Agatha (best children's young adult mystery novel); the winners will be announced at Malice Domestic 26 in Bethesda in April. The Internet's always full of rumor about plans for something near or far in the future, but there was a report at the Collider web-site on Nov. 7 <www.collider.com/enola-holmes-3-netflix> that Scott Stuber, chairman of Netflix Films, said that "we're working once again on a screenplay" for a third "Enola Holmes" film.

"Visit Toronto" offers a video tour of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library <www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfV5_66sAEk>.

The February issue of The District Messenger, the newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, is the first issue edited by Holly Turner, who has succeeded Jean Upton. The District Messenger does for the Brits (and others) what this newsletter does for the Yanks (and others), and all its more-than-180 issues are archived on-line at the Society's web-site at <www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/newsletter>.

The ACD Society had its annual meeting during the birthday festivities in New York, on Jan. 11 at the Mysterious Bookshop. Video of the presentation its honors by Ross Davies, and a running of this year's Wessex Cup, is on-line at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4OPBtt6eZE>.

This month's auction at Potter & Potter of material from the collections of Bob Hess and Roy Pilot made many new owners happy indeed. The star lot in the auction was the manuscript of "Uncle Bernac" that sold for \$37,000 (plus buyer's premium); Randall Stock's detailed discussion of the manuscript is on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/4wbj5pbu>. Sidney Paget's dressing gown sold for \$3,400. The complete auction catalog (with prices realized) is at <www.tinyurl.com/hj3szkzp>.

Feb 24 #6 David Kahn died on Jan. 23. His deep interest in cryptology led him to write *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing* (1967); it was and is widely regarded as the best book ever written about codes and ciphers, and those who deal with them (one of them was Sherlock Holmes and the dancing men cipher). He was appointed scholar-in-residence at the National Security Agency in 1995, and he donated his collection of books and artifacts to the National Cryptological Museum of the NSA.

Laurie R. King's new *The Lantern's Dance* (Nov 23 #5) has its own page at her web-site <<https://laurierking.com/books/the-lanterns-dance>>, where she offers a downloadable reading-group guide to the novel. Laurie is an expert at using the Internet to keep her fans interested in her books, and her web-site's well worth exploring.

Laurie also contributed an interesting post about "Sherlock Holmes, That Enigma We Know So Well" to the CrimeReads blog on Feb. 14. She explains that "I write Holmes as a character, and it's startling how much I've had to make up."

Neil Nyren offered an impressive look at Laurie R. King's "Mary Russell" series at Crime Reads on Feb. 8 <www.tinyurl.com/3ntvvmtp>. And there's still time to sign up for her "Russell & Holmes" days in April in Seattle, Bethesda, and Nashville <www.laurierking.com/russell-holmes-days>.

The winter issue of the *Sherlock Holmes Journal* (published twice a year by the Sherlock Holmes Society of London) offers the late Russell Merritt's vocative and well-illustrated article "Seeing Paget in Colour", and much more. Information about subscription, and membership in the Society, will be found on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/ysd85wax>.

Illeana Douglas' *Connecticut in the Movies: From Dream Houses to Dark Suburbia* (Essex: Lyons Press, 2023; 340 pp., \$39.95) is a pleasant and well-illustrated tribute to films made in, or related to, the state, including William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" (1916), because his magnificent home Gillette Castle is in the state, and (although not Sherlockian) "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House" (1948), which was directed by H. C. Potter, a member of the Baker Street Irregulars.

Holmes, Marple & Poe, co-authored by James Patterson and Brian Sitts (New York: Little, Brown, 2024; 341 pp., \$30.00), has three private detectives (Brendan Holmes, Margaret Marple, and Auguste Poe) solving crimes in modern-day New York; they're well aware of their namesakes, and their actual identities are an additional mystery.

Terry Hunt's presentation about Christopher Morley at the Bryant Library in Roslyn, N.Y., on Mar.13 will be available on-line; you can register at the Library's web-site <www.tinyurl.com/57frrswa> (scroll down to "Christopher Morley Zoom Lecture"). Morley founded the Baker Street Irregulars, and his one-room writing studio, the Knothole, is preserved in the county park named in his honor near the Library. Terry, former senior curator of history and supervisor of historic sites for Nassau County, was responsible for the Knothole for many years.

Feb 24 #7 The Beacon Society continues to offer resources to help Sherlockian societies, and to help people find Sherlockian societies <www.tinyurl.com/2j486ym2>. Mike McSwiggin's interactive map of the active geographical societies is useful indeed, and their web-page now has my alphabetical list of all of the Sherlockian societies (well, all that I know of) that formerly was available at Sherlocktron, so that you can see the imaginative names that people have chosen for their societies. If you like numbers, there's a total of 987 societies on the list, including 477 active societies.

Social media seems to be an interesting way to reach people who share your interests. Howard Ostrom reports close to 5,000 members (in at least 60 countries) at Facebook for his "Sherlock Holmes on Screens" (which covers stage, screen, radio, television, and the Internet); you can see (or follow) his posts at <www.tinyurl.com/47v7cufx>.

Will Thomas' *Death and Glory* (New York: Minotaur, 2024; 292 pp., \$28.00) is the latest in the fine series that stars private enquiry agents Cyrus Barker (an homage to Holmes' rival in "The Retired Colourman") and Thomas Llewelyn (his faithful and long-suffering partner); the series now runs to 15 titles, and this time involves a plot by survivors of the Confederacy who hope to revive their lost cause and want possession of a warship that was bought from Britain in 1865 but never delivered. Thomas again offers nice plotting and interesting characters.

"It's nice I've been chosen," Louis Hector said to Edith Meiser, after his successful audition for her "Sherlock Holmes" radio series (according to Bernes Robert in the Oakland Tribune, Apr. 7, 1935), "I used to play the role in England." Does anyone know when and where and in what play? According to Wikipedia, Hector emigrated to the U.S. in 1920.

"The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare" (directed by Guy Ritchie) will be released on Apr. 19; the trailer's on-line at <www.tinyurl.com/42fx89uy>. The film, based on Damien Lewis' book *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare: How Churchill's Secret Warriors Set Europe Ablaze and Gave Birth to Modern Black Ops* (Nov 16 #6) may (or may not) mention that members of the Special Operations Executive, which had its headquarters in Baker Street, called themselves the Baker Street Irregulars.

"Gilded Newport Mysteries: Murder at the Breakers" is a new movie available on the Hallmark channel <www.tinyurl.com/ekbr9k96>. According to a review at the Film Fugitives web-site <www.tinyurl.com/2yewh4un> there are references to Conan Doyle in the film (and there are plot spoilers in the review).

"Mountain creature -- with 'massive' head and blue eyes -- discovered as new species," read the headline on a report in the Miami Herald on Feb. 15 <www.tinyurl.com/ybabj7kn>. The "mountain creature" is a frog, about 1.3 inches long, and its species is *Caligophryne doylei* (Doyle's mist frog). Its Wikipedia entry <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caligophryne> reports that it is found on a tepui on the border between Brazil and Venezuela and was named in 2023 in honor of Conan Doyle, author of *The Lost World*.

Feb 24 #8 Elizabeth Crowens' *Hounds of the Hollywood Baskervilles* (Olney: Level Best, 2024; 254 pp., \$16.95) features young and inexperienced private detective Babs Norman and her partner Guy Brandt, who have been hired by Basil Rathbone in 1940 to find his kidnapped dog (since the police just ask, "Sherlock Holmes has lost his dog?") There are other movie stars (and other kidnapped dogs), and of course villainy afoot, and the story's told with (sometimes slapstick) humor. The author will be at the Mysterious Bookshop in New York for a launch party on Apr. 4, and her web-site's at <www.elizabethcrowens.com>.

Theatrical news: Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville" is scheduled at the Bates Masonic Lodge in Attleboro, Mass., Mar. 1-17 <www.tinyurl.com/sdk5zs2a>.

Tim Kelly's adaptation of William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" is scheduled at the O'Reilly Theatre in Dublin, Ireland, Mar. 7-8; their web-site is at <www.oreillytheatre.com>.

Kent R. Brown's children's play "Dracula: A Comic Thriller Starring Shirley Holmes and Jennie Watson" will be performed at the Traveling Players Studio in Tysons, Va., Mar. 9-17 <www.tinyurl.com/h3a273h9>.

"The Great Murder Mystery" is a dinner-theater presentation of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" scheduled at the Lost Estate in London, Mar. 12-May 24 <www.tinyurl.com/4hywm73a>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Heiress" will be performed as an "old-fashioned radio-style play" in New Brunswick, Canada, Mar. 16-23 <www.tinyurl.com/3yx9dwe4>.

Nick Lane's "Sherlock Holmes: The Sign of Four" is scheduled at the Robin Hood Theatre in Newark-on-Trent, Notts., Mar. 23-26 <www.rhtc.co.uk>.

Kate Hamill's "Ms. Holmes and Ms. Watson—Apt. 2B is coming up at the Alvinna Kraus Theatre in Bloomsburg, Pa., Mar. 28-Apr. 14 <www.bte.org>.

Richard Levin's "Sherlock Holmes & the Star of Arabia" will be performed at Tudor House in Lake Arrowhead, Calif., Apr. 26-May 4; their web-site is at <www.heislertheater.com>.

I've long described this newsletter as "six or more pages of whatever gossip I find appropriate, much of it quite trivial, but most of it Sherlockian or Doylean." If you would like to run a word-search on a large file with all of the text since March 1985 (which is when I entered the computer age), you can now do that, thanks to Steve Mason, who updates his compilation each month and kindly posts at the Beacon Society's web-site at <www.beaconsociety.com/scuttlebutt-from-the-spermacetti-press.html>. If you occasionally forget that the PDF of a new issue of this newsletter is available on-line, you're welcome to join the Google Group for monthly reminders; just let me know by e-mail.

The Spermaceti Press: Peter E. Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401 (301-229-5669) <blau7103@comcast.net>

The winter issue of *Canadian Holmes* (the journal of the Bootmakers of Toronto) offers Donny Zaldin's article about the Agony Column (in Victorian culture and in the Canon), Mark Jones' discussion of Conan Doyle's short story "The Black Doctor", and much more. Subscriptions are included with membership, \$50.00 a year (print) or \$35.00 (PDF), and \$12.00 postpaid for a single issue <www.torontobootmakers.com/membership>.

"Money back if not satisfied" was an offer made by Harper Brothers to its customers in 1929, and the Japanese publisher Hayakawa makes the same offer for its new translation of Tom Mead's *Death and the Conjuror*. You can read all about it at <www.tinyurl.com/2s426afz>.

"The Case of Sherlock Holmes' Motorcycle" offers Brendan McAleer's amusing discussion of (and answer to) the question: "what kind of motorcycle did Sherlock Holmes ride?" You can read his article (and answer) at the Hagerty Media web-site <www.tinyurl.com/5epuncsd>.

Jennie Paton has reported the discovery of some interesting footage from the long-lost Universal film "Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula" (now available at YouTube <www.youtube.com/watch?v=ov0WnRzLrhQ>).

Sasha Archibald's article in the *Public Domain Review* about P. H. Ditchfield's *Books Fatal to Their Authors* (1895) isn't Sherlockian, but it's a fascinating look at how dangerous being an author can be; you can read all about it at <www.tinyurl.com/5n77vupc>.

The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes, edited by Jonathan Cranfield (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023; 359 pp., £125.00), is the second volume in *The Edinburgh Edition of the Works of Arthur Conan Doyle*, and includes the text of the book, detailed introductions; comparisons of first serial appearances and first editions, the text of "The Cardboard Box" and a discussion of the story's history, and explanatory notes. Some may question the publisher's boast that it's "the first scholarly edition" of the book (if they are aware of *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes* and Leslie S. Klinger's *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library and New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*), but Edinburgh's project will include much of Conan Doyle's non-Sherlockian work).

The artist's sketchbooks owned by Henry Marriott Paget and Walter Stanley Paget (Sidney Paget's brothers), offered at Chorley's in Gloucestershire on Feb. 6 (Jan 24 #2) each estimated at £200-£300, were sold for £150 each <www.tinyurl.com/mz9mhvyf>.

The Daily Beast says that "Benny Hill, classic '80s video games, *Voltron*, and Sherlock Holmes are components of this zany gem," its review (Feb. 27) of the film "Hundreds of Beavers" <www.tinyurl.com/3zruvp55>. There is a trailer at the official web-site <www.hundredsofbeavers.com>, and you can see images of the Holmes and Watson beavers at the film's page at Facebook <www.tinyurl.com/52vzt53u>.

Mar 24 #2 Sad news for those who have procrastinated about visiting Lew Trenchard, the home of Sabine Baring-Gould (Dec 88 #2 and May 18 #2). He wrote about the folk-tales of Dartmoor, including the spectral hounds, and his grandson William S. Baring-Gould's biography of Sherlock Holmes used details from his grandfather's life in describing Holmes' early years. Sabine Baring-Gould also was visited by Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes in Laurie R. King's novel *The Moor* (1998). Lew Trenchard, run as a luxury hotel and restaurant for the last twelve years, has now been closed due to "difficult trading conditions," and is expected to return to Baring-Gould family ownership. Oliver Mundy kindly forwarded one of the on-line reports <www.tinyurl.com/3v5dn57a>. One of the very best items on the restaurant menu (in 2004) was the Devonshire clotted cream ice cream.

The Japanese eight-episode series "Miss Sherlock" (Oct 18 #5) is available on HBO Max, and it is well worth watching; it stars Yûko Takeuchi as Sherlock and Shihori Kanjiya as her friend Wato-san, and is full of Canonical echoes <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Sherlock>.

Bill Seil has reported that Harry Bliss' comic strip was nicely Sherlockian on Feb. 26 <www.gocomics.com/bliss/2024/02/26>.

Country Life continues to publish interesting articles about stately homes in Britain, including one (on Jan. 28) on Madresfield Court (in Worcestershire) <www.tinyurl.com/yxzv8kyv>; a house that has been owned by the same family for more than 900 years.

The first of the "obligatory Canonical toasts" listed in the Constitution and Buy-Laws of the Baker Street Irregulars is to The Woman, and episode #282 of the interviews by Scott Monty and Burt Wolder at their "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog <www.tinyurl.com/bzce3t8b> is their discussion of "A History of The Woman" with Beverly Wolov, who was honored with that toast in 1997.

"The Holmes You Never Knew: Black American Adaptations Then and Now" is a virtual lecture by Ann McClellan at the Public Library in Groton, Mass., on Apr. 23 (7:00-8:00 pm); she will discuss the Broadway musical "In Dahomey" (1902), the silent film "A Black Sherlock Holmes" (1918), jazz references, graphic novels, and modern fan fiction, and the registration link for the Zoom event is at <www.tinyurl.com/5n7uekbn>.

There was a colorful report about The Langham in Upscale Living Magazine on Feb. 15 <www.upscalelivingmag.com/features/the-langham-hotel>; it's a lot fancier now than it was in 1889, when Conan Doyle dined there (and was commissioned to write "The Sign of the Four").

Marvin Lachman died on Oct. 21. Marv was an outstanding scholar of crime and mystery fiction, and won an Edgar from the Mystery Writers of America for his work on *The Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection* (1976). He also received their Raven Award (for significant contributions to the genre) in 1997, and his later books included *The Heirs of Anthony Boucher* (2005) and *The Villainous Stage* (2014). He was the fan guest of honor at Bouchercon in 1984, and was knowledgeable and helpful to a host of friends.

Mar 24 #3 The Internet continues to offer a flood of rumors about, and comment on, the BBC's "Sherlock" television series, and occasionally older news turns up. "Sherlock creators reveal their choices for female Sherlock Holmes," was the announcement at the Digital Spy web-site on July 27, 2020 <www.tinyurl.com/2sfbtadra>. Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss had suggested Michelle Gomez, Phoebe Waller-Bridge, and Olivia Colman, and producer Sue Vertue proposed Jodie Comer (you can easily find their images and resumes on-line). But there were no suggestions for a female Watson; "You know what I get stuck on?" Moffat said, "Who is John Watson as a woman?" And yes, all seven seasons of "Elementary" had aired by then.

Yes, that interesting footage from the long-lost Universal film "Sherlock Holmes Meets Dracula" (Mar 24 #2) might well have been posted on Apr. 1.

The Kyodo News reported on Mar. 1 <www.tinyurl.com/3kntkn2v> that the "Immersive Fort Tokyo" theme park is now open; its web-site shows some of its Sherlockian atmosphere <www.immersivefort.com/en>. There's much more in a full-scale (and colorful) review posted to the Japan Wireless web-magazine on Mar. 7 <www.tinyurl.com/mww6tuzn>.

Mark Johann <mkr9905@gmail.com> wonders if anyone knows anything about a plastic token, 1.25" in diameter, with interesting Sherlockian artwork. The M.A.T.C.A. was the Maryland Amusement Token Collectors Association, founded in 1979 (but apparently no longer active).



Possibly something truly new for Sherlockians: Jennie Paton reports a video review <www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO7f7XgHBpw> of Jorge Félix's *The Baker Street Canon* (2024), which can be found easily at Amazon (for Kindle only); the video was created by someone who used invideo AI, and it's quite possible that the book also is an AI product. There's another video from invideo AI at YouTube <www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6J0k2_l368>, but Jorge may be the first AI author of a Sherlockian book. There is a lot more about Amazon and AI at <www.tinyurl.com/2md975sk>. Note that invideo AI should not be confused with Nvidia, which is a dominant supplier of artificial intelligence hardware and software.



"The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar" is a new film, nominated for an Oscar (best live action short film), based on a short story by Roald Dahl, now available on Netflix, with some fine actors, and well done indeed. Samantha Wolov has noted that in an early scene in a hospital a doctor is seen sitting at a table holding a book that has a Sherlock Holmes silhouette on its cover (a nod, perhaps, to Benedict Cumberbatch, who's one of the stars in the film. We'll be seeing more Roald Dahl stories on Netflix: in Sept. 2021 Netflix bought the Roald Dahl Story Company for \$686 million.

Sonia Fetherston has reported a tea available from the Republic of Tea in Larkspur, Calif. <www.republicoftea.com/calm-focus/p/v20851>, that may be of interest to Sherlockians: it's a green tea, with uplifting peppermint and lion's mane mushroom extract, and a touch of bright lemon. She found it in her CostPlus World Market, so it might be in other local stores.

Mar 24 #4 The winter issue of *The Magic Door* (published by the friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library) has Gareth A. Reeves' article on "Examining Trace Fossils in 'The Terror of Blue John Gap'", David Sanders' report on Dana Richards' lecture on "Conan Doyle and The Fires of Fate", and much more. You can request a copy of the newsletter from Cliff Goldfarb at the Toronto Public Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4W 2G8, Canada <cgoldfarb@sympatico.ca>.

Elizabeth Crowens, author of *Hounds of the Hollywood Baskervilles* (Feb 24 #8) will be happy to speak to Sherlockian societies via Zoom or in person. She lives in New York City, e-mail at <greatyear111@gmail.com>, and website at <www.elizabethcrowens.com>.

You can watch Sherlock's Jewel come from behind to finish second on Mar. 9 at Tampa Bay Downs <www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7MQZxigEMc>; video kindly reported by Jennie Paton.

Philip Cunningham is compiling a census of Michael Murphy's *Conferment by Needle*, a pamphlet issued in 1980 reprinting Vincent Starrett's correspondence with T. S. Eliot about Eliot's honorary membership in the Hounds of the Baskerville (sic); there were 230 copies, 1-221 numbered and nine unnumbered, some signed or inscribed by Murphy in black or green ink. Phil would like to hear from anyone who has a copy <pjcl21@comcast.net>.

In case you weren't watching the Oscars ceremony this month, Robert Downey Jr., who has played Sherlock Holmes in two films, won as best actor in a supporting role as (Lewis S. Strauss in "Oppenheimer"), and "The Wonderful World of Henry Sugar" (Mar 24 #3) won as best live-action short film.

Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki won his second Oscar (for best animated feature film) for "The Boy and the Heron". His first Oscar was for "Spirited Away" (2001), and he was the director of six early episodes of "The Adventures of Sherlock Hound" (1983).

The manuscripts of four unpublished short stories by A. A. Milne, one of them an amusing Sherlock Holmes pastiche, have been published in the new *The Complete Short Stories of A. A. Milne* (Richmond: Farrago, 2024); 304 pp., £12.99/\$22.27). The stories were found by the agent of the Milne estate in his papers at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, and the new book has an introduction written by Gyles Brandreth, who imagines Milne in the next world, sitting on a heavenly cloud with two of his good friends and personal heroes, Conan Doyle and Barrie. If you'd like to see the manuscript of the Sherlock Holmes story, it sold at auction in 2018 <www.tinyurl.com/4krrckc6> for \$900 (including the buyer's premium).

The new story ("Elementary, My Dear Vincent") appears to have been written and sent in 1933 to Vincent Seligman, and it's a nice addition to Milne's Sherlockian credentials, which started with "The Rape of the Sherlock" in *Vanity Fair* (Oct. 15, 1903). The burlesque was his first published fiction; it's not in the new book, but was reprinted in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* (Feb. 1974).

Mar 24 #5 *A West Wind*, edited by Thomas A. Horrocks and Ray Betzner (New York: Baker Street Irregulars, 2024; 204 pp., \$39.95), is subtitled "How America and Americans Influenced the Sherlockian Canon," and offers interesting essays that include Curtis Armstrong's expert analysis of just how good an actor Sherlock Holmes was when he pretended to be an American, Burt Wolder's well-illustrated examination of how Americans saw Holmes when the stories were first published, and many more. You can order the book from the BSI at <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/tag/books>.

Michael Culver died on Feb. 27. He began acting on stage in Britain, and went on to a career that lasted more than 50 years. Best known, perhaps, for his death scene (as Captain Needa) in "Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back" (1980), he also played Sir Reginald Musgrave in the Granada version of "The Musgrave Ritual" (1986).

For everyone who fondly remembers Sherlock Hemlock: Jennie Paton has found a nice compilation of his many appearances on "Sesame Street" at YouTube <www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxVUNwZo_UyO02nZVQyDlPQDBrALPFl_C>.

"Remembering Gene Wilder" (a new 92-minute documentary now in limited release in U.S. theaters) <www.tinyurl.com/2m8kjymp> has had nice reviews; one hopes that it includes footage from "The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother" (1975), a film which he wrote, directed, and starred in, and that it will soon be available on one of the cable channels.



Petri Wine was heavily advertised in the good old days, and an unusual porcelain enamel garage sign was recently offered at eBay <www.tinyurl.com/5ddj7wu7> by a dealer in Australia, for AU\$180.00 (plus shipping, of course). It would seem that Petri's advertising was different down under than here (there is no date for the sign).

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) has recognized Exeter as a City of Literature, and Exeter is celebrating the event with colorful murals at the city's Great Western Railways station. The murals include scenes from books by famous authors, and the announcement by the Exeter City Council allows you to see one of the murals <www.tinyurl.com/yc5e537k>. There's no mention of the Great Western in the Canon, but Holmes and Watson must have used it when they traveled to Exeter in two of their cases.

Joel Cohen has reported a colorful slide-show on "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Poisonous Plants" at the web-site of the Science History Institute in Philadelphia <www.tinyurl.com/yckb3ust>.

The first volume of Tripwire's graphic novel *Sherlock Holmes and the Empire Builders: The Gene Genie* <www.tinyurl.com/4zk7an7p> is now in print (96 pp., \$35.00), and the first few pages are available (free) on the Global Comix digital platform <www.tinyurl.com/5n83r7sa>. It's an alternate-universe science fiction story, with striking artwork, and Oswald Mosely (leader of the British Union of Fascists) as the villain. Tripwire's web-site's at <www.trpwire1001.bigcartel.com>.

Mar 24 #6 "Conan Doyle's books are always so good," the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) wrote in 1911, thanking someone for sending him three charming books. The letter was offered at International Autograph Auctions Europe on Mar. 14 <www.tinyurl.com/x58f5axv>, with an estimate of €200-€300, and it was bought for €320 (plus buyer's premium). One hopes, of course, that the fortunate buyer will eventually some-day be able to identify those three charming books.

It's always interesting when films and television are reviewed by real experts: Jennie Paton spotted the Thoroughbred Racing Commentary web-site's review of various versions of "Silver Blaze" on Feb. 25 (Granada came in first) <www.tinyurl.com/2b5h2v9z>.

The 2023 Baker Street Almanac is now on-line and available without charge <www.greenbag.org/almanacs/BS/2023.html>; more than 364 pages, so it takes a while to download the PDF file, but it's well worth it. That means that the print version of the 2024 Almanac is almost ready; the URL also offers information on how to subscribe.

Laurie R. King has begun work on her next novel, about Mary Russell's Uncle Jake (who gave her, and then taught her how to use, her first throwing knife. You can read the (possible) opening of the Prologue at her blog at <www.tinyurl.com/ymx4n6bh>.

The Swann Galleries auction of material from the Steve Forbes Collection included a lot with nine manuscript pages from, and other material related to, the last chapter ("Singular Records of a Circle") of Conan Doyle's *The Edge of the Unknown* (1930), estimated at \$3,000-\$4,000; it sold for \$2,400 (plus the buyer's premium). Randall Stock's discussion of the manuscript is at <www.bestofsherlock.com/mss/edge-unknown-2024.htm>.

There's continuing discussion of what can happen when characters enter the public domain, and what has happened with and to Winnie the Pooh. "Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey" (2023) was so successful that there's now a sequel <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winnie-the-Pooh:_Blood_and_Honey>.

There are some people who still have 16mm projectors: a print of Christopher Plummer's television film "Silver Blaze" (1977) was sold this month at eBay for \$115 <www.tinyurl.com/yved86hw>.

The two "Moriarty" series now available at Audible (Sep 23 #5) continue to be well-reviewed and there was an interesting interview with Phil LaMarr (who plays Sherlock Holmes) posted at the Bleeding Cool web-site (Nov. 16) <www.tinyurl.com/23zjvj94>.

Ross Davies has discovered an interesting (and expensive) letter from F. Scott Fitzgerald offered by a New York dealer <www.tinyurl.com/mvhwwf8s> in which Fitzgerald mentions having written an "utterly imitative" Sherlock Holmes story. This may (or may not) have become his first appearance in print: "The Mystery of the Raymond Mortgage" (non-Sherlockian), which was published in a school magazine in 1909 (Mar 17 #6). Fred Dannay found the story and reprinted it in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (Mar. 1960) and in *Ellery Queen's 15th Mystery Annual* (1960).

Mar 24 #7 John Allen's *Stylometric Analysis of the Sherlock Holmes Canon* (Allen & Allen Semiotics, 2021; 57 pp., \$5.95) offers the basis behind his earlier *Shadow Woman: The Creator of Sherlock Holmes and Brimstone* (Mar 18 #4); Allen has used the function-word frequencies of Conan Doyle's stories and concluded this his first wife Louise wrote 27 of the Sherlock Holmes short stories and that his second wife Jean wrote 28 (with "The Empty House" being the only one written by Conan Doyle). Some of his non-Sherlockian stories also were written by Louise and Jean. Allen also has a Louise Conan Doyle Cyclopedia web-site, where he has been blogging since June 2017 <www.louiseconandoyle.com>.

It may not be the better-known Guinness World Records, but on Feb. 16 the World Record Academy listed the world's largest Sherlock Holmes collection at the University of Minnesota <www.tinyurl.com/2pyn2x7c> (with some nice images of the collection).

Christian Klaver's *Sherlock Holmes & Dorian Gray* (New York, Titan, 2024; 353 pp., \$25.99) is the third in his "classified dossier" series. There are vampires galore, including Dracula and Mina and (now) Watson, who with Holmes are confronted with vicious enemies that include H. G. Wells' Doctor Moreau. Dorian Gray is decidedly different from the character in Oscar Wilde's story, and the focus of Klaver's book is on Watson rather than Holmes. The author's web-site is at <www.christianklaver.com>.

The March issue of the Beacon Society's Not-So-Quarterly Newsletter now is available at the society's web-site <www.beaconsociety.com>, with the latest news from the society and its efforts to offer "teachers, librarians, children's museums, and children's theaters with local resources to bring the magic of Sherlock Holmes to life."

Further to the item (Jan 24 #5) about the celebration of the 40th anniversary of "The Adventures of Sherlock Hound", Jennie Paton discovered a nice post to the SoraNews24 web-site (Mar. 26) <www.tinyurl.com/4t7yttj7>, with an image of the poster for the new theatrical release (and a trailer for the older Blu-ray collection).

Holly Turner has reported in the March issue of the District Messenger on an antique dealer's offer of a silver salver presented to Dr. Joseph Bell by the Glasgow Infirmary in April 1862 <www.tinyurl.com/727wja85>.

The District Messenger, launched in 1982 as the "grapevine service of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, is an excellent monthly round-up of go-igs on in the Sherlockian and Doylean world in Britain and elsewhere; current and back issues are available at <www.tinyurl.com/34u876mj>.

Les Klinger has now edited 17 volumes in the Library of Congress' Crime Classics series; the latest is Richard Harding Davis' atmospheric *In the Fog* (1901). You can sample Les' introduction to the reprint at the Crime-Reads web-site <www.tinyurl.com/4bppwczu>. It's not really true that everything has a connection to Sherlock Holmes, but: the book's first edition had grand illustrations by Frederic Dorr Steele, and Davis mentored young Vincent Starrett at the beginning of his brief career as a war correspondent.

Mar 24 #8 There's all sorts of theatrical news: Joe and Brad Dickenson's "Sherlock Holmes: The Melodrama" is on at the Pocket Sandwich Theatre in Carrollton, Tex., through May 11 <www.pocketsandwich.com>.

James Barry's "Sherlock's Excellent Adventure" continues on tour in Britain through July 6 <www.ourstartheatrecompany.com/what-s-on>.

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville" will be running at the Gateway Theatre in Richmond, B.C., Apr. 11-20 <www.gatewaytheatre.com>; presented in English with traditional and simplified Chinese subtitles (certainly understandable in a city that's said to have a population that's 74% ethnically Chinese). It also is scheduled at the Bell Tower Theater in Dubuque, Iowa, on Apr. 12-28 <www.belltowertheater.net>; and will be touring in England, on Apr. 20-27 <www.facebook.com/minttheatresociety>. It's next at the Greenbrier Valley Theatre in Lewisburg, W.Va., on May 10-18 <www.gvtheatre.org/baskerville>; and at the Ruth Humphreys Brown Theatre in Creede, Colo., May 25-Sept. 14 <www.creederep.org>.

"Sherlock & Cinders" (by Tom Kirkham and Matthew Crosby) is scheduled at the Muse Theater in Jefferson City, Mo., Apr. 18-20; their web-site's at <www.itsybitsyboradway.com>.

Teresa Pesce's "Sherlock" will have its world premiere at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint, Idaho, Apr. 19-27 <www.panida.org>.

Max Bush's "Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of Abbey Grange" and "Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Capper Beeches" will be produced at the Patsy Miller Studio Theatre in St. Paul, Minn., Apr. 25-May 4; their web-site's at <www.tinyurl.com/mps28he7>.

Conan Doyle's "The Speckled Band" has been scheduled at the Placer Repertory Theater in Rocklin, Calif., May 3-4 <www.placerrep.org>.

Ron Kelly Spurles' humorous "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Heiress" will be performed radio-style (BBC in 1928) at the Sackville Legion in Sackville, NB, May 4 <www.tinyurl.com/ymamsrd2>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of the Crown Jewel" (by Janet Yates Vogt and Mark Friedman) is to be performed at Wollondilly Anglican College in Tahmoor, N.S.W., May 7-9 <www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1178632?>.

Bert Coules' "Watson: The Final Problem" is scheduled at the 59E59 Theaters in New York, May 22-June 9 <www.tinyurl.com/mrx9dzkc>; it's a one-man show starring Tim Marriott.

"Sherlock and Watson: A Murder in the Garden" is a new comedy from Calf 2 Cow, launching a tour in Britain at the Maumbury Rings in Dorchester, Dorset, on June 7 <www.calf2cow.co.uk/sherlockandwatson>.

Kate Hamill's "Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson--Apt. 2B" will be performed at the Robert Shackleton Playhouse in Cape May, N.J., July 17-Aug. 25; web-site at <www.capemaystage.org>.

The Spermaceti Press: Peter E. Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD
20817-4401 (301-229-5669) <blau7103@comcast.net>