

May 17 #1

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press

Big Brother is indeed watching you. Your mail not only is delivered by the U.S. Postal Service, but the sorting machines also scan and store images of the envelopes (so people can keep track of who's sending mail to you). You can also sign up for "informed delivery" (a daily e-mail message with images of the letter-size envelopes that will be delivered that day); you can check on-line to see if "informed delivery" service is available in your area.

Audible has released a recording of "Sherlock Holmes: The Speckled Band Retold for Children" (written by Mark Williams and narrated by Joseph Tweedale); 55 minutes, \$3.95 (or free with a 30-day trial membership); details at <www.tinyurl.com/lu8of5o>.

A long-range forecast: The Norwegian Explorers are planning to hold their next Sherlockian conference in Minneapolis on Aug. 9-11, 2019, and you can get on their mailing list by contacting Julie McKuras <mike9750@aol.com>.

The song "Let Yourself Fall" from the then-work-in-progress musical "Dust and Shadow" (based on Lyndsay Faye's book) was previewed at the Saturday-afternoon reception of The Baker Street Irregulars in Jan. 2011; the complete musical will have its first public performance at the Highline Ballroom in New York on July 17 <www.tinyurl.com/k8djuqb>. The novel (and the musical) have Holmes and Watson in pursuit of Jack the Ripper. And there's another Sherlockian connection: Jenny Ashman (who plays Mary Jane Kelly) is the daughter of the late Peter G. Ashman ("Peter Steiler, the Elder" in the BSI).

Jennie Paton has reported the country western song "Just Call Me Sherlock Holmes" with words and music by Richard Grossman (1987); it's available at YouTube <www.tinyurl.com/mt2m4yf>.

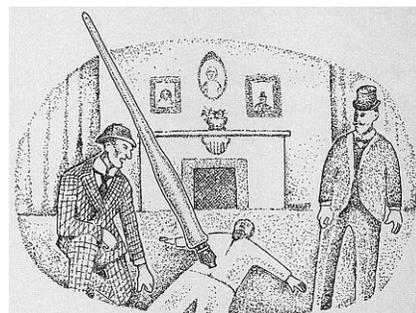
It has been quite a while since DINING WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES was published in 1976, but people still are interested in Canonical dining: the [London] Evening Standard's upcoming "Food Month" will include the Literary Hour's presentation of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes & the Scandalous Supper Club" at the Manor House in London on June 28-30 <www.tinyurl.com/lq92dxo>. According to the newspaper <www.tinyurl.com/mpjkzmy>, there will be drinks, a five-course dinner, and a mystery to solve.

Paul Herbert has noted Andrew M. Greeley's IRISH EYES: THE DARK BEGINNINGS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (2000) at Amazon <www.tinyurl.com/kjjop6e>, but the book seems to have no Sherlockian connection other than the subtitle (which is not given in other listings of the book). It's one of twelve novels about "Nuala Anne McGrail, that beautiful Irish spitfire," and the "Look inside" feature at Amazon turns up no mention of Sherlock Holmes in the text other than mention of a character who "looked like the last Basil Rathbone playing Sherlock Holmes in the old movies."

Jennie Paton reports that there's a "Sinister Image" series at Vimeo, with David Del Valle as host, and with his commentary on each film. There are two Rathbone films in the series (so far): "Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon" (1943) and "Terror by Night" (1946) <www.tinyurl.com/lepdkw2>.

May 17 #2 Further to the report (Jan 17 #6) on plans to reopen the former Royal Oak pub in Ashburton, Newton Abbot, with a new theme, the pub is now open as The Hound of the Baskervilles, and thoroughly Sherlockian (including Baskervilles IPA from the Dartmoor Brewery on draft) (or on draught, as it's spelled on Dartmoor). There was a colorful report, complete with videos, at Devon Live (May 5) <www.tinyurl.com/kdet8rg>.

Bob Mankoff is retiring from The New Yorker after 20 years as cartoon editor and 20 more as a contributor, and there's a fine Washington Post article about him at <www.tinyurl.com/mqo7ppu>. The caption on his Sherlockian cartoon is "Elementary, my dear Watson, the cartoonist did it" (in the Saturday Review, Nov. 15, 1975). And his story about his own famous "How about never" caption is at <www.tinyurl.com/jlbaot9>.



Reported by Dana Richards: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: STUDIES IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT IN HONOUR OF ANNELI AEJMELEUS (CONTRIBUTIONS TO BIBLICAL EXEGESIS AND THEOLOGY), published by Peeters Bvba in 2014, with no mention of Sherlock Holmes other than in the title. Kristin De Troyer, one of the editors of the book, explained by e-mail that "text critics work with data and have to put all the data together in order to solve the text critical problem."

It's old news, but we're catching up now: there was a report from BBC News last year <www.tinyurl.com/jcqnedw> on how researchers at University College London have taught a computer to imitate anyone's handwriting. They call their system "My Text in Your Handwriting" and they have tried it out on samples of handwritten text from historical figures that include Abraham Lincoln and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. If you'd like to see "Elementary, my dear Watson" in Conan Doyle's handwriting (produced by their computer) go to the UCL web-site <www.visual.cs.ucl.ac.uk/pubs/handwriting> (and don't neglect the video).

Further to the item about Stephen Fry's recording for Audible of SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION (Mar 17 #1), there's a six-minute video of Fry discussing Holmes at YouTube <www.tinyurl.com/lv7scaz>. Note: the complete collection (71 hours and 58 minutes) is available only in Britain (and in the U.S. only if you have a program that allows you to pretend you are in Britain); the shorter version that's available in the U.S. has only the stories that are in the public domain in the U.S.

Simon Callow has a long (and enthusiastic) review of THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION in the N.Y. Times <www.tinyurl.com/mzqnzyj>; Callow is a British director, writer, and actor, and he has played Holmes on radio, and Lestrade on television.

Ben Abramson presided over the Argus Book Shop, published the old series of The Baker Street Journal from 1946 to 1949, and of course was an early member of The Baker Street Irregulars. He was a good friend of Vincent Starrett, and there's a nice blog entry about Ben at Ray Betzner's "Studies in Starrett" <www.tinyurl.com/lde82gl>.

May 17 #3 The Strand Magazine (the modern version edited by Andrew Gulli) continues to publish quarterly, and its on-line shop offers a wide variety of Sherlockian merchandise, including notepads, colorful Hound of the Baskervilles socks, bookmarks, mousepads, lapel pins, and refrigerator magnets <www.strandmag.com/shop-new>. They have other literary offerings, including some imaginative Count of Monte Cristo socks.



Samantha Wolov spotted a story in the Japanese edition of Harper's Bazaar about Miu Miu's pop-60s-style pre-fall collection <www.tinyurl.com/khv8bsc>, inspired by Twiggy; there are eight images of models in fashionable deerstalkers, with a link to behind-the-scenes video.

Further to the long-ago report (Jun 83 #1) on The Baskerville Hounds, the band has a web-site <www.baskervillehounds.com>, with links to some of their music at YouTube.

The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis have an interesting event coming up on Aug. 26: "Nerve and Knowledge II" will take place in the operating theater in the Old Pathology Building at the Indiana Medical History Museum; it is the oldest intact pathology facility in the U.S. (it opened in 1896) and offers visitors a chance to see the sort of operating theater described in Conan Doyle's "His First Operation" (which is available on-line at Project Gutenberg as well as in ROUND THE RED LAMP and other collections). Contact Steve Doyle <sdoyle221@sbcglobal.net> for more information (attendance is limited to 98, the seating capacity in the operating theater); there is a nice web-site for the Museum (with video) at <www.imhm.org>.

The title of the event in Indianapolis was inspired by NERVE AND KNOWLEDGE: DOCTORS, MEDICINE, AND THE SHERLOCKIAN CANON, published by The Baker Street Irregulars in 2015, and still available (\$39.95) at the Baker Street Journal web-site <www.bakerstreetjournal.com/nerve.html>.

Margaret H. Laing honored Arthur Conan Doyle's birthday by posting to the Chicago Tribune's "Chicago Now" blog the amusing "Tale of John Thomas" extracted from DANGEROUS WORK: DIARY OF AN ARCTIC ADVENTURE (2012). Here's a link to her blog: <www.tinyurl.com/kb2vc9a>. For those of you who do not have access to the Internet, but do have the book, you'll find John Thomas in the entries for June 3-6 and June 10, 1880. Randall Stock has an excellent discussion of the diary and the book at <www.tinyurl.com/ycabhd8>.

Reported: a new recording of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" starring Derek Jacobi as Holmes, due from Cadabra Records in July (\$29.00); there's more information at <www.tinyurl.com/mk8jamq>. And there's an audio sample at <www.tinyurl.com/n53m99o>.

Paul Schullery's DIAMOND JUBILEE: SHERLOCK HOLMES, MARK TWAIN, AND THE PERIL OF THE EMPIRE (Charleston: CreateSpace, 2016; 246 pp., \$18.00) involves Holmes and Watson with Mark Twain, who is visiting London for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, and all three men in thwarting a dire assassination plot. Schullery (a member of the Mark Twain Forum) does an excellent job of capturing Twain's voice and style, and has a web-site at <www.paulschullery.com>.

May 17 #4 Sherlockian.Net was launched in 1994 by Chris Redmond, and has long been a valuable resource for the growing population of Internet-savvy Sherlockians (Jul 16 #5) (Dec 16 #5), and it is now owned and edited at the Center for Writing, Information, and Digital Experience, located at Michigan State University. One of its important features is the list of Sherlockian societies' web-sites; societies that aren't included, and would like to be, should contact Liza Potts <lpotts@msu.edu>.



One of the traditional features of Malice Domestic (the long-running conference for mystery writers and readers in the Washington area) is the hospitality room, where authors and publishers leave stacks of bookmarks and other publicity for their books. One of the cards available this year promoted the Skyley Foxe Mysteries, written by Haley Walsh <www.skyleyfoxemysteries.com>. "This LGBT rom-com mystery series follows the teaching and unwitting sleuthing career of Skyley Foxe, high school teacher," but there isn't anything Sherlockian about the books (despite the imaginative publicity image).

Malice Domestic is an excellent opportunity to meet your favorite authors, and get them to sign their books for you, this year's "Sherlock Lives" panel featured John Gregory Betancourt, Dana Cameron, Carla Coupe, and Vicki Delaney, with Peter E. Blau as moderator. Next year's Malice will be held on Apr. 27-29 <www.malicedomestic.org>.

Good news for fans of "Elementary": the series has been renewed for a sixth season. According to Deadline Hollywood, the series has "soft" ratings in its slot (7.4 million viewers), but "Elementary" also is syndicated to WGN America, Hulu Plus, and other broadcast stations, for as much as \$3 million per episode; a year ago Les Moonves (CEO of CBS Corp. which owns the series) said that "Elementary" made about \$80 million profit for the corporation the preceding year. With 120 hours over five seasons, Jonny Lee Miller and Lucy Liu already hold a record for any pair of actors as Holmes and Watson except for Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce.

CBS has asked for only 13 new episodes of "Elementary" (rather than a full 24-episode season), and the new season will be a mid-season replacement for a new series that doesn't do as well as CBS hoped. The network surely will be paying attention to how many protests from "Elementary" fans there are when the series does not air in September, and what the ratings the series gets when it does air again.

And Lucy Liu will have a busy year, the Hollywood Reporter notes: she has signed on for a multiple-episode arc on the Hulu series "Difficult People" (as Veronica, "a morally corrupt, taste-challenged, and highly successful alpha female").

Further to the report about a manga edition of "Sherlock: A Study in Pink" from Titan Comics, the series will continue with "Sherlock: The Blind Banker" in October, and then "Sherlock: The Great Game" (all based on the BBC television series). And Insight Editions is publishing English versions of "The Baker Street Four" (a graphic novel written by Olivier Legrand and J. B. Dijan and published by Vents d'Ouest in France in 2009); the first volume is available now, and additional volumes are due in August and October.

May 17 #5 More news from the Stepping Stones School, which has carefully restored Undershaw, Conan Doyle's former home: the school has launched a year-long "Arthur Conan Doyle Lecture Series". Michael Gunton, senior archivist at the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection in Portsmouth, gave the first lecture this month (on "Conan Doyle: The Hampshire/Surrey Connection"), and the series will finish next May with a weekend of events; more information about the series can be found at <www.tinyurl.com/mleq56y>.

There was a nice story about the school, and the series, in the Alton Herald (May 13) <www.tinyurl.com/mh3b6nd>, with a photograph of "pupils and volunteers at Undershaw" that includes (presumably a volunteer rather than a student) what appears to be Freddy the Pig. It isn't Freddy the Pig, actually, but rather Sherlock Hams. Haslemere is celebrating a Festival of Hogs, using local artists and schools to decorate fiberglass Hogs that will be displayed in the area and then sold at auction. The school is sponsoring Sherlock Hams, decorated by Alison Saunders <www.tinyurl.com/l3kt6ks>, and it's well worth clicking on this link to see Sherlock Hams.

"What To Do with Too Many Books (Is There Such a Thing?)" is the title of Chris Redmond's interesting contribution to the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere") blog <www.tinyurl.com/lwl7wgu>.



There aren't many bookshops left that specialize in the mystery genre, but The Sleuth of Baker Street is going strong in Toronto <www.sleuthofbakerstreet.ca>. J.D. Singh and Marian Mister are the proprietors, and their monthly newsletter "The Merchant of Menace" offers discussion of many of the Sherlockian and Doylean books published in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K., and available from their shop. And of course it's nice that their logo is Sherlockian.

The Rookies web-site has noted <www.tinyurl.com/k4w8rw4> that the Royal National Institute for the Blind is now planning a mini-exhibition display that will include a newly-commissioned bust of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. There are images and a brief video at the web-site. Dame Jean Conan Doyle bequeathed her copyrights to the Institute, and the Institute later sold them to the Conan Doyle Estate Ltd.

According to Laura Weston (the education and learning officer at the Conan Doyle Collection in Portsmouth), the mini-exhibition, prepared by the Collection to be transported by car to various locations, is intended to allow people who are blind or partially sighted to access the Collection, and to attract other audiences such as children or younger people, and people with disabilities. There will be audio about the Collection and the life of Conan Doyle, and two boxes of unique handling-objects that will include the bust and a 3D printed version of battle at the Reichenbach Falls that will be cold to the touch (thanks to a refrigeration unit), all designed to be as sensory as possible.

William Hjortsberg died on Apr. 22. He was an author of novels and screenplays, including Ridley Scott's cult film "Legend" (1985); his novel NEVERMORE (1994) was a mystery featuring Harry Houdini, Arthur Conan Doyle, and a serial killer who copies the murders described by Edgar Allan Poe.

May 17 #6 Larry L. Elliott has created interesting artwork for a "Sherlock Holmes" jigsaw puzzle that's now available from Piecetime Puzzles <www.piecetimpuzzles.com> (\$16.95); there also a "Sherlock Holmes Gift Tower" available from Thingamajigsaw <www.thingamajigsaw.com> and more expensive, because it has hand-cut wooden pieces, including special pieces tied to the Canon).

Further to the long-ago report (Jun 83 #1) on The Baskerville Hounds, the band now has a web-site <www.baskervillehounds.com>, with links to some of their music at YouTube.

Samantha Wolov notes a menu of Sherlockian loose-leaf teas at The Dartealing Lounge in San Francisco <www.dartealing.com/menu.html>; they also offer teas that are an homage to Downtown Abbey, as well as tea services and sandwiches.

Further to the item (Sep 14 #7) on "The Great Ace Attorney" (an addition to the Japanese Nintendo 3DS series from Capcom), a new game set in the Meiji period, with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, in the cast of characters: you can watch a demo with English subtitles <www.tinyurl.com/kkpsk2c>. Nintendo has announced that "The Great Ace Attorney 2" will be released in Japan on Aug. 3 and there's a trailer at <www.tinyurl.com/nyczlvl>.

Dr. Watson takes on the case of Sherlock Holmes' supposed death in Jeffrey Hatcher's new play "Holmes and Watson" (performed in Tucson and Phoenix in April and May, to good reviews). You can hear Hatcher talk about the play in an interview for Arizona's KJZZ-FM <www.tinyurl.com/lskuwry>.

iClassics offers some colorful and interesting combinations of literature, art, and technology, and one of the stories they've done is "A Scandal in Bohemia" <www.iclassicscollection.com/en/project/idoyle>. It's available in four languages (English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese), and it's an impressive demonstration of how modern technology can make reading enjoyable for a generation that needs to be persuaded that reading can be fun. It's an on-line app (\$2.99) available at Amazon and other sites, and they have done others authors as well (Washington Irving, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, Oscar Wilde, and Edgar Allan Poe. The company also offers attractive stickers that can be used when sending messages using iOS 10 (click on Stickers in the iClassics drop-down menu), and Sherlock Holmes stickers are available.

Cliff Goldfarb kindly reported that "lust-house" was featured on May 17 at the A.Word.A.Day web-site <www.tinyurl.com/k4zormc>, with credit to Conan Doyle. By nice coincidence, the "thought for today" was from Alan Kay, the spouse of Sherlockian author Bonnie MacBird.

The web-site also honored Conan Doyle's birthday on May 22 with a "thought for today" that he once wrote: "I should dearly love that the world should be ever so little better for my presence. Even on this small stage we have our two sides, and something might be done by throwing all one's weight on the scale of breadth, tolerance, charity, temperance, peace, and kindness to man and beast. We can't all strike very big blows, and even the little ones count for something."

May 17 #7 If you viewed "Elementary: Dead Man's Tale" on Mar. 26, you saw Nadia Alexander as Hope Nelligan. Nadia, a member of The Sound of the Baskervilles (the Sherlockian society in Seattle), was interviewed by James C. O'Leary for the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog; you can read the interview at www.tinyurl.com/knd4u23. Spoiler alert: if you've not watched the episode, you might want to wait for a repeat or the DVD before reading the interview.



"Sherlock's 7 Cent Solution" is a new wooden puzzle designed by Diamond Jim Tyler (\$14.95) www.tinyurl.com/l49u47k. Tyler is a magician as well as a puzzle designer, and has some intriguing promo videos at his web-site [ABOUT DJT].

Who knew? May 22 has been designated "International Sherlock Holmes Day" by someone posting to The Sherlock Forum in 2014, suggesting that people "celebrate by reading Sherlock Holmes books, watching Sherlock on TV, watching a Sherlock Holmes movie, dressing up in a costume, solving a mystery, etc." May 22 also is sometimes noted as "Sherlock Holmes Day" (and of course it's the birthday of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle).

Laurie R. King offers a bit of news about the next Mary Russell novel, due next year: the working title is ISLAND OF THE MAD. The book is set in the spring of 1925, when Mary travels across Europe to Venice, and to Poveglia (an island asylum built on the bones of centuries of plague victims); one assumes that her husband is involved somehow. Laurie has a colorful web-site at www.laurierking.com, with lively blogs and much more.

One of the interesting features of the long-running Mystery Scene magazine are the crossword puzzles in each issue. Verna Suit's "A Case of Identity" puzzle is nicely Sherlockian, and you can find it on-line at the magazine's web-site www.mysteryscenemag.com/fun-games?id=5532.

The Bradford Telegraph & Argus has reported on events that will celebrate the centenary of the Cottingley Fairies hoax. There are exhibitions now at Cliffe Castle Museum in Keighley www.tinyurl.com/mehysrz and at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford www.tinyurl.com/kntnw68, and there will be a Cottingley Community Association Fun Day on July 8, and a Cottingley Fairy Festival on July 29, both taking place at the Cottingley Recreation Ground. The museum in Bradford owns the two cameras used by the young girls who took the photographs that fooled Conan Doyle.

The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia, maintained on-line by Alexis Barquin www.arthur-conan-doyle.com, is a fascinating and extensive resource for information about the life and work of Conan Doyle, and well worth exploring. There are images and transcripts, including the encyclopedia entry, noted by Alexander Orlov, for the thesis Conan Doyle wrote to earn his M.D. www.tinyurl.com/ls7xjd7.

A much younger-than-now Steve Doyle played Watson in the first act of "The Case of Black Peter" recorded at Indiana University in Apr. 1983; you can see him perform at YouTube www.tinyurl.com/kapng5s. This was his second performance as Watson, the first being in high school, in a film "Sherlock Holmes vs. the Wolfman" (1976) (not yet available at YouTube).

May 17 #8 "Jinsei ni Kiku! The World of Sherlock Holmes" ["Enriching Your Life: The World of Sherlock Holmes"] is a 90-minute interactive documentary scheduled for broadcast by NHK in Japan (and only in Japan) on July 8; the production company has recorded segments in the U.S. and Britain, and viewers will be able to answer quiz questions using their remotes (they'll also be able to see interviews with Sherlockians in the U.S., with voice-over in Japanese).

Roger Moore died on May 23. The actor was best known for his roles as "The Saint" in the 1960s television series and then as the longest-running James Bond in six films in the 1970s and 1980s, he also played the title role in the NBC television film "Sherlock Holmes in New York" (1976). He received a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2003.

Howard Ostrom spotted an announcement by Spookhouse Productions of "Puppet Holmes" (described as "the Odd Couple meets Ernie and Bert in the world of Arthur Conan Doyle"); you can see an announcement trailer at their web-site <www.spookhouseproductions.weebly.com/puppet-holmes.html>, and if you click on the "short films" link you will find their earlier "221B: The Sherlock Holmes Web-Series" (2013).

And the usual theatrical update: Ken Ludwig's comedy "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" is running at the Coach House Theatre in Akron, Ohio, through June 4 <coachhousetheatre.com>.

Steven Canny and John Nicholson's comedy "The Hound of the Baskervilles" is on at the English Theatre Frankfurt in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, through June 30 <www.english-theatre.de>. And it's scheduled at the Shubert Theatre in Center Valley, Pa., June 21-July 16 <www.pashakespeare.org>.

Jonathan Josephson's immersive-theater "Mystery Lit: Holmes, Sherlock, and the Consulting Detective" will be performed at the Santa Anita Train Depot on the grounds of the Los Angeles County Arboretum, from June 2 to July 1 <www.unboundproductions.org>.

The Baker Street Players and KVGC Radio will present double bills of live radio theater of programs from the old "Sherlock Holmes" series at the Hein & Co. Bookstore in Jackson, Calif., on June 3-4, Aug. 4-5, and Aug. 17-18; more information at <www.bakerstreetwest.com>. The Players also will perform Ken Ludwig's comedy "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" Sept. 8-Oct. 7 (there's lots more about Baker Street West, noted at the web-site).

"The Baker Street Irregulars" (written by Flip Kobler and Cindy Marcus) is to be performed at the Liberty Lake Theatre in Liberty Lake, Wash., June 7-15 <www.libertylaketheatre.com>.

Jami-Leigh Bartschi's musical "My Dear Watson" will be performed at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater in New York, July 11-16 <www.nymf.org>. The web-site for the musical <www.mydearwatsonmusical.com> has the history of the musical, and an audio interview with Bartschi.

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