

Jun 18 #1

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press

The mid-year letter from Mike Whelan ("Wiggins" of the Baker Street Irregulars) included the news that the BSI Archive, formerly at the Houghton Library at Harvard University, is being transferred to the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind.; the Lilly Library already has an impressive Sherlockian and Doylean collection, and now also houses the archive of the Mystery Writers of America.

There also was news of the next BSI conference, set for 2020, will have as its theme "Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire" (details to be announced later), Next year's birthday festivities in New York will be held on Jan. 9-13, and the Distinguished Speaker Lecture on Jan. 10 will feature director and playwright Ken Ludwig, author of "Postmortem", "The Game's Afoot, or Holmes for the Holidays", and "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery".

Russian war correspondent Arkady Babchenko, who fled Russia for Ukraine in 2017, turned up at a press conference in Kiev last month, one day after he had been reported killed; he explained that the announcement that his wife had found his body after he had been shot several times at the entrance to his apartment in Kiev was intended to help Ukraine's security services foil a real plot against his life. All this is of possible interest to readers of this newsletter because Anton Geraschenko, a member of Ukraine's parliament, then said that "Sherlock Holmes successfully used the method of staging his own death for the effective investigation on complex and intricate crimes, no matter how painful it was for his family and Dr. Watson."

Benoit Guilielmo has launched an on-line collection of Sherlockian articles from the 1930s (many of them reprinted for the first time), accompanied by some modern commentary on what he calls the Golden Age of Sherlockian scholarship (1927-1934), at <www.earlysherlockiana.blogspot.fr>. It's nicely done, and an opportunity to see what the Sherlockian world once was like.

The manuscript of "The Story of Spedegue's Dropper" will be at auction at Sotheby's in London on July 10, estimated at £10,000-£15,000. There is a nice entry about the manuscript at Randall Stock's "Best of Sherlock" website at <www.bestofsherlock.com/mss/spedegues-dropper-2018.htm>.

Howard Ostrom has found another example of the wonders of digitization: the Nov. 1906 supplement to the Urban Films catalog, with a three-page synopsis of Vitagraph's "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" (1905); it's on-line at <www.lukemckernan.com/2018/02/15/the-world-in-1906> [pages 61-63]. Leslie S. Klinger wrote about the film in The Baker Street Journal, June 1998.

Sherlock Bones Lost 'N Hound Dog Recovery has a Facebook page but no website: they're "a local group of animal lovers dedicated to reuniting owners with their lost furies" in and around Buffalo, N.Y.

"Hooray for Meghan Markle, a Very Modern Adventuress" was the headline on a story by Julie Burchill in the Spectator on Apr. 28, reported by Evy Herzog (who presides over The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes). The word "adventuress" is rarely encountered today, other than in the Canon and at Sherlockian gatherings; you can read the article at <www.tinyurl.com/yd7d9ot4>.

Jun 18 #2 Erik Ofgang's GILLETTE CASTLE: A HISTORY (Charleston: History Press, 2017; 139 pp., \$21.99) is a nicely readable and attractively illustrated guide to William Gillette's home in Hadlyme, Conn., with discussion of Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes, and Gillette himself, but the main focus is on the Castle and its history.

A "Sherlock Holmes" electric locomotive was used on the Metropolitan Line in London from the early 1920s until it was withdrawn from service in 1962, but now there's a new one, christened at a naming ceremony at the Quainton Road Station on Apr. 29, and video of the ceremony is available at YouTube; search for [quainton sherlock holmes].

All that remains of the first locomotive are the nameplates, which are fortunately preserved in Sherlockian collections, but a battery-powered scale model (in 7¼ inch gauge, which means it will run on rails 7¼ inches apart) was at auction at Dreweatts in England in 2013, with an estimate of £1,000-£1,500. It sold for £2,728 (including the buyer's premium). Of course there is a 7¼inch Gauge Society, with a web-site <www.sevenandaquarter.org> for those who enjoy riding on (rather than in) these attractive trains, and you can do exactly that in Great Britain, Europe, and North America, as noted in the Club Directory at the web-site.



The winners of this year's Audie Awards (from the Audio Publishers Association) included Stephen Fry's recording of the Sherlock Holmes stories (for excellence in production); the recording is available from Audio Studios at <www.audible.com>.

THE CROWN JEWEL MYSTERY, by Anna Elliott and Charles Veley (Wilton Press, 2017; 109 pp., \$5.98), a prequel to their "Sherlock Holmes and Lucy James" series, brings Lucy to London for the first time, hoping to determine the identity of her mysterious benefactor and winding up on the scene of a bank robbery; the novella is both imaginative and fast-paced, and the series has a web-site at <www.sherlockandlucy.com>.

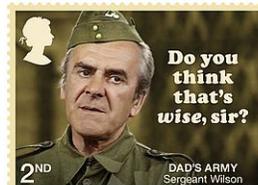
Earlier novels in the series include REMEMBER, REMEMBER (2017; 346 pp.) and THE JUBILEE PROBLEM (2017; 407 pp.) (each \$12.99); Lucy discovers who her mysterious father and mother are, and is involved in investigating two interesting mysteries, as well as some romance.

The restored version of "Der Hund von Baskerville" (1929) received a warm reception at the San Francisco Silent Film Festival this month, and there are reports that a commercial DVD will be available sooner rather than later; in the meantime, Danill Dubshin has reported, you can watch clips from the film uploaded by Rob Byrne to Vimeo: go to <www.vimeo.com> and search for [der hund von baskerville] to see how splendid the restoration is.

"Sherlock: The Game Is Now" <www.sherlockgame.com> is billed as "the only official Sherlock Holmes Escape Game, a 90-minute immersive experience for teams of 4-6 people," and it will open in London on Oct. 23 and run through Feb. 24, with tickets costing £54 per person. It's organized by Time Run and "Sherlock" creators Steve Moffat and Mark Gatiss, and you can see some of Time Run's other escape games at <www.time-run.com>.

Jun 18 #3 Martyn Sutton is the proprietor of Uncle Jeremy's Household, a gift shop in Ingleton <www.unclejeremy.com> that celebrates the connections of Sherlock Holmes to the Yorkshire Dales; he believes that the name of Sherlock Holmes was inspired by Conan Doyle's visits to the region (he married his first wife Louise Hawkins there in 1885, the same year his short story "Uncle Jeremy's Household" was published). One of their Sherlock Holmes Teddy Bears will be the prize in the "This is Ingleton" competition in July at <www.facebook.com/VisitIngleton>; the contest is open to anyone, anywhere, who answers a simple question to qualify for the end-of-the-month drawing.

The Royal Mail has issued a set of eight stamps honoring the 50th anniversary of the BBC's long-running television series "Dad's Army" that was broadcast from 1968 to 1977. Two of the stamps show Arthur Lowe as Capt. George Mainwaring and John Le Mesurier as Sgt. Arthur Wilson; if the actors look familiar, it's because Arthur Lowe played Dr. William Watson in "The Strange Case of the End of Civilization as We Know It" (1977), while John Le Mesurier was Eduardo Lucas in "The Second Stain" in the Alan Wheatley television series (1951), Barrymore in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (1959), and Lord Redcliff in "The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother" (1975).



Rob Nunn has been posting to his "Interesting Though Elementary" blog since June 2017 <www.interestingthoughelementary.blogspot.com>. It's imaginative as well as interesting, with a mix of essays and interviews.

Bill Peschel's "223B Casebook Series" continues, offering his survey of the many parodies and pastiches published in newspapers, magazines, and books, reprinted with footnotes and brief accounts of what Conan Doyle was doing each year. The latest volumes are SHERLOCK HOLMES: GREAT WAR PARODIES AND PASTICHES I: 1910-1914 (Hershey: Peschel Press, 2017; 365 pp.) and SHERLOCK HOLMES: JAZZ AGE PARODIES AND PASTICHES I: 1920-1924 (2018; 352 pp.) (each \$15.99), and both volumes include one of his own pastiches, in which Mark Twain reports on his encounters with Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes. Bill's web-site is at <www.peschelpress.com>.

It's likely far too late for souvenir-hunting, but Del Taco kindly offered free Sherlock Holmes lunch bags with the purchase of any Kid Loco Meal (a kid's quesadilla, fries, drink and a treat); their web-site allows you to find your nearest Del Taco <www.tinyurl.com/y873mmme>.

The latest catalog from the BBC Shop has as always a page of Sherlockiana, including a Sherlock Holmes Pewter Pocket Watch, just the thing for those who, like Holmes, don't wear a wristwatch <www.tinyurl.com/y9p7td5b>.

Ray Betzner continues to find new and interesting material for his "Studies in Starrett" blog <www.vincentstarrett.com>, which now includes entries on "Where are the missing pages of Starrett's autobiography?" and a new translation of his classic sonnet "221B"; the new translation, handsomely printed and bound, is available the Atelier Typographique de la Cité in Switzerland for CHF40.00 <www.ateliertypo.tictail.com/product/221b>.

Jun 18 #4 "With Landmark UK Embassy Planned for East London, China Rides the River of History Full Circle" was the headline on a story in the South China Morning Post on June 05 <www.tinyurl.com/y98b82hs> about a new Chinese embassy that will be on the site of the old Royal Mint. The article noted that the East End was home to London's first Chinatown, and that the area's opium dens were legendary: "It was in one such establishment in Limehouse that Sherlock Holmes found Dr. Watson" in "The Man with the Twisted Lip". The Royal Mint moved to Wales in 1975, and (yes indeed) the South China Morning Post was quite careless about who found whom in the Bar of Gold.

Jennie Paton found a video demonstration <www.tinyurl.com/yadndn8p> of how easy it is to use the Mr. Sherlock lock-picking tool set, which comes with a full set of lock picks and a transparent padlock that helps you see what you're doing.

YOUNG PUFFIN'S WONDERFULLY GRAND MYSTERY is a delightful children's carousel-bound pop-up book created by Yekaterina Komarovskaya and Mike Ficarra: Young Puffins wears Sherlockian costume while investigating a mystery that unfolds (literally) as one turns the pages to read a story that's both imaginative and amusing. It was a successful Kickstarter project and now is available to everyone (\$31.00); just go to <www.youngpuffin.com> to see a demonstration of how the books works. Young Puffin himself also is available as a plushie (\$20.00), along with other merchandise.

RiffTrax offers a download of the colorized version of "Sherlock Holmes and the Woman in Green" (1945) with commentary by Mystery Science Theater 3000 stars Bridget Nelson and Mary Jo Pehl (\$9.99) at <www.rifftrax.com>; needless to say, they don't take the movie seriously.

Holmes Fest is now an annual event in Portsmouth: this year's celebration began on June 27 and runs through July 14, with a wide variety of goings-on <www.lifeisamazing.co.uk/holmesfest>.

They're off and running at Laurel Park in Maryland, where Greg Ruby has arranged for The Silver Blaze (Southern Division) on July 22. You can read all about it at the Facebook page for the event, and there's more information available from Greg at <greg@fourthgarrideb.com>.

Royal Books is offering an early treatment of the script for "The Return of Sherlock Holmes" (1929) for \$4,500 <www.tinyurl.com/y9shlpb4>; written by F. Hugh Herbert, it differs substantially from the finished film, and does not contain the now-classic statement "Elementary, my dear Watson" (spoken by Clive Brook in the film when it was released). It was the first talking Sherlock Holmes film, and the first known instance of Holmes actually saying the line (William Gillette often is credited as the first, but the line does not appear in any known script of his play, and no one has reported a contemporary newspaper or magazine that mentions Gillette saying it).

"Anything Goes--on ISLAND OF THE MAD" is an amusing book trailer promoting the latest volume in Laurie R. King's series about Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes (Apr 18 #2) <www.tinyurl.com/ydxlcqwb>. That's not Cole Porter singing, but Michael Meketa III does well with his cover of the song.

Jun 18 #5 "To review the books, monographs, films, and other, more ad-hoc projects inspired by Holmes today is not to note a revival of interest, but simply to let down a bucket into a bottomless well." That's according to Christopher Sandford in HOUDINI AND CONAN DOYLE (London: Duckworth Overlook, 2011; 282 pp.).

Excerpts from Jeffrey Hatcher's imaginative play were read during the Baker Street Irregulars' "The Mind and Art of Sherlock Holmes" conference in 2016 in Chautauqua, and the play premiered in 2017 in Tucson, Ariz., and has had other productions since then; the script has now been published by the Dramatists Play Service (\$9.00) <www.tinyurl.com/yaxbwm7y>, and you can read a sample at their web-site.

It would have pleased the late Herman Beerman and other members of the Sir James Saunders Society: "Had Sherlock Holmes Gone into Medicine, He'd Have Been a Dermatologist" is the headline on Phil Whitaker's article in the New Statesman on Mar. 4 <www.tinyurl.com/y94b8vcc>.

Records by Mail <www.recordsbymail.com>, launched in 1974, now has an 8000-square-foot warehouse with more than 2 million vinyl LPs and 45s; searching for [sherlock holmes] turns up a few interesting items, and of course there is a lot more material for anyone interested in old records.

Cynthia Ward's THE ADVENTURE OF THE INCOGNITA COUNTESS (Seattle: Aqueduct, 2017; 110 pp., \$12.00), is part of a "conversation pieces" series of feminist science fiction; Lucy Harker is Dracula's dhampir daughter and a British intelligence agent who encounters dangerous foes on board the Titanic; the book's Sherlockian only for occasional mentions of Mycroft as head of Britain's secret service.

Karen Murdock noted a letter to the editor in the Chicago Tribune on June 3 about "bringing the cane back into style" that mentioned that "you can even learn single-stick cane-fighting (like Sherlock Holmes) at the Forteza Fitness, a local gymnasium." Forteza Fitness also is the home of the Bartitsu Club of Chicago <www.bartitsuclubofchicago.com>.

"Comedy Playhouse" was a long-running British 30-minute television series broadcast by BBC-1 from 1961 to 1975; many episodes graduated to their own series, but among those that didn't was "Elementary, My Dear Watson" (1973) with John Cleese as Sherlock Holmes and Willie Rushton as Dr. Watson. As with so much long-lost television, a YouTube user has come to the rescue: you can watch the program at <www.tinyurl.com/ycgb59ux>.

Leslie Katz continues to make his Sherlockian scholarship available at the Social Science Research Network; his latest article is "The Game Is a Hand: Traditional Tabletop Games in the Sherlock Holmes Adventures" and you can read or download all of his articles) at <www.ssrn.com/author=1164057>.

Mattias Boström, whose FROM HOLMES TO SHERLOCK has already been nominated for an Anthony Award (best critical/non-fiction book) at Bouchercon; also has been nominated for a Macavity Award (best mystery-related nonfiction) from Mystery Readers International; the winners of both awards will be announced at Bouchercon in St. Petersburg, Fla., on Sept. 8.

Jun 18 #6 The second issue of The Newspapers (it's an "Irregular Journal of Sherlockiana" that Greg Ruby edits for The Sherlockians of Baltimore) has been published, with 136 pp. of toasts, poems, articles, and much more, many by members of the SOBs <www.tinyurl.com/SOB2018Newspapers> (\$20.00). It focuses on material from Baltimore newspapers, and about Baltimore, but Greg casts his net widely to include Evelyn Herzog's account of the history of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes, plus Ross E. Davies' investigation of the history of the first Sherlock Holmes game (the Parker Brothers card game that was launched in 1904).

Further to the earlier report (Aug 14 #2) about the Mars 2020 Rover and its Scanning Habitable Environments with Raman and Luminescence for Organics and Chemicals, Jeff Dow notes that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has a new and colorful web-site about SHERLOC and its Wide Angle Topographic Sensor for Operations and eNginering (yes, that's WATSON) at <www.tinyurl.com/ybvkgqj>.

"Save the date," says Susan Diamond: the 59th annual running of the Silver Blaze in Chicago will be on Oct. 20 at the Hawthorne Race Course. You can enroll on her mailing list at <szdiamond@comcast.net>.

Another early Sherlockian film has turned up at YouTube, reported by Jennie Paton. "Sherlock Holmes i Bondefangerklør" (1910) features Otto Lagoni as Holmes, and is one of the Danish silent films made by Nordisk (and the only one known to have survived) <www.tinyurl.com/ybocm6w8>; the title is "Sherlock Holmes in the Claws of the Confidence Men" in English.

Wikipedia has a web-page for "Hat" <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hat> with illustrated entries for hats that range from the Ascot cap to the Zuchetto; one of the hats is the Deerstalker, with a mention of Sherlock Holmes.

Claire O'Dell's A STUDY IN HONOR (New York: Harper Voyager, 2018; 294 pp., \$15.99) reimagines Holmes and Watson in a feminist thriller set in a near-future Washington during the next Civil War; the protagonists are Dr. Janet Watson and covert agent Sara Holmes, both black LGTBQ women, engaged in a battle against both villainy and bureaucracy.

Greg Ruby discovered two amusing television commercials from 1970 and 1971 for Esso Home Comfort; available at YouTube <www.tinyurl.com/y7lpcnut> and <www.tinyurl.com/ycgyecbh>.

EL GOS DEL BASKERVILLES is Catalan translation published by Vicens-Vives in Barcelona in 2013, with striking artwork by Bulgarian artist Iassen Ghiuselev; you can view the artwork at his web-site <www.tinyurl.com/y7d2mbxs>, and order the book from the publisher or (possibly) at www.abebooks.com. Some of the original artwork is available from the artist.

In case you've wondered about how important Sherlock Holmes truly is, Sidney Paget's original watercolor of "Fishing Boats on the Shoreline" sold at auction this month for £160 <www.tinyurl.com/y7r2rqag>. In 2004 his original pen and ink and wash drawing of "The death of Sherlock Holmes" was sold at auction for \$220,000. Randall Stock has a nice (and nicely illustrated) census of Sidney Paget paintings at <www.tinyurl.com/y8hd6fxo>.

Jun 18 #7 "Revision, My Dear Watson" (episode 146 on the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog) <www.tinyurl.com/y9765sbh> offers Nick Martorelli, interviewed by Scott Monty and Burt Wolder; Nick suggests that Irene Adler was the Boba Fett of the Sherlock Holmes stories (and explains this for those who are fans of "Star Wars" and those who aren't), and has much more to say about the four long stories in the Canon. Scott and Burt have started providing a transcript of each of the podcasts; a few of them are available now, and they're asking for assistance in keeping the worthy project going.

Deadline Hollywood reports that the release date for "Holmes & Watson" (the new comedy that stars Will Ferrell as Holmes and John C. Reilly as Watson) has been postponed once more: it's now scheduled for Dec. 21.

The Mount Nelson in Capetown is one of six "hotels with pasts as amazing as the amenities," Cator Sparks blogged on May 4 <www.tinyurl.com/yddwul3j>, noting that the Prince of Wales and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle both stayed at the hotel in 1925. According to Brian Pugh's A CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE (2012), Conan Doyle stayed at The Mount Nelson twice (in 1900 and 1928). There's no mention of Conan Doyle in Spark's entry for the Mena House in Egypt, but Conan Doyle did stay there, in 1895.

David Marcum has edited SHERLOCK HOLMES: BEFORE BAKER STREET for Belanger Books (2017, 356 pp., \$19.95); it's an anthology of stories from the years before Holmes met Watson and moved into quarters at 221B. The publisher's web-site is at www.belangerbooks.com.

David also continues to edit his series of annual anthologies of pastiches for MX Publishing, with two new volumes added this year: THE MX BOOK OF NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES: PART IX and PART X (406 pp. for 1875-1895 and 386 pp. for 1896-1919, \$44.95 each); they are excellent anthologies, and offer poems and radio scripts, as well as traditional pastiches, written by authors old hands and newcomers, and good writers as well. The MX web-sites are at <www.mxpublishing.com> and <www.mxpublishing.co.uk>.

Also from MX: Carl Heifetz's SHERLOCK HOLMES THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE (2018; 214 pp., \$14.95) is a collection of essays that reflect his expertise as a microbiologist and examine scientific aspects of the Canon; most have been published in journals with limited circulation, and it's nice to see them now more widely available. David Ruffle's WATSON: MY LIFE (2018; 148 pp., \$12.95) takes a new approach to the Canon, offering Dr. Watson's reminiscences about his life, loves, and career, and his association with Sherlock Holmes, as recorded in 1936.

And there's more from MX: Richard T. Ryan's THE DRUID OF DEATH (2018; 217 pp., \$28.95) has Holmes and Watson and Lestrade investigating a series of bizarre murders at Druid sites in England; his previous pastiches were THE VATICAN CAMEOS (2016) and THE STONE OF DESTINY (2017), and his new book includes a chapter from his upcoming THE MERCHANT OF MENACE. Michael Druce's SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ROSWELL INCIDENT (2018; 211 pp., \$14.95) has Holmes and Watson alive and well in the 1940s and 1950s, involved with British and American and Russian intelligence and counter-intelligence in a plot that may or may not involve aliens and flying saucers.

Jun 18 #8 Last year the French company Black Box Boutique released a limited Blu-ray+DVD "Ultimate Collector's Edition" of the 1984 Japanese animated "Sherlock Hound" television series, in Japanese with French subtitles <www.blackbonesboutique.com/sherlockholmes.htm>, with a 200-page book of artwork. It cost €59.00, and is no longer available from the company, but completists may want to pursue it from other sources.

Steven Canny and John Nicholson's comedy "The Hound of the Baskervilles" is being performed at the English Theatre in Frankfurt, Germany, through July 8 <www.english-theatre.de>, and then tours to the Deutsches Theater in Munich, Germany, July 17-21 <www.deutsches-theater.de>.

"A Scandal in Bohemia, Part One" (a radio play) is due at the Edge Theater in Chicago on July 22 <www.idlemuse.org>.

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" is scheduled at the Clove Creek Dinner Theater in Fishkill, N.Y., Aug. 2-19; their web-site's at <www.clovecreekdinnertheater.com>. Also at the Magenta Theatre in Vancouver, Wash., Sept. 7-22 <www.magentatheatre.com>; and at the Duluth Playhouse in Duluth, Minn., Oct. 4-14 <www.duluthplayhouse.org>;

The Illyria Theatre Company will tour Oliver Grey's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" in Britain, Aug. 3-Sept. 7 <www.illyria.co.uk>.

Katie Forgette's "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily" is due at the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Aug. 9-26 www.chambertheatre.com.

Timothy Evers' new play "The Return of Sherlock Holmes" is due at the Chelsea Market Theatre in Houston, Oct. 3-21 <www.classicaltheatre.org>.

"Legenda jménem Holmes" [A Legend Named Holmes] (a "cult musical" by Ondrej G. Brzobohatý) will premiere at the Musical Theater Karlín in Prague, Oct. 12-21 <www.vstupenky.ticket-art.cz>.

C. P. Stancich's "Sherlock Holmes and the Masters of Crime" is scheduled at the Camino Real Playhouse in San Juan Capistrano, Calif., on Oct. 19-Nov. 4 <www.caminoplayhouse.org>.

The East Lynne Theater Company will perform Craig Wichman's radio-style adaptation of "Sherlock Holmes' Adventure of the Speckled Band" at the First Presbyterian Church in Cape May, N.J., Oct. 26-Nov. 2, and Mar. 15-17, 2019 <www.eastlynnetheater.org>.

Ken Ludwig's "The Game's Afoot, or Holmes for the Holidays" has been scheduled by the St. Marys Community Players at the Town Hall Theatre in St. Marys, Ont., Nov. 1-11 <www.stmaryscommunityplayers.org>.

John Longenbaugh's "Sherlock Holmes & the Case of the Christmas Carol" will be performed at the Rosebud Theatre in Rosebud, Alta, from Nov. 2 to Dec. 23 <www.rosebudtheatre.com>.

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