

Dec 18 #1

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press

There is still time to reserve for many of the events during the birthday festivities in New York (although the Saturday cocktail reception has sold out, and no tickets will be available at the door); details are available at www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/2018/11/20/the-2019-bis-weekend.

Flicker Alley has announced that its deluxe Blu-ray/DVD dual-format edition of "Der Hund von Baskerville" (1929) will be released on Feb. 5, and there is a pre-order sale price of \$29.95 www.tinyurl.com/y9qh6zjs; this is the last Sherlockian silent film, directed by Richard Oswald, and the bonus materials will include Oswald's earlier "Der Hund von Baskerville" (1914), as well as original commentary on the story and on the restoration, and an illustrated booklet with an essay by film historian Russell Merritt.

"There's a fundamental principle of law that derives from Sherlock Holmes, which is the dog that didn't bark," Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito said during an argument on Nov. 26; the case involved jurisdiction on Native American land in Oklahoma, and you can read the details in an article in The Economist (Nov. 28) www.tinyurl.com/ya8qyrkv.

"The Vampire of the Lyceum" (a short-story pastiche written by Charles Veley and Anna Elliott) is available (free) as text and read by Simon Prebble at their web-site www.sherlockandlucy.com/the-vampire-of-the-lyceum.

Big Chief Studios reports that production has been completed on their licensed figures showing Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman in costume from "The Abominable Bride" are now on their way from China and should be available for Christmas shopping www.tinyurl.com/ycgvdqaf.

Thomas Mann's A CHRISTMAS CAROL AT 221B (League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, 2018; 21 pp., \$5.50 at Amazon) is a nicely seasonal (and Dickensian) pastiche.

Oscar Ross observed the Sherlockian artwork on the cover of the Dec. 2018 issue of Philosophy Now www.philosophynow.org; the issue's cover story is Tim Weldon's "The Forgiving Reason: The Secret of Sherlock Holmes' Success" (which explores the links between Holmes and Blaise Pascal) and there's also Carol Nicholson's "Ockham's Rose" (in which she discusses Umberto Eco's THE NAME OF THE ROSE). Both articles can be read at the web-site.

Howard Ostrom has now identified more than 4,300 actors who have appeared as Sherlock Holmes on stage, screen, radio, television, the Internet, and elsewhere. His SHERLOCK HOLMES ON SCREENS 1929-1939 (the first volume of his Sherlock Holmes Cyclopeda) appeared earlier this year (Oct 18 #2), and you can hear him discuss the project in the latest "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" podcast www.tinyurl.com/ybslndo3.

The Canon has many mentions of fog, and today's readers might not know just what a "London particular" really was like. The MiceTimes of Asia had an interesting illustrated article on Dec. 8 about the "great smog" that enveloped London for four days in December 1952, when 12,000 people died and more than 100,000 were injured www.tinyurl.com/ybxecqcg.

Dec 18 #2 Responding to the query about "unneptile" (Nov. 18 #3), Steve Rothman suggests a bit of word-play on "neptis" (in Latin). It should be noted that "neptis" can mean "niece" as well as "grand-daughter" and that a nephew is "nepote" or "nepos" (giving us the word "nepotism"). Stu Nelan reports that Miles Bredon is speaking to his wife Angela, about her aunt, so Angela would be the niece (and "unneptile" would be a coinage by Ronald Knox for "not niece-ish").

SHERLOCK and SHERLOCK DELUXE are memory games designed by Reinhard Staube, first issued in 2009 for ages 5 to adult. SHERLOCK (\$10.00) has 49 cards, and SHERLOCK DELUXE (\$15.00) has 60 cards and a small Sherlockian figurine. The games are made by PlayRoom Entertainment for Ultra-PRO Entertainment, and are available at Amazon and elsewhere.

All sorts of things turn up on YouTube. Howard Ostrom has noted two videos produced by the Columbia University Libraries Preservation Committee: "Murder in the Stacks" (1987) and "Shedding Light on the Case" (1990), with David Chapman (Sherlock Holmes) showing David Bowman (Dr. Watson) the proper techniques of preservation. You can search for the videos by their titles at <www.youtube.com>.

Two pieces of artwork showing Snoopy in Sherlockian costume from the television program "It's a Mystery, Charlie Brown" (1974) were offered at Heritage Auctions on Dec. 9: a production cel <www.tinyurl.com/y9fwzwl5> sold for \$1,800 (including the 20% buyer's premium), and a graphite animation drawing <www.tinyurl.com/yd2o2bqd> sold for \$780 (ditto). Both were signed by Bill Melendez, who produced the program and provided voices for Snoopy and Woodstock.

Denis Norden died on Sept. 19. Famous (sometimes notorious) for his often-ribald sense of humor, he had a long career on British radio and television and was a successful screenwriter as well; he wrote the screenplay for "The Best House in London" (1969), an X-rated film (because it was that sort of house) remarkable for a very short scene that included uncredited performances by Peter Jeffrey as Holmes and Thorley Walters as Watson.

Michael Robertson's A BAKER STREET WEDDING (New York: Minotaur, 2018; 291 pp., \$26.99) is the sixth in his series about Reggie and Nigel Heath, who have their offices in the building at 221B Baker Street, and a lease that requires them to answer Sherlock Holmes' mail; Reggie's marriage to Laura Rankin puts them both in unexpected and dire peril, and they are rescued by Reggie's law clerk Lois and a thoroughly intriguing character who has made a minor appearance in a previous book but now comes into his own (no spoiler here, but Sherlockians won't be fooled for very long).

"Do not destroy the Strand," was the plea from Nancy Bass Wyden, owner of the Strand Bookstore, which has been a destination for visitors to New York since it opened in 1927. "18 miles of books" is the slogan of the store, and those miles include a separate section for rare books located on an upper floor. The city wants to declare the bookshop's building an official city landmark, but the owner believes that landmarking would result in the death of the business. You can read all about it in an article in the N.Y. Times (Dec. 3) <www.tinyurl.com/y8x6x2nk>, kindly note by Samantha Wolov.

Dec 18 #3 Ron Fish's Sherlockian Calendar <www.sherlockiancalendar.com> is a helpful list of upcoming Sherlockian events, for anyone who would like to know what is happening when and where, and it offers an interesting look at how many society events are being held hither and yon. You should contact Ron <ronf404@aol.com> if you would like to have a meeting or conference listed.



It's not all that often that The New Yorker offers an image of Sherlock Holmes on its cover (in fact, this the first time ever): the Dec. 24 "Power Issue" has Barry Blitt's "Elementary" tribute to the ongoing investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller; you can see the cover in full color (and with Blitt's preliminary sketch) at <www.tinyurl.com/ycsvsb5>.

Vicki Delany's *A SCANDAL IN SCARLET* (New York: Crooked Lane, 2018; 293 pp., \$26.99) is the fourth in her series of "Sherlock Holmes Bookshop" mysteries that star Gemma Doyle (proprietor of the Sherlock bookshop) and her friend Jayne Wilson (who manages the next-door Mrs. Hudson's Tea Room). The pastiche begins with a mysterious fire at the local house museum, and needless to say there are murders and a complicated plot. The author has more than one series going, and her website's at <www.vickidelany.com>.

"A four of gin hot" is Scott Monty's Canonical introduction to his "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" post about Sherlock & Sons Gin; it's a new brand of small-batch products from Distillers of Surrey, founded by Simon Sherlock. Read all about it at <www.tinyurl.com/y95wyp6d>.

Barbara S. Koelle died on Nov. 28. She married her husband Jack in 1948, and for decades shared his many interests; she also was a gourmet cook, an avid reader, and a keen collector of children's book, and was a long-time member of the International Wizard of Oz Club, serving as a member of its board of directors, its president, and editor of its magazine *The Baum Buggle*. She was honored by The Baker Street Irregulars as *The Woman* in 1982.

The January-February issue of Ellery Queen's *Mystery Magazine* continues a long annual tradition of honoring Sherlock Holmes' birthday, with Sherlockian artwork by Nataša Illinčić on the cover, an amusing pastiche by Terence Faherty, a new story about the Amlingmeyer brothers by Steve Hockensmith, a pastiche by Keith Hann (with artwork by Jason C. Eckhardt), a Sherlockian cartoon by Scott Masear, and reviews by Steve Steinbock of new Sherlockian books.

A bit more about T. S. Eliot's *OLD POSSUM'S BOOK OF PRACTICAL CATS*: there is a registered charity called Old Possum's Practical Trust, established by Valerie Eliot in 1990 <www.old-possums-practical-trust.org.uk>.

Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki's long and distinguished career includes his work on the 1984 Japanese-Italian television series "Meitantei Homuzu" ["Famous Detective Holmes"], widely available in English as "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"; Miyazaki directed the first six episodes, and they're great fun. Jenne Paton reports an interesting video by Stevem at YouTube about "Miyazaki's Forgotten Gem" <www.tinyurl.com/yc6bwhpk>.

Dec 18 #4 From manga to the stage: the Anime News Network reports (Dec. 21) that Ryōsuke Takeuchi and Hikaru Miyoshi's "Yūkoku no Moriarty" ["Moriarty the Patriot"] manga has inspired a stage musical that will be performed in Tokyo and Osaka in May <www.tinyurl.com/y9ts25js>; the manga debuted in 2016 and stars James Moriarty, an orphan who is adopted into the Moriarty family. The musical will star Shōgo Suzuki (William James Moriarty) and Ryō Hirano (Sherlock Holmes). There's a brief trailer for the musical at <www.tinyurl.com/ybulsm4>.

Further to the report (Oct 18 #3) that THE SELECTED ADVENTURES AND MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES has now been published by the Folio Society, there was a post on Dec. 5 at the Flavorwire web-site <www.tinyurl.com/yazqzzyy> that offers a look at some of the artwork, and at Michael Dirda's introduction.

Tim Dedopoulos' THE SHERLOCK HOLMES PUZZLE CARD CHALLENGE (Carlton, 2018; \$14.95) is a colorful box of 60 decorative cards with logical puzzles that are only marginally Sherlockian.

John Wulp died on Nov. 27. He was a playwright, producer, director, visual artist, designer, and educator, and in 1979 was nominated for a Tony Award as scenic designer for "The Crucifer of Blood" (which starred Paxton Whitehead and Glenn Close).

The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes debuted in Columbus, Ohio, in 2014, and after touring in the United States and in other countries, now is at the Library Science Center in Jersey City, N.J. through May 27, and well worth a visit. There are spectacular Sherlockian and Doylean items on display, and a murder mystery (written by Dan Stashower) to solve, and you can listen to Scott Monty and Burt Wolder's interview with exhibition creators Amy Noble Seitz and Geoffrey Curley at the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" podcast at <www.tinyurl.com/y7bn6cjj>.

Gyles Brandreth, author of seven murder mysteries that feature Arthur Conan Doyle and Oscar Wilde, has written a new short story that them at a festive party at Buckingham Palace; the story was published, with colorful illustrations, in the Mail on Sunday on Dec. 23 <www.tinyurl.com/yddea86y>.

"Sherlock Holmes, John Watson, and a Christmas Gift of Friendship" is the title of Colin Fleming's warm holiday tribute, accompanied by some striking artwork, in the Daily Beast on Dec. 22 <www.tinyurl.com/y8rhozbo>.

The copyright clock continues to tick: at the end of this year "The Creeping Man" (published in 1923) will enter the public domain. Only the final nine Sherlock Holmes stories will be protected by copyright, and the last of them will enter the public domain at the end of 2022.

Further to the report (Sep 18 #7) on a proposal to demolish the Lyndhurst Park Hotel (the campaign to protect the hotel had cited evidence that Conan Doyle helped design the redevelopment of the building as a hotel in 1912), the BBC reported on Dec. 21 <www.tinyurl.com/y9jrdk9w> that the developer has withdrawn its appeal against the National Park Authority's decision to reject the proposal to demolish the hotel. The NPA said it would seek to recover its costs of preparing for a public hearing scheduled in January.

Dec 18 #5 The two volumes of THE MX BOOK OF NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES: SOME UNTOLD CASES, edited by David Marcum, are the latest additions to his excellent series of anthologies, and they will be welcomed by those who believe that traditional short stories are the best way to visit Holmes and Watson again (London: MX Publishing, 2018; 405/415 pp., \$44.95 each); there are new short stories, poems, and a radio script, all offering imaginative accounts of cases only mentioned in the Canon. MX's books are available at <www.sherlockholmesbooks.com>.

Also from MX: Tim Symonds' A MOST DIABOLICAL PLOT (2018; 156 pp., \$12.95) is a collection of six pastiches reprinted from volumes of David Marcum's THE MX BOOK OF NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES; his other Sherlockian work can be found at his web-site <www.tim-symonds.co.uk>.

Tom Bidwell, whose television adaptation of Richard Adams' "Watership Down" debuted on BBC One this month, has told the BBC Writersroom that his next project will be a Netflix series titled "The Irregulars" that will focus on a group of street urchins whose crime-solving success a drug-addict Holmes takes credit for; the interview's at <www.tinyurl.com/ydxgppqwh>.

Too late for this year, but in plenty of time for next year: Stephanie Urban has found amusing artwork by David Price on a "Sherlock Holmes Christmas" card from Allport Editions <www.allport.com/products/1873>.

The Chautauqua Institution, founded in 1874, offers a wide variety of summer educational programs, and Bob Coghill and Christopher Redmond discussed Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle at Chautauqua's Hall of Philosophy on Aug. 23, 2000; Jennie Paton has kindly reported a 35-minute video of the discussion at YouTube <www.youtube.com/watch?v=6psB3rmNoBE>.

The Beacon Society works to provide teachers, librarians, children's museums, and children's theaters with resources "to bring the magic of Sherlock Holmes to life," and their web-site <www.beaconsociety.com> is well worth exploring. Click on "additional resources" and then on "beacon booklist" to see an interesting list of recommended books for younger Sherlockians to enjoy and use for research purposes.

Deadline Hollywood reported on Dec. 17 <www.tinyurl.com/yaccj5fo> that the CBS-TV series "Elementary" will end its run after the seventh season, due to air in 2019. Created by Rob Doherty, the series stars Jonny Lee Miller as Holmes and Lucy Liu as Watson, and at the end of the seventh season will have set a record of 154 episodes for a Sherlockian television series; only Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce have played Holmes and Watson more often and for more hours, screen and on the radio.

The District Messenger is the newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, now edited by Jean Upton and as always interesting and informative, has reported in its latest (382nd) issue on some news from the U.S.: Ceylan Yeginsu, on the N.Y. Times' ReaderCenter on Twitter, recently asked readers about their experiences with petty crime in London; according to Jean, "one person reported that a red-headed man hired him to copy out the Encyclopedia Britannica, but it turned out to be a scam." The newsletter (and much more) is available at <www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk>.

Dec 18 #6 The play's the thing (as Shakespeare wrote): Bart Lovins' "The Novel Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet" is a new production of a dramatization performed at Expanded Arts in New York in 1998, now being produced again at the Hardin County Schools Performing Arts Center in Elizabethtown, Ky., Jan. 17-27 <www.thepac.net>.

Kevin O'Brien's "Sherlock Holmes and the Temple of Doom" will be performed by Upstage Productions <www.upstageproductions.com> at the Carterville Community Center in Carterville, Ill., on Jan. 18; the dinner theater mystery is billed as "Sherlock Holmes, Nancy Drew, Lt. Columbo, and the Scooby Doo Gang are on a wild and dangerous treasure hunt, but so is the amazing archaeologist Louisiana Jones." The company has another play titled "No Schick, Sherlock" (Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson come through many a close shave as they investigate "The Case of the Slashing Razor").

Jami-Leigh Bartschi's musical "My Dear Watson" is due at the Edge Theater in Chicago, Ill. Feb. 5-23 <www.cmtf.org>.

Nick Scovell's "Sherlock Holmes: The Hound of the Baskervilles" is due at Ferneham Hall in Fareham, Hants., Feb. 20-24 <www.fernehamhall.co.uk>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Dying to Say I Do" is a new play scheduled at the Diamond Theatre in Ligonier, Pa., Mar. 1-3 <www.diamondtheatre.com>.

Jeffrey Hatcher's "Holmes and Watson" will be performed at the Commonweal Theatre in Lanesboro, Minn., Apr. 5-July 6 <www.commonwealththeatre.org>.

Rick Robinson's "Sherlock Holmes and the Sign of the Four" is scheduled at the Oregon Cabaret Theater in Ashland, Ore., Apr. 11-May 26; web-site is at <www.theoregoncabaret.com>.

K. C. Brown's "Sherlock's Veiled Secret" will be performed at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre in Rockville, Md., May 3-12 <www.rlt-online.org>.

Margaret Raether's new play "Sherlock Holmes & the Precarious Position" is scheduled at the Cheek Theater at Rockford University in Rockford, Ill., on May 9-26 <www.artistsensemble.org>. "Whistling in the Dark" (her dramatization of "The Speckled Band"), performed in 2017, was broadcast by Northern Public Radio on July 15, 2017; podcast at <www.tinyurl.com/yctj3aou>.

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" is due at the Warner Theatre in Torrington, Conn., Mar. 23-31 <www.warnertheatre.org>. Also at the Ashland University Studio Theatre in Ashland, Ohio, Apr. 5-7; web-site at <www.ashland.edu>. And at the Firehouse Theater in Alliance, Ohio, May 10-19 <www.carnationcityplayers.com>.

Michael Mitnick's new play "Mysterious Circumstances" will premiere at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles, July 11-14 <www.geffenplayhouse.org> (the play is inspired by David Grann's article in the New Yorker about the death of Richard Lancelyn Green).

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