

Jean Upton reports in the District Messenger that congratulations are in order for Jerome Coopersmith: on Nov. 12, aged 94, he became a Chevalier in the National Order of the French Legion of Honor, in recognition of his service to France in WW2 (Sherlock Holmes received the same honor for his tracking and arrest of Huret, the Boulevard assassin). Coopersmith wrote the book for the musical "Baker Street" (1964), and you can read about the ceremony, and his military career, in a story in the Long Island Herald on Nov. 21 <www.tinyurl.com/scar5v5>.

The District Messenger, launched in 1982 as the "grapevine service" of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London, is an excellent monthly round-up of goings on in the Sherlockian and Doylean world in Britain and elsewhere; all back issues are archived at <www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/newsletter>, and it's available by e-mail <district.messenger@yahoo.com>.

The "Sherlock Holmes tent joke" (Oct 19 #5) keeps turning up in new forms, including Legos <www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/742717>, noted by Jennie Paton.

Edward S. Smith Jr.'s *The Floor Plans of Baker Street*, first published in 1996, offers a survey of what was where at 221 Baker Street, on all of the floors, with plans and citations; a second printing of the 38-page booklet now is available at Amazon (\$15.00).

The new movie "Knives Out" is a delightful blend of mystery and comedy and excellent acting, and it has some imaginative Canonical allusions.

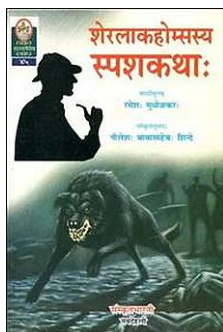
Proceedings of the Pondicherry Lodge is the semi-annual electronic newsletter edited by Jayantika Ganguly for the Sherlock Holmes Society of India <www.sherlockholmessocietyofindia.com>, now in its seventh year; the current issue (with 120 colorful pages) offers Sherlockian news from India, and a nice mix of scholarship and pastiche. All issues of the Proceedings can be found at the society's web-site.

Further to last month's report that Yahoo is shutting down Yahoo Groups, Jim Hawkins notes that WelcomeHolmes ("a discussion group for fans of Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes"), formerly at Yahoo, now is hosted at <www.groups.io/g/welcomeholmes>.

"Mostly Lost" is an annual conference at the Library of Congress' National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Va. (William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" was screened there in 2015), and one of the features of the conference is screenings of unidentified films, in hopes that someone can help. Take a look at what the Nitrate Film Interest Group has posted on-line <www.flickr.com/photos/nfig/albums>. Nothing seems Sherlockian, but there's always possibility that something of interest will turn up.

Jennie Paton found a jar of "It's Sedimentary, My Dear Cookie!" mix in an aisle at Trader Joe's; you may be able to find it at a local store, or buy it on-line <www.traderjoes.com/FearlessFlyer/Article/4578>. It was named by Jeannette Powers in a contest Trader Joe's ran in 2016 (Jul 16 #6).

Dec 19 #2 Gahan Wilson died on Nov. 21. Neil Gaiman once described him as "having a cockeyed, dangerously weird way of looking at the world," and Wilson told a reporter that "life is a grotesque thing, inexplicable, odd." As a cartoonist Wilson was a master of the macabre, and a frequent contributor to the *New Yorker*, the *National Lampoon*, and *Playboy*. His *Playboy* cartoons often were Sherlockian, beginning with a delightful four-page spread in the Dec. 1959 issue and continuing over the years. He also was the Distinguished Speaker at the Baker Street Irregulars' lecture in 2005.



Don Hobbs continues to update "The Galactic Sherlock Holmes": he has found a translation into Sanskrit, bringing his count to 109 foreign languages (and 9 versions of English in non-Roman alphabets such as Braille and Pittman Shorthand). He shows covers in color and with bibliographic details for more than 8,200 entries; a thumb drive costs \$15.00 (postpaid) to the U.S. or \$20.00 (elsewhere) from Don (2100 Elm Creek Lane, Flower Mound, TX 75028).

Joe Posnanski's *The Life and Afterlife of Harry Houdini* (New York: Avid Reader Press, 2019; 316 pp., \$28.00) is a delightful account of the author's pursuit of Houdini; aided by a legion of Houdini's fans (and some detractors), Posnanski offers a splendid exploration of why Houdini became (and still remains) a legend. Conan Doyle is mentioned in passing, but he wasn't really part of the story that Posnanski has told so well.

The podcast "Doings of Doyle" <www.doingsofdoyle.com> (launched last month by Mark Jones and Paul Chapman) now includes discussion of Conan Doyle's short story "The Winning Shot" (1883) and a report on last month's "Conan Doyle in London" conference. Planning is now underway for a "Conan Doyle in Edinburgh" conference <www.edinburgh-conan-doyle.org/events> at Napier University on June 25-27, 2020; Owen Dudley Edwards and Nicholas Daly will be the keynote speakers.

The Daily Sherlock Holmes, edited by Levi Stahl and Stacey Shintani (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019; 195 pp., \$14.00) offers "a year of quotes from the case-book of the world's greatest detective" that provide an excellent demonstration of how fascinating the language of the Canon is. And there are some amusing surprises in store for readers.

The Christmas Card Crime and Other Stories, edited by Martin Edwards (Naperville, Poisoned Pen Press, 2018; 224 pp., \$14.99) is part of the long-running series of "British Library Crime Classics"; none of the stories in this volume are Sherlockian or Doylean, but it includes a delightful story ("The Motive") by Ronald Knox, who in addition to being a fine author is credited with creating the "Grand Game" that Sherlockians still play.

Colonel Sebastian Moran's Secret Gun Club will hold their quadrennial hunt for the mongoose named Moriarty on Feb. 29; the gala will feature the mongoose chase, bison burgers, cash bar, awards, and surprises, and more information is available from Donald Izban (1012 Rene Court, Park Ridge, IL 60068). The club has been meeting on Leap Day every Leap Year since 1996.

Dec 19 #3 René Auberjonois died on Dec. 8. He began his acting career on stage in 1962, appeared in his first film in 1964, went on to play Father John Mulcahy in "M.A.S.H." in 1970 and many other significant roles in films and on television. He played Sherlock Holmes in "The 1977 Milliken Breakfast Show" (a ten-act "industrial musical" performed at the Waldorf Astoria in New York) and read Mark Frost's pastiche *The List of Seven* for a Dove audiobook in 1993.

Profiles in History's "Hollywood: A Collector's Ransom" auction this month included a "vintage original doll of William Gillette in his role as Sherlock Holmes, presented to Gillette by his costumer on the opening night of the play" in 1899, estimated at \$400-\$600; it sold for \$4,000. Previously owned by Dan Posnansky, it went for \$2,000 when his collection was sold in 2017.



Further to last month's item about the Christmas lights that have been installed in Baker Street in London (featuring illuminated geese that will remind passersby of "The Blue Caruncle"), the lights were designed by the Michael Grubb Studio, and are imaginative indeed.

The National Science and Media Museum, in Bradford, Yorks., now owns all three of the cameras that were used to photograph the Cottingley fairies, according to a report in the Yorkshire Post (Dec. 16) <www.tinyurl.com/todj7n3>. The article includes an image of all three cameras, which appear thoroughly antique in modern times when everyone seems to have a smartphone; the museum also owns original prints of the photographs, and watercolor sketches of fairies drawn by Elsie Wright, one of the young woman who took the photographs that convinced Conan Doyle that the fairies were real.

For those who were watching television in the 1960s (and remember "Beany and Cecil"), Greg Darak kindly reports an interview with Bob Clampett, the creator of the series, in *Funny World* (summer 1970); Clampett said that he was inspired by the prehistoric monsters in a silent movie when he created the dinosaur Cecil, and that Captain Huffenpuff, in beard and pith helmet, echoed a character in the film, which of course would have been "The Lost World" (1925). The series is available at YouTube, and "Beany Meets the Monstrous Monster" <www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ge5f2HSeFCc> is of particular interest: watch for Cecil as a detective, wearing a deerstalker.

Greg also has posed an intriguing challenge: where in the Canon is Sherlock Holmes likened to Cleopatra?

Garrison Keillor's "The Writer's Almanac" still is available on the Internet, and Bill Anselm noted a mention of Conan Doyle on Dec. 18, the date the Piltdown Man was presented to the Geological Society of London in 1912 <www.tinyurl.com/sh6ux9s>; the entry reports that "many scholars point the finger at Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as the perpetrator," but includes a link to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on the Piltdown Man that offers a more careful and less sensational discussion of the hoax.

Dec 19 #4 Sky News noted on Dec. 18 <www.tinyurl.com/vd8na8q> the end of an era of British publishing: Pearson has decided to sell its remaining stake in Penguin Random House to Bertelsmann. Now none of the "big five" of English-language book publishing remain in British ownership (Macmillan is owned by another German publisher Holtzbrinck, John Murray (for many years the publisher of Conan Doyle's books) is now owned by the French company Hachette, HarperCollins is owned by News Corp in the U.S., and Simon & Schuster (once owned by Pearson) is owned by ViacomCBS.

Where in the Canon is Sherlock Holmes likened to Cleopatra? In "The Empty House" it's Holmes himself who says, "I trust that age does not wither nor custom stale my infinite variety," echoing the description of Cleopatra in Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra".

Netflix has announced the lead actors in its new television series called "The Irregulars": Harry Lloyd-Hughes (Sherlock Holmes) and Royce Pierreson (Doctor Watson); Tom Bidwell, who is writing the series, has said "what if Sherlock Holmes was a drug addict and a delinquent and the kids solve the whole case whilst he takes credit?"



And now for a mystery: the image shows Sophie Aldred as Ace, who was the companion to the Seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy) in the "Doctor Who" series from 1987 to 1989. Patrick J. DeCanio, who's both a Sherlockian and a Whovian wonders, about one of the patches that Ace is wearing on her jacket. Andrew Cartmel, the script editor of the series at the time, has said that it is related to the Baker Street Irregulars, and Charles Prepolec hopes that a reader of this newsletter might know more about the patch, which (as might be expected) has been reproduced is available for Whovians (and others) at Etsy for only \$9.00 <www.tinyurl.com/sglbgbf>.

Too late for this year, but in plenty of time for 2020: Jim Suszynski reports two colorful Sherlockian Christmas cards offered by Allport Editions; there's a third card that's Sherlockian only if inspected closely. Go to <www.allport.com> and search for [sherlock].



Van Ryder Games is running a Kickstarter campaign for *Sherlock Holmes: Baker Street Irregulars*, which is described by the company as "a cooperative graphic novel adventures game" <www.tinyurl.com/uk94yf7>; there appear to be many Sherlockian games available; is anyone keeping track of them? Or maintaining a web-site that describes and discusses them?

Do you have quick nunchi? According to Eunyu Hong, author of *The Power of Nunchi: The Korean Secret to Happiness and Success*, noted by Yahoo! Lifestyle on Dec. 17 <www.tinyurl.com/txhsv4b>, picking up signals from your environment can make you a "nunchi ninja" like Steve Jobs, Tyrion Lannister, Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, and Sherlock Holmes.

Dec 19 #5 The Red-Headed League Public House in Lebanon (Pennsylvania) (Oct 19 #5) is now open for business on the third floor of the Lebanon Farmers Market, the Lebanon Daily News reported on Dec. 13. The name of the restaurant pays tribute to the Sherlock Holmes story that was (according to owner Michael Kapp) inspired by a notorious murder committed by the Blue-Eyed Six in Lebanon in 1878 <www.tinyurl.com/trk74m9>.

The first permanent granite statue honoring Sherlock Holmes erected in the Americas has now been unveiled in Chester, Ill., according to Michael W. McClure <www.baskervilleproductions.com/statue>; Mike was interviewed earlier this year by Scott Monty and Burt Wolder on the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog <www.tinyurl.com/tu8l4py> discussing "Sherlock, Popeye, and More" (and yes, Popeye has a connection to Chester).

Ashley Polasek has reported on plans for The Conan Doyle Review, devoted to peer-reviewed scholarship on Conan Doyle's life and work. The journal will begin accepting submissions in the summer of 2020, and the first volume will be published in the spring of 2021. A special limited-run preview issue will be on sale in Covent Garden West during the birthday festivities in New York. Scott Monty reported on the project at his "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog <www.tinyurl.com/uzk3qq>, and more information is available from Ashley (the editor-in-chief) at <editor@acdreview.org>.

Claudine Auger died on Dec. 18. She began her long career as an actor in France in 1958, went on to star as Domino in the James Bond film "Thunderball" in 1965, and played Isadora Klein in Granada's "The Three Gables" in 1994.

An interesting letter will be at auction on Jan. 22 at Forum Auctions in London, estimated at £1,000-£1,500 <www.tinyurl.com/sew96fe>: P. G. Wodehouse wrote to Miss Terry Smith in 1933 that "I racked my brain for years for something that would make a series like the Sherlock Holmes stories, and could never get one," adding that he "suddenly found that I had written about a dozen stories round Jeeves and that there seemed to be no reason why the thing shouldn't go on forever."

There's an on-going campaign to restore the Royal Court Theatre in Wigan (near Manchester) <www.royalcourttheatre.org.uk>. The 3,000-seat theater was open in 1886, and in 1903 Charlie Chaplin performed there as a teenager as Billy; that would have been with Charles Frohman's North Company on tour with William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" (with H. A. Saintsbury as Holmes and Fred Inwood as Watson).

When in Bialystok (in Poland): you can pay a visit to the Sherlock Holmes Pub <www.facebook.com/sherlock.bialystok>.

There seems to be an unlimited supply of Sherlockian action figures, and Jennie Paton has reported a new one, showing Benedict Cumberbatch as Sherlock Holmes, made by Pekkasland and available from AliEspress for \$13.64 <www.tinyurl.com/vkjg5gb>. Jennie also has noted a new set of plush soft toys of six characters (including Sherlock and Watson) from the "Sherlock Gnomes" film (£3.98) from Wisorkgoods <www.tinyurl.com/wsdefc4>

Dec 19 #6 Karl E. Meyer ("Fritz von Waldbaum") died on Dec. 22. He had a distinguished career in journalism, as a foreign correspondent and editorial writer for the Washington Post, as an editor and television critic for the Saturday Review, and then as an editor for the N.Y. Times and the Foreign Policy Review. He wrote stories about the Sherlockian birthday festivities for the N.Y. Times in 1986 and 2000, and went on to a distinguished career as an author, making sure that his *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia* (1999) included Dr. John H. Watson in the index. He received his Investiture from the Baker Street Irregulars in 1977.

The conversion of Great Scotland Yard into a hotel (Jun 19 #6) is now complete, and the Great Scotland Yard Hotel is open for business. The Evening Standard had a nicely illustrated article about the new hotel on Dec. 9 <www.tinyurl.com/vbkt2yg>.

Jennie Paton reports a new Sherlockian teddy bear that is made by Hermann Spielwaren in Germany and is available from various Internet sellers; it's more imaginative than others of its ilk in that there appears to be tobacco in the pipe, which one supposes could be rigged so that there's a bit of smoke.



The January-February issue of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine continues a long annual tradition of celebrating Sherlock Holmes' birthday, with Sherlockian artwork by Erika Steiskal on the cover, a new and amusing pastiche by Terence Faherty, an Ellery Queen pastiche by Josh Pachter with a Sherlockian pun as a title, a Sherlockian cartoon by Scott Masear, and reviews by Steve Steinbock of new Sherlockian books.

The Holmes Hotel London (formerly the Sherlock Holmes Hotel) has been reviewed on-line by Business Traveller <www.tinyurl.com/wgwhzl6>; the hotel has been refurbished and brought up to date, still with nicely Sherlockian décor.

Correcting a typo (Nov 19 #1): registration is now open for the "Holmes in the Heartland" conference in St. Louis on July 24-26; more information is available at <www.tinyurl.com/yd5elmpj>.

Thanks to author Hank Philippi Ryan (who has written some fine, although non-Sherlockian) mysteries, here's an iPhone secret: if you hold down the space bar, it acts like a mouse, and you can move to wherever you want to be in the message you've typed.

Roger Johnson has discovered a nice treat for those who want something to drink while reading this newsletter: an Australian wine called Skuttlebutt sold by Stella Bella Wines <www.stellabella.com.au>. There's a 2017 Cabernet and a 2019 Sauvignon Blanc Semillon advertised at the company's website, and it appears that you don't need to go to Australia to buy some: Little Peacock Importers <www.little-peacock.com> can tell you where it's sold in the U.S.

Jennie Paton has discovered a new audio production of "The Blue Carbuncle" from Redfield Arts Studio <www.redfieldartsaudio.com>, starring Mark Redfield as Sherlock Holmes, J. R. Lyston as Dr. Watson, and Carol Mason as Mrs. Hudson; it's available at YouTube <www.tinyurl.com/sxcxw6x>.

Dec 19 #7 The three latest volumes of *The MX Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories: Whatever Remains*, edited by David Marcum, continue his excellent series of anthologies, this time presenting a wealth of traditional pastiches, with Holmes facing "ghosts and mythological creatures, impossible circumstances, and curses, possessions, and prophecies," in the stories, poetry, and radio scripts (London: MX Publishing, 2019; 383/419/380 pp., \$24.95 each); MX Publishing's books are available at a discount at <www.sherlockholmesbooks.com>.

Also: Sheldon Goldfarb's *Sherlockian Musings* (2019, 299 pp., \$16.95), is an interesting collection of the "musings" he prepared for meetings of the Stormy Petrels of British Columbia, by way of suggesting ideas for discussion of the Canon; it is nicely done, and will be helpful to other Sherlockian societies. The author offers samples of some of the essays at his web-site <www.sheldongoldfarb.wordpress.com>.

And: Richard T. Ryan's *The Merchant of Menace* (2019; 232 pp., \$16.95) is his fourth pastiche, pitting Holmes against a master criminal who specializes in stealing precious objects, eventually meeting his match with the Great Detective at Blenheim Palace. Kim Krisco's *Irregular Lives: The Untold Story of Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars* (2016; 356 pp., \$18.95) is set in 1919, when Holmes and Watson are invited to a mysterious exhibition of photographs that reconnect them with the young boys who helped them all those years ago, and they're all engaged in solving in a new mystery. Marcia Wilson's *The Adventure of the Flying Blue Pigeon* (2016; 274 pp., \$14.95), the first book in her "Test of the Professionals" series, is set in 1883 and offers an intriguing look at the world of Sherlock Holmes as seen by the Scotland Yarders (who include Lestrade, Gregson, and Bradstreet). And David Marcum's *Sherlock Holmes: Tangled Skeins* (2015; 241 pp., \$14.95) offers five pastiches set in London and in Sussex.

Karen Murdock has noted an imaginative coffee mug that's marked "Property of Diogenes Club/Comfortable Chairs/Latest Periodicals" and is available at Amazon UK <www.tinyurl.com/w3dfrmu> (£16.99).

The Lost World is in the news again, mentioned often in articles about a successful attempt to climb the 2,000-foot high prow of Guyana's Mount Roraima, credited by many as having inspired Conan Doyle when he wrote the story. Here's what the Daily Mail had to say: <www.tinyurl.com/r3k6rk7>.

The Sherlock Holmes Complete Puzzle Collection, with text and puzzles by Tim Dedopulus (London: Carlton Books, 2017; 400 pp., \$25.37), offers "over 200 devilishly difficult mysteries, inspired by the world's greatest detective." It's a reprint combining his *The Sherlock Holmes Puzzle Collection* (Feb 15 #1) and *The Sherlock Holmes Puzzle Collection: The Lost Cases* (Aug 19 #1), nicely bound and with attractive artwork.

The Cambridge Companion to Sherlock Holmes, edited by Janice M. Allan and Christopher Pittard (Cambridge University Press, 2019; 261 pp., \$19.99), is an anthology of excellent academic and readable essays that deal with a wide variety of aspects of the Canon, ending with Roberta Pearson's up-to-date and interesting discussion of "Sherlockian Fandom".

Dec 19 #8 At auction at Ahlers & Ogletree in Atlanta on Jan. 11: a copy of the Al Hirschfeld limited-edition colored lithograph "The Game's Afoot" (showing Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as Holmes and Watson), estimated at \$800-\$1,200 <www.tinyurl.com/uwsjvw2>. Note: It's also still available from Margo Feiden Galleries <www.alhirschfeld.com> \$1,800.

Steven Dietz's "Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure" is scheduled at the 2nd Stage Theatre in Fresno, Calif., Jan. 3-Feb. 23 <www.gcplayers.com>.

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville" will be performed at the New Bern Civic Theatre in New Bern, N.C., Jan. 10-19 <www.newberncivictheatre.org>. Also at the Von Braun Center Playhouse in Huntsville, Ala., Jan. 17-25; web-site's at <www.theatrehsv.org>. Also at the Topeka Civic Theatre in Topeka, Kan., Jan. 17-Feb. 9 <www.topekacivictheatre.com>; and at the Stageworks Theatre in Houston, Texas, Jan. 17-Feb. 9 <www.stageworkshouston.org>.

Bart Lovins' "The Novel Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Sign of Four" will be performed at the Hardin County Schools Performing Arts Center in Elizabethtown, Ky., Jan. 16-26, 2020 <www.thepac.net>.

Jeffrey Hatcher's "Holmes and Watson" is scheduled at the Burlington County Footlighters Theater in Cinnaminson, N.J., Jan 17-Feb. 1; web-site's at <www.bcfootlighters.com>.

Christopher M. Walsh's "Miss Holmes" will be performed at the Waterville Opera House in Waterville, Maine, Jan. 24-Feb. 2 <www.operahouse.org>.

Craig Wichman's radio-theater dramatization of "The Blue Carbuncle" will be performed at the First Presbyterian Church in Cape May, N.J., Mar. 13-14 and Oct. 30-Nov. 7 <www.eastlynnetheater.org>.

"Watson: The Last Great Tale of the Legendary Sherlock Holmes" (by Jamie Robledo) will be performed at the Sheldon Vexter Theater in San Antonio, Texas, May 7-31 <www.vexter.org>.

Christopher M. Walsh's "Miss Holmes Returns" is due at the Greater Boston Stage Company in Stoneham, Mass., June 4-28 <www.greaterbostonstage.org>.

Craig Sodaro's "The Secret Case of Sherlock Holmes" will be performed at the Waukesha Civic Theatre in Waukesha, Wis., June 4-21; their web-site's at <www.waukeshacivictheatre.org>.

R. Hamilton Wright's "Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse" will be performed at the Shaw Festival Theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., June 21-Oct 18 <www.shawfest.com>.

"Sherlock and Cinders" (a musical written by Tom Kirkham and Matthew Crossley) will be performed at the Carver Theatre in Stockport, Cheshire, July 3-4 <www.carvertheatre.co.uk>.

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