

Sherlockians (and Holmesians) gathered in New York to celebrate the Great Detective's 165th birthday during the long weekend from Jan. 9 to 13; the (very) long weekend was filled with events, both formal and informal, and detailed reports on most of them will be available soon at the web-site of The Baker Street Irregulars <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com>. But in the meantime, here are few brief paragraphs to tide you over:

The BSI's Distinguished Speaker on Thursday evening was Ken Ludwig, award-winning author of three Sherlockian (and many more non-Sherlockian) plays; he reported that he has just completed work on his newest play "Moriarty" (in the five-actor format of "Baskerville") and hopes it will be produced in the near future.

The Irregulars and their guests gathered for the BSI annual dinner at the Yale Club, where Evelyn Herzog proposed the traditional preprandial first toast to Nelda Richards as *The Woman*. This was followed by the presentation of a Festschrift to a thoroughly-surprised member of the BSI who was celebrating the 60th anniversary of his Investiture; immodestly, the editor of this newsletter says "let me recommend this book," which is available (80 pp., \$19.95) from the BSI at <www.tinyurl.com/yb5z9frc>.

The annual dinner's agenda included the usual toasts, rituals, and papers, and Mike Whelan (the "Wiggins" of the BSI) presented Birthday Honours (Irregular Shillings and Investitures) to Alexander Katz ("Sarasate"), John Knud-Hansen ("This Lascar Scoundrel"), Brigitte Latella ("Holmes's Alpenstock"), Michele Lopez ("Attenta, Pericolo"), Ira B. Matetsky ("The Final Problem"), Terry McCammon ("Young Stamford"), Mike McSwiggin ("A Seven Percent Solution"), Greg D. Ruby ("Bulldog Pin with Ruby Eyes"), and Monica Schmidt ("Julia Stoner").

Mike Whelan then announced that Mike Kean had been appointed to the office of "Commissionaire" to serve one year, and the end of which he will become the BSI's new "Wiggins". Mike Kean will be only the sixth person to lead the BSI since it was founded by Christopher Morley in 1934.

The Baker Street Irregulars also have published a second title in the Professions Series that was launched with *Nerve and Knowledge* in 2015. The new book is *Canon Law: Lawyers, Law, and the Sherlockian Canon*, edited by William A. Walsh and Donny Zaldin (2018; 206 pp., \$39.95), and it offers a wide-ranging look at many of the legal (and illegal) aspects of the world of Sherlock Holmes, including a transcript of what might have happened if he were to have been tried for some of his infringements of the law.

The latest title in the BSI's Manuscript Series is *Deadly Harpoon*, edited by Glen Miranker (2018; 168 pp., \$39.95), which offers a facsimile of the manuscript of "Black Peter", an annotated transcript, and interesting commentary on the manuscript, the story, and the world in which the Great Detective lived when he was involved in the case. It is of course thoroughly appropriate that the volume has been edited by the fortunate owner of the manuscript. More information about both books, including the tables of contents, can be found at <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com>.

Jan 19 #2 It should be noted that there is much more to see at the BSI's web-site <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com>, such as information about The Baker Street Journal, which now appears five times a year (there are four quarterly issues and a Christmas Annual that's available only to subscribers). The 2018 Christmas Annual reported on the colorful history of the Sherlock Holmes Exhibitions in London in 1951 and then in New York in 1952, and the 2019 Christmas Annual will be a tribute to the late William S. Baring-Gould.

And, for those who want to plan ahead, the Sherlock Holmes Society of London will hold its annual dinner on Jan. 11, 2020, in London, and the BSI will hold their annual dinner on Jan. 17, 2020, in New York.

With regard to *Canon Law*, those who recall that William Shakespeare wrote (in *Henry VI*), "the first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers," should also remember that those words were spoken by Dick the Butcher, who was in rebellion against the king, and that the rebels then managed only to kill a county clerk.

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

Gasogene Books has published *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle in the Newspapers, Volume 4, January-June 1894*, edited and annotated by Mattias Bostrom, Mark Alberstat, Leah Guinn, and Matt Laffey (2019; 202 pp., \$34.95); there are more editors now, quite understandable considering the wealth of material about Holmes and Conan Doyle in the ever-expanding data-bases of digitized newspapers and magazines <www.gasogenebooks.com>.

Those who have bought Nicholas Utechin's splendid *The Complete Paget Portfolio* (Nov 18 #3), still available from Gasogene and still highly recommended, will be interested in a recent message from Nick: some of his text did not make it into the final version of the book, and he will be happy to send the text by e-mail so that you can print it out and insert it into your copy; you can reach Nick at <highfieldfarmhouse@gmail.com>.

More news from the birthday festivities: Nicholas Meyer announced the discovery of another missing manuscript: *The Adventure of the Peculiar Protocols*, which will be published later this year (the 45th anniversary of the publication of his *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*).

The Crew of the Barque Lone Star, in Dallas, has published a sequel to its *A Grimm Sherlock Holmes* (Dec 17 #2). *A Grimmer Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Steve Mason, is the society's second anthology of fairy-tale pastiches; it is a 179-page e-book, offering pastiches and the fairy tales on which they are based, nicely available without charge at <www.tinyurl.com/y9oqdroc>.

"Literary Figures Who Can't Commit" in the N.Y. Times Book Review on Jan. 20 offered graphic artist Ali Fitzgerald's illustrations of Captain Ahab, Edward Rochester, Mary Poppins, the White Rabbit, and Sherlock Holmes; you can see them all at <www.tinyurl.com/y97b8l9p>.

Jan 19 #3 Plan ahead: the latest issue of The Bowling Green (the newsletter of The Grillparzer Club of the Hoboken Free State) announces an excursion to Oxford in May 2021, commemorating Christopher Morley's first year as a Rhodes Scholar at the University. Details will be available (eventually) from Terry Hunt <18goldini95@gmail.com>.

The UCLA Film and Television Archive has announced a collaborative worldwide search for missing or deteriorating Sherlockian films that will lead to the films' restoration, and the project is being coordinated by Barbara Roisman Cooper, who is a member of The Baker Street Irregulars as well as the Archive's board; if you would like further information or to join the volunteer committee that's working on the project, you can contact Barbara at <penin1@aol.com>. UCLA has the second-largest moving-image archive in the United States (after the Library of Congress), and has worked on Sherlockian films in the past: restoring from nitrate originals and preserving the classic Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce films, with funding from UCLA, Warner Bros., and Hugh Hefner.

Barbara S. Koelle died on Nov. 28. She married Jack Koelle in 1948, and like her husband was an avid book collector, enthusiastic about children's books and especially the world of the Wizard of Oz. Barbara was a member of the board of directors of the International Wizard of Oz Club and she served as its president and as editor of its magazine *The Baum Bugle*. She was honored by The Baker Street Irregulars as *The Woman* in 1982.

Plan ahead: the Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium, which is scheduled for Oct. 12-13 in Portland, Ore., promises "a weekend of scholarship and camaraderie" in the image of the Scintillation of Scions, 221B Con, and other Sherlockian conferences. Planning is underway, registration is open, and there's more information at their web-site at <www.leftcoastsherlock.com>.

The Golden Raspberry Awards (for failure in cinematic achievement), also known as the Razzies, were created in 1981, and traditionally are awarded the day before the Oscars. This year's nominations have been announced, and "Holmes & Watson" has been nominated in six of the nine categories: worst picture; worst actor (Will Ferrell); worst supporting actor (John C. Reilly); worst screen combo (Ferrell and Reilly); worst remake, rip-off, or sequel; and worst director (Etan Cohen). There's plenty of competition for each award, and the winners will be announced on Feb. 23.

For those who came in late, "Holmes & Watson" has won negative (sometimes scathing) reviews from critics, audiences, and Sherlockians, and (so far), according to the Box Office Mojo web-site, has grossed less than its estimated production budget of \$42 million. It has been reported that Netflix turned down the film, and that it likely will be available on DVD in March for those who want to find fault with it, or to enjoy watching Hugh Laurie overact as Mycroft.

The National (based in the United Arab Emirates) ran an article on Jan. 8 <www.tinyurl.com/yaop68m2> about "How Do Film Studios React When They Know They've Made a Dud?" (there have been many other films that foundered; it is interesting that some major newspapers, including the Washington Post, never bothered to review the film).

Jan 19 #4 Netflix has announced plans for a new live-action Sherlockian Television series called "The Irregulars" (to be produced by the Canadian company Muse Entertainment); Tom Bidwell, who will be 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?" Bidwell's adaptation of "Watership Down" aired on BBC One last month, and he talked about that (and about "The Irregulars") in a BBC Writersroom interview on Dec. 18 <www.tinyurl.com/ydxgpgqwh>. Muse produced four Sherlockian television films that starred Matt Frewer as Holmes: "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (2000), "The Sign of Four" (2001), "Royal Scandal" (2001), and "The Case of the Whitechapel Vampire" (2002).

The television series will be based on four graphic novels written by Tony Lee and illustrated by Dan Boulton that were published by Franklin Watts in 2011; their graphic novels already have been dramatized by Eric Coble as a two-act play "Sherlock Holmes: The Baker Street Irregulars" that premiered in Milwaukee, Wis., in 2014; it has had regional productions elsewhere and the script is available from Dramatic Publishing.

David L. Hammer ("Major-General Stoner") died on Dec. 27. He had a long career as a lawyer, and was launched as a Sherlockian author in 1983 with the publication of his splendid *The Game Is Afoot: A Travel Guide to the England of Sherlock Holmes*, the first of a long series of books about his world-wide travels in the footsteps of Holmes. He was the founder of the Gasogene Press, and presided over an interesting Sherlockian workshop in Dubuque. Scott Monty has a warm tribute to David at "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" <www.tinyurl.com/ya92lg7w>, with a link to Gael Stahl's interview with Dave for the Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem. He received his Investiture from The Baker Street Irregulars in 1986.

One of the interesting things about modern technology is that the Internet makes it possible to find productions of Sherlockian plays just about anywhere. Howard Ostrom notes Ken Ludwig's "Sherlock Holmes dhe Langoi i Baskervillëve" at the Metropol Theater in Tirana, Albania, Dec. 13, 2018-Feb. 3, 2019 <www.tinyurl.com/y92nmucv>.

The Norwegian Explorers' Christmas Annual for 2018 has "War and Peace" as its theme, with contributions that include pastiches, essay, and artwork, all related to appropriate aspects of the Canon; the 60-page booklet, edited by Ray Riethmeier and Phillip Bergem, can be ordered from Phillip (at 3829 172nd Avenue NW, Andover, MN 55304), and the cost is \$10.00 postpaid (checks payable to the Norwegian Explorers, please). Anyone outside the U.S. should contact Phillip <pgberman@gmail.com> to ask about the postpaid cost.

Peter Calamai ("The Leeds Mercury") died on Jan. 22. A distinguished Canadian journalist, Peter was awarded membership in the Order of Canada in 2014, honoring his achievements as a science journalist and his contributions to the cause of literacy. He drew upon his expertise in journalism for many of his contributions to Canonical scholarship, and received his Investiture from The Baker Street Irregulars in 2005, and was the winner of the BSI's Morley-Montgomery Award for the best article published in The Baker Street Journal in 2012.

Jan 19 #5 The Mystery Writers of America have announced the nominees for this year's Edgar awards, and they include Bradley Harper's *A Knife in the Fog* (for best first novel by an American author) and Leslie S. Klinger's *Classic American Crime Fiction of the 1920s* (for best critical/biographical). The winners will be announced at the MWA Gala Banquet in New York on Apr. 25.

The Deutsche Sherlock-Holmes-Gesellschaft and the Austrian town of Feldkirch will celebrate Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 160th birthday with an excursion to Feldkirch on May 23-26 (Conan Doyle studied at the Jesuit College of Stella Matutina from 1875 to 1876). More information on the event is available at www.dshc.de/dshg-jahresreise-2019, all in German (as the conference will be).

The Fourth Garrideb will hold its "Numismatic Friends of Sherlock Holmes Dinner" in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Mar. 29, during the American Numismatic Association's National Money Show; there's more information about the event at www.tinyurl.com/y9nhndby.

Russell Baker died on Jan. 21. He was a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who worked most of his career for the N.Y. Times, as a reporter and as a columnist. He also succeeded Alistair Cooke as host of "Masterpiece Theatre" on PBS, introducing programs from 1993 to 2004; none of the programs were Sherlockian, but he often found reason to mention (and praise) Holmes and Conan Doyle.

The British Royal Mint has announced that it will issue a 50p coin honoring Sherlock Holmes this year, and the coin already is available for purchase in an annual set that includes all of this year's coins, in various metals; details on the coin, the sets, and an illustration, will be found at the Fourth Garrideb web-site www.tinyurl.com/yc89akeo. Of course the Royal Mint hopes that collectors (and speculators) will pursue the expensive annual sets, but it will be worthwhile waiting: Greg has learned that individual coins will be available later this year at more modest prices. It is unlikely, however, that the coins will turn up in pocket change.

The Beacon Society offers annual Jan Stauber grants of up to \$600 to fund development of programs that introduce young people to Sherlock Holmes in the U.S. and Canada; the deadline for grant applications is May 1, and details are available at the society's web-site www.tinyurl.com/h7acxds.

Windsor Davies died on Jan. 17. Born in Wales, he began his acting career on stage in 1961 and went on to work in film and television and as a voice actor in commercials. He played Inspector Illingworth in a dramatization of Max Pemberton's "The Ripening Rubies" (1971), with Bernard Sutton as Robert Lang, in the ITV television series "The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes".

The Chicago Philharmonic has an interesting afternoon program coming up on Mar. 24, at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie: "Silent Sherlock" will offer Buster Keaton's "Sherlock Jr.," (1924), Koko the Clown's "Fadeaway" (1926), and Felix the Cat's "Sure-Locked Holmes" (1928) (the first and third films being Sherlockian), with live orchestral accompaniment www.chicagophilharmonic.org/silent-sherlock.

Jan 19 #6 Theatrics: Ken Ludwig's "The Game's Afoot, or Holmes for the Holidays" on at Cheney Hall in Manchester, Conn., through Feb. 17 <www.cheneyhall.org>. It also is due at the Granite Theatre in Westerly, R.I., Mar. 22-Apr. 7 <www.granitetheatre.com>.

Richard Lavin's "Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Impaled Whaler" will be performed at the Tudor House in Lake Arrowhead, Calif., Feb. 15-23 <www.tudorhouseentertainment.villas>.

David Stuart Davies' new play "Sherlock Holmes: The Final Reckoning" will debut at the Assembly Roxy in Edinburgh, Feb. 25-Mar. 2; there's more information at <www.tinyurl.com/y8dlfpb4>.

Mike Grogan's "Life After Sherlock" (billed as "a tale of blackmail, murder, suicide, deceit, and treasure, all in two acts") is touring in Britain with performances scheduled at the Alton Assembly Rooms in Alton on May 25, the Hanger Farm Arts Centre in Southampton on May 31, the Capitol Theatre in Horsham on June 7, and the Petersfield Festival Hall in Petersfield on June 15. Devil's Drum Productions seems to be the producer, but doesn't have a working web-site; a Google search will help. Mike Grogan can be seen at <<https://twitter.com/mikegroganmusic>>.

If you haven't heard already, postage prices have gone up again: a first-class letter now costs 55¢ (up from 50¢), so subscriptions to this newsletter will cost more, for those few remaining subscribers willing to pay for the privilege of opening envelopes rather reading the newsletter online (or printing it themselves). The second ounce of a first-class letter now costs 15¢ (down from 21¢), and delivery outside the U.S. does not cost more (yet).

Finally: if you have noticed slight differences between this month's issue and past issues, that's because this month's issue was created on my newer computer, a change required by the hospitalization of my older MS-DOS computer, and the need to find an exorcist, a resurrectionist, and a wizard to bring me firmly into the 21st century. If you did not notice any differences, that is because I was easily able to find someone who combines all three skills, and has been able to show me how to use Microsoft Word instead of Volkswriter 3, and to write my newsletter on my newer Windows 10 computer. The font is slightly different (TrueType's Courier New isn't quite the same as dot-matrix Courier), but I'm delighted that I still can pretend that I'm using a typewriter (as I did when I started writing paragraphs to John Bennett Shaw in the now-distant 1970s). Some day you might see things such as proportional spacing and dingbats, but the world (this one, at least) is not quite prepared for that.

A few things, including some very recent paragraphing, have vanished, but I expect to catch up sooner rather than later. My Wizard has told me that there's a way to run my older software on my newer computer, so it's possible (but not likely) that this slightly-more-modern look may vanish. If there's anything I've forgotten to remember, please let me know.

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