

A public service announcement: now that vaccines have become widely available, and more and more people are being vaccinated, it is possible that (at least) some people have not been fully advised on how important it can be to safeguard your vaccination records, because if they are lost it may not be possible to replace them. So: you should photograph or scan your card and store the image on your smart phone and other devices. You also should make copies of your card, for your wallet and for your files, and keep the original safe with your important papers, to tide you over until official vaccine passports are available for those who want to travel to other countries, or even within the United States. And do deliver a copy of the record to your primary care physician.

"Her letters to the flighty soldier are, without a doubt, among the great literary monuments that women of talent have, with relative frequency, erected to total good-for-nothings." That's from the chapter on "Julie de Lespinasse" (subtitled "The Amorous Mistress") in Javier Marías' *Written Lives* (New York: New Directions, 2007; 200 pp., \$14.95). There also are chapters on many other writers (including "Arthur Conan Doyle and Women"), in a book that Michael Dirda correctly called "an immensely enjoyable collection of vignettes."

The Chinese animated film "The Great Detective Sherlock Holmes: The Jail-Breaker" (2019) has been dubbed in English (and with sub-titles) and released on an 84-minute DVD as "Sherlock Holmes and the Great Escape" from Shout Factory (\$19.98); all of the characters are animals, and it's nicely done; you can see previews at YouTube.

The Adventure of the Oakshott Trunk, by C. Alfred Lewis, Sr. (Charleston: CreateSpace, 2010; 50 pp., \$6.95), is a revised second edition of a story about Holmes and Watson's success in rescuing a young client while thwarting an evil villain.

Les Enfants Terribles, a theatre company that was founded in 2001, created "The Game's Afoot" for Madame Tussaud's in London a few years ago, and now offers "The Case of the Hung Parliament" as an "immersive on-line experience" <www.sherlockimmersive.com> (described by one Sherlockian as "utterly delightful" but "not for purists").

Howard Ostrom discovered "Dave Gorman's Terms & Conditions Apply" channel on the Internet, with an episode on "Guessing Weird Acronyms" that you can watch at YouTube <www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqoNZnMs-fk>. Two of the acronyms are HOLMES, one them the Home Office Large Major Enquires System, and the other Hunting cOol Low Mass Extrasolar planets (which does seem to be a cheat).

"As a small kid in South Africa in the late 60s and 70s, I didn't see anything unusual about being called Sherlock Holmes. He wasn't a well-known character there at that time." That's from an interview in Metro UK (Apr. 1) <www.tinyurl.com/kwmb2vj5> with a present-day Sherlock Holmes (who was named after his father, whose mother had a sense of humor).

Apr 21 #2 *The Case of the Displaced Detective: The Arrival*, by Stephanie Osborn (Kingsport: Twilight Times, 2011; 326 pp., \$19.95), is the first in a science fiction/mystery series in which Holmes has survived his battle with Moriarty at the Reichenbach having been transported to an alternate universe thanks to Project Tesseract, a government project supervised by Skye Chadwick, who becomes both his protector and his assistant. The author's web-site is at <www.stephanie-osborn.com>.



Britain is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Royal Albert Hall in London, and there was a well-illustrated report on its history published by the BBC News on Mar. 29 <www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-56428543>. The Royal Mint also is celebrating the event with a £5 coin; details on the coin are at <www.tinyurl.com/53ns63sn>.

It should be noted that Conan Doyle appeared at least twice in the Royal Albert Hall, the first time in 1901, when he was one of the judges at the world's first body-building contest, orchestrated by the strong man Eugene Sandow, and the second time in 1929, when he spoke during an Armistice Day spiritualist assembly. He may (or may not) have appeared a third time in 1930, during a spiritual memorial service in which a clairvoyant tried to contact him before an audience of 10,000 people; his widow, Lady Jean Conan Doyle, said that the event was "cheering and encouraging."

Steve Doyle's video podcasts (for the Baker Street Irregulars) continue at YouTube; search for [fortnightly dispatch] to watch interviews with David Stuart Davies, Rebecca Romney, and Roger Johnson.

Many Sherlockians have seen and enjoyed the International Sherlock Holmes Exhibition, which will be at the Science Museum of Oklahoma, May 1-Sept. 6 <www.sciencemuseumok.org>. Created by the Exhibits Development Group, the exhibition has an impressive web-site <www.tinyurl.com/y9b7yq83> where the company promotes the exhibition to museums that might consider putting it on display. The exhibition is scheduled next at the Frost Science Center in Miami, Fla., May 14-Sept. 5, 2022 (the appearance at the Minnesota Historical Center in St. Paul, Minn., has been postponed).

Christopher Redmond's *A Sherlockian History of England*, a new 28-page monograph that traces the country's history from prehistoric times into the Victorian era as echoed in the Canon; it is nicely done, and conveniently available as a free PDF file from Chris at <redmond2@execulink.com>; ink-on-paper copies are available for US\$5.00 or CA\$6.00 (postpaid) via PayPal or Interac.

Sherlock Holmes y la Conspiración de Barcelona written by Sergio Colomino and illustrated in full color by Jordi Palomé (Barcelona: Norma Editorial, 2012; 152 pp., \$19.65) is an attractive example of graphic novels in other languages; it's set in 1893, during the Great Hiatus, with Holmes in dire peril in Barcelona. It's available from Amazon in Spanish and in Catalan, and the publisher's web-site is at <www.normaeditorial.com>. Also available from Amazon is their *Sherlock Holmes y el Legado de Moriarty* (2016), and Colomino's *Sherlock Holmes de Hayao Miyazaki* (2020), both in Spanish.

Apr 21 #3 Ridley Pearson's *Lock and Key: The Initiation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016; 419 pp., \$17.99) is the first volume in his trilogy about twelve-year-old Moria Moriarty. She's at school at Baskerville Academy, near Boston, where her older brother James is the roommate of Sherlock Holmes, and the series, written for young adults (age 8+) presents a well-told origin story for the boys who wind up arch enemies. The other two books in the series are *The Downward Spiral* (2017) and *The Final Step* (2018); the author has a web-site <www.ridleypearson.com>, where you can download a free prequel short story *The Gadwell Incident*.

John Christopher's *The London of Sherlock Holmes* (Stroud: Amberley, 2012; 96 pp., £11.99) offers a tour of Canonical locations, with an attractive variety of period photographs and illustrations; the publisher's web-site is at <www.amberley-books.com>.

Learn French with Sherlock Holmes and *Learn Spanish with Sherlock Holmes* (Dublin: Diglot, 2020) offer an intriguing approach to learning languages; each book has the text of "A Study in Scarlet" and "The Hound of the Baskervilles" in English, and page by page introduces more and more words in the foreign language, helping the reader understand context and meaning, without the need to focus on translation and grammar. Both of the books are available at Amazon (\$15.20 each), and you can use the "look inside" feature to see how the system works. Diglot's web-site at <www.diglot.ie> offers a look at all their languages and authors, and they're on Instagram @diglotsocial, for those who want to know what's new with the company.

Sandra de Helen's *The Hounding* (McCorkle Ink, 2013; 168 pp., \$14.57) features Shirley Combs (who would like to be the world's greatest detective) and Dr. Mary Watson in a murder mystery set in modern-day Portland. The sequel, *The Illustrious Client* (2013), has them investigating a series of murders, in the midst of which Mary finds romance (although not with Shirley). The author's web-site <www.sandradehelen.com> includes a video interview about the first book.

Olivia Rutigliano suggests that "Once you eliminate the least compelling Sherlock Holmes performances, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the best" in her article "The 100 Best, Worst, and Strangest Sherlock Holmes Portrayals of All-Time, Ranked" posted to the CrimeReads blog on Apr. 8 <www.crimereads.com/100-sherlock-holmes-ranked>, kindly reported by Les Klinger. One can agree or disagree with her choices, and comments, but it is interesting to consider how many (or few) people there are who actually have seen all 100 of the portrayals.

"Both in the books and on screen, Sherlock is shown to be fond of his tea, and so we infused vodka with Earl Grey tea. He's also found with a glass of wine, and we made a beetroot and wine reduction, making it look a little like blood for all the murder mysteries he's solved. Add to it a hint of rose for his unrequited hostility toward women, and a little fresh lime to balance it all. The very English gherkin pickles are added to it. We serve it with Sherlock's iconic magnifying glass." That's the recipe for "Sherlock in a Pickle" a cocktail reported (with an image) by Bill Seil in the Asian Age <www.tinyurl.com/39bfv9ch>.

Apr 21 #4 *Printer's Error*, by J. P. Romney and Rebecca Romney (New York: Harper, 2017; 353 pp., \$26.00), is subtitled "irreverent stories from book history," and it's a delightful excursion into the world of books and those who create them. It is not really Sherlockian (although Arthur Conan Doyle and Christopher Morley are quoted), but it is full of great stories, and Rebecca (who is "That Gap on the Second Shelf" in the Baker Street Irregulars) presides over Type Punch Matrix, with an on-line catalog <www.typepunchmatrix.com> that does not neglect the Canon in its offerings of interesting and rare books.

J. K. Van Dover's *The Detective and the Artist: Painters, Poets, and Writers in Crime Fiction, 1840s-1970s* (Jefferson, McFarland & Co., 2019; 188 pp., \$55.00) explores artists in the detective genre, as detectives, villains, and victims, from Poe's Dupin through the hard-boiled detectives, with (of course) detailed discussion of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Christopher Redmond wonders, "Can you name two literary works that never mention Sherlock Holmes but are coveted by Sherlockian collectors everywhere?" in his article in the spring issue of *Canadian Holmes* (published quarterly by the Bootmakers of Toronto). The literary works are "Food for Poser" and "The Four Leaved Shamrock" (two drawing-room plays that accompanied "A Study in Scarlet" in Beeton's Christmas Annual for 1887); Chris has some interesting commentary about the plays and their authors. *Canadian Holmes* costs \$30.00 a year (US or CA), and single issues cost \$12.00 <www.torontobootmakers.com>.

Nikki Stafford's *Investigating Sherlock: The Unofficial Guide* (Oct 15 #4) was an insightful companion to the first three seasons of the series, with discussions of its history, analysis, and commentary on each episode. She hasn't updated the book, but her blog <www.nikkistafford.blogspot.com> has her commentary on "The Abominable Bride" and many other television series.

The Washington Post ran a "March Madness" poll to determine the greatest fictional detective <www.tinyurl.com/9d29c9y3>, with 32 bracketed choices; the winner was Armand Gamache, with Sherlock Holmes in second place. The poll still is up and running, so you can still vote (and see how many of the detectives you actually recognize). It has been suggested that fans of Louise Penny's books carried out an organized campaign in favor of her detective.

Quartet Records has released a "50th Anniversary Special Edition" CD for "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes" (€21.95) <www.tinyurl.com/54ykk6y8>; it's a remastered version of their 2013 CD, with additional material that includes a bonus track of "Gabrielle" (omitted from the 2013 version).

"Spring Cleaning the Old-Fashioned Way" is the title of an article posted on-line by English Heritage on Mar. 19 <www.tinyurl.com/bx82cxa5>, with a link to an instructive video, offering a look at some of things that Mrs. Hudson did (or perhaps tried to do) when it came to clean-up time. There also is Lucy Lethbridge's *Mind Your Manors: Tried-and-True British Household Cleaning Tips* (2016), noted with commentary in Maria Cramer's article in the N.Y. Times on Mar. 21 <www.tinyurl.com/9sbecdyf>.

Apr 21 #5 "Meitantei Conan" [Detective Conan] was first a Japanese manga comic-book series created by Gyosho Aoyama, developed into a long-running animated television series, and then animated films; Shinichi Kudo is a 17-year-old master detective who has been turned by villains into a child, and assumes the name Conan Edogawa (in tribute to Arthur Conan Doyle) and pursues evil-doers. The character is still popular. The Japan Times reported on Apr. 14 <www.tinyurl.com/5zzm4aw> that a train station in central Japan has (briefly) been renamed "Meitantei Conan" to celebrate this month's release of a new film "Detective Conan: The Scarlet Bullet".

SHERLOC and WATSON are alive and well on Mars, as you will see if you go to <www.apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html> and click on the Calendar link at the bottom of the page, and then on the image for Apr. 3.

"There's a genre of Sherlock Holmes story that starts brilliantly," Steven Moffat said, Radio Times reported (July 20, 2020), "and obviously someone comes to the door and suggests to Sir Arthur that maybe a game of cricket is in the offing, and he just dashes an ending rather quickly. Five Or-Orange Pips and the Engineer's Thumb both fall foul of that. But they've got great beginnings!" <www.tinyurl.com/7kwfpvp2>.

Will Thomas' *Dance with Death* (New York: Minotaur, 2021; 307 pp., \$27.99) is the latest in his excellent series that features private enquiry agent Cyrus Barker (an homage to Holmes' rival in "The Retired Colourman") and his assistant Thomas Llewelyn; it's now 1893, and they're involved in combatting an attempt to assassinate the future czar of Russian, who is visiting London for a royal wedding; strong characters are the mark of a good series, and as usual, the plot is interesting and the story well told.

Stefan Bechtel and Laurence Roy Stains' *Through a Glass Darkly* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017; 303 pp., \$26.99) reports in detail on "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the quest to solve the greatest mystery of all"; the authors note that they "are not true believers," adding "but it's fair to say we don't not believe," and address both sides of the lengthy argument over Spiritualism.

"Tobacco for the cigars was sourced from as far as Cuba and was fermented in fruits, jaggery, and honey, giving them their unique taste," according the News Minute (Feb. 18) <www.tinyurl.com/pxzkr7st>, in a story about the Trichinopoly cigar. It appears that cigars made in Trichinopoly are still available for purchase in India <www.tinyurl.com/5f7dr9dm>, although perhaps not with the same flavor as the cigar smoked by Jefferson Hope (in "A Study in Scarlet").

Matt Wingett's *The Mysteries of Portsmouth* (Portsmouth: Life Is Amazing, 2019; 107 pp., £10.00) includes his acknowledgement that "while many stories in this book are explicable, many appear not to be," and among those stories is his brief account about "Conan Doyle and the Paranormal". Matt earlier published an excellent facsimile of Beeton's Christmas Annual for 1887, *Conan Doyle and the Mysterious World of Light 1887-1920*, and *Portsmouth: A Literary and Pictorial Tour*, (Feb 19 #6), and all his books are available at <www.lifeisamazing.co.uk>.

Apr 21 #6 Paul T. Gilbert's *Sherlock Holmes and the Unholy Trinity* (London: Robert Hall, 205; 222 pp., £19.99) is his version of two of the unrecorded cases ("The Death of Cardinal Tosca" and "The Coptic Patriarchs"), and it takes Holmes and Watson to Italy and Egypt in a battle against a mysterious and malignant enemy. The author's Facebook page is at <www.facebook.com/paul.gilbert.589100>.

Diana Bacco explained "Why we should thank Sherlock Holmes for the invention of forensic geology" in a post on Apr. 22 to the Ripley's Believe It or Not! web-site <www.tinyurl.com/48hfjnke>.

Bill Peschel's *The Casebook of Twain and Holmes* (Herschel: Peschel Press, 2018; 233 pp., \$17.95) offers seven stories "as dictated by Samuel Clemens" in which Twain encounters Sherlock Holmes and other Canonical characters, most reprinted from his "223B Casebook Series" and all nicely capturing Twain's style and self-deprecating humor. Bill has a web-site at <www.peschelpress.com>.

Alexander Orlov reports something new for Sherlockian gardeners: seeds for Sherlock Holmes sweet peppers <www.tinyurl.com/2nhparmb>; the web-site describes them as "incredibly productive" and "zoned for Siberia."

Jon L. Lellenberg ("Rodger Prescott") died on Apr. 24. He had a long career as a strategist for the Defense Department, serving as the director of the Policy and Strategy Office of the Special Operations & Counterterrorism Bureau when he retired in 2006. Jon found the Sherlockian world as a member of the Red Circle of in the early 1970s, became the American representative for Dame Jean Conan Doyle after she was able to gain control of her father's American copyrights, and wrote and edited volumes for the Baker Street Irregulars archival history series and about Conan Doyle and his writings. He received his Investiture from the BSI in 1974, and the BSI's Two-Shilling Award in 1988.

It's nice that theaters continue to open (with appropriate wear-your-mask precautions, while more and more of us are being vaccinated for COVID-19). Susan Zeder's "The Death and Life of Sherlock Holmes" will be performed at the Royal Theatre in Versailles, Mo., May 6-9 <www.theroyaltheatre.com>.

Katie Forgette's "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily" will be performed at the Historic Casino Hall in La Grange, Tex., May 14-16; Facebook page at <www.facebook.com/Fayettecountycommunitytheatre>.

Amy Frey's new "Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia" will be performed at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum in Pelham Bay Park, N.Y., on June 14-13 <www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org>.

Leslie Bricusse's musical "The Revenge of Sherlock Holmes" is scheduled in a Spiegel-tent tour in Britain that's due to begin in Leicester in August <www.morphicgraffiti.co.uk>.

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