

Interfax reported (July 23) that the Russian parliament has passed a package of bills that prohibit "the propaganda of narcotic drugs in Russia." But the Sherlock Holmes stories have not been banned: "all literature published before August 1, 1990, including works by Arthur Conan Doyle," is not affected <[www.interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/104479](http://www.interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/104479)>. Things were different in 1929, when the Soviet government banned all of Conan Doyle's works, because of his interest in "occultism and spiritualism," and almost nothing was published in the USSR until some of the Sherlock Holmes stories were translated into Russian for distribution to the Soviet Army during World War Two.

RiffTrax <[www.rifftrax.com](http://www.rifftrax.com)> has added "Spider Woman" (1944) to its list of Sherlockian films with commentary by Mystery Science Theater 3000 alumnae Bridget Nelson and Mary Jo Pehl; needless to say, they never take movies seriously.

The new CBS-TV series "Watson" (Jan 24 #5) will debut at MIPCOM in Cannes on Oct. 24. MIPCOM [Marché International des Programmes de Communication] is a four-day trade show for the television industry, and "Watson" will be broadcast here after the football season ends. Morris Chestnut (who plays Watson) and Craig Sweeny (executive showrunner and producer) will attend the screening (Sweeny was executive producer and writer on the successful CBS-TV series "Elementary").

Conan Doyle isn't the only famous author to have been honored by Montblanc in their "writer's edition series of pens (Jul 21 #6). The latest author is Jane Austen <[www.tinyurl.com/4s3wsd4b](http://www.tinyurl.com/4s3wsd4b)>, and if you'd like to have a Conan Doyle pen, run a Google search for [montblanc conan doyle].

Barry Le Cheminant has won this year's Conan Doyle competition, according to a report <[www.tinyurl.com/5hcd3p3u](http://www.tinyurl.com/5hcd3p3u)> in the Jersey Evening Post on July 23. The Conan Doyle competition is held annually, with a prize awarded by Britain's National Rifle Association, and you can read more about that in Christopher Bunch's book *The National Rifle Association: Its Tramways and the London & South Western Railway* (2019), which is conveniently available on-line <[www.tinyurl.com/bdda2vzs](http://www.tinyurl.com/bdda2vzs)>, and in Mark Alberstat's article "Conan Doyle Takes Aim" in the winter 2022 issue of the Baker Street Journal.

It's nice to report that Glen Miranker was a successful bidder at the auction of the Swanktko collection at Sotheby's (Jun 24 #1), and is the new owner of the manuscript of "The Sign of the Four" and Sidney Paget's original artwork for "The Death of Sherlock Holmes".

Latvia is not high on the list of countries that Sherlockians visit, but a recent post at the Culture Trip web-site <[www.tinyurl.com/yck648yu](http://www.tinyurl.com/yck648yu)> was a fine reminder that it was in Riga that the first Russian "Sherlock Holmes" television series (1979-1986, starring Vasilij Livanov and Vitali Solomin as Holmes and Watson) was filmed, and with good reason: the city still has a lot of Victorian architecture, and was a convenient and excellent substitute for Sherlockian London.

Aug 24 #2 The Beacon Society continues to publish its "quarterly gazette for younger Sherlockians everywhere," and the summer issue of Sherlock's Spotlight is available at their web-site (check the menu at the left) <[www.beaconsociety.com](http://www.beaconsociety.com)>; the contents include material both by and for younger followers of the Great Detective, and the gazette is intended to provide younger Sherlockians with information and entertainment.

Rebecca Romney continues to post sales lists of interesting material from the collection of Andrew Jay Peck; if you would like to be on her mailing list, just sent her a message at <[info@typepunchmatrix.com](mailto:info@typepunchmatrix.com)>. There's much more Sherlockiana and Doyleana at her web-site <[www.typepunchmatrix.com](http://www.typepunchmatrix.com)>.

The "Sherlock Holmes @ 50" conference in Minneapolis was thoroughly enjoyable, with more than 160 people registered for the festivities. The major news included the announcement of three major donations that will be coming to the Sherlock Holmes Collections: Laurie R. King's notes and drafts for her novels about Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes, Denny Dobry's spectacular recreation of Holmes and Watson's sitting-room 221b Baker Street, and Jerry Margolin's comprehensive collection of original Sherlockian artwork. Laurie spoke (virtually) at the conference, and you can watch her video at <[www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1536320753641832&ref=sharing](http://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1536320753641832&ref=sharing)>.

"Become a Detective at Sherlock Holmes Experience Space" was the headline on an article in the Shanghai Daily (Aug. 20) <[www.tinyurl.com/4m9h3jyu](http://www.tinyurl.com/4m9h3jyu)> about a new attraction in the city's Old Millfun (described as a renovated historic slaughterhouse whose "unique architectural style and historical weight adds a mysterious atmosphere to the Experience Space").

Gaston Tissandier's *Popular Scientific Recreations in Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Geology, Chemistry, etc., etc., etc.* ("profusely illustrated" and published by Ward, Lock, and Co., ca. 1883) provides a comprehensive view of what science was like at the beginning of Sherlock Holmes' career as a detective, and the entire 782-page book is conveniently available online at the Public Domain Review's web-site <[www.tinyurl.com/3v285wc7](http://www.tinyurl.com/3v285wc7)>.

"To the Tower," Sherlock Holmes said (in "The Sign of the Four"). It is nice indeed that the Royal Mail has issued a set of stamps celebrating the Tower of London, which was built almost a thousand years ago as a fortress and a symbol of royal power.



Aug 24 #3 Conan Doyle was described as "not himself distinguished as a particularly acute thinker," and Sherlock and Mycroft Holmes as having "quite a sniff of priggery about these two precious gents," in a long letter written by J. R. R. Tolkien in 1947, recently offered by Bayliss Rare Books. It sold for \$26,041.00 <[www.tinyurl.com/4wscrr9a](http://www.tinyurl.com/4wscrr9a)>. Aziz Adam has reported a short video at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=G18hNoTCSsw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G18hNoTCSsw)>.

Six letters and notes written about Spiritualism and Houdini were offered at Canterbury Auction Galleries in the U.K. this month, with an estimate of £3,000-£5,000 <[www.tinyurl.com/9zw9989a](http://www.tinyurl.com/9zw9989a)>; they sold for £2,800 (plus the 30% buyer's premium). The next lot, a letter from Houdini, was estimated at £1,000-£1,500, and sold for £900 (plus the premium). You can read a BBC News article, posted a day before the sale, at <[www.tinyurl.com/3rxjsrrx](http://www.tinyurl.com/3rxjsrrx)>.

Howard Brody ("Anstruther") died on July 22. He was a doctor and an educator, a pioneer in medical ethics, and a frequent contributor to the Baker Street Journal and Baker Street Miscellanea. He received his Investiture from the Baker Street Irregulars in 1981.

A recent post to the "Economist Writing Every Day" blog is a fine example of what happens when someone looks at something Sherlockian, and thinks, "I wonder..." <[www.tinyurl.com/22kdwnnb](http://www.tinyurl.com/22kdwnnb)>. The memorable scene in the dock-yard in the Robert Downey Jr. "Sherlock Holmes" film (2009) led to an interesting question: was that ship insured? And if you don't remember the scene, here it is at YouTube <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8knG5h9m4I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8knG5h9m4I)>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon" (1942) in modern times, spotted by Jennie Paton <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bt04D5p-dQo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bt04D5p-dQo)>; someone has "enhanced" the Rathbone/Bruce using AI. If you can recall seeing the film projected in a theater, you can decide whether AI can take you back to the good old days, or (for younger generations) whether AI enhancement can be as good as remastering for DVD or Blu-ray.

The television series "The X-Files" had (and still has) fans galore, and one of the episodes ("Fire") was nicely Sherlockian and Doylean; you can read all about it in an article posted to the Giant Freakin Robot web-site (Aug. 13) <[www.tinyurl.com/nhmmn66c](http://www.tinyurl.com/nhmmn66c)>. And you can watch "The X-Files" on Hulu.

"The Baker Street Boys" (a 30-minute television series broadcast by BBC-1 in 1983, starring Roger Ostime and Hubert Rees) is conveniently available at YouTube <[www.tinyurl.com/3c97rdz8](http://www.tinyurl.com/3c97rdz8)>.

"Fogtown is a mystery comedy series of multimedia projects (including a TV show) that's been in development since 2020, featuring the adventures of a brilliant but easily-distracted detective Sherblock and his ever-devoted Blockon," according to the series web-site <[www.fogtownseries.com](http://www.fogtownseries.com)> (all of the characters are puppets). Articles about "Fogtown" were published in the Portland Oregonian (Aug. 7) <[www.tinyurl.com/59h9tx8y](http://www.tinyurl.com/59h9tx8y)> and in the Willamette Week (Aug. 13) <[www.tinyurl.com/34b8fv3d](http://www.tinyurl.com/34b8fv3d)>, and the pilot episode premiered on Aug. 22 at a special event in Portland.

Aug 24 #4 *The Sherlock Society*, by James Ponti (New York: Aladdin, 2024, 339 pp., \$18.99), is an entertaining middle-grade (ages 8-12) novel about four youngsters who decide to become detectives, and wind up involved in solving a real crime; there are many echoes of the Canon, and it's the start of a new series by an experienced author. There's a free reading-group guide available at <[www.simonandschuster.net](http://www.simonandschuster.net)>, and Ponti's web-site's at <[www.jamesponti.com](http://www.jamesponti.com)>.

Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* is a romance novel published in 2019, and now a movie released this month. The movie seems to be accidentally Sherlockian, as noted in a review at the British Film Institute web-site (Aug. 9) <[www.tinyurl.com/mtsbfa8j](http://www.tinyurl.com/mtsbfa8j)>.

An interesting copy of the first edition of Vincent Starrett's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* will be at auction at PBA Galleries in Berkeley on Sept. 5 <[www.tinyurl.com/mryncw4b](http://www.tinyurl.com/mryncw4b)>; it's inscribed by Starrett to Franklin Rhode, a fellow Sherlockian in Chicago as well as a fellow member of the Baker Street Irregulars, it's estimated at \$200-\$300.

Randall Stock has updated his web-site pages on Sherlockian manuscripts at <[www.bestofsherlock.com/sherlock-manuscripts.htm](http://www.bestofsherlock.com/sherlock-manuscripts.htm)> to show new information on the recent sale of "The Sign of the Four" and the on-going exhibition that includes "The Valley of Fear".

The television series "Gomorra" (which first aired on Sky Italia in 2014 and 2016) is again available on Max (formerly HBO). The series is a fictionalized account of today's crime syndicate in Naples, and the title's a pun on the syndicate's real name, the Camorra <[www.tinyurl.com/2yfundtv](http://www.tinyurl.com/2yfundtv)>, which of course is well known to those who are aware that the manuscript of "The Red Circle" states "Camorra" (but when the story was published the name was changed to "Carbonari"). Of course there are subtitles in English; when the series aired in Italy it was subtitled in Italian, because the dialogue is in the Neapolitan dialect rather than in proper Italian. Fair warning: the series is not for the faint-hearted.

"Mastermind" (a long-running British television game-show series launched on BCC-1 in 1972, and still on the air on BBC One) has had contestants who chose "Sherlock Holmes" as their topic. Philip Gartside was a contestant on Mar. 5, 1989, and Wilfrid de Freitas has suggested that you might want to see how you do <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfszihbvL6E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfszihbvL6E)>. Wilfrid reports that he "failed miserably."

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London's 2024 Christmas Card Competition is now open, and you don't need to be a member of the Society to submit a design; the deadline is Sept. 15, and you'll find more information about it at <[www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/christmas-card-competition-2024](http://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/christmas-card-competition-2024)>.

The Northern Opera Group's opera "The Sign of Four" premiered at the Leeds Opera Festival this month, with much of the publicity explaining that it's the first Sherlockian opera. It may be the first one in Britain, but the U.S. had "A Scandal in Bohemia" (2009) and "Sherlock Holmes and the Fallen Giant" (2015), and there have been Sherlockian operas in Japan and China.

Aug 24 #5 Registration is now open for the fourth annual BSI Trust Lecture, available free on Sept. 21 via Zoom, but with registration required. Mattias Boström has analyzed thousands of newspaper articles to perform a deep dive into the activities of the Baker Street Irregulars to shed light on how the BSI has helped create and shape the Sherlockian landscape for nearly a century. You can register for the event at <[www.bsitrust.org](http://www.bsitrust.org)>.

Kingsley Amis' "Dr. Watson and the Darkwater Hall Mystery" was broadcast by BBC-1 (1974), and published in Playboy (May 1978). You can now watch the broadcast at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA0LbivaRBs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA0LbivaRBs)>; Edward Fox appears as Watson.

"An Exciting Day at the Track" read the headline in the Spokane Press on Sept. 26, 1906, discovered by John Lockwood. "The talent all got down on Sherlock Holmes for the next heat," according to the article about harness racing at the Interstate park. You can read all about it at the Library of Congress web-site <[www.tinyurl.com/um8f5j2h](http://www.tinyurl.com/um8f5j2h)>.

Rebecca Romney is continuing to star as the book specialist on the "Pawn Stars" television series. On Aug. 14 she appraised the Limited Editions Club eight-volume "Sherlock Holmes" set; you can watch her segment on-line at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV2UZm2Jiqg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV2UZm2Jiqg)>.

Mike Homer notes that a friend has reported a Sherlock Holmes Irish Pub in Zumpano (in Cosenza Province in Calabria in Italy); plenty of reviews on-line but apparently no web-site.

The Reading Room in the British Museum, which has been closed to the public for many years, is open to visitors again, and Country Life had a nice story about it on Aug. 18 <[www.tinyurl.com/2axmn7t3](http://www.tinyurl.com/2axmn7t3)>. Conan Doyle was one of many people who had reader's tickets, and Sherlock Holmes spent a morning there reading about voodooism (as noted in "Wisteria Lodge"). There also is a nicely illustrated report about the Reading Room at the British Museum's web-site blog <[www.tinyurl.com/bdh6he74](http://www.tinyurl.com/bdh6he74)>.

Registration is now open for "221B Con: A Fan Con For All Things Sherlock Holmes" in Atlanta, Apr.11-13, 2025 <[www.221bcon.com](http://www.221bcon.com)>; many Sherlockians have attended, and I don't know anyone who didn't have a good time.

The John H. Watson Society, which bills itself as "The Open and Inclusive Worldwide Online Sherlockian Society (Really, We're about Having Fun)," has an annual John H. Watson Treasure Hunt; it's far from easy, and you can read all about it at <[www.johnhwatsonssociety.com](http://www.johnhwatsonssociety.com)>.

"Shekhar Home" (a new six-episode Bengali television series from BBC Studios Productions India) is inspired by the Canon and stars Kay Kay Menon in the title role and Ranvir Shorey as his friend and assistant Jayavrat Saini. It debuted on Aug. 14, and was widely reviewed in India. You can find reviews (and a trailer) on-line, and watch episodes (with subtitles in English) at <[www.dailymotion.com](http://www.dailymotion.com)>; search for [shekhar home s01e01] to find the first episode (and s01e02, etc., for the others).

Aug 24 #6 Mystery fans who have attended Malice Domestic and other conferences will have enjoyed presentation by Luci Zahray, who is renowned as "the poison lady" and gladly shares her expertise with authors who want to learn interesting ways to poison people. You can read about her in the Gatesville Messenger (Aug. 22) <[www.tinyurl.com/43d7wrve](http://www.tinyurl.com/43d7wrve)> and at the Daily Beast web-site (Aug. 7) <[www.tinyurl.com/5xpf3nez](http://www.tinyurl.com/5xpf3nez)>.

Lincoln Peirce's "Big Nate" comic strip had Nate in a Sherlockian arc that ran from Aug 19 through Aug. 24 <[www.bignate.com](http://www.bignate.com)>.

Bill Seil has forwarded an article in Publishers Weekly (July 31) reporting <[www.tinyurl.com/8u43jp8f](http://www.tinyurl.com/8u43jp8f)> the purchase by Barnes & Noble of the Tattered Cover bookstore in Denver. It's nice news indeed for faithful customers, but what's really interesting is the list of formerly independent bookstores now owned by Elliott Investment Management: Waterstones, Blackwell's Hatchards, Foyles, Hodges Figgis, Barnes & Noble, among others.

So Far Down Queer Street, Holly Turner's on-line journal that focuses on "Aspects of the Sherlockian canon and adaptations that are not ordinarily discussed in scholarly work," was launched in 2022, and the fourth issue is now available, at <[www.downqueerstreet.com](http://www.downqueerstreet.com)>; click on "Issues" to see all of them.

Rare Birds Books bills itself as "Edinburgh's liveliest bookstore," and is hosting a "make friends mixer" tea on Sept. 14 <[www.tinyurl.com/2vysmt96](http://www.tinyurl.com/2vysmt96)>. The menu honors the city's famous writers <[www.tinyurl.com/4fhkrwtu](http://www.tinyurl.com/4fhkrwtu)> and includes a raspberry cranachan as a tribute to Conan Doyle. You can consult Wikipedia's entry for "cranachan" to see how delicious it is.

Theater news: Jeffrey Hatcher's "Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders" is running at the Lakewood Theater in Madison, Maine, through Sept. 7 <[www.lakewoodtheater.org](http://www.lakewoodtheater.org)>.

Tim Kelly's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" is scheduled at the Repertory Company Theatre in Richardson, Tex., Sept. 6-15 <[www.rcttheatre.com](http://www.rcttheatre.com)>.

Kate Hamill's "Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson--Apt. 2B" is due at the Warehouse Theatre in Greenville, S.C., Sept. 13-Oct. 6 <[www.warehousetheatre.com](http://www.warehousetheatre.com)>.

Ken Ludwig's "The Game's Afoot" is scheduled at the Theatre in the Country in Langley, B.C., Sept. 11-28 <[www.theatreinthecountry.com](http://www.theatreinthecountry.com)>.

Ken Ludwig's "Moriarty" will be produced at the Playhouse in Huntsville, Ala., Sept. 13-22 <[www.theatrehsv.org](http://www.theatrehsv.org)>.

Alexander Shevtsov's musical "Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia" has been scheduled (in Russian with English subtitles) at the Russian Club in Strathfield, N.S.W., Sept. 20-Nov. 23 <[www.tinyurl.com/2k6ujzxw](http://www.tinyurl.com/2k6ujzxw)>.

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