

Reported: *The Captain of the Polestar: A Ghost Story for Christmas*, illustrated by the Canadian cartoonist Seth (Windsor: Biblioasis, 2023; 64 pp., \$6.61), in a continuing annual series with almost two dozen titles from a wide variety of authors.

The October issue of the newsletter of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota offers detailed reports on this year's "Sherlock Holmes @ 50" conference in Minneapolis, and news from and about the collections. Copies of the "A Festive Fifty" exhibition catalog may still be available (\$30.00) <<https://z.umn.edu/holmescatalog>>; copies of the newsletter are available on request from Timothy J. Johnson (#15-G Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455) <[johns976@umn.com](mailto:johns976@umn.com)>.

Fans of the late MSFK3 [Mystery Science Theater 3000] will enjoy the work of the parodists at RiffTrax <[www.rifftax.com](http://www.rifftax.com)>; their latest Sherlockian offering is Ronald Howard's "The Case of the Christmas Pudding" (1955).

Two Conan Doyle letters were at auction at Ewbank's in Woking on Dec. 5, of interest because they're examples of many letters written and signed by his secretaries (Michael Meer has suggested that the letter from Davos was signed by Conan Doyle's sister Lottie) <[www.tinyurl.com/46xxpdsw](http://www.tinyurl.com/46xxpdsw)>; the estimate was £200-£300, and the letters sold for £338 (including the buyer's premium).

"A storybook embodiment of architectural splendor" is how Sotheby's International Realty describes Otto Penzler's home in Kent, Conn., now offered for sale <[www.tinyurl.com/4fmthzcv](http://www.tinyurl.com/4fmthzcv)>, complete with a three-story library, a turret, and a gargoyle; 5,800 square feet and ten rooms, with an asking price of \$2,950,000.

Offered by David Duggleby Auctioneers in Scarborough on Dec. 6: an oil-on-canvas painting by Sidney Paget of "Figures in a Gothic Landscape with Ancient Castle Ruins" sold for £850 <[www.tinyurl.com/4sk97xme](http://www.tinyurl.com/4sk97xme)>. You needn't pay a lot for Paget artwork that isn't Sherlockian.

Doug Wrigglesworth ("The Retired Colourman") died on Dec. 1. Doug taught high-school chemistry, and was recognized as Science Teacher of the year in 1988. He was a distinguished member of the Bootmakers of Toronto, as well as one of the founders of the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library, and was awarded his Investiture by the Baker Street Irregulars in 2004.

William Ozer's painting "The Muse or Like for Like" (one of three commissioned for Phil Growick's anthology *The Art of Sherlock Holmes* (published by MX Publishing in 2019) was available at Anglia Car Auctions in Norfolk on Dec. 7, estimated at £12,000-£15,000 <[www.tinyurl.com/y9wv723m](http://www.tinyurl.com/y9wv723m)>; bidding did not meet the reserve, and the painting's still available. Or you can buy a digital print from MX for \$35.00 <[www.tinyurl.com/2832373y](http://www.tinyurl.com/2832373y)>.

Dec 24 #2 The Jan.-Feb. issue of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine offers its annual tribute to Sherlock Holmes, with Steve Steinbock's reviews of some Sherlockian (and other) books, Dean Jobb's "Stranger Than Fiction" column about a mystery that intrigued Conan Doyle, Terence Faherty's parody of "The Greek Interpreter", and editorial happy birthday wishes. This is the 1,000th issue of EQMM, and the last to be edited by Janet Hutchings, who is retiring after 33 years at the editor's desk. The new editor will be Jackie Sherbow, only the fourth editor in the long history of the magazine.

Jennie Paton reports a truly unusual performance of Sherlockian music, by the James Madison High School Marching Band in Vienna, Va., available at YouTube <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr8cZ0ajjlQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr8cZ0ajjlQ)>.

The Boston Sunday Post published many Sherlock Holmes stories in the early 20th century, when quite a few newspapers gladly offered readers more than mere news, and Ross Davies has found some attractive artwork preserved in the Internet Archive <[www.tinyurl.com/573876vu](http://www.tinyurl.com/573876vu)>.

John Rabe and the New Speckled Band have recorded "The Ballad of Dr. Bell" (described as "a loving honkytonk tribute to Conan Doyle's inspiration for Sherlock Holmes") <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5kQKqnj2BM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5kQKqnj2BM)>. John is the son of the late Bill Rabe and shares his father's devotion to Sherlock Holmes, and for many years delighted the listeners at KPCC-FM (Los Angeles). You can request a copy of the lyrics from John at <[johnsrabela@gmail.com](mailto:johnsrabela@gmail.com)>.

Just in time for the second day after Christmas in 2025: Laurie King has created a video that offers eight members of the Baker Street Irregulars reading "The Blue Carbuncle" <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvlovETrnhg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvlovETrnhg)>.

Oscar Ross died on Dec. 5. He was the sparking plug for the Crew of the S.S. May Day, the Sherlockian society in Northern Ireland, and presided over their newsletter (May Day May Day), which he launched in Oct. 2000. The society's web-site is at <[www.thessmayday.org.uk](http://www.thessmayday.org.uk)>.

Howard Ostrom has updated his illustrated essay on "The World of Sherlock Holmes Statues" to include Jenny Mackenzie's "Bighead" Holmes and Watson; 64 pages, available at <[www.nplh.co.uk/sherlock-statues.html](http://www.nplh.co.uk/sherlock-statues.html)>.

The Conan Doyle Medical Centre in Edinburgh was officially opened on Nov. 30, 2007 (Dec 07 #4); it's located in Nether Liberton Lane, near Liberton Bank House. Alas: the Edinburgh Evening News reported that the Scottish government's health and care experience survey ranked the Braefoot Medical Practice at the Conan Doyle center among the worst GP practices in Edinburgh <[www.tinyurl.com/386hf4j8](http://www.tinyurl.com/386hf4j8)>.

There still are vinyl records, Jennie Paton notes, and so there are. One of them is the soundtrack, by David Arnold and Michael Price, of the Benedict Cumberbatch "Sherlock" television series' first three seasons, available from various on-line sellers; try a Google search for [sherlock original television soundtrack vinyl]. It's quite possible that they're all pirated from the CD issued by Silva Screen Records in 2015.

Dec 24 #3 A copy of the July 1890 issue of Lippincott's Monthly Magazine was sold at Heritage Auctions on Dec. 11 for \$5,500 (including the buyer's premium) <[www.tinyurl.com/ymxxdc3r](http://www.tinyurl.com/ymxxdc3r)>; it contains Oscar Wilde's story "The Portrait of Dorian Gray" (commissioned at the Langham Hotel at the same dinner when Conan Doyle agreed to write "The Sign of the Four"; a copy of the Feb. 1890 issue, with that story, was sold for \$9,062.50 in 2021 <[www.tinyurl.com/cetxv7x6](http://www.tinyurl.com/cetxv7x6)>.

The Public Domain Review has kindly made available an electronic copy of Allan Pinkerton's *Thirty Years a Detective* (1884); there's nothing about the Molly Maguires, but the book offers a thoroughly colorful account of crime and criminals in those days <[www.tinyurl.com/mrxy63k8](http://www.tinyurl.com/mrxy63k8)>.

CBS-TV has released an official trailer for the new "Watson" series that stars Morris Chestnut in the title role <[www.tinyurl.com/3uswxcxy](http://www.tinyurl.com/3uswxcxy)>. The first episode is scheduled for Jan. 26, after the AFC Championship game. You can see and hear Chestnut read an excerpt from "The Blue Carbuncle" at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FfmpEOnzEI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FfmpEOnzEI)>.

Reported: Elizabeth Clark Ashby's *The Miniature Library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2024; 160 pp., £16.95); the author, curator of books and manuscripts at the Trust, has not ignored the Library's manuscript of Conan Doyle's "How Watson Learned the Trick" (one of the treasures in the Library); the Trust's press release about the book is at <[www.tinyurl.com/7ffzjkuz](http://www.tinyurl.com/7ffzjkuz)>, and you can purchase the book from the Trust at <[www.tinyurl.com/ms58k2ex](http://www.tinyurl.com/ms58k2ex)>, as well as from Blackwell's in Oxford <[www.tinyurl.com/3jafn7dp](http://www.tinyurl.com/3jafn7dp)> at a slight discount and with free shipping to the U.S. (the image at the Blackwell's web-site shows the cover of an older edition, but they ship the new edition).

Nigel Miles-Thomas is continuing to tour in David Stuart Davies' one-man play "Sherlock "Sherlock Holmes: The Last Act"; you can watch a video promo at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5wxhPhNnA0&t=4s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5wxhPhNnA0&t=4s)>.

Hugh Bonneville (fondly remembered as Robert Crawley, Earl of Grantham, by fans of "Downton Abbey") has recorded some of the Sherlock Holmes stories for BBC Sounds <[www.tinyurl.com/2knfsyku](http://www.tinyurl.com/2knfsyku)> <[www.tinyurl.com/4ymbzpth](http://www.tinyurl.com/4ymbzpth)>. You can hear the first of three parts of his narration of "The Speckled Band" at <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kpFkNyr09s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kpFkNyr09s)>.

Al Gregory is offering for sale a set of four letters written and signed by King Charles III that have serious Sherlockian content. If you're interested, you can contact Al at <[gaslightandfog@verizon.net](mailto:gaslightandfog@verizon.net)>.

Bruno Vincent's *The New Adventures of Old Sherlock* is an amusing trilogy of parodies that involve Holmes and Watson in present-day and far-fetched mysteries (London: Viking Penguin, 2024). *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Trigger Warning*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Air Fryer of Doom*, and *Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of the Forgotten Password* (each with 112 pp., £10.99). They're all illustrated with Sidney Paget artwork, with new and imaginative captions. There are no American editions (yet).

Dec 24 #4 "Fogtown", an interesting (and amusing) television series that is still in development, will offer "the adventures of Sherlock Holmes with hand-crafted puppets in a cozy 3D animated world, meant for audiences young and old alike" <[www.fogtownseries.com](http://www.fogtownseries.com)>. Some bits and pieces have been available on-line for a while, but now (kindly reported by Roger Johnson) you can watch Sherlock and Blockson solve the "mystery of the moth napper" (that's the first 30-minute episode) at the web-site, which has a link to trailers and to the first episode (click on "see the pilot soon at YouTube"). There also are quite a few videos about the series at its YouTube channel <[www.youtube.com/@FogtownSeries/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@FogtownSeries/videos)>.

The Beacon Society has announced its 2025 R. Joel Senter Sr. Memorial Essay Contest for students in grades 4 through 12; the deadline for submissions is Apr. 1, and details on the contest (and its history) can be found at <[www.beaconsociety.com/joel-senter-essay-contest.html](http://www.beaconsociety.com/joel-senter-essay-contest.html)>.

Scott Monty offers some helpful tips for those attending the birthday festivities in New York in January <[www.tinyurl.com/59x7fa9p](http://www.tinyurl.com/59x7fa9p)>.

The three episodes of "Lucy Worsley's Holmes vs. Doyle" were broadcast by PBS-TV this month (they aired in Britain a year ago); if you missed them, they're still available on PBS Passport and Amazon Prime, and Warner Bros. will release them on a DVD on Jan. 7 (according to Amazon).

Madresfield Court (in Worcestershire) was the house that inspired Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, and it's grand indeed, as you can see in an article in *Country Life* (Feb. 4) <[www.tinyurl.com/26m69heh](http://www.tinyurl.com/26m69heh)>. The library is especially grand.

Max Magee has launched a new Sherlockian society: the Scarlet Threads, for anyone who gives blood to the Red Cross after signing up via the Red Cross app as a member of the Scarlet Threads team. Information on how to join is available from Max <[maxpmagee@gmail.com](mailto:maxpmagee@gmail.com)>, and their Facebook group is at <[www.facebook.com/groups/1126077539211380](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1126077539211380)>.

Fans of "The Adventures of Sherlock Hound" will welcome the news that the Japanese-Italian anime television series, which was launched in 1984 (with the first six episodes directed by Hayao Miyazaki) can now be seen streaming on Hulu.

Reported: a new Blu-ray release of Christopher Plummer's "Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace" (1962) with added features that include an interview with director Terence Fisher and commentary by Barry Forshaw and Kim Newman, enthusiastically reviewed by John Soltes at the Hollywood Soapbox web-site <[www.tinyurl.com/vunvzhxf](http://www.tinyurl.com/vunvzhxf)>.

Thorley Walters, who played Dr. Watson in "Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace", played Watson three more times, in "The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother" (1975), "Silver Blaze" (1977), and one more that counts as a trivia question: which film? Hint: Peter Jeffrey was Sherlock Holmes. Second hint: it was an X-rated film. No credit if you had to use the Internet to answer the question.

Dec 24 #5 Phil Cheadle's dramatization of Arthur Conan Doyle's "Selecting a Ghost" was produced at the Stanley Arts Centre in London, Nov. 6-9. You can hear more about the play (and Conan Doyle's story) at the "Doings of Doyle" blog <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDmyGQ37PlE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDmyGQ37PlE)>, where Mark Jones and Paul Chapman interview Phil Cheadle and Edward Bennett (who starred in the play) and offer a link to the text of the story (first published in London Society in Dec. 1883); their blog <[www.doingsofdoyle.com](http://www.doingsofdoyle.com)> was launched in 2019 and does a grand job of exploring Conan Doyle's non-Sherlockian and Sherlockian books and stories.

Peter Jeffrey and Thorley Walters appeared uncredited as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in "The Best House in London" (1969). Synopsis: in Victorian London, the British government attempts a solution to the problem of prostitution by establishing the world's most fabulous brothel."

"From beer and facial hair to stomach bugs and car parts, test your knowledge of English's transatlantic idiosyncrasies." The Guardian offered a nice little quiz on this (Dec. 10) <[www.tinyurl.com/pes4v4a3](http://www.tinyurl.com/pes4v4a3)>. "England and America and two countries divided by a common language," George Bernard Shaw is alleged to have said (although no one has been able to find just where or when he said it).

Registration is now open for the Midwest BSI Canonical Conclave of Scion Societies in Indianapolis, Ind., on Apr. 26, 2025 (Oct 24 #5); more information is available at <[www.tinyurl.com/BSIMWConclave25](http://www.tinyurl.com/BSIMWConclave25)>.

*Brain Games: Sherlock Holmes Puzzles* was first published in 2017, and offered "over 100 cerebral challenges inspired by the world's greatest detective." There's also a second volume (Morton Grove: Publications International, 2021; 192 pp., \$9.00) with different puzzles that challenge you to "gather the clues and solve the case!"

Congratulations to Nicholas Meyer: "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" has been added to the Library of Congress' National Film Registry (for films considered to be of "cultural, historic, or aesthetic importance"). Nick directed the film, which had a record first day box-office gross and made possible the "Star Trek" franchise that continues today.

"The Man Who Disappeared" (1951) was a British film, made as a television pilot but apparently never broadcast, with John Longden (Sherlock Holmes) and Campbell Singer (Dr. Watson). The film survived, and Jennie Paton has found it on-line at YouTube <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FM8CdVU4HOA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FM8CdVU4HOA)>. It's "The Man with the Twisted Lip" and nicely done for its time.

Robert J. Randisi died on Oct. 6. Bob was a prolific author and editor, credited with more than 650 books in the mystery, western, adventure, and fantasy genres, and more than 30 anthologies, and he was a co-founder and editor of *Mystery Scene* magazine. One of the stories in his *The Private Eye Writers of America Presents Mystery Street: The 20th Anniversary PWA Anthology* (2001) was Warren Murphy's "Highly Irregular on Baker Street". Ali Karim's interesting interview with Bob at Bouchercon in 2003 appeared in the Shots eZine <[www.tinyurl.com/4hyzbnpt](http://www.tinyurl.com/4hyzbnpt)>.

Dec 24 #6 *The Sherlock Holmes Miniature Library* was published by Canterbury Classics in 2019 (\$55.00); it's a boxed set with eleven volumes, 5" high, ten with the stories (without *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes*), plus a lined notebook (one suspects they planned a complete Canon but encountered copyright problems). It's out of print now, but available at from dealers (some of whom are asking outrageous prices).

One does hear of Sherlock everywhere, but occasionally he's not the correct answer to a question, as was the case on the British game show "Tipping Point" (broadcast by ITV) earlier this year; there was a nice report in the Daily Express (with video) on Oct. 25 <[www.tinyurl.com/52j4v6fr](http://www.tinyurl.com/52j4v6fr)>.

There's less theatrical news this month, because Mark Shanahan's "A Sherlock Carol" appears not yet to be planned anywhere next year (there were at least 18 regional productions of the play this year).

Ken Ludwig's "Moriarty" is running at the Hanover Tavern in Hanover, Va., through Jan. 26 <[www.va-rep.org](http://www.va-rep.org)>.

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville" will be performed at the Pro Arts Playhouse in Kihei, Hawaii, Jan. 31-Feb. 16 <[www.proartsmaui.org](http://www.proartsmaui.org)>; and at Main Street LIVE in Trinidad, Colo., Feb. 14-23 <[www.mainstreetlive.org](http://www.mainstreetlive.org)>.

Christopher M. Walsh's "Miss Holmes Returns" is scheduled at the Rochester Repertory Theatre in Rochester, Minn., Jan. 16-26 <[www.rochesterrep.org](http://www.rochesterrep.org)>; and at the Slightly Off Broadway Theatre in Excelsior, Mo., May 31-June 15 <[www.sobtheatre.org](http://www.sobtheatre.org)>.

Martin Parsons' dramatization of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" as a radio-play toured in Britain in 2022 and 2024, and it will tour again, Apr. 5-19 <[www.crimeandcomedytheatrecompany.co.uk](http://www.crimeandcomedytheatrecompany.co.uk)>.

Brian Guehring's "Sherlock Holmes and the First Baker Street Irregular" is scheduled at the Doug Mitchell Memorial Theatre in Ayden, N.C., Apr. 11-12 <[www.smilesandfrowns.org](http://www.smilesandfrowns.org)>.

T. S. Forsyth's "Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet" will be performed in the Parkview Room in Johnson Springview Park in Rocklin, Calif., Apr. 25-26 <[www.placerrep.org](http://www.placerrep.org)>.

Christopher M. Walsh's "Miss Holmes" is due at the Sunset Playhouse in Elm Grove, Wis., June 5-22, 2025 <[www.sunsetplayhouse.com](http://www.sunsetplayhouse.com)>.

Tim Kelly's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" will be performed at the Lydney Town Hall in Lydney, Glos., July 4-6, and the Larrupers Centre in Ross-on-Wye, Heref., July 11-13 <[www.thedeantheatrecompany.com](http://www.thedeantheatrecompany.com)>.

Tim Marriott continues to tour in Bert Coules' one-man show "Watson: The Final Problem", and Smokescreen Production's forward schedule is on-line at <[www.smokescreenprods.com](http://www.smokescreenprods.com)>. The show is scheduled in New Jersey, Nov. 6-16.

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