

Sherlockians (and Holmesians) gathered in New York to celebrate the Great Detective's 171st birthday during the (very) long weekend from Jan. 15 to 19, and reports on many of the goings-on will be posted soon at the Baker Street Irregulars' web-site <www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/tag/reports>. In the meantime, here are a few brief paragraphs to tide you over; you can also hear Scott Monty and Burt Wolder discuss the festivities at their "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" podcast at <www.bit.ly/ihose304>. Scott also reports on the weekend at <www.tinyurl.com/2m5s4ppz>.

Locals and early arrivals enjoyed the ASH Wednesday dinner, and on Thursday morning the ACD Society's Doylean Awards Ceremony and a running of the Wessex Cup were held at the Mysterious Bookshop; the society's web-site is at <www.acdsociety.com>. The BSI's Distinguished Speaker that evening was author (and Oscar winner) Graham Moore, whose explanation of the Sherlockian aspects of the career of the famous economist John Maynard Keynes will be published in the Baker Street Journal later this year.

On Friday the William Gillette Memorial Luncheon featured a performance of Andrew Joffe's skit "Our Old Holmes" (with Paul Singleton as Holmes, Andrew Joffe as Watson, and Sarah Montague as Mrs. Hudson). And the Susan Rice Mentorship Award (which recognizes "commitment to mentoring Sherlockians as a means of keeping green the memory of Sherlock Holmes") was presented to Julie McKuras.

Irregulars and guests gathered for dinner at the Yale Club, where Dick Olken offered the traditional first toast to Ellen Pfeifer as "The Woman". The dinner agenda included the usual toasts, and rituals, and spectacular presentations by Ross Davies on "certain aspects of Sherlock Holmes' actual involvement with the Pinkertons," and by Ashley Polasek on the "collaborations, compromises, and occasional conflicts" she has encountered in bringing Sherlock Holmes to the stage. The entertainment also included a new song ("Brush up Your Sherlock") that was written and performed by Alex Katz and Karen Wilson.

Michael Meer was announced as the winner of the annual Morley-Montgomery Award (for the best contribution to the Baker Street Journal in 2024), for his article (in the winter issue) on the "Examination Paper" Conan Doyle wrote in 1893 on the methods of Sherlock Holmes. You can subscribe to the BSJ (four issues and the Christmas Annual) at <www.tinyurl.com/3vxncdhd>.

The BSI Birthday Honours were awarded to Shana Carter ("Carter"), Jim Cox ("Coxon"), Judi Ellis ("The Carlton Club"), Ron Fish ("The Hon. Ronald Adair"), Beth Gallego ("Lighthouses"), Bruce Harris ("Harris") Louise Haskett ("Aurora"), Rosemary Herbert ("A Slim Youth in an Ulster"), Christian Monggaard ("Neville St. Clair") and Gary Thaden ("Augusto Barelli). And the BSI's prestigious Two-Shilling Award was bestowed on Andrew Solberg.

Another Friday-evening event was the Gaslight Gala, held at Annie Moore's, honoring Watson's "pawky sense of humor" with cocktails, dinner, toasts, jokes, songs, a quiz, and a play. Planning for 2026 is under way.

Jan 25 #2 On Saturday morning Covent Garden West offered the usual opportunity for dealers to help those who wanted to add to their collections, and the Saturday luncheon and reception included the Dr. John H. Watson Fund's auction, which attracted enthusiastic bidders; the raffle prizes included the last collection of medals and awards designed and made by the late Maggie Schpak, who had provided spectacular raffle prizes for Dr. Watson for many years, and a mantel clock that was designed and crafted by Danna Mancini to look like two books, back to back, honoring "The Bruce Partington Plans" and "The Hound of the Baskervilles". Finally, for those who lasted that long, the last event of the birthday festivities was the traditional Adventuresses' Brunch on Sunday.

You can plan ahead: the next annual dinner of the Baker Street Irregulars is scheduled for Jan. 9, 2026. You can also plan much farther ahead: the BSI's next special conference (similar to "Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire" at Bear Mountain in 2022) is scheduled for the summer of 2027. If you'd like to have information about future events (and much more) you are welcome to sign up for "News from the BSI" at <www.tinyurl.com/yc5tsz27>.

An added feature of the birthday festivities was a performance at the Coffee House Club of Hal Glatzer's "A Musicale in Mrs. Hudson's Parlor" which celebrated Sherlock Holmes' 60th birthday with music-hall presentations by Insp. Lestrade, Mrs. Hudson, Henry Baker, Irene Adler and other friends). A recording will be available at Hal's channel at YouTube in mid-February (stay tuned).

Another nice feature of the festivities was the opportunity to visit the Grolier Club to view their exhibition "Imaginary Books: Lost, Unfinished, and Fictive Works Found Only in Other Books" from the collection of Reid Byers. There are three nice Sherlockian items in the exhibition: "The Giant Rat of Sumatra" in the June 1909 issue of The Strand Magazine, Sherlock Holmes' notes for his monograph "On the Polyphonic Motets of Lassus", and Aristotle's *Poetics II: On Comedy*.

The exhibition closes on Feb. 15, and there's another nice exhibition "A First-Class Fool: Mark Twain and Humor" (open through Apr. 5); one of the items on display is Mark Twain's typewriter. The Grolier Club's web-site is at <www.grolierclub.org>. If you're wondering about Aristotle's *Poetics II: On Comedy*, the only known copy of the book was destroyed by fire in a Benedictine abbey in the Piedmont in 1327, reported in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (according to the exhibition catalog, "the safe handling of this book requires protective clothing and gloves). The catalog of the "Imaginary Books" exhibition, written by Reid Byers, is spectacular (scholarly, humorous, and in full color), and available from the Oak Knoll Press (\$65.00) <www.tinyurl.com/5e6smbs5>.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was not neglected during the festivities. You can watch the ACD Society's Doylean honors and its running of the Wessex Cup at <www.tinyurl.com/mxfnc82v>, as well as the annual meeting of The Literary Agents, held via Zoom on Friday, honoring the centenary of "The Land of Mist" and Christine Ferguson, editor of that book upcoming in the Edinburgh University Press series, at <www.tinyurl.com/5cap5cpd>.

Jan 25 #3 Daniel J. Morrow ("James Stanger of the *Herald*) died on Dec. 23, 2024. His long career in radio broadcasting inspired his dedication to Sherlockian radio programs, and in 1969 Dan was one of the founders of the Scandalous Bohemians of New Jersey. He contributed scholarship to the Baker Street Journal and society newsletters, and received his Investiture from the Baker Street Irregulars in 1977.

A non-trivial trivia question: many people celebrated the Chinese New Year this month. In the Chinese calendar each year is named for one of twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac cycle, and this year's zodiac animal is the snake. What was Sherlock Holmes' zodiac animal?

Sonia Fetherston's "*Wiggins*": *Tom Stix & His Baker Street Irregulars* (126 pp., \$24.95), one of two new books from the Baker Street Irregulars Press, is the latest title in the Biography Series. It is a carefully-researched and well-written warm tribute to the fourth leader of the BSI, who in many ways brought the BSI firmly into the 20th century.

That Ghastly Face, edited by Ira Brad Matetsky, is the new addition to the Manuscript Series (224 pp., \$49.95); there's a facsimile of the manuscript of "The Blanched Soldier", accompanied by both an annotated transcription and scholarly commentary on the manuscript and on various aspects of the story (the Manuscript Series continues to offer readers an opportunity to come close to the moment when the stories were written, and the commentary is spectacular). Both of the new titles (and many others) can be ordered at www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/tag/books.

The three Sherlockian neckties offered by Frederick Thomas of London some years ago (Feb 16 #1) are still available, but (of course) more expensive now www.tinyurl.com/568xuhty.

Max Magee has noted that William S. Baring-Gould's *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (1967) can be borrowed (read on-line but not downloaded) from the Internet Archive www.tinyurl.com/52y7rtjx. The book is available in the Internet Archive's National Emergency Library, which was created in 2020, at the start of the pandemic, and became the target of a lawsuit filed by four major publishers against the Internet Archive. On Sept. 24 the Wired web-site reported www.tinyurl.com/rwbyjda4 that a U.S. Court of Appeals had decided against the Internet Archive, but Baring-Gould's book is still available at the web-site, possibly because the book's out of print, which would make it difficult for the publisher to demonstrate damages.

If you'd like to read the Court's 64-page opinion, it's available on-line at www.tinyurl.com/36zpkb7r. Thanks to Ross Davies for knowing how to find this sort of thing.

Scott Monty has reported on planning for what might well take first prize for the most unusual Sherlockian event: the H&W Con, scheduled on Mar. 1-3 in Sioux City, Iowa www.tinyurl.com/ysmcm5fa; fans of the 2018 "Holmes & Watson" film that starred Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly will gather for a celebration of the "hilarious and timeless comedy classic." Be sure to read Scott's report all the way to the end.

Jan 25 #4 "Why the British Love Belonging to Clubs" was the headline on an article (Dec. 31, 2024) <www.tinyurl.com/mry9kaf7> by Sean Walsh, at The Conservative Woman web-site, and he mentions one of his favorite clubs, found in "the fictional world of Sherlock Holmes." It's not the Diogenes Club, and you are welcome to guess what it was (or just go to the web-site and read the article).

The King's New Year Honours included a knighthood for Stephen Fry (for his work on mental health); he played Mycroft Holmes in "Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows" (2011), recorded "Sherlock Holmes: The Definitive Collection" (2017), and is a patron of the Sherlock Holmes Collection in Portsmouth.

And Eddie Marsan received an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) for services to drama; his many credits include Inspector Lestrade in "Sherlock Holmes" (2009) and "Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows" (2011).

There also is the New Zealand Royal Honours List (created in 1975), which included the Order of Merit for Lee Murray (for services to literature); she was one of the 2024 honorees of the ACD Society, for her short story "Māoriland Blue" in their "The Terror of Blue John Gap Project.

What was Sherlock Holmes' zodiac animal? If your answer was that Holmes was born in the year of the tiger, you're wrong.

There was an interesting article at the Country Life web-site on Jan. 16 <www.tinyurl.com/bjm7f7ms> about the history of the London double-decker bus, particularly interesting for the photograph of a horse-drawn double decker bus in Piccadilly about 1904, when Sherlock Holmes would have seen them, and (who knows) ridden in or on one.

SHERLOC is alive and well on Mars, still contributing to the exploration of the Red Planet. SHERLOC (it's an acronym) has its own entry at Wikipedia <www.tinyurl.com/3nmsx9nh>. Just click on the image of the calibration target to see where it came from.

The National Park Visitor Centre in Princeton was under threat of closure in 2022 (Nov 22 #5), but it was rescued with a £440,000 government grant. The money has now been spent, and the Centre may be shut down, the Devon Air Radio web-site reported on Jan. 11 <tinyurl.com/yc756djk>. The Centre formerly was the Duchy Hotel <www.tinyurl.com/5cpdtttyd>, said to have been "once home to Conan Doyle as he wrote the Hound of the Baskervilles."

The Living Life Fearless blog as reported <www.tinyurl.com/3u75axkj> that Manga Classics has launched a manga series of the Sherlock Holmes stories. *A Study in Scarlet*, adapted by Crystal S. Chan and with artwork by Julien Choy, released this month and available in comic-book shops and at Amazon (\$11.99). *A Scandal in Bohemia and Other Stories* is due in June. Manga Classics <www.mangaclassics.com> has published a long list of titles, and seems to be the modern equivalent of the Classic Comics that so many members of an older generation relied on for an introduction to literature or for writing book reports without actually having read the books.

Jan 25 #5 There are many people who prefer ink-on-paper when it comes to books, and others who prefer digital (and plenty of people, of course, who happily live in both worlds). Smashwords <www.smashwords.com> is an on-line retailer that offers almost a million ebooks (some of them free), and many (but not all of them) self-published. A recent search for ["conan doyle"] yielded 200 hits and ["sherlock holmes"] produced 906 (use quotation marks when searching).

The National Theatre's revival of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" closed on Jan. 25, but National Theatre Live will make it available in cinemas world-wide beginning on Feb. 20; the production seems to be (momentarily) Sherlockian: watch the trailer to see Ncuti Gatwa (Algeron Moncrieff) in Sherlockian costume <www.tinyurl.com/yfu5awfb>.

What was Sherlock Holmes' zodiac animal? Holmes was born in the year of the ox. The new year in the Chinese lunisolar calendar does not begin on Jan. 1. In 1854 the year of the tiger began on Jan. 29, and Jan. 6 was in the last month of the year of the ox.

Ray Betzner was the Cameron Hollyer Lecturer at the Toronto Public Library on Nov. 30, 2024, on "Born in a (Toronto) Bookshop: Vincent Starrett and the World of Sherlock Holmes", and the lecture's now on-line, so you can watch the proceedings at <www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEbSGzMnyzs>. Ray is an entertaining speaker, as well as an expert on Starrett.

Scott Monty and Burt Wolder reviewed 2024 on their "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog with an interview with Ross Davies (who's the editor of the Baker Street Almanac) <www.tinyurl.com/5hf6mpze>. It's just the thing for people who want more news than you get in this newsletter.

Peter Lovesey's article "Wobble in the Aggie", an interesting account of the career of his Sergeant Cribb in novels and on television in the winter 2024 issue of the Mystery Readers Journal <www.tinyurl.com/bddsvcty>, ends with a surprising (and Sherlockian) reason why the television series ended prematurely.

It's not Sherlockian, except for many nice things said about Christopher Morley, but Evan Friss' *The Bookshop: A History of the American Bookstore* (New York: Viking, 2024; 403 pp., \$30.00) is a delightful read for anyone who remembers, or wants to know, what bookshops were like, in times past when there were lots of them.

"Sherlock Holmes' birthday is NOT January 6th after all," according to Erik Deckers, who has deduced what's quite likely (well, possibly) the correct date, and explains his reasoning in detail in a post to Scott Monty's "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog <www.tinyurl.com/3v2pdubv>.

Erin O'Neill (the editor of the Sydney Passengers' journal *The Passengers' Log*) has reported on interesting artwork available from the Chris Beetles Gallery in London. The artists include Conan Doyle's father Charles Altamont Doyle <www.tinyurl.com/y5k5vxk5> and by Conan Doyle's uncle Richard Doyle <www.tinyurl.com/44ebxw96>.

Jan 25 #6 Fowlescombe Farm in south Devon will open eight full-service luxury suites this spring, according to a report at the web-site of The Caterer (Jan. 9) <www.tinyurl.com/2ntvrhnm>. The ruined mansion on the estate, it seems, "may well" be the inspiration for "Baskerville Hall". The web-site of the Farm <www.tinyurl.com/2ntvrhnm> has an account of the mansion's "legend of the hounds."

Sherlockian scholars have noted occasional mistakes in how nobility is described and addressed in the Canon, and an article in Country Life (Nov. 20) <www.tinyurl.com/5u6d5uez> about "The End of Deference: Why the Right Title Matters" offers an instructive look at proper terms of address.

Almost twenty years ago (Dec 06 #1) Stanford University's Community Reading Project published some of the Sherlock Holmes stories weekly, by mail and on the Internet, in nicely annotated facsimiles of the Stories as they first appeared in The Strand Magazine. Max Magee notes that they're still available on-line at <<http://sherlockholmes.stanford.edu/readings.html>>. Don't neglect to click on "more stories".

Max also has noted something that may interest fans of the "Raffles" stories that were written by Conan Doyle's brother-in-law E. W. Hornung: the "Raffles Redux" web-site <www.rafflesredux.com>, where you'll find annotated reprints of all the stories, as well as a play.

Reported: Kerry McGee's "Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia" from the Literary Adventure Society (\$55.00); it's a mail-order audio mystery with clues, souvenirs, and audio, and there's more information (and an audio sample) at their web-site <www.literaryadventuresociety.com>.

There are many (some people would say far too many) ratings of Sherlockian films on the Internet, but Bob Rivers' list of his "top ten" films for The Strand Magazine (Jan. 13, 2017) <www.tinyurl.com/ycx8peas> is more interesting, because he gives his reasons for why he likes them.

Adrian Nebbett has reported discovering a film that's Sherlockian in a minor way: "The Curse of the Living Corpse" (1964), in which Paul Haney (as Chief Constable Barnes) is seen in Sherlockian costume. It's conveniently available at YouTube <[/www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuy6tmw8NuU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuy6tmw8NuU)>.

Cromer, in North Norfolk, is an underrated seaside town with a huge pier and the best fish and chips in the UK, according to the headline on an article in the Daily Mirror (Dec. 28) <www.tinyurl.com/5baf2z4c>. The article also mentions Conan Doyle and Fletcher Robinson, who visited Cromer in 1901, when they stayed in the Royal Links Hotel and were invited to dinner at Cromer Hall. They then went on to Dartmoor, and a ride in a carriage driven by Harry Baskerville, and the result of all that was "The Hound of the Baskervilles".

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).

Jan 25 #7 CNN Travel had a story in 2017 headlined "All-White and Futuristic: Tianjin's Stunning New Library Looks Out of This World" <www.tinyurl.com/3tsuhjp4>; the Tianjin Binhai Library is impressive, and the article also had a grand gallery of images of "the world's most beautiful places to read." However: there's more to the story, as noted in an article at the Atlas Obscura web-site in 2018 <www.tinyurl.com/5nym2267>.

No Comfort for the Dead, by R.P. O'Donnell (New York: Crooked Lane, 2024; 281 pp., \$29.99), is a pleasant Irish murder mystery, set in Castlefreke, a small village not far from Skibbereen; the detective is Emma Daly, the town librarian, who has read (and enjoys remembering) the Sherlock Holmes stories throughout her investigation.

The Beacon Society continues to administer the Fortescue Scholarship Honours Program, and more than 150 people have completed all three exams and have received a Doctorate in Sherlockiana. The 2025 Recertification Exam is available on request from Steve Mason <mason.steve8080@gmail.com>, and there's more information about the program at <www.tinyurl.com/2vt9saym>. The society's goal is "providing teachers, librarians, children's museums, and children's theaters with local resources to bring the magic of Sherlock Holmes to life" <www.beaconsociety.org>.

The Mystery Writers of America have announced the nominees for this year's Edgar Awards, and one of them is Nicholas Shakespeare's *Ian Fleming: The Complete Man* (Apr 24 #4) in the best critical/biographical category. You can see the complete list of nominees at <www.tinyurl.com/muax2ej6>. The winners of the Edgars will be announced on May 1.

The Sherlock Holmes Society of London has always been imaginative: their Well-Readed League <www.tinyurl.com/3je6d8bf> is an informal on-line book group, and now they have their Reformed Diogenes Club, which is planning an excursion to Phantom Peak in Canada Water (a Wild West Frontier Town in London <www.tinyurl.com/carayzdw>, far more convenient than Phantom Peak in Nunavut Territory in Canada, or Phantom Peak in Whatcom County, Wash., in the United States. One of the wonders of modern technology is official lists of geographic names, available on-line for both countries.

Sherlock Holmes: Immortal Detective: Selected Writings of Donald A. Redmond, Volume 2 (193 pp., \$26.95), one of two new titles from the Gasogene Press, is edited by Christopher Redmond and collects many of his father's articles, notes, and essays, from 1983 to 2001, both published and unpublished. Don was among the most literate, intelligent, and entertaining of Sherlockian researchers and authors; the nine-page bibliography at the end of the book shows just how widely his interests ranged. It is grand indeed to have his collected work so easily available.

And *The Sherlock Holmes Review: 2024 Sherlockian Annual* (96 pp., \$31.95), edited by Steven Doyle, is an anthology that ranges from a celebration of Eille Norwood to a tribute to Walter Klinefelter, with Rob Nunn providing "A Snapshot of Sherlockiana as Seen Through Interviews with 100 Sherlockians" and Ira Brad Matetsky discussing the suppression and resurrection of "The Cardboard Box". Gasogene's web-site's at <www.wessexpress.com>.

Jan 25 #8 "Watson" has now debuted on CBS-TV, and many people have (or haven't) seen it, and have (or haven't) enjoyed it. If you've not seen it, the premiere is available on Paramount+ and (thanks to Howard Ostrom for the report) on YouTube <www.tinyurl.com/2jxuss36>. No spoilers here, but the show seems likely to please the CBS-TV viewers who made the CSI and NCIS series (and "Elementary") so popular. The next episodes will air weekly at 9:00 pm beginning on Feb. 16.

Theater news: Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville" is on at the Doris Harper-White Playhouse in Flagstaff, Ariz., through Feb. 2 <www.theatrikos.com>; it also will be produced at the Jewish Community Center in St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 20-Dec. 7 <www.jccstl.com>.

Kate Hamill's "Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson-Apt. 2B" is on at the State Theater in Olympia, Wash., through Feb. 9 <www.harlequinproductions.org>. It also is being performed at the Red Barn Theatre in Key West, Fla., through Feb. 22 <www.redbarntheatre.com>. And it will be produced at Osceola Arts in Kissimmee, Fla., May 30-June 15 <www.osceolaarts.org>.

Ken Ludwig's "The Game's Afoot" is on at the Sutter Street Theatre in Folsom, Calif., through Feb. 16 <www.sutterstreettheatre.com>.

Jeffrey Hatcher's "Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders" is coming up at the Performing Arts Center at Garrett College in McHenry, Md., Feb. 19-Mar. 2 <www.performingartsgc.com>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Professor Moriarty" (a new play) is due at the Majestic Theater in Pottsville, Pa., Feb. 21-Mar. 2; their web-site is at <www.majestictheater.net>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of the Crown Jewel" (Janet Yates Vogt and Mark Friedman) is planned at the Arts Center of Cannon County in Woodbury, Tenn., Feb. 26-Mar. 8 <www.artscenterofcc.com>.

Tim Kelly's version of William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" has been scheduled at the Baldwin Theatre in Royal Oak, Mich., Feb. 27-Mar. 2; website's at <www.stagecrafters.org>.

"Sherlock Holmes: The Last Laugh" is due at St. Thomas Churchill Hall in Warrington, Ches., Apr. 25-26 <www.facebook.com/soupproductionsuk>.

Nick Lane's "Sherlock Holmes and the Hunt for Moriarty" is going to be Nick Lane's third Sherlockian play, performed on tour in Britain by Blackeyed Theatre beginning in September <www.tinyurl.com/y24fb6vn>.

C. P. Stancich's new "Sherlock Holmes and the Greek Chorus" is due at the Arapaho Center in Lafayette, Colo., in November <www.tclstage.org>.

Mark Shanahan's "A Sherlock Carol" will be performed at the Ottawa Little Theatre in Ottawa, Ont., Dec. 3-20 <www.ottawalittletheatre.com>. We can be sure there will be many more productions of this popular (and seasonal) play in 2025; there were at least 17 productions in 2024. And at least 38 productions of Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville".

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