

Nov 18 #1

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press

Modern technology has made it possible to abbreviate the traditional forecast for the birthday festivities in New York in January; details available at www.bakerstreetirregulars.com/2018/11/20/the-2019-bsi-weekend. Space is limited at some events, so don't delay registering.

The Dr. John H. Watson Fund offers financial assistance to all Sherlockians (membership in the BSI is not required) who might otherwise not be able to participate in the weekend's festivities. A carefully pseudonymous John H. Watson presides over the fund and welcomes contributions, which can be made by check payable to John H. Watson and sent (without return address on the envelope) to Dr. Watson, care of The Baker Street Irregulars, at 7938 Mill Stream Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278; your letters are forwarded unopened, and Dr. Watson will acknowledge your generosity.

Just in time for holiday hinting (or shopping), Randall Stock's annual informative nominations for the best Sherlock Holmes books/DVDs of the year is on-line at www.bestofsherlock.com/sherlock-gifts.htm#newgifts; he also has recommendations of older Sherlockiana.

Those who fondly remember the days when one could listen to "Bob and Ray" on the radio in the 1950s will welcome Jennie Paton's discovery that one of their "Sherlock Sage" segments (with Bob Elliott as Sherlock Sage and Ray Goulding as Dr. Clyde) is available at YouTube www.tinyurl.com/y8xjss8w; and yes, YouTube does audio as well as video.

Thomas D. Utecht ("Arthur Charpentier") died on Nov. 9. He worked in marketing communications for Macy's and then for the U.S. Navy, and discovered the Sherlockian world at a John Bennett Shaw workshop in 1984. Thom was a founder of the Montague Street Lodgers and a stalwart member of the Three Garridebs, and (like Holmes) was an inveterate pipe-smoker; he was an enthusiastic attendee at Autumn in Baker Street, and received his Investiture from The Baker Street Irregulars in 1984.

The next 221B Con will be held in Atlanta on Apr. 5-7; registration is now open at www.221bcon.com, where you'll also find information on guests and performers and much more (it's billed as a "fan con for all things Sherlock Holmes"). Bob Stek's enthusiastic report on the 2014 event will be found on the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog at www.tinyurl.com/y8y3muvs.

A passing mention of George Charles Haité, reported by Karen Murdock from a newspaper in New Zealand, led to an interesting discovery: Haité was a designer, painter, illustrator and writer who illustrated an article on "The History of the Strand" in the first (Jan. 1891) issue of The Strand Magazine and (far more important to Sherlockians) created the iconic image that graced the cover of the magazine for decades; it also appeared on the covers of the first British editions of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES and THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES. There is an excellent entry about him at Wikipedia; his original artwork was on display at the "Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die" exhibition in London in 2014-2015, and is reproduced in the catalog of the exhibition (Quarterly Press) and in Alex Werner's book about the exhibition (Ebury).

Nov 18 #2 The PM was dressed up as Sherlock Holmes for Halloween, according to a Huffington Post story <www.tinyurl.com/yaaxldar>, and was accompanied by his wife, costumed as a zombie bride. Add another name to the list of Sherlockian politicians: Justin Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada; there's a photograph of him as Sherlock Holmes in the article. And there was a report on Yahoo Canada Style that some Canadians were wondering what exactly might have been in Trudeau's pipe, two weeks after marijuana was legalized in Canada.

Further to the report (Sep 18 #4) on Canadian skater Stephen Gololev performing in an imaginative costume to music from the film "Sherlock Holmes" in a competition in Slovakia, Jennie Paton has found video of him competing at the Minto Summer Skate in Canada <www.tinyurl.com/ya9bsrhl>.

Edward J. Van Liere was a prolific contributor to Sherlockian literature in the 1950s and 1960s, and a co-founder of The Scion of the Four in Morgantown, W. Va., and a new book provides much more about his life and career. William A. Neal's QUIET ADVOCATE (Morgantown: West Virginia University Libraries, 2017; 264 pp., \$14.95) focuses on Van Liere's many contributions medical education in the state (where during the depression he was successful in establishing a four-year medical school). His Sherlockian writings were collected in A DOCTOR ENJOYS SHERLOCK HOLMES (1959), and he was a contributor to Michael Harrison's anthology BEYOND BAKER STREET (1976); Neal's biography has a fine chapter devoted to Van Liere as a Sherlockian.

For those who are into Sherlockian games, MMORPG notes that Wizard101 has released a "Great Detective" bundle starring Sherlock Bones and Dr. Rolf; details (and images) are at <www.tinyurl.com/y83gnxds> and (with video) at <www.tinyurl.com/y7zo7r26>.

"Can you solve the secret werewolf riddle?" is the riddle-of-the-month at TED-Ed, discovered and reported by Samantha Wolov; there's Sherlockian artwork, but otherwise it's not Sherlockian <www.tinyurl.com/yd4eg444>.

"I sent down to Stanford's for the Ordnance map," Sherlock Holmes said to Watson (in "The Hound of the Baskervilles"). The iconic London bookshop, which was established by Edwin Stanford in 1853, is moving to a new location (just round the corner in Covent Garden); the Stanfords web-site has a section on the shop's history at <www.stanfords.co.uk/our-history>. If you don't recognize the name, that's because it's mis-spelled Stamford in many editions of the Canon.

Publicity for the "Holmes & Watson" film is gearing up: Kelly Blau kindly reported that the N.Y. Times published an interview with Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly on Nov. 4 <www.tinyurl.com/y9am3fam>, including their explanation of how they chose who would play Holmes and who would play Watson.

"A box of Watson's memorabilia of Sherlock Holmes has been stolen from his club in Piccadilly," is the premise of the first in the Sherlock geocache series set in London <www.tinyurl.com/y97oylfe>, reported by Jennie Paton. Geocaching is the modern version of a Victorian outdoor recreational activity called letterboxing, participants now use GPS technology, and there's an excellent article about geocaching at Wikipedia.

Nov 18 #3 Nicholas Utechin's THE COMPLETE PAGET PORTFOLIO (Indianapolis: Gasogene Books, 2108; 274 pp., \$46.95) is a delightful tribute to Sidney Paget, offering high-quality reproductions of all his Sherlockian illustrations from The Strand Magazine, and (for the first time) an opportunity to see 22 (that's almost all) pieces of the original artwork known to have survived shown (in full color) side-by-side with the illustrations published in the magazine; the book also includes full-color portraits of Sherlock Holmes that weren't published in the Strand. Highly recommended. The publisher's web-site is at <www.gasogenebooks.com>, and you can listen to an interesting interview with Nick at <www.ihose.co/ihose156>.

Gasogene also has published Terence Faherty's THE TRUE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE ANNOTATED EDITION (2018; 153 pp., \$19.95); it's a collection of his amusing "earlier drafts" of the stories, some of them reprinted from the annual Sherlockian issues of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, and others new, and all great fun. Faherty's Sherlockian and non-Sherlockian bibliography can be found at his web-site <www.terencefaherty.com>.

The long wait for Pokémon's "Detective Pikachu" film is scheduled for release on May 11; it's based on the company's Nintendo game, and there's an amusing 3-minute official trailer at <www.tinyurl.com/ybszcx68>.

Stan Lee died on Nov. 12. He was a legend in the world of comic books, and famous for creating a new world of super-heroes for Marvel Comics. In 2008 he told an interviewer that "There have been millions of detective stories over the years. Many of them are forgettable. Somehow Sherlock Holmes has endured, mainly because no one could write a detective story as brilliantly as Conan Doyle and nobody could come up with a character as interesting and flawed as Sherlock Holmes." And two years later he explained that "I know what I loved about Conan Doyle's work was he made his characters so real. I mean not only me, but the people that read Sherlock Holmes felt that they knew him." The "Marvel Preview" series (billed as "Stan Lee Presents") had a two-part "The Hound of the Baskervilles" in 1976, and he had author credit for "Spidey Super Stories: Sherlock Spidey" in The Electric Company in 1977.

The Strand Magazine (the modern version that's edited by Andrew Gulli) continues to offer a wide variety of Sherlockian merchandise at its web-site, including an attractive and artistic wall calendar for next year (\$24.95); the URL is <www.strandmag.com/product/sherlockholmes-calendar-2019>.

"Live from the Red Carpet" is the title of the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" report on this year's "From Gillette to Brett" conference in Bloomington, Ind., on Oct. 5-7 <www.tinyurl.com/y9lyjjh5>. There were 150 people on hand for the festivities, and you can hear all about it at the podcast.

"I know perfectly well how unneptile you are about aunts," the late Ronald Knox wrote in his Miles Bredon novel DOUBLE CROSS PURPOSES (1937), Stu Nelan has noted (on p. 155 in his copy of the Dover edition), and he wonders just what "unneptile" means. Google is of no assistance, and it's possible that Knox, who enjoyed word-play, invented the word. Has anyone seen the word used anywhere else?

Nov 18 #4 "American Is Killed by Bow and Arrow on Remote Indian Island" was the headline on the N.Y. Times article (Nov. 21) about the death of John Allen Chau, who attempted to go ashore on North Sentinel (one of the Andaman Islands) apparently in hopes of converting the tribesmen to Christianity. The Indian government has banned all access to the islands, and the seven fishermen who brought Chau to the island have been arrested and charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder; the government also has announced that although charges have been filed against "unknown persons" for killing Chau, it is virtually impossible to prosecute members of the protected tribes, or to recover his body.

Thanks to YouTube, admirers of the Brigadier Gerard can see him in action in "The Fighting Eagle" (1927) <www.tinyurl.com/ybx8ap8t>, and in "How the Brigadier Won His Medal" (1954) <www.tinyurl.com/y74nymv3>.

There's additional news for admirers of the Brigadier: the British Library has acquired the manuscripts for five of the first eight stories, and Randall Stock has a detailed report on the manuscripts, and their history, at his "Best of Sherlock" web-site <www.tinyurl.com/y8gmfuo8>. The survival of the manuscripts was reported more than two years ago (Mar 16 #1), and it is nice indeed that they will now be readily available to scholars.

Melvin Ragin ("Wah Wah Watson") died on Oct. 24. A guitarist and session musician, he was famous for his skills with the wah-wah pedal and in 1976 recorded an LP album "Elementary" that showed him on the cover with deer-stalker and calabash; you can see the cover and listen to an extended release version of the album at <www.tinyurl.com/y8cgxfau>.

Flicker Alley (the company that distributed the restored versions of William Gillette's 1916 "Sherlock Holmes" and Wallace Beery's 1925 "The Lost World") also offers "Douglas Fairbanks: A Modern Musketeer" (a 5-DVD set of digitally remastered versions of 11 films that include his 1916 "The Mystery of the Leaping Fish") (with Fairbanks as Coke Enneyday in Sherlockian costume) and a 22-page booklet with an essay about Fairbanks and his films by Jeffrey Vance and Tony Maietta (\$69.95) <www.flickeralley.com>. The set offers a grand opportunity to see some of Fairbanks' classic films (as well as one of the truly weird Sherlockian films).

The BoardRoom is a speakeasy (they're coming back into fashion, even though liquor's legal now) in Los Angeles <www.patinagroup.com/the-boardroom>, and Karen Murdoch spotted a story in the Los Angeles Times that noted that the cocktails are named after famous authors, including a "gin-forward Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" (the recipe is Plymouth gin, Dolin Blanc, Braulio, orange bitters, and lemon peel). For those not versed in cocktails: Dolin Blanc's a vermouth, Braulio's a liqueur, and gin-forward appears to be a gin that's not flavor-added and thus tastes like juniper berries).

"Cats on the Page" is an exhibition at the British Library, that will run from Nov. 27 to Mar. 17 <www.tinyurl.com/y7cjczvo>; you will have a chance to "renew your acquaintance with familiar favorites including *Mog*, *Winnie and Wilbur*, and T. S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (the last of which includes "Macavity: The Mystery Cat" and "Gus: The Theatre Cat", both of interest to Sherlockians).

Nov 18 #5 "Everyone needs a mother who keeps them grounded," according to Benedict Cumberbatch, who told GQ that he bounded home, full of excitement, after being told that he would be the next Sherlock Holmes, but he was soon put in his place. "The first thing my mother said when I mentioned I'd got the part was: 'You don't have the right nose.'" Noted by Karen Murdock in Patrick Kidd's "The Times Diary" in The Times on Nov. 2.

Juris Jurjevics died on Nov. 7. He had a long career in the publishing industry, and in 1986 was one of the founders of the Soho Press, to publish "books that deserve to be published, but that the bigger houses can't afford to do." His obituary in the N.Y. Times noted that earlier, as editor in chief for E. P. Dutton, he "scooped up a manuscript that had crossed his desk on a hunch that readers would clamor for a Sherlock Holmes revival." The novel was Nicholas Meyer's THE SEVEN-PER-CENT SOLUTION (1974).

Hospitality & Catering News reported on Oct. 13 <www.tinyurl.com/yakcegyz> that Adrian Martin, newly appointed Master Cook at Simpson's-in-the-Strand (an establishment mentioned in the Canon), has delved into its archives to create a spectacular new Bill of Fare. And it's spectacular indeed.

Basil Rathbone with two Hounds of the Baskervilles? Not quite, but there's an amusing signed photograph of Rathbone coming to auction at Written Word Autographs on Dec. 15 <www.tinyurl.com/y8kg4wnk>.

Further to the item (Apr 16 #4) on the metal plates apparently created in 1940 to celebrate Macmillan's publication of Vincent Starrett's 221B: STUDIES IN SHERLOCK HOLMES, Greg Ruby has continued his research on "Sherlock Holmes and the American Bank Note Mystery" and posted his latest findings at the Fourth Garrideb web-site <www.tinyurl.com/ycvgvpy7>.

Greg also notes <www.tinyurl.com/y7a7hdfm> the appointment of Hugh Laurie as CBE (that's Companion of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for services to drama in the 2018 New Year Honours List. Laurie read "The Hound of the Baskervilles" on BBC Radio 2 (in 2002) and played the Holmes-inspired House in the long-running Fox television series, and will be seen as Mycroft in the film "Holmes & Watson" due in theaters in December.

Peter Brace died on Oct. 29. He began his long acting career in 1947, and went on to being a stuntman and stunt coordinator, with more than a hundred credits; he played the hangman in the 1990 television film "Hands of a Murderer" (also known as "Sherlock Holmes and the Prince of Crime").

Karen Murdock has noted an article in the Irish Times (Nov. 10) about how craft breweries are becoming creative with artwork on their cans. Yellowbelly Beer in Wexford offers an "It's Elementary" India Pale Ale that has Sherlockian artwork <www.yellowbellybeer.ie/beer-type/its-elementary>.

Visitors to Edinburgh might want to stay at the Sherlock Apartments at 14 Picardy Place; the three serviced apartments are named for Doyle, Watson, and Moriarty, with nicely modern furnishings (according to on-line images). You can see the Doyle Residence at <www.tinyurl.com/y7wklvrh>, the Moriarty Residence at <www.tinyurl.com/y8xp8y7a>, and all three with a Google search (Conan Doyle, it should be noted, was born at 11 Picardy Place).

Nov 18 #6 George A. Cooper died on Nov. 16. He began his acting career on stage in Britain in the 1940s and then moved to television, performing for almost 50 years. He was Mr. Fawcett in "The Croxley Master" in the BBC series "The Stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" (1967), Inspector Gregson in "A Study in Scarlet" and "The Greek Interpreter" in Peter Cushing's "Sherlock Holmes" series (1968), and Inspector Beedel in "The Missing Witness Sensation" in "The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes" (1971).

Theatrics: John Longenbaugh's "Sherlock Holmes & the Case of the Christmas Carol" is being performed at the Company OnStage in Houston, Texas, through Dec. 22 <www.companionstage.org>.

Ken Ludwig's "The Game's Afoot, or Holmes for the Holidays" on at the Runway Theatre in Grapevine, Texas, through Dec. 17 <www.runwaytheatre.com>; and at the Richardson Theatre Centre in Richardson, Texas, through Dec. 23 <www.richardsontheatrecentre.net>. It's also scheduled at the Performing Arts Center in Tarpon Springs, Fla., Dec. 8-16 <www.tarponarts.org>.

Tim Kelly's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" will be performed at the Salterton Playhouse in Salterton, Devon, Dec. 3-8 <www.saltertondrama.co.uk>.

Tim Kelly's adaptation of Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes" will be performed at the Colonnade Theatre in Ringgold, Ga., Dec. 6-8 <www.colonnadecenter.org>.

Jeffrey Hatcher's "Holmes and Watson" will be performed at Theatre Lawrence in Lawrence, Kans., Jan. 18-27 <www.wp.theatrelawrence.com>. Also at Stage West in Fort Worth, Texas, May 30-June 20 <www.sagewest.org>.

"Sherlock Holmes: Das Musical" (Holmes and Watson investigate their first case) will premiere (in German) at the First Stage Theater in Hamburg Jan. 20, 2019 <www.sherlockholmes-musical.de>; it's billed as "ein rasantes Musical über Liebe, Tod und Leidenschaft".

Ken Ludwig's "Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery" will be performed at the Black Box Theatre in LaGrange, Ga., Jan. 24-Feb. 2 <www.lsparts.org>; at the Hill Country Community Theatre in Cottonwood Shore, Tex., Feb. 14-Mar. 3 <www.thehcct.org>; at the Studio Theatre in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Mar. 29-Apr. 7 <www.tinyurl.com/ybcw83r6>; at the Falcon Theatre in Newport, Ky., May 3-18 <www.falcontheatre.net>; and at the Bellevue Little Theatre in Bellevue, Neb., May 3-19 <www.bellevuelittletheatre.weebly.com>. Also at the Lowe Auditorium in Upper Ferntree Gully, Vic., Aug. 8-31; website at <www.1812theatre.com.au>.

Steven Canny and John Nicholson's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" will be performed at the Regis Centre in Bognor Regis, West Sussex, Feb. 7-9, 2019 <www.regiscentre.co.uk>.

"Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Music" (performed by the Nashville Symphony) is scheduled at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 9 <www.tinyurl.com/yc75uvxe>.

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