I AM AN OMNIVOROUS READER

Book reviews by DAVID JONES, NICHOLAS UTECHIN and ROGER JOHNSON

Y Cylch Brith - Stori gyntaf Sherlock Holmes yn y Gymraeg (The Speckled Band; the first Sherlock Holmes story published in Welsh) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, translated by Eurwyn Pierce Jones. *Y Lolfa*. 2014. 60pp. £3.95. (pbk)

At last a story of the Great Detective has been translated into Welsh! All Welsh people speak English, of course, but the Welsh language is thriving and is spoken by approximately half a million people in Wales and many more throughout the world. The selection of this story, Conan Doyle's favourite, to be the first translated was made by the Executive Committee of The Deerstalkers of Welshpool, whose Chairman, Roy Upton-Holder, and President, Roger Llewellyn, must be delighted with its publication by Y Lolfa Press of Talybont, Aberystwyth.

The translation is a triumph. Eurwyn Pierce Jones has produced a readable and exciting modern version of the Victorian-styled English narrative — a daunting challenge! This translation is, I believe, the hundredth language in which one or more of the Sherlock Holmes stories are now available. The book will appeal greatly to the young and not so young reader and to the serious Holmesian collector and, of course, to those students of linguistics who may be thinking of studying the oldest living language in Europe. *Y gem sydd ar draed!* (The game is afoot!)

DJ

Sherlock Holmes - The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die compiled by Alex Werner. *Ebury Publishing*. 2014. 256pp. £25.00 (hbk)

The title is that of the Museum of London's Holmes exhibition — Werner is its curator. This is emphatically not a catalogue of the show but a publication to accompany and publicise it.

The central essay by the eminent historian Sir David Cannadine concentrates on the "limitations of Conan Doyle's mode of metropolitan evocation" and, fascinatingly, the contradiction between Holmes the superman and Holmes the "*fin de siècle* aesthete and decadent". Professor John Stokes picks up on the Bohemian side and Pat Hardy (Curator of Paintings, Prints and Drawings at the Museum) contributes an interesting essay on "The Art of Sherlock Holmes", with an emphasis on illustrations of London. Holmesians will find little they didn't already know about Sidney Paget's influence on the iconography of Holmes in an article by Werner himself; and there is a slight feeling of padding with the BFI's Nathalie Morris writing up Holmes's silent film history (it was bad luck that the book was at the binders when the great Gillette discovery was made public!)

In production terms, there are some annoying errors that should have been picked up at the proof-reading stage; but these are balanced by some lovely picture reproductions (especially the atmospheric London photogravures made by Alvin Langdon Coburn early last century).

This is a solid and welcome addition to any Holmesian library — but I am glad to hear that the Museum may be reconsidering its original decision not to publish a catalogue of some of the remarkable items brought together in the exhibition.

NU

In The Company of Sherlock Holmes – Stories Inspired by the Holmes Canon edited by Laurie R King and Leslie S. Klinger. *Pegasus Books*. 2014. xii + 260pp. From £9.81 (hbk)

Yes, this is *that* book! The collection of Holmes-inspired stories (note: not pastiches) over which the big court case was fought between Les Klinger and the Conan Doyle Estate as to whether a fee should be paid to the latter.

It is excellent to see a second outing of tales by famous authors — straightaway the names of Sara Paretsky, Jeffrey Deaver and Michael Dirda should be recognised. This volume is a follow-up to *A Study in Sherlock* and is just as intriguing: in a world replete with second-rate pastiches that may need listing but often not reviewing, this is a welcome selection of tales, created — as the editors write — by "men and women [who] still find Holmes the ideal vessel to carry a variety of stories, aspirations, reflections".

There are some curios: an uninspiring strip cartoon adventure by Leah Moore and John Rippon, and 25 pages that could have been put to more interesting use than updating *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for the modern social networking scene (by Andrew Grant). To counterbalance: Michael Sims intrigues with his take on the personal memoirs of … Silver Blaze; and Jeffrey Deaver pulls off so sudden a shift in plot and emphasis ("The Adventure of the Laughing Fisherman") that you'll scarce believe it's happened.

NU

How Watson Learned the Trick by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. *Walker Books & Royal Collection Trust*. 2014. 24pp (hbk)

Arthur Conan Doyle was, when he chose, a first-rate comic writer. In 1896, to help raise funds for Edinburgh University, he wrote "The Field Bazaar", a clever spoof of his own stories, and in 1922 he was one of the authors invited to contribute to the library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House. *How Watson Learned the Trick* was the result, a very short self-parody, written in his small neat hand on tiny sheets of paper that were then exquisitely bound for the Dolls' House. This beautiful facsimile of the unique original is a real treasure. It comes in a lovely gold-stamped cloth-bound package, with an attractive, informative booklet.

A Sherlock Holmes Monopoly: An Unofficial Guide and Outdoor Activity by JP Sperati. *Irregular Special Press*. 2014. 199pp. Deluxe full colour edition £18.99 (pbk)

You may think there's no obvious link between the great detective and the standard London version of the game, but as you follow Holmes around the locations on the Monopoly board, preferably walking in London with the book in your hand, you'll find yourself entranced by the many curious connections that Mr Sperati has uncovered. Splendid photographs contrast the Victorian scene with today's, and as a bonus there's a cleverly devised Sherlock Holmes Monopoly treasure hunt, which I fancy will be great fun to play. It's a winner!

Fan Phenomena: Sherlock Holmes edited by Tom Ue & Jonathan Cranfield. *Intellect Books*. 2014. 153pp. £15.50 (pbk)

Most of the contributors spoke at last summer's conference *Sherlock Holmes: Past and Present*: we have the editors on fan culture, and Holmes and Shakespeare, Jonathan Barnes on writing audio drama, Luke Kuhns on pastiche, Benjamin Poore on Moriarty. The exceptions are Noel Brown on *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century*, Russell Merritt on Sheldon Reynolds' 1954 TV series, and Shane Peacock on writing the *Boy Sherlock Holmes* novels. There are interviews with the creators of the *Young Sherlock Holmes Adventures* graphic novels, the co-author of the *Sherlock Holmes: Year One* graphic novels, and the authors of *Steampunk Holmes: Legacy of the Nautilus*, *Dead Man's Land* and *The House of Silk*. It's a rich, varied and most interesting mixture, let down by an unnecessarily small sans serif font in the main articles.

Sherlockian Saturdays At The Pratt edited by William Hyder, BSI. *Baker Street Irregulars Press*. 2014. viii + 192pp. $21.95 plus postage (pbk)

Inspired by Christopher Morley's childhood memories, Baltimore area Sherlockians established a *Weekend With Sherlock Holmes* in 1980. The Six Napoleons and the Carlton Club still team up with the Enoch Pratt Library to present an annual symposium, and Bill Hyder has selected papers from the remarkable variety of canonical scholarship presented at what has long been *Saturday With Sherlock Holmes*. It's a splendid collection: twenty-eight papers, by names familiar (Steven Rothman, Evelyn Herzog, Peter Calamai, John Pforr) and less so (Sandra J Ailiff, W Glenn Lieske, Deborah Clarke) on a fascinating variety of topics.

Investigating Sherlock Holmes: Solved & Unsolved Mysteries by Hartley R Nathan and Clifford S Goldfarb. *Mosaic Press*. 2014. xvi + 209pp. £13.45 (pbk)

Two leading Canadian lawyers also happen to be leading Holmesian scholars, whose work has been published in *Canadian Holmes*, *The Baker Street Journal* and elsewhere. Most of the twelve excellent pieces in this book (which include contributions by Joseph Kessel and John Linsenmeyer) were given as talks to the Bootmakers of Toronto, and they all have a very engaging freshness. The law naturally features, and since both authors are Jewish they can offer with authority provisional identifications of the "Hebrew rabbi", "old Abrahams" and Ikey Sanders, as well as a look at Jewish stereotypes in the canon. And did you know that the solicitor Sir George Lewis, one of the few real-life people referred to by name in the stories, was Jewish? This is a very welcome book.

The Real World of Sherlock by BJ Rahn. *Amberley*. 2014. 256pp. £20.00 (hbk)

Just "Sherlock", so we know which market the publisher has in mind, but this is actually an absorbing account of how a Scottish-born member of an artistic Anglo-Irish family came to create a character that still, nearly 130 years later, defines the Great Detective in the public mind. BJ Rahn examines fictional and factual antecedents (though she seems unaware of the disappearance in 1881 of a Mr Stanger, which was investigated by a detective named Scherer), and compares Sherlock Holmes's methods with those of the police. Even old hands will learn something from this book, and find pleasure in doing so.

Sherlock: Chronicles by Steve Tribe. *BBC Books*. 2014. 320pp. £25.00 (hbk)

This is what we hoped *Sherlock: The Casebook* would be: the story of how and why the mad idea of making Sherlock Holmes as modern again as he is in Conan Doyle's tales spawned an international phenomenon. Mr Tribe has interviewed the writers (including the elusive Stephen Thompson) and actors, which is good, but here too are interviews with designer Arwel Wyn Jones, composers David

Arnold and Michael Price, directors Paul McGuigan and Toby Haynes, sfx master Jean-Claude Deguara, and more, so we get a truly authoritative look at what makes *Sherlock* so successful. There are the scripts of scenes that were cut, comparisons between passages from the canon and extracts from the scripts, and any number of gorgeous photos — stills, of course, and, more interestingly, pictures taken behind the scenes. It's a definitive companion to a wonderful series.

Benedict Cumberbatch: Transition Completed by Lynnette Porter. *MX Publishing*. 2014. 286pp. £11.99 (pbk)

Since *Benedict Cumberbatch, In Transition* Mr C has consolidated his position as both a really important actor and a genuine star. Dr Porter's new book continues her survey of his work, his approach to that work, and his fame, in a year that has seen him on screen in *The Fifth Estate*, *12 Years a Slave*, *August: Osage County*, the second *Hobbit* film, and *The Imitation Game*, and in preparation for *Hamlet* on stage. Not to mention *Neverwhere*, *Rumpole of the Bailey* and *Cabin Pressure* on radio, and of course *Sherlock* in television. The book isn't (thank goodness) a fan's act of worship; rather, it's an admirer's exploration of how a decent, intelligent man has become a star while remaining a major actor.

A Scandal in Bohemia by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, adapted and illustrated by Petr Kopl. *MX Publishing*. 2014. 164pp. £9.99 (pbk)

There are actually two adventures here, the other being "The Speckled Band", and both serve to show Holmes that women can be just as courageous and intelligent as men — much to Watson's satisfaction. The result is a feast for the eye and the imagination. The vivid, exciting text, translated by Paul & Jana Simpson, is enhanced by artwork that's by turns deeply atmospheric and devastatingly funny — and often beautiful. The original Czech edition won Petr Kopl the 2013 Fabula Rasa Czech Award for the best script, best artwork and best comic book.

The Hound of the Baskervilles by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, adapted and illustrated by Petr Kopl. *MX Publishing*. 2014. 164pp. £9.99 (pbk)

This is actually the first volume in Mr Kopl's *Victoria Regina* series, of which *A Scandal in Bohemia* is the fourth, so don't be surprised to find the narrative intersecting with the events of *Dracula*, *The Lost World*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and even *Rossum's Universal Robots*, as well as other exploits of Holmes and Watson. Look closely at the illustrations and you'll see all sorts of unexpected details — though you may be too engrossed in the story on first reading.

Young Sherlock: Stone Cold by Andrew Lane. *Macmillan Children's Books*. 2014. 320pp. £12.99 (hbk)

After exotic adventures in China and spooky ones in Ireland, Sherlock is sent to Oxford to study logic under Mycroft's friend Charles Dodgson. He also attends an anatomy lecture and learns that body parts are being stolen from the pathology laboratories. Unable to resist investigating, Sherlock is soon grateful for the courage and resourcefulness of his chum Mattie Arnatt. The mystery is ingenious, the adventure thrilling, and, as we see Sherlock Holmes develop from a boy to the man we know, we also meet the young Reginald Musgrave, and learn something about Mortimer Maberley. Like its predecessors, *Stone Cold* is a cracker.

Moriarty by Anthony Horowitz. *Orion*. 2014. vi + 310pp. £19.99 (hbk)

"Does anyone really believe what happened at the Reichenbach Falls?" The narrator is a Pinkerton man, Frederick Chase, who has arrived at Meiringen just in time to join Athelney Jones of Scotland Yard in identifying the body of James Moriarty. Chase, on the trail of a vicious American criminal who has a connection with Moriarty, makes a refreshingly different reporter, appropriate to the dark and bloody events that ensue when his elusive quarry makes his presence felt in London. Chase and Jones, whose opinion of Holmes and his methods has changed since the Pondicherry Lodge case, make a formidable team. (Jones's epiphany is recounted by Dr Watson in the story of the Three Monarchs, which forms a neat appendix to the novel.) I confess that I prefer *Moriarty* to *The House of Silk*.

Sherlock Holmes in Montague Street: Sherlock Holmes's Early Investigations by Arthur Morrison, edited, Holmes-ed, and with original material by David Marcum. *MX Publishing*. 2014. Vol. I, 241pp; Vol. II, 241pp. £9.99 each volume (pbk)

After "The Final Problem" in December 1893, *The Strand Magazine* filled the gap with detective stories by Arthur Morrison. It's been suggested that the sleuth, Martin Hewitt, was the young Mycroft Holmes, but Mr Marcum has a more plausible and attractive theory: that he was Sherlock, early in his career as an investigator. With surprisingly little tweaking, Morrison's tales are remarkably convincing in their new guise, and, since he was a good writer, the results are very engaging. Meanwhile, the Martin Hewitt stories still exist in their original state and aren't hard to find.

In brief

Most earlier collections of parody and pastiche written during Conan Doyle's lifetime are out of print, so *A Bedside Book of Early Sherlockian Parodies and Pastiches* compiled and edited by Charles Press (MX; £12.99) is very welcome. The stories and snippets

include work by JM Barrie, O Henry, Bret Harte, Ring Lardner and many others. It's good to see the Wild Wood episode from *The Wind in the Willows* recognised as a tribute to Sherlock Holmes!

The first volume in *The 223B Casebook Series* sets a high standard. *The Early Punch Parodies of Sherlock Holmes* edited by Bill Peschel (Peschel Press; £9.56) contains RC Lehmann's wickedly funny exploits of Picklock Holes, with spoofs and satires by PG Wodehouse, CL Graves, EV Lucas, and Ronald Knox's brother "Evoe", as well as the prolific Anon. Verse, reviews, cartoons too, attractively presented, with interesting editorial notes.

Last year the drama company Enter Stage Right toured south-eastern England with Claire Malcomson's *The Hound of the Baskervilles: An Adaptation for the Stage*, and will take it on the road again in 2015. The story is cleverly and effectively dramatised, with the legend of the Hound performed as a folk play, and a neat twist at the end (MX; £9.99).

The Elementary Sherlock Holmes: Things You Didn't Know About Literature's Greatest Detective (Portico; £9.99) is a nice little volume for dipping into, though the mention of "*Mrs Beeton's Christmas Annual"* and the assertion that the Sherlock Holmes Museum's address at 239 Baker Street was officially changed to 221B show that it's not wholly reliable.

Following John Gibson's introduction and Laurie R King's foreword, *Project Two, to One, Be*, edited by Carrie Carlson & Lynn Gale (MX; £9.99) contains nearly 140 pages of essays, long and short, about Undershaw, enhanced by photographs and original artwork — some, like Riley Stark's cover design, outstanding. All royalties go to the Undershaw campaign.

To date MX has published new editions of six tales from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, at £6.99 each. The illustrations by P James Macaluso Jr are eccentric, clever, beautifully presented, witty, and bang up to date, being full-colour photographs of creations in Lego, each a scene depicted by Sidney Paget in *The Strand Magazine*. Ideal presents for the young Holmesian in your life.

Dan Andriacco's tales of Sebastian McCabe and Jeff Cody follow an appealing tradition dating back to Anthony Boucher's *The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars*. They're quality fair-play detective stories about a Sherlock Holmes devotee. After four novels, all highly recommended, Dr Andriacco's latest book is *Rogues Gallery* (MX; £8.99), a collection of witty and ingenious short stories.

New Sherlock Holmes adventures are being published in such quantities that there isn't space even to review all the good ones. The better examples that have appeared in the last six months include: *Sherlock Holmes: The Scottish Question, or Sons of the Thistle* by Mike Hogan (MX; £8.99); *Sherlock Holmes — The Golden Years: Five New Post-Retirement Adventures* by Kim H Krisco (MX; £10.99); *Sherlock Holmes: Gods of War* by James Lovegrove (Titan; £7.99); *The Last Confession of Sherlock Holmes* by Kieran Lyne (MX; £8.99); *Sherlock Holmes: The Spirit Box* by George Mann (Titan; £7.99); *Two Hundred and Twenty-One Baker Streets* edited by David Thomas Moore (Abaddon Books; £7.99); *Sherlock Holmes & the Case of the Twain Papers* by Roger Riccard (Irregular Special Press; £8.50); *A Biased Judgement: The Sherlock Holmes Diaries, 1897* by Geri Schear (MX; £10.99); *Sherlock Holmes: Disquiet at Albany* by NM Scott (Book Guild Publishing; £8.99); and *The Final Page of Baker Street* by Daniel D Victor (MX; £8.99).