Theatre reviews

by Laura Sparks, Stephen Wallace, and Mark Jones

Harry Meacher as Sherlock Holmes and Guy Hepworth as Arthur Conan Doyle

Sherlock Holmes and the Man Who Believed in Fairies by F. R. Maher. Coed Celyn Productions (Wales).

FOLLOWING its successful run at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh in 2024, *Sherlock Holmes and The Man Who Believed in Fairies* returned to stage in Greenwich in October 2025 and members of the Society were on hand to help crack the case… This is a quirky, clever play which centres on Conan Doyle's difficult relationship with his greatest creation. However, this time it is a two-way street with Holmes expressing his exasperation with Conan Doyle's "spiritualism and general fake foolery" (Act One, Scene Two).

Holmes has come out of retirement. "Bored with bees", he is now in his sunset years and has become quite cantankerous, a trait worsened by discovering his reputation is in tatters on account of his creator believing in fairies. To makes matters more problematic, Holmes has been told that if he attempts to do anything about this, he will most likely experience another fall off the Reichenbach Falls or perhaps something more disturbing. Luckily, Holmes's every faithful sidekick Watson, as loyal and charming as ever, is on hand to lighten the mood.

Holmes acts the true detective, going out of his way to investigate thoroughly the case and explain to the audience, with the help of Watson, how Conan Doyle came to be hoodwinked by "two minxes". The show is also suffused with dialogue that drew chuckles from the audience, from the canonical "Women are never entirely to be trusted, Watson. Not even the best of them..." to the rather less faithful "Miss Hudson..... you haven't been tidying up!"

Members of the society were fortunate to have time to speak to playwright Fiona R. Maher about her enthusiasm for the project. Maher said: "I came

to write this play after giving a talk on the Cottingley fairies hoax at a bizarre magicians' convention - think a roomful of Derren Browns with one Reece Shearsmith in amongst them. The talk, in which I revealed all the new clues I had garnered surrounding a century old hoax, led to me being praised as having "out-Sherlocked, Sherlock."

"The talk became an article in *The Fortean Times* and then a book, *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and The Secret of The Cottingley Fairies*; but something about that Sherlock comment stuck. I kept finding fresh material tucked away in the background of the hoax and before long I began work on my play. A scant year later, I took it to the Edinburgh Fringe where it garnered much praise and the odd brickbat from non-Sherlockians for being "tricky."

"Now it has ventured forth to three venues in a mini tour of Malvern, Greenwich and Bath. It is being extraordinarily well received and I'm hoping for sponsorship to enable me to take it even further afield next year."

The cast consisted of Harry Meacher as Sherlock Holmes (Harry previously played Holmes on stage in 2009), Kenneth McConnell as Watson, Kate Coldron (multiple roles) and Guy Hepworth (multiple roles including Arthur Conan Doyle). We are delighted that Fiona joined the Society after meeting members after the show. You can read more of her work in her 2014 novel *The Last Changeling*.

(SW)

Image credit: Blackeyed Theatre

Sherlock Holmes – The Hunt for Moriarty by Nick Lane. Blackeyed Theatre.

BLACKEYED THEATRE, formed twenty years ago, has earned an enviable reputation for creative, compelling stage adaptations of Gothic classics such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde*. In 2018, they branched out into Sherlock Holmes with a well-regarded production of *The Sign of Four*, followed in 2022 by an exceptional version of *The Valley of Fear*. Now, they are back with *Sherlock Holmes – The Hunt for Moriarty*, and it doesn't disappoint.

It is London, 1901. The British Empire is ailing after a series of mysterious events, culminating in the shocking death of a Woolwich clerk and the theft of top-secret submarine plans. Holmes is called in to clear up the crime quickly and dispassionately, but the stakes are swiftly raised, and the case takes a decidedly personal turn when Mycroft Holmes is implicated…

Centred on the diplomatic stories (BRUC, NAVA, SECO), writer-director Nick Lane's impressive script knits together many of Conan Doyle's short stories into a single coherent narrative. The story is brought together by original material inspired by the slightest of Canonical references – Oberstein's use of 'Pierrot' as an alias – which leads to a *Commedia dell-arte*-themed middle section that unifies the whole. This is more than simply dropping Easter Eggs for the fans; some facts and events in the Canon are reinterpreted, bringing new perspectives on familiar material and keeping even the most ardent Sherlockian on their toes.

The performances are as good as we have come to expect from Blackeyed Theatre. Ben Owora's

Watson is a believable old faithful, while Mark Knightley's Holmes is pleasingly energetic as he is put through the emotional wringer. Special mention must go to Pippa Caddick who plays Irene Adler, Violet Westbury, Hilda Trelawney-Hope *and* Mrs Hudson. Caddick takes every opportunity afforded by the script to give our favourite landlady agency, intelligence and drive. Gavin Molloy, Robbie Capaldi and Eliot Giuralarocca complete the cast, Eliot having great fun with the role of Mycroft Holmes and the pronunciation of Wilhelm von Ormstein's full name.

As for staging, the story opens shortly after Reichenbach in the burnt-out remains of Baker Street, which then serve as the backdrop for the entire show. A few minor furniture changes and folding flats and the famous apartment is transformed into the Foreign Office, the London underground and a Drury Lane theatre. Tristan Parkes's music and sound design enhance the production beautifully.

While there is a high degree of fidelity to the original stories, *The Hunt for Moriarty* also owes a debt to BBC's *Sherlock*. Telegrams and clues are projected onto the set, much as Sherlock's text messages are superimposed on the screen, while Gavin Molloy's entertaining performance as Moriarty offers more than a nod towards that of Andrew Scott. Both felt somewhat out of sync with the otherwise faithful production, but neither took one so far out of the action as to become distracting.

Towards the end of the show, Lane gives us the famous Reichenbach encounter where Moriarty's evil plan is fully explained. No-one could be ignorant of the contemporary resonances in this scene, which could have run the risk of being on the nose, but enough is left unsaid for the audience to make up their own mind and take from it what they will. Personally, I enjoyed it, but I can see it might divide opinion. If I have one criticism it is that, at two hours and twenty minutes, the show feels rather long for the material and the scenes immediately either side of the interval could be tightened up.

The Hunt for Moriarty tours the UK until 23 May. Go at once if convenient, if inconvenient go all the same.

(MJ)

Mark Knighley as Holmes, Ben Owara as Watson, with Pippa Craddick as everyone else!
Image credit: Blackeyed Theatre

Sherlock Holmes Untold by Jonathan Barnes. Big Finish Productions.

A SERIES of seemingly unrelated mysteries gradually unfolds into a decades-spanning crime in the newest audio drama from Big Finish Productions: *Sherlock Holmes Untold*. This eight episode collection recounts six curious cases over the course of the great detective's renowned career.

We join Dr. Watson in the year 1913 as he waylays Prime Minister Jasper Cranfield and his secretary Rosborough aboard the politician's private train, intent on relating the strange circumstances of several long-buried investigations. A fan of the good doctor's publications, Cranfield is initially intrigued, but quickly grows disenchanted as Watson shares the fulsome details of six separate stories, drawing him, and the listener, into a web of conspiracy and political intrigue that stretches far beyond a singular scandal.

Each tale reveals itself as a unique puzzle piece in a larger, more complex picture. From the tragic fate of a music hall ensemble to a man driven mad by visions of his long-dead brother, and a society that meets under cover of darkness for a cruel purpose, these disparate strands are ultimately drawn together by a single, unbroken thread – the enigmatic organisation known as "The Lighthouse". While lighthouses are typically synonymous with hope and guidance, in the context of *Untold,* the symbol takes on a far more malign meaning.

The production boasts a full cast recording with Nicholas Briggs at the helm, who expertly voices Holmes' incisive intellect and imbues the detective with mounting consternation as whispers of the covert "Lighthouse" elude him for years. Richard Earl brings warmth and gravitas to Dr. Watson as he narrates the interwoven stories while peppering in a hint of humour. Having undertaken these roles in previous Big Finish Sherlock Holmes dramas, this series is far from the duo's first foray into the consulting detective's world and their chemistry is evident.

The rest of the characters are brought to life by a powerhouse supporting cast, portraying canon favourites such as Inspector Lestrade, Mycroft Holmes and Colonel Sebastian Moran alongside compelling new additions to Holmes' universe. The evocative sound design sets the auditory stage with effects and music which keep the listener engaged and the story clipping along at a pace.

The thirty minute episodes were released weekly from October 1, 2025, followed by an 'after show' discussion in the Big Finish Podcast, featuring panellists from the Society. With a multi-faceted mystery and an abundance of action, *Sherlock Holmes Untold* builds to a literal 'Big Finish' that's sure to keep even the most seasoned Sherlockian enthralled.

(LS)

Sherlock Holmes and the 12 Days of Christmas by Nicholas Ker and David Reed, with original songs by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. Birmingham Rep in association with Heartaches Limited.

AS ONE for whom the notion of "comedy Sherlock" serves as a trigger warning and "musical theatre" is one of the seven circles of Hell, I approached this production with a due sense of exhaustion and dread. But even the most militant of my soulless ilk would struggle to find something to dislike in what is, quite honestly, a fantastic evening's entertainment.

Sherlock Holmes has returned from a three-month stint in Germany to find London gripped by a series of murders themed on the 12 Days of Christmas. While Holmes is quickly on the scent, his task is made all the harder by the appearance of a rival consulting detective, Athena Faversham, who co-opts the maltreated Watson as her own chronicler. As the countdown to the First Day of Christmas accelerates, can Holmes reunite with his Boswell and stop the killer?

Alright, so I may have purposely overstated my apprehension... Ker and Reed are, after all, two-thirds of The Penny Dreadfuls, the comedy troupe whose work – notably the excellent BBC Radio 4 series *The Brothers Faversham* (2008-9) – fuses a love of Victoriana with absurdist humour and rapid-fire gags. In *12 Days of Christmas*, their love of Sherlock Holmes is firmly on show, with a script that pastiches the characters, relationships and scenarios with knowledge and affection. Ker's Holmes is an emotionally blinkered genius with a delightful childishness ("hey, get your own human pen!"), while Reed's Watson is the put-upon idol worshipper seduced by plaudits and much-wanted attention. The reality of the Holmes-Watson relationship is beautifully lampooned, with both leads putting in excellent comic performances and Reed in particular showing the full gamut of emotions.

The other "regulars" are equally well-satirised, with an excellent take on Lestrade (John Kearns) as

The cast of Sherlock Holmes and the 12 Days of Christmas. *Image credit: Pete Le May*

the inspector traumatised by a job for which he is ill-suited, a pleasingly mercenary Mrs Hudson (Margaret Cabourn-Smith) and the charming Baker Street Irregular Ernie (Ernie: "I thought I was dead!" / Sherlock: "Not for two more weeks, my polio-ridden friend."). The principals in the unfolding mystery are a rich panoply of characters, from the threateningly competent Athena Faversham (Helena Wilson) to the fretful panto dame Arthur Stone (Cameron Johnson). Every performance was a knock-out, with all the minor parts getting big laughs (a genius turn from an old crone putting out the laundry and two Opera singers in the mode of Brian Blessed). As the story progressed, the panto elements became more prominent, but never to the point of descending into predictable well-worn camp. This is a story with a high degree or originality and flair, perfectly pitched for a family audience, and with plenty of discreet jokes for appreciative adults.

The production boasts original songs by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber (the latter having more than a passing interest in Sherlock Holmes) which is quite the coup. The opening number 'Christmas Lights' is catchy and Webber's score occupied my head for a good few hours afterwards. Meanwhile, Rice demonstrates his trademark lyrical wizardry with unconventional rhymes on "recidivist" in 'The Game's Afoot' and "Boswell to my Sammy J" in 'Write Away!' (this is the man who managed to get "genuflect" into the *Aladdin* score, after all). Watson's plaintive 'Houses Are Not Holmes' (beautifully sung) is a better joke than a number but, this aside, the songs and score capture the mood. There are also a couple of very funny jokes at Rice-Webber's expense.

Few people have succeeded in making Holmes and Watson funny – even the greats have tried and failed miserably (Cook and Moore anyone?). But Ker and Reed, and all the cast and crew, have succeeded in stellar form with a fast-moving, wisecracking, joyous production that comes from a place of genuine and deep affection for the original.

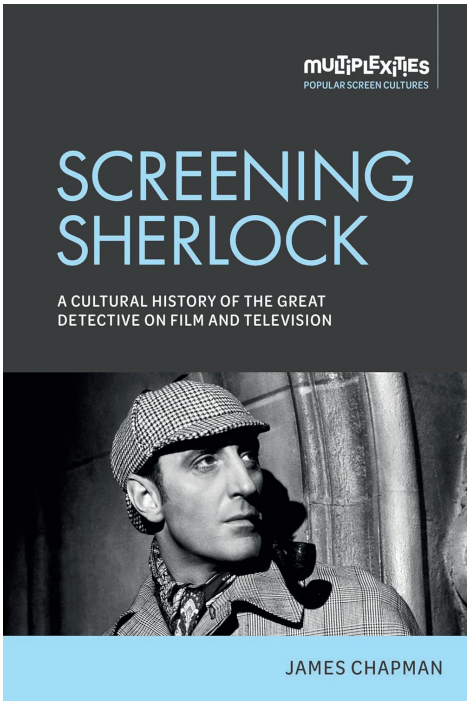
The show's run has already been extended further into January 2026 so clear your diary and get to Birmingham Rep while you can.

(MJ)

"I AM AN OMNIVOROUS READER"

Book reviews by Matthew Booth, Lance Parkin and Mark Jones

Screening Sherlock: A Cultural History of the Great Detective on Film and Television by James Chapman. Manchester University Press, 2025. 368pp. £90.00 (hbk)



Screening Sherlock is a book that one might reasonably think is surplus to requirements. As author James Chapman points out, there have been many previous histories of Holmes on screen, notably by David Stuart Davies and Alan Barnes, to whom Chapman refers. But it has been more than twenty years since the first edition of Barnes's book, the last substantial work on the subject, and so an update is well overdue. More importantly, *Screening Sherlock* is attempting something a little different from its predecessors, by deliberately placing Holmes's appearances on film and television in a much wider context.

Chapman starts by making a careful categorisation of the productions he will go on to dissect: the straight adaptations (Granada), the approximations (*Sherlock*, 'A Scandal in Belgravia'), new Holmes stories in a familiar vein (*Murder by Decree*), and spoofs (*Without a Clue*). Of course, there are no hard and fast boundaries between these types – later Granada readily blurred the line between the first two categories – but the taxonomy is a useful thinking aid. Fortunately, Chapman resists the temptation to dive deep into adaptation theory, keeping the references to academic concepts light, relevant and elucidating for a general readership.

The book is structured chronologically, with discussion of the major productions in each era. The selections are necessarily Anglophone – there would simply be too many to include otherwise, and Chapman admits to be less familiar with foreign language versions – but significant international features, such as *Der Hund von Baskerville* (1937) are included.

This structure allows Chapman to tell a richly layered story. In addition to the conventional discussion of fidelity to the text, there are original insights into the production companies and their key personnel, developments in film production and directorial style, and popular reception both in the UK and overseas (one gets a little tired of the phrase "mixed reception" but it's sadly true of many productions).

There are interesting sidelights on the traditions of national cinema (the influence of German Expressionism for example) and how the emerging taste for hardboiled detective fiction and movies coloured the later Clive Brook films. Chapman also demonstrates how the changing fortunes of the film and television industries influenced Sherlockian productions, from the balance of trade difficulties facing Stoll and British producers in the 1920s to the glory days of the Hollywood Studio system, at its peak when 20thC Fox produced the first two Rathbone-Bruce movies.

In addition to the external demands on the production industries, Chapman pays close attention to the instincts and motivations of individual filmmakers. The chapter 'Revisionist Holmes' –

focused on *Private Life*, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, *Murder by Decree* (Chapman's favourite) and others – explores the desire to extend, innovate and perhaps reinvigorate the character of Holmes and Watson (*Young Sherlock Holmes* is discussed but perhaps not given its due). 'Parody Holmes' includes a welcome exploration of many comic enterprises (*Holmes and Watson* is notably absent) including the dreadful Pete and Dud *Hound* which Chapman dryly observes "defies conventional analysis". 'Heritage Holmes' (Granada, etc.), 'Action Holmes' (Downey Jr) and 'Postmodern Holmes' (*Sherlock*) bring us to the present day. At times, these later chapters feel rather more like conventional film reviews than analysis, perhaps because they lack the benefit of distance, but there is always something new to say.

If there is a small downside it's that the book is something of a "Lockdown project" (Chapman admits as such) in so far as the source material is rather more reliant on newspapers and trade journals, which were available online, than field work in archives in which remain riches to explore. This quibble aside, the rich cultural and production context that Chapman includes ensures that even one familiar with the best and worst of these productions will see them again with fresh eyes. One hopes Manchester University Press will release *Screening Sherlock* in an affordable paperback edition for a willing and eager non-academic audience. (MJ)

The Casebook of Stamford Hawksmoor by Bryan Talbot. Penguin Books, 2025. 192pp. £25.00 (hbk)

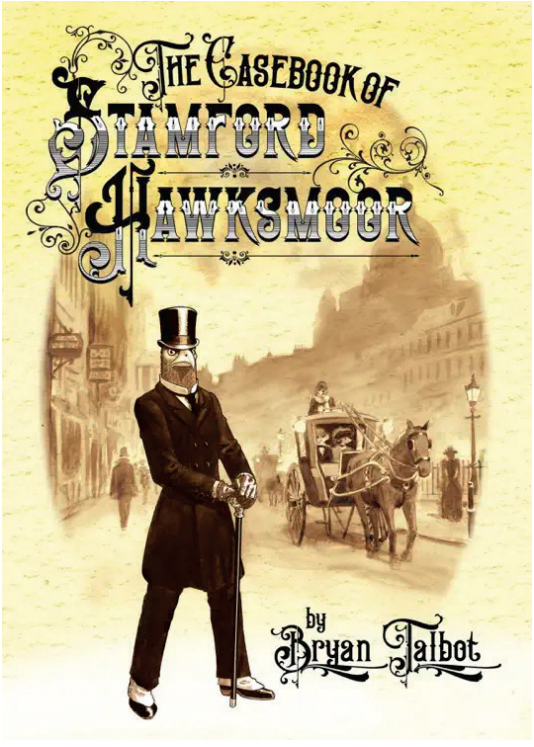
Describing a comic always seems to involve laying out an off-putting explanation of how it fits into a complicated network of previous work and influences. Long story short: *The Casebook of Stamford Hawksmoor* works as a fantastic standalone action-mystery, that's not a direct pastiche of Holmes (despite the protagonist's initials), but is steeped in Holmesian lore, and is accessible even to people who don't read many comics.

Writer/artist Bryan Talbot is a master of the medium, and his biography of James Joyce's daughter Lucia, *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes* (2013, co-created with his wife Mary) was the first graphic novel to win a Costa Book Award. He started his career with landmarks with a real claim to have created the aesthetics of steampunk: *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* (1978-89) and the Gothic Empire story arc in *Nemesis the Warlock* (published in *2000AD*, 1984-5, written by Pat Mills, Kevin O'Neill drew the first two episodes). His interest in Victoriana has surfaced in his other work, such as the masterful *Alice in Sunderland* and the *Grandville* series.

Hawksmoor is nominally a prequel to *Grandville*, with the title character being the mentor of that series' hero, Inspector LeBrock. There is absolutely no need to read *Grandville* first, and *Hawksmoor* lays out the set-up in its first few pages. It's a parallel history where Britain lost the Napoleonic Wars, and was subsumed into a vast French Empire. This is an excuse for Talbot to concoct a London that's a fantasia of Hogarth, Gothic, Dickens, Art Deco, and of course Conan Doyle. Fogs, steam, a serial killer with a Liston knife, becorseted sex workers. Yet every page is packed with intricate details from decoration to household appliances that convince you this world has been thought through and makes sense, it's not just a collage of nineteenth century stuff.

Ah yes … and the characters all have human bodies, but the heads of anthropomorphic animals. Hawksmoor is an eagle. Make a leap of faith, it really does work.

The heart of the story is Hawksmoor, a detective investigating a suicide on the eve of Britain gaining



its independence from the French Empire. It's not a story where Sherlock Holmes having an 'aquiline profile' has been translated into some one-to-one witless thing where it's Holmes but he's literally an eagle. It's a story that uses details from the canon – including echoes of some of the illustrations – and there's a trail of clues, high stakes political intrigue, people roughed up in alleys, men in high places involved in a cover up, secret codes, various suspects, some of whom end up as victims. There are surprises, and – as with a lot of Talbot's action stories – the violence is rare, but brutal.

This is a proper mystery, with all the clues present and correct (often in plain sight). Hawksmoor solves the case in the Holmesian manner, by paying attention, ignoring assumptions, and finding what others overlook. Bryan Talbot has created an intricate work that will richly reward any reader prepared to do the same.
(LP)

Holmes and Moriarty by Gareth Rubin. Simon & Schuster Books, 2025. 352pp. £9.99 (pbk)

I've always found Holmes pastiche a thorny road to travel. Having written several of them myself, I've always taken the view that if you don't make a serious attempt to follow Doyle's original style, what's the point? The further a pastiche strays from the original, the less purpose it seems to me to have.

Which is why I approached *Holmes and Moriarty*, Gareth Rubin's foray into the world of the doyen of Baker Street, with a certain amount of trepidation. The idea of Holmes teaming up with Moriarty ("*Two adversaries, one deadly alliance…"*) seemed to promise the very kind of catchpenny deviance from Doyle that I try to avoid. Which is why I was so surprised at how much I enjoyed it. It isn't perfect, but it's great fun.

There are some good Holmesian touches here, showing Rubin has done his Canonical homework. We know that Holmes was attracted to cases that were out of the ordinary ("something a little *recherché*," in his own words), and Rubin's initial set-up is certainly that. George Reynolds is a professional actor, playing the lead in *Richard III*, who is troubled by the fact that the other actors are amateurs and the audience is always in disguise. It whetted my appetite as much as it does Holmes's, and it's followed by a dark hint of something bigger behind it when Mycroft utters the words, *"Thank God"*, after Holmes agrees to take the case.

But where this excellent premise is taken by the subsequent plot is a descent into melodrama, culminating in a world-at-stake threat that wouldn't be out of place in a Roger Moore Bond film. Admittedly, something major has to be at the centre of a story that demands a Holmes and Moriarty team-up, but that's the problem. Doyle's Holmes wouldn't be in this silly plot because he wouldn't ally himself with Moriarty. The whole thing becomes rather improbable, and the climax is so overblown that it dismantles some of the enjoyment of what goes before it.

Two things save the day.

Firstly, there doesn't seem to be a serious attempt to ape Doyle's style. Rubin's prose isn't a conscious departure, like Michael Dibdin's in *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story*, but nor is it close enough to be taken seriously as a Watson replica. Nevertheless, the style is engaging and entertaining, despite some jarring phrases (a reference to "Whitechapel Jack" made me wonder why we couldn't use the killer's actual epithet), but those aside, this is the sort of first-person adventure narration that makes books like *The 39 Steps* such thrilling reads, making its more outlandish elements easier to forgive.

However, a much more important saving grace is the use of Sebastian Moran as an alternative narrator. The book switches chapters between his narration and Rubin's pseudo-Watson's. Freed from the constraints of Watson, Rubin shines with Moran's voice. He comes across as roguish, dangerously affable, and unashamedly hilarious, a sort of natural but more sinister successor to George MacDonald Fraser's Flashman.

Moran is the star of this show. His asides to the reader are genuinely funny, from his casual confession that one character has an accent *"like a banker I once shot dead on a boat to Southampton"*, to his dismissal of Watson as a *"pigeon-livered dunghill"*. I loved being in his company, so much so that I tended to wish Watson's chapters would end, so that we could get back to wily old Seb and his wisecracks. He's a marvellous creation and by far the best part of the whole story.

If I could give Rubin some friendly advice, it would be to follow this up with a stand-alone Moran adventure. I, for one, would be right on board with that.
(MB)

Baker Street: The Curious Case Files of Sherlock Holmes by David Foster. Genius Book Publishing, 2025. 284pp. £30.87 at time of writing.

David Foster's *Baker Street: The Curious Case Files…* is indeed a curious book – perplexing, one might say. On one level, it is a lavishly illustrated roller-coaster ride through the worlds of Sherlock Holmes; on another, it's a baffling confusion of Sherlockian creations, smushed into a somewhat idiosyncratic categorisation.

Let's start with the positive: it is awesomely ambitious in scope. Extending across Sherlock Holmes in literature, film, television, crossover fiction, pastiche and spoofs, it is replete with potted summaries of novels, film and television programmes. The book is rich with illustrations of covers, film posters and the like, and it is pleasing to have them all in one place as a ready reference. While the printing does not do full justice to them, it is nevertheless a work of considerable effort to create a visually appealing compendium of this kind.

However, any volume so expansive immediately encounters the problem of selection – what to leave in and what to ignore. In the introduction, Foster says that the world Conan Doyle created has "long since grown beyond [the] original stories" (p8) – an entirely reasonable statement – and one that signals his interest is primarily beyond the canon. This is a perfectly good and laudable mission, and one I support, but I couldn't shake the feeling that the project harboured a passive disdain for Conan Doyle. No-one should feel required to include Conan Doyle in a discussion of non-Doylean creations – the book would be better ignoring him entirely – but to spend as many words on the Piltdown Man hoax and the Cottingley Fairies as on the *entirety* of ACD's life and work – a total of two pages of a 270-page work no less – smacks of an agenda.

The book is naturally far stronger on the world of pastiche and spin-off projects, but here too selection is a problem. There are chapters on pastiches that continue the original adventures in a faithful spirit, ones focused on Moriarty, Mycroft or previously undisclosed members of the Holmes family, and there are multiple chapters on cross-over stories, where Holmes faces Fu Manchu, Cthulhu and creations by other authors. In each, Foster chooses examples, but it's not clear how he arrived at them. Are they the most influential works, the best by some defined standard, or simply personal preference? For example, I cannot fathom why the *Fight Club Sherlock Holmes* series or Professor Challenger spin-offs, as entertaining as both are, deserve chapters of their own, or why more than half the book is spent on Sherlock Holmes in film and television, topics which have been exhaustively covered elsewhere.

And this is why this book is so perplexing – it *could* be great. I am reminded of the famous 'Shaw 100' in which John Bennett Shaw "tried to list One Hundred items that would give an in-depth view of the entire Holmesian culture" (Introduction to the 1979 list). Surely there is a place for a 'Shaw 100' that looks explicitly at Sherlockian works *beyond* the canon (or if that's too much, pastiche fiction)? Such a volume would celebrate the diversity of creations that have followed in Conan Doyle's wake and become a primer for anyone wishing to take the next step – the ultimate expression of the view that "all Holmes is good Holmes".

Foster ends by hoping his readers have "uncovered something new, something that sparks your curiosity and propels you further" (p.269), so perhaps his mission is not dissimilar to that of Shaw. But such an endeavour requires far more rationale, rigour and discipline than we see here.
(MJ)

Also received

The Archives of Sherlock Holmes Volume 1 by Ben Congdon. BCFA, 2025. 157pp. POA. www.bcongdon.com. Three compelling stories told in brisk style, with glorious artwork by the author (the man in the rafters on p. 98 – oh my!).

The Return of Moriarty by Jack Anderson. Raven Books, 2025. 348pp. £18.99. Engagingly written epistolary novel, the first in a new series of 'Moriarty Mystery' books.

Investigating Sherlock Holmes by Ron Tiner. Austin Macaulay, 2025. 228pp. £30.99 (pbk), £35.99 (hbk). A beautiful and lavishly illustrated love-letter to the Canon that serves as a fitting memorial to the talented writer-illustrator Ron Tiner who passed away over the summer.