# Sherlock Holmes Film Festival 2013



Presented by

### The Three Garridebs

Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library

#### Introduction

Welcome to the second Sherlock Holmes Film Festival presented by The Three Garridebs. Last year's event was so well-received that we planned almost immediately to have another festival. But hurricane Sandy almost derailed those plans. The festival was saved by the efforts of three people: Greg Darak, who agreed to use his expertise to put together an interesting combination of films, and who also wrote the introductions in this booklet; Pete McIntyre, who once again ferretted out interesting information about the films, actors, directors, etc.; and Len Poggiali who worked out technical issues with the library and lent his extensive knowledge of films to the cause We offer these three members our heartfelt thanks and the thanks of the entire scion We also want to thank Roman Chomanczuk and Bob Ludemann for lending us films And we thank Laurie Manifold for the booklet's cover.

Once again this year, we begin with a short silent film. This year it's from a 105-year-old Scandinavian series. Next is another silent featuring Eille Norwood—*The Devil's Foot*. Then we move to another iconic figure—Arthur Wontner—in *The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes*. Greg then includes a very unusual piece, but we don't want to spoil the surprise. If you took the survey we offered, you may be partly responsible for the choice of the next film—*The Sting of Death*, starring Boris Karloff. Moving into the last third of the century, we have excerpts from a Russian series, followed by an unusual piece involving Jeremy Brett. After a short break, we'll see an episode of a British series, starring Geoffrey Whitehead and Donald Pickering. We conclude this year's program with three deleted (but at least partially saved) sequences from *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*.

## Programme

A Confidence Trick The Devil's Foot The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes

break (during the Scowrers section of The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes)

An excerpt from Crazy House

The Sting of Death

An excerpt from The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and DrWatson

The Four Oaks Mystery (Part 1)

10-minute Break

Sherlock Holmes - The Speckled Band The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes – deleted sequences

#### A Confidence Trick

Studio: The Nordisk Company Year: 1908 Run time: 8 minutes Holmes: Otto Lagoni

Otto Lagoni is not most people's picture of Sherlock Holmes. He's not thin, and although he smokes a pipe, his cap is nothing like a deerstalker. However, in 1910, he played Sherlock Holmes in what may have been the first series of Sherlock Holmes films ever made. (He replaced Viggo Larsen, who played the role in the first 6 films of the series).

"Sherlock Holmes I Bondefangerkloer", to use its original title, was part of the series of Sherlock Holmes films made in Denmark by the Nordisk company. It's from the early days of silent film, and will seem very primitive to modern eyes. In America, at the time, in an amazing artistic achievement. D. W. Griffith was basically creating the language of film as we know it today – shooting a scene from different angles, moving the camera, using close-ups, cutting between two different scenes that were occurring simultaneously...

That was not the way most films were made at the time. In the earliest days of cinema, a camera was put in a place where you could see all the actors in the scene, and then the actors played the scene until the end. When you come to think of it, it's not really odd that the first films were shot this way – the only thing that was comparable to film at the time was the theater, and when you went to see a play, you sat down in your seat and saw the whole thing from one angle. Why would film be any different? (It's said that when close-ups started being used, distributors complained – "We're paying for the whole actor, not just part of him!")

So be prepared for a film that's not like most you see today – or even like later silent films from the teens and twenties. But it is an opportunity to see the only surviving film from the earliest Sherlock Holmes film series ever.

There is, unfortunately, no musical soundtrack for this eight -minute film.



Otto Lagoni

Boris Karloff



Vasily Livanov and Vitaly Solomin

*The Devil's Foot* Studio: Stoll Pictures Productions Ltd. (British) Year: 1921 Run time: 27 minutes Sherlock Holmes: Eille Norwood

Eille Norwood is the only Holmes we're showing this year that also was in last year's festival, but we hope his importance as an early Sherlock Holmes (praised by Conan Doyle himself), and the rarity of his films will let you pardon his repeat appearance, and also the unfortunately lower quality of the print, which is very dark at times..

*The Devil's Foot* is silent, but, while not a masterpiece of the silent film, it's much more like what you would see today than "A Confidence Trick".

Norwood appeared as Holmes in 45 shorts and 2 features, from 1921 to 1923 for Stoll Pictures Productions, following that with a run on the London stage starring in "The Return of Sherlock Holmes". An expert in makeup, he was supposed to have occasionally done on the film set what Holmes sometimes did in the stories – showing up in disguise, and being told to leave by people who didn't recognize him.

Here's Norwood's conception of the great detective, as he wrote in Stoll's Editorial News: 'My idea of Holmes is that he is absolutely quiet. Nothing ruffles him, but he is a man who intuitively seizes on points without revealing that he has done so, and nurses them with complete inaction until the moment when he is called upon to use his wonderful detective powers. Then he is like a cat – the person he is after is the only person in all the world, and he is oblivious of everything else till his quarry is run to earth."

A list of the Sherlockain films Norwood made.  $\land$ 

#### Series 1- May to Aug 1921

The Dying Detective The Devil's Foot A Case of Identity The Yellow Face The Red-Headed League The Resident Patient A Scandal in Bohemia The Man with the Twisted Lip The Beryl Coronet The Noble Bachelor The Copper Beeches The Empty House The Tiger of San Pedro (An adaptation of Doyle's "Wisteria Lodge") The Priory School The Solitary Cyclist The Hound of the Baskervilles (feature)

#### Series 2 - March to June 1922

Charles Augustus MilvertonThe Abbey GrangeThe Norwood BuilderThe Reigate SquiresThe Naval TreatyThe Bruce-Partington PlansThe Red CircleThe Second StainThe Six NapoleonsBlack PeterThe Stockbroker's ClerkThe Boscombe Valley MysteryThe Musgrave RitualThe Golden Pince-NezThe Greek Interpreter

#### Series 3 – March to July 1923

Silver Blaze His Last Bow The Speckled Band The Gloria Scott The Blue Carbuncle The Engineer's Thumb The Cardbox Box The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax The Three Students The Missing Three-Ouarter The Stone of Mazarin The Mystery of Thor Bridge The Dancing Men The Crooked Man The Final Problem The Sign of Four (feature)

Eille Norwood, real name Anthony Edward Brett (11 October 1861 – 24 December 1948) was a famous stage actor in his day and was also one of the most popular screen interpreters of Sherlock Holmes. Most of the 47 films he appeared in were about twenty minutes in length, but two, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Sign of Four*, were feature length. These films covered almost every Holmes story printed up to that time. This record stood until, ironically, the *Jeremy* Brett series eclipsed it.

Eille Norwood was a true master of disguise. He fooled his producer and director on the set a few times. The site below goes into great detail on his skills and also gives a link to a 1921 Strand Magazine that has a Norwood interview and a non Sherlockian story as well. http://altamarkings.blogspot.com/2012/10/eille-norwood-my-dearconan-doyle.html

#### The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes

Studio: Olympic Pictures Year: 1935 Run time: 79 minutes Cast and review: See last two pages of this booklet

Now we're in the sound era, with a film made in Britain in 1934. Before Basil Rathbone played the part, Arthur Wontner, who appeared in five films as Holmes, was considered to be *the* Sherlock Holmes. Here's what Vincent Starrett had to say about him, in his classic *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. "For Mr. Wontner, there can be only words of praise... Since Gillette there has been no such Sherlock on the stage or screen. For two hours, in a darkened theater, one almost wavered in one's allegiance to Gillette. Surely no better Sherlock Holmes than Arthur Wontner is likely to be seen and heard in pictures, in our time. Sentimentalized, as is imperative, his detective is the veritable fathomer of Baker Street, in person. The keen, worn, kindly face and quiet, prescient smile are out of the very pages of the book."

Wontner enjoyed playing Holmes, and many years after making his films he was part of the letter-writing campaign that helped bring about the creation of the Sherlock Holmes exhibition in the Festival of Britain in the 50s.

*The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes* is an adaptation of *The Valley of Fear* and a relatively close one, despite the actual presence of Professor Moriarty, and the fact that Holmes is planning to retire (Wontner himself was 60 at the time the picture was released).

Lyn Harding, who plays Professor Moriarty, had made his original appearance in a Holmes story playing Grimesby Roylott in the play version of "The Speckled Band" that Conan Doyle wrote in 1910. And despite being killed at the end of this film, he appears again as the professor in the next and last film of the Wontner series, *Murder at the Baskervilles* (which, despite its title, is an adaptation of "Silver Blaze").

The Ian Fleming who plays Watson in this film is not the author of the James Bond books.

#### Arthur Wontner as Sherlock Holmes



NOTE: In the middle of the film, the story of "The Scowrers" is told in a 25-minute non-Holmes segment. In order to get as much film into the festival as possible, and since I've heard that many people skip this section when rereading the story, we'll be using this time for a break. If you want to stay and see the film, go right ahead; if you want to get some food, here's your chance to do so without missing any Holmes.

Lyn Harding (Prof. Moriarty) was born in Wales to very strict Congregationalist parents who expected him to become a preacher. When he became an actor they were shocked. After seeing him perform his father said, "I have been in hell tonight." But modern reviewer Hal Erickson noted, "The architect of all this skullduggery is that 'Napoleon of Crime,' Professor Moriarty (the magnificent Lyn Harding),"

Harding played Dr. Grimesby Rylott in the 1931 version of "The Speckled Band' with Raymond Massy as Holmes. And in 1937 he once again was Moriarty in *Murder at the Baskervilles* with Wontner as Holmes.

Minnie Rayner played Mrs. Hudson in this same show, which is mostly the "Silver Blaze" story.

Michael Shepley played Cecil Barker. In 1959 he played Sir Rupert in a film called *Gideon of Scotland Yard*. Also in the cast of that film were Ronald Howard and Howard Marion-Crawford, otherwise known as H. Marion Crawford.

H. Fowler Mear was a writer who adapted the story and was also a writer though un-credited for *Murder at the Basker-villes*.

Ben Welden played Ted Balding (*sic*) in this film. He also played the opposite side of the law – a Pinkerton agent - in *Sherlock Holmes and the Missing Rembrandt* – with Arthur Wontner, Ian Fleming and Minnie Rayner He is also well known to American TV audiences with many roles in such epic shows as *Superman*, *Mr. Ed*, *Batman*, *Branded*, *Surfside 6*, *Dobbie Gillis*, *Lassie*, *Lone Ranger* and on and on. He had a very active career.

#### Excerpt from Crazy House

Studio: Universal Pictures Year: 1943 Run time: Excerpt is 4 minutes (Film is 80 Minutes) Cast: see poster below

The comedy team of Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson were most famous for their work on stage, but they did make a few movies. We'll be showing the opening sequence of *Crazy House*, about their arrival in Hollywood; it has an interesting Sherlockian connection.

One joke I like that won't be in the brief scene we'll be showing – in the picture, Olsen and Johnson form a new movie studio, Miracle Productions, with the slogan, "If it's a good picture, it's a Miracle!"



#### The Sting of Death

Year: 1955 Run time: 53 minutes Cast: Boris Karloff

You asked for it – this film won the poll The Three Garridebs took to find out which one most people would most want to see. It was done live on TV on February 22, 1955, for *The Elgin Hour* with Boris Karloff playing the part of "Mr. Mycroft".

I have not yet seen it myself, so I can't give you much information about the show. I can tell you it was based on the novel *A Taste of Honey* by H. F. Heard. The narrator of the novel meets an elderly retired man who keeps bees, smokes a pipe, and seems to have some talent as a detective. The character goes by the name of "Mr. Mycroft", presumably to keep Heard from being sued by the Conan Doyle estate. Oddly enough, when this and the two following novels that Heard wrote about the character were republished in the 1980s, the publishers actually seemed to think that the character was supposed to be Mycroft Holmes, and not Sherlock.

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Boris Karloff was born William Henry Pratt.

Although it can be argued that he never played Sherlock Holmes, Karloff did play Chinese detective Mr. Wong in five films of that six-film series from 1938-1940. A thinly veiled Charlie Chan rip-off produced by bargain basement Monogram Studios, the Wong series was moderately successful, due in large part to Karloff's presence. This also can be said of RKO's 1947 production of *Dick Tracy Meets Gruesome* in which Karloff portrays the sinister villain Gruesome. Karloff's best mystery vehicle and one of his strongest and most sympathetic performances came in 1936 when he appeared as a mentally ill, operatic tenor in *Charlie Chan* at the Opera.

He appeared in a few films with actors who played Sherlock Holmes: "Comedy of Terrors" (1963) and "Tower of London" (1939) with Basil Rathbone, and "Corridors of Blood" (1958) with Chirstopher Lee.

In 1958 in a TV series called *Telephone Time*, he appeared with Ben Wright in an episode called "The Vestris". Ben Wright did the introductions to the box set of Sherlock Holmes radio shows starring Rathbone and Bruce.

Karloff made many movies, but he acted in a lot of TV shows as well. Some were very campy, others were serious. He even appeared as himself at times.

His many performances as a villain and a monster did not reflect his real character. Very late in his career, he was hired to do a guest appearance on The Red Skelton Show. Because of Karloff's poor health, his part was written so that he could play it from a wheelchair. However, when at the dress rehearsal, he sensed the audience's reaction to seeing him in the chair, he insisted on doing the part standing up and walking around.





#### The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson

Studio: Gostelradio/Lenfilm Studio Year: 1979 Run time: 10 minutes Cast: Sherlock Holmes—Vasily Livanov

I'm told that many film-goers today have problems with subtitles. Because of this, we're only showing two excerpts of the Russian series with Vasily Livanov and Vitaly Solomin, who starred in a series of films for Russian TV between 1979 and 1986.

You'll be seeing two scenes of detection – one serious, one lighter in tone – Holmes's deductions about Watson's watch, and a scene of Holmes making some deductions about a man in the street outside the Baker Street lodgings. The second scene includes a joke – but note how the joke actually adds effect to the real deduction.

It's a very interesting series, with only occasional changes showing that it was made in the Soviet Union; for example, the Hound of the Baskervilles, in their version, is killed not by Holmes or Watson, but by the official police detective, Lestrade

It's often been stated that the Granada series was the first to really show the true Watson, a young and not unintelligent man, as opposed to the Nigel Bruce type. However, this series was made a number of years before that one. Vasili Livanov shot to international fame during the 1980's, when he was starring as Sherlock Holmes in the popular Russian TV series by director Igor Maslennikov. Livanov portrayed Sherlock Holmes as a refined intellectual, who is very elegant and English-looking in both demeanor and facial appearance. Vasily Livanov's performance as Sherlock Holmes was very popular in Russia, and much admired elsewhere. In 2000 Livanov and his co-star Vitali Solomin were voted the best impersonators of Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson in a poll by English press. On 20 February 2006 Livanov became an Honorary MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) "for service to the theatre and performing arts" becoming the first Russian film actor to receive such an honor. A statue of him and his Watson was put up in Moscow near the British embassy.



When talking about Holmes's popularity, people here often talk about such things as the Victorian era, and different aspects of the detective's character. Livanov, asked about it, mentioned a basic factor which isn't remembered often enough : "Holmes helps people."

Five films from this Russian series are available for free viewing at <u>http://video.kylekeeton.com/2007/03/sherlock-holmes-and-dr-</u><u>watson-on.html</u> and for purchase from a variety of Amazon.Com dealers. The films are all full-length, most being over 2 hours in length. They can be a bit slow moving, but they all do a pretty accurate job of dramatizing the actual stories in unique Russian settings. It's interesting and clever how they manage to package four stories into one fairly unified plot as they do in *The 20th Century Approaches* with "The Engineer's Thumb," "The Second Stain," "The Bruce-Partington Plans," and "His Last Bow" joined.

#### The Four Oaks Mystery – Part 1

Studio: Granada Television Year: 1992 Run time: 11 minutes Cast: Sherlock Holmes – Jeremy Brett

I know many people think of Jeremy Brett as the best Sherlock Holmes ever. Some viewers believe that, while Brett was capable of giving a decent impersonation of Holmes, all too often his performances were marred by overacting, preening, and by shouting for no apparent reason. However, if we're showing, in these film festivals, the major Holmes actors, he has to be included. So here is a rarity – a performance of Brett and Edward Hardwicke as Holmes and Watson that you probably have never seen before.

In 1992, as a part of a charity-fundraising weekend, Granada Television decided to make a program featuring all 4 of their leading television detective series in one story – the other three characters being Taggart, Van der Valk, and Wexford. The result is "The Four Oaks Mystery", only shown once on British television.

Because we don't want to take up a lot of time showing Taggart, Van der Valk, and Wexford at a Sherlock Holmes film festival, unfortunately you'll be seeing an incomplete story. But we hope that the opportunity to see this rare footage will help make up for it.

#### Sherlock Holmes "The Speckled Band"

Studio: Sheldon Reynolds Productions and Telewizja Polska Year: 1979 Run time: 23 minutes

Cast: Sherlock Holmes: Geoffrey Whitehead Dr. Watson: Donald Pickering

When people talk about Sherlock Holmes on television, the Geoffrey Whitehead-Donald Pickering series is rarely mentioned. This is probably because most people are unaware that there ever was a Geoffrey Whitehead-Donald Pickering TV series. However, there was, and we'll be seeing an episode of it today – one of the few episodes that was an adaptation of one of the original stories, "The Speckled Band".

The series of 24 episodes was made in 1979 by Sheldon Reynolds, who produced the old Ronald Howard TV series. It was shot in Poland (in English), due to a financial deal where the Poles would supply the use of their studios and production staff, and Reynolds would supply the scripts, actors and directors.

Toward the end of shooting, the Polish studio executive who set up the deal was arrested for corruption, and Reynolds himself got in trouble with the authorities, and the legalities involved may have some connection with why the series has rarely been shown.

Two other people who are reasonably well-known were involved in the series. Patrick Newell, best known for playing "Mother" in the last year of the TV series "The Avengers" plays Inspector Lestrade, and the famous novelist. Anthony Burgess ("A Clockwork Orange") gets screen credit as "script consultant", although it's not known exactly what he did – a number of the scripts were reused from the Ronald Howard series.

Geoffrey Whitehead, Donald Pickering and Douglas Wilmer appeared in a British TV series *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* in the early 70's.. Geoffrey Whitehead played Harry Parsket in an episode titled "The Horse of the Invisible." Pickering (as Fielding) and Wilmer (as Prof. Van Dusen) appeared in the episode "Cell 13." Wilmer played the same role in "The Superfluous Finger." Wilmer played Holmes in a 13episode TV series (and he appeared in the recent BBC series *Sherlock*.

Douglas Wilmer "then" and "now"



#### The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes -

#### deleted sequences

Studio: MGM
Year: 1970
Run times: 25 minutes, 3 minutes, 11 minures
Producer and Director: Billy Wilder in cooperation with the
Mirisch Company
Cast: Sherlock Holmes: Robert Stephens
Dr. Watson: Colin Blakely Mycroft: Christopher Lee

Alfred Hitchcock never made a film of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Akira Kurosawa did adaptations of Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and Ed McBain, but never Conan Doyle. Only once did someone who could be called one of the great film directors ever choose to make a Sherlock Holmes movie – and nobody ever saw the film as he planned it.

When Billy Wilder wrote and directed The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes, he created a movie with a number of different original episodes in the life of Sherlock Holmes, which would be over three hours long, and shown with an intermission. Unfortunately, when it was completed, the studio convinced him that the "special event" type of movie was out of fashion, and they persuaded him to drop a number of episodes, cutting it down to a two hour movie.

Film researchers have been looking for the lost footage for many years. The missing scenes have only been partially found – the soundtrack of one sequence, with no pictures, and the film of another sequence, with no soundtrack. What we plan to show today are the recreations of the two major missing sequences, with, in one case, the soundtrack being illustrated by stills and script pages, and in the other case, subtitles used in place of the missing soundtrack. This won't be your ordinary movie-going experience, but it's as close, it seems, as we'll ever come to seeing the missing scenes.

We'll also be showing (if time allows) a brief 3minute recreated sequence of Holmes telling a story of his past; we won't be showing another recreated sequence – a prologue to the film, taking place in the present day, showing Watson's descendant arriving at Cox and Co, to pick up the doctor's tin-box.

Incidentally, while most great film directors have never directed a Holmes film, oddly enough, some of them have appeared in Holmes stories as actors. Orson Welles, on the radio, gave a performance as Holmes in the 1930s, and in the '50s took the part of Professor Moriarty. John Huston played Moriarty in the TV movie, "Sherlock Holmes in New York". And the theory has been put forward that in the lost 1916 silent version of *A Study in Scarlet*, with Francis Ford as Holmes, the otherwise unknown "Jack Francis" who was credited as playing Dr. Watson, may really have been Francis's younger brother Jack, who had recently arrived in Hollywood, and later became better known as John Ford. Billy Wilder became a screenwriter in the late 1920s while living in Berlin. After the rise of the Nazi Party, Wilder, who was Jewish, left for Paris, where he made his directorial debut. He relocated to Hollywood in 1933, and in 1939 he had a hit when he co-wrote the screenplay to the screwball comedy *Ninotchka*. He became a director so that his scripts wouldn't be messed up by someone else.

As a director, he made such films as *Stalag 17*, *Some Like It Hot*, *The Lost Weekend*, *The Seven-Year Itch*, and *The Apartment*, all highly recommended if you've never seen them.

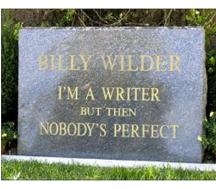
Wilder holds a significant place in the history of Hollywood censorship for expanding the range of acceptable subject matter. He is responsible for two of the film noir era's most definitive films in *Double Indemnity* and *Sunset Boulevard*.

If, as a Sherlockian, you're interested in crime and mystery movies, you should especially see his *Double Indemnity* and *Witness for the Prosecution* - still the best film adaptation of an Agatha Christie story.

He was more interested in telling the story than using the camera to give unusual angles, like Orson Welles or Hitchcock. He felt the unusual camera angles took the viewer's mind off the story. But he did use some close ups well, like in *Double Indemnity*.

He once told the woman who later became his wife, "I'd worship the ground you walk on, if you lived in a better neighborhood."

Wilder's gravestone:



Boss McGinty.....Roy Emerton Ames .....Conway Dixon

Let it be said that the Criterion died game! It strides out of Times Square (closing Sunday night) with a smile on its façade and Sherlock Holmes on its screen. Its last picture, "The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes," with Arthur Wontner in the title rôle, is a mellow, evenly paced British film that renders to Holmes what Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would have rendered to him: Interest, respect and affection.

Again we find the sinister Professor Moriarty at large, this time in the service of a secret organization which is seeking revenge upon one of its former members, John Douglas. Holmes is lured out of retirement when the murder of Douglasby that delicate weapon, the doublebarreled, sawed-off shotgun-gives him an excuse to match wits again with Moriarty.

Dr. Watson is around, of course,

muddling through the clues, announcing his theories and waiting patiently for the dénouement which will permit him to exclaim, "Marvelous, Holmes!" Finally, Holmes assembles a dumb-bell, a candle, a pair of slippers, an umbrella and a suit of clothes and converts them into a bludgeon which topples Moriarty from his criminal throne. That is Holmes's triumph.

Mr. Wontner decorates a calabash pipe with commendable skill, contributing a splendid portrait of fiction's first detective. Lyn Harding is capital as Morlarty and Roy Emerton, Leslie Perrins, Ian Fleming and Michael Shepley perform com-

petently.

#### The New Hork Times

Published: May 27, 1935 Copyright © The New York Times

This review was signed F.S.N. This was probably Frank S. Nugent, first chairman of the New York Film Critics Circle, which was founded in 1935.