

## Winston Churchill Didn't Really Exist, Say Teens

Telegraph.co.uk, Feb 4, 2008

A fifth of British teenagers believe Sir Winston Churchill was a fictional character, while many think **Sherlock Holmes** and King Arthur were real, a survey shows.

The canvass of 3,000 under-twenties uncovered an extraordinary paucity of basic historical knowledge that older generations take for granted. Despite his celebrated military reputation, 47 percent of respondents dismissed the 12<sup>th</sup>-century crusading king Richard the Lionheart as fictional. More than a quarter (27 percent) thought Florence Nightingale, the pioneering nurse who coaxed injured soldiers back to health in the Crimean War, was a mythical figure.


In contrast, a series of fictitious characters that have featured in British films and literature over the past few centuries were awarded real-life status. King Arthur is the mythical figure most commonly mistaken for fact—almost two thirds of teens (65 percent) believe he led a round table of knights at Camelot.

**Sherlock Holmes, the detective, was so convincingly brought to life in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novels, their film**

**versions and television series that 58 percent of respondents believe that the sleuth really lived at 221B Baker Street.**

Fifty-one percent of respondents believed that Robin Hood lived in Sherwood Forest, robbing the rich to give to the poor, while 47 percent believed Eleanor Rigby was a real person rather than a creation of The Beatles.

The study also shows a marked change in how people acquire their historical knowledge these days. More than three-quarters of those polled (77 percent) admitted they did not read history books, and 61 percent said that they changed channels rather than watch historical programmes on television.

UKTV Gold, which commissioned the poll, said that while there was no excuse for demoting real historical figures such as Churchill, the elevation of mythical figures to real life showed the impact good films could have in shaping the public consciousness. "Stories like Robin Hood are so inspiring that it's not surprising people like to believe these characters truly existed," they said. 



## Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

• **Thanks to SOB Margie Deck for this:** You probably have most of these, but just in case... (from a Sherlockian I much admire in England):

⇒ University of Adelaide Library [The Canon (complete downloadable text), as well as links to other ACD works online]: [http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/d/doyle/arthur\\_conan/](http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/d/doyle/arthur_conan/)

⇒ Sherlockian Resources on the Internet: <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~bergg003/holmes/>

⇒ Sherlocktron, an Information Centre for Sherlock Holmes: <http://members.cox.net/sherlock1/Sherlocktron.html>

⇒ The (abbreviated) Web version of The Universal Sherlock Holmes bibliography: <http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/ush/ush.html#Introduction>

⇒ A Study In Sherlock [including literary song videos, parodies, and cartoons]: <http://www.astudyinsherlock.net/>

• **"A Remarkable Mixture"** (\$35.00 + \$3.95 postage, Baker Street Journal) is an anthology of the writings which won the Morley-Montgomery Award (for writings in the journal) from 1958-2006.

• A 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of **"The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes"** by Vincent Starrett (\$37.20 in-


cluding postage, Gasogene Books [Wessex Press]) includes a facsimile of the first edition, a discussion of the origins of the book, and a bibliography of subsequent editions.

• **"Baker Street Rambles"** by Leslie S. Klinger (24.95 Postage Paid, Gasogene Books) collects Klinger's writings from 1994-2005.

• David Hammer's latest collection of articles and talks—**"You Know My Methods, Watson"** (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, \$20CDN plus postage)—gets a thumbs up from **Roger Johnson**.

• **Thanks to SOB Karen Murdock for this:** Kessinger Publishing's **Rare Reprints** publishes thousands of rare, scarce, and out-of print books, and there are many titles listed under "Conan Doyle" and "Sherlock Holmes".

• **Peter Blau reminds us...** that next year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the "literary agent" Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

• **"The Quintessential Sherlock Holmes"** by Richard L. Boyer (\$75.00, Alexander Books) is a collection of five pastiches including "The Giant Rat of Sumatra" from 1976; it is leather bound and slip cased. 

### "Top 10 Episodes"

Where  
Entertainment  
Weekly **reviewer**



Ken Tucker had previously (Nov. 23, 2007) bashed "House", saying it "shows symptoms of strain", EW **writer** Benjamin Svetkey cited (Dec. 21, 2007) the April 10, 2007 episode ("Airborne") as his favorite show of the year. "It...dispensed some of the most subversive humor on the air. And it got even better when the show broke out of form, with the cranky doc making a House call on a flight from Singapore, prepping for surgery with just three plastic spoons and alcohol wipes. House came up with a lifesaving diagnosis at the last minute...and yet it all felt brand-new," Said Svetkey.

### From SOB Ann Deussenberry

Dear Editor,

You certainly didn't need to give me credit for that Holmes fuzz-ball article!!

As the man says:

"As to reward, my profession is its own reward..."

I just find 'em and send 'em along!

And speaking of sending things along...On last Tuesday's episode (February 5) of "House"—set at Christmas)—one of House's staff



bought him a "2nd edition Conan Doyle"!! No mention of which book, though.

**Walter Choy sends us this great image!! Could it actually be his and Michael's Vienna in costume?**



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