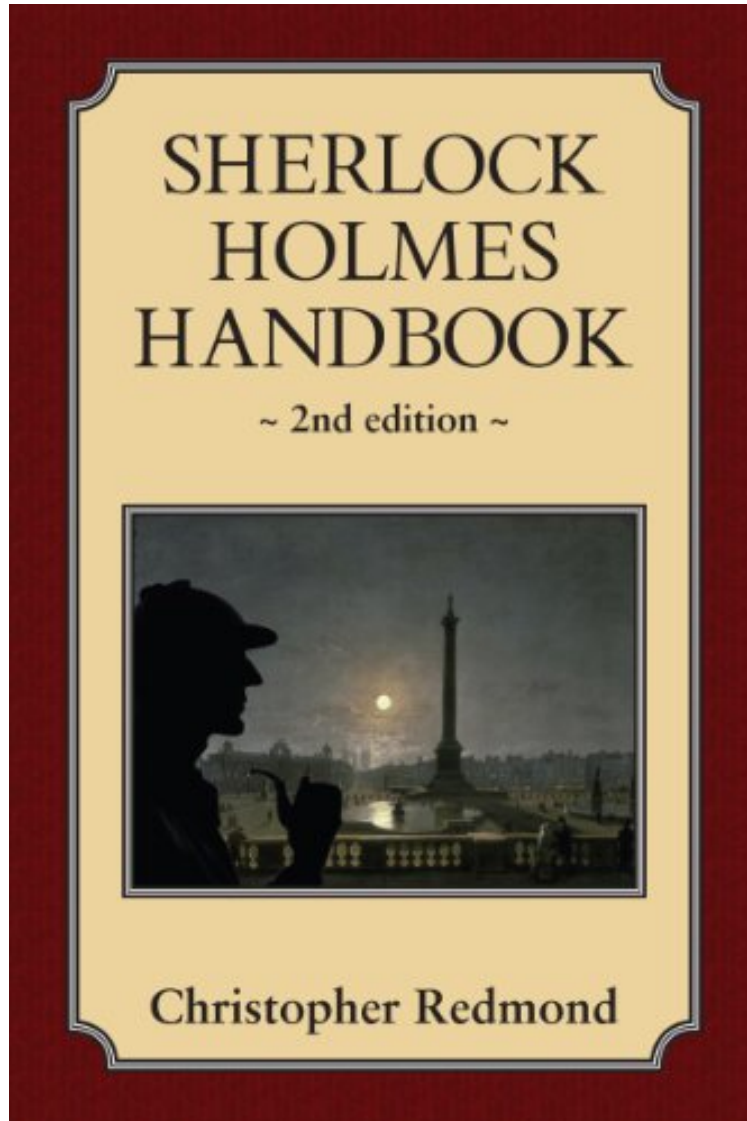


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Sherlock Holmes Handbook: Second Edition

Christopher Redmond

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Christopher Redmond : Sherlock Holmes Handbook: Second Edition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sherlock Holmes Handbook: Second Edition:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The game's afoot!By Curt MudgeonA must-have for Holmes and/or Doyle enthusiasts. A scholarly, delightful read and a great reference.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Jim DavidsonWonderful book!5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Perhaps the Best Book on the Subject of Them AllBy Robert A. ByrneNOTE: This review is for the first editionA must for any Sherlockian

library" and similar phrases seem to appear a bit too often. The Canon can be enjoyed without 100 accompanying books next to it on your shelf. However, there are a few books that stand head and shoulders above the rest and really should be read to greatly increase your Holmes experience. Christopher Redmond has written one of them. The Canadian, who maintains the internet's leading Sherlock Holmes website, Sherlockian.net, is a well-known Sherlockian and Baker Street Irregular. A Sherlock Holmes Handbook is thoroughly researched, covers a broad array of topics and, most importantly, is easy and enjoyable to read. The first chapter is an overview of the Canon, mentioning when each tale was first published (individually or as a collection) and touching on a highlight or two per story. It is assumed that anyone who buys this book is already familiar with the Holmes adventures, so it is in chapter two that the real fun begins. 'Characters and Adventures' kicks off with a discussion of Holmes and his characteristics ("Holmes is moody, alternating periods of energy, enthusiasm and prodigious work with periods of languor, inactivity and apparent depression"). Of course, Watson is next, then the supporting characters, including Professor Moriarty, ("in short....the modern day Jonathan Wild"), Irene Adler, Mycroft Holmes and a few others. There is mention of the unpublished cases, 221B Baker Street, the great detective's methods and overtones in the stories (from the hero archetype to sexual motifs). I was a fan of this book by the end of chapter two. Chapter three focuses on Sherlock Holmes in print and touches on sources for the tales and characters, original publication of the stories, copyrights and illustrations. This is a pretty interesting chapter for the layman in these areas. If you haven't read an in-depth biography of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (several are reviewed in this site's Reference Works section), you can't go wrong with chapter four, which is about Doyle and includes a nice discourse on his military and spiritualist interests. I am not an expert on Victorian England. I learned a great deal from chapter five, titled 'The Victorian Background'. Redmond talks about the rail system, London itself, public affairs, social classes, newspapers, telegraphs, European affairs and more. You really get a sense of how the times played a part in the Holmes tales. He finishes with a nice 'Who's Who' of the era. My understanding of the backgrounds throughout the Holmes adventures was enhanced by what I learned here. The next chapter discusses crime and punishment in Victorian England, along with a brief overview of detective fiction. Chapter seven is a nice potpourri called 'Holmes in Modern Media.' Pastiches, parodies, films, television, theater, radio and other forums are covered. Of course, this is by no means a complete listing of these areas, but it is a wide ranging look that includes specifics such as a listing of the Rathbone films, a mention of the Solar Pons books and the musical, Baker Street. You'll find something of interest in this chapter. 'Fans and Followers' discusses Sherlockiana and the birth of Societies. Even the most knowledgeable Sherlockian and Holmesian will likely find some nugget of information here. The final chapter touches on such topics as Holmes museums, memorials, statues, restaurants and the like. Redmond mentions Holmes in advertising and references from other literature. He finishes with a talk about the appeal of Sherlock Holmes. Isaac Asimov says "How wonderful to have intelligence made so plain and so straightforward that any reader can feel that he might be that intelligent, too, with a bit of luck." Well put! There is an appendix with all of the tales from the Canon listed with their Christ abbreviations, and a thorough index. If I could only pick one tome from my reasonably-sized Holmes library to accompany the Canon, it would be Christopher Redmond's A Sherlock Holmes Handbook. No other one volume adds so much to my enjoyment and experience of Doyle's sixty tales. I can think of no higher recommendation

Sherlock Holmes Handbook sums up a Canadian scholar's lifetime expertise about Sherlock Holmes the characters and themes, the publishers and readers, Victorian London and the Houdini connection, radio actors and cartoonists, the fans who cling to Holmes reality and the professors who tease out motifs from the fifty-six short stories and four novels. The first edition of Sherlock Holmes Handbook appeared in 1993. This edition catches up on new films, new books (a few with a hint of the supernatural) and the advent of the Internet, which has spread Holmes fame and Sherlockian fun even further worldwide. The intervening years have brought three multi-volume editions of the Sherlock Holmes stories, with hundreds of footnotes providing new insights and new amusement. They have also seen Holmes repeatedly on the amateur and professional stages, including a few Canadian productions. And there have been changes to everything from copyright rules to libraries, booksellers and audio recordings.

From Publishers Weekly Canadian author Redmond's unquestioned standing as a Sherlock Holmes expert, manifested in books such as *In Bed with Sherlock Holmes* and *Welcome to America, Mr. Sherlock Holmes*, is not displayed to best advantage in this updated edition of his guide to the Great Detective. He simply doesn't meet his goal of writing a comprehensive companion to the original stories and the cultural world that has grown up around them that will satisfy both neophytes and cognoscenti. Instead, both kinds of readers are likely to be disappointed. Only 25 pages are spent summarizing the Canon, in some cases spoiling the plots, but 40 are devoted to "Fans and Followers," a history of organized devotees of Holmes and Watson. Despite the author's pride in avoiding errors in the first edition, this one is not free of them, including the assertion that a "Merivale" was one of the Scotland Yarders pitted against Holmes by Doyle to the claim that actor Jeremy Brett authored the play he appeared in, *The Secret of Sherlock Holmes*. Those in search of a one-volume guide might want to wait for *Sherlock Holmes for Dummies*. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "...an essential item for any serious Sherlockian. The

ordinary Holmes fan may not be interested in the intricacies of the plots of each story, but the chapter on Fans and Followers is wonderful reading for just how the Sherlockian societies (there are hundreds) began and the rules they set. There is a section dealing with serious academic studies of Holmes, as well as Conan Doyle, and plenty useful information and fun trivia on the Victorian setting. Redmond, as befits a serious Sherlockian, puts this all down in fine scholarly style." (Globe Mail, The)"The new edition...is the finest overview of the world of Holmes and the Holmesian that we're ever likely to see." (The District Messenger) Sherlock Holmes Handbook sums up a Canadian scholar's lifetime expertise about Sherlock Holmes -- the characters and themes, the publishers and readers, Victorian London and the Houdini connection, radio actors and cartoonists, the fans who cling to Holmes's reality and the professors who tease out motifs from the fifty-six short stories and four novels. The first edition of Sherlock Holmes Handbook appeared in 1993. This edition catches up on new films, new books (a few with a hint of the supernatural) and the advent of the Internet, which has spread Holmes's fame and Sherlockian fun even further worldwide. The intervening years have brought three multi-volume editions of the Sherlock Holmes stories, with hundreds of footnotes providing new insights and new amusement. They have also seen Holmes repeatedly on the amateur and professional stages, including a few Canadian productions. And there have been changes to everything from copyright rules to libraries, booksellers and audio recordings. From the Inside Flap Here, in one convenient volume, is everything needed for the enjoyment of Holmes's canon.