



September 2019

I hope you will enjoy the issue of *Magic Door* which this letter accompanies. Instead of my usual Chairman's Piece, I want to address our Friends directly on a timely issue.

A recent posting on the Friends Facebook page, rejected the proposal that May 22, Arthur Conan Doyle's birthday, should be declared "Sherlock Holmes Day". Instead, the writer concluded "Don't relegate him. Elevate him." The day should be declared "Annual Arthur Conan Doyle Day". Which led me to muse on whether it is time to have more than just a day in his memory.

There are Sherlock Holmes societies in virtually every English-speaking country, as well as in many other countries in Europe and Asia. But there is no literary society anywhere dedicated to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This is an anomaly, since there are literary societies dedicated to most of his well-known contemporaries, including Rudyard Kipling¹, Oscar Wilde², Lewis Carroll³, Robert Louis Stevenson⁴, H.G. Wells⁵, George Bernard Shaw⁶ and P.G. Wodehouse⁷, to mention just a few. But there is no Arthur Conan Doyle Society.

Such a society did exist, but it has been dormant for many years and the link to its website is broken. It was founded in 1989 by Christopher Roden, then living in the U.K., and managed to produce 10 high-quality volumes of *The Arthur Conan Doyle Journal*, the last of which appeared in May 2000, from Ashcroft, British Columbia. The Society also published approximately 13 issues of *The Parish Magazine*, initially a newsletter, but eventually a "news magazine", the last of which appeared in 1997. The Society staged its April 1994 Convention in Toronto. But, despite announced intentions to revitalize the Society, it is now defunct.

Another society, the Conan Doyle Crowborough Establishment⁸, came into formal existence in 1989, headed by Malcolm Payne, who was succeeded by Brian Pugh.

¹ <http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/>

² <https://oscholars-oscholars.com/>

³ <http://lewiscarrollsociety.org.uk/>

⁴ <http://robert-louis-stevenson.org/stevenson-societies/>

⁵ <http://hgwellssociety.com/>

⁶ <https://shawsociety.org/>

⁷ <https://www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk/>

⁸ <http://www.the-conan-doyle-crowborough-establishment.com/>

