

RICHARD BURNIP – LECTURES

The Strand Magazine - An Illustrated History in 60 Years

How this popular magazine evolved, adapted to changing tastes, and provided an outlet for a truly outstanding array of writers and artists. Best remembered today for its 40-year association with Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes, the *Strand* was a pioneer among illustrated monthly magazines, and rapidly spawned many imitators. Major contributors included Agatha Christie (Poirot and Miss Marple both appeared here), Winston Churchill (political sketches during his 'wilderness years', paintings after World War Two), and P G Wodehouse (Blandings, Mulliner, and a host of Jeeves tales). From the early brilliance of writers such as Grant Allen and E W Hornung, through the enchanting tales of children's favourite E Nesbit, the robust melodramas of Sapper and his heroes Bulldog Drummond and Ronald Standish, to the weightier work of H G Wells and even Joseph Conrad, the *Strand* left a remarkable legacy which repays detailed investigation. Richard will bring original copies of the Strand to the lecture.

P G Wodehouse in London – 'Welcome home, Jeeves!'

The remarkable way in which Wodehouse, over his phenomenal career of three-quarters of a century as a published author, populated Mayfair and the West End with scores of characters in one of the most elaborate overlapping fictional worlds ever created. Moreover, this was a locale Wodehouse knew well; living in Mayfair for several years and borrowing the addresses of family, friends and colleagues to root the likes of Uncle Fred, Lord Emsworth, and Psmith (not forgetting Bertie Wooster and Jeeves), in a real world which was vanishing even as he immortalised it. Richard will bring original illustrated magazines featuring Wodehouse's work, and theatre programmes to the lecture.

P G Wodehouse and the magazine short story

Wodehouse's remarkable career traced through his work in popular magazines from the 1900s to the 1960s. The prolific author created his first great literary saga with the exploits of cricketer hero Mike Jackson and his remarkable friend Psmith (the 'p', as he informs us, is silent) in *The Captain Magazine*. He enjoyed a 35-year run as a leading contributor to *The Strand Magazine*, among others, and not only established his enduring reputation as a peerless wordsmith, but also found the magazines and their artists helped shape his characters in return. And as the world of popular reading changed, so did Wodehouse. Richard will bring original illustrated magazines featuring Wodehouse's work, and theatre programmes to the lecture.

Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers in London

How the two great Queens of Crime brought the metropolis to life in the 1920s and 30s and how Hercule Poirot and Lord Peter Wimsey found a home there. Both authors chronicled the rapidly-changing London of the 1920s and '30s, writing in the same genre but in radically different ways. They also had very particular views on where their characters should live and work; a revealing investigation in itself. Although Sayers gave up detective fiction, in Christie's case, far from remaining fixed in one period throughout her long career, she charted the changes she witnessed, with her customary skill and insight, in later works such as *Endless Night* and *At Bertram's Hotel*. Richard will bring early magazine printings of Christie and Sayers to the lecture.

Sherlock Holmes From Page to Screen - The Evolution and Revolution of an Icon

How the image of Sherlock Holmes was formed by several other people besides Conan Doyle, and how it continues to evolve. The familiar concept of the famous detective was crystallised by the artist Sidney Paget in 1891, and was somewhat different from the author's original descriptions. However, there had been earlier versions and there would be many subsequent incarnations; including the three actors who Conan Doyle rated as most influential in shaping the public's view of this iconic character. (Richard received the Tony and Freda Howlett Award from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London for his research into Doyle's stage version of his classic story 'The Speckled Band'. He will bring original magazines and theatre programmes to the lecture.)

Conan Doyle Among the Illustrators

At the end of the first decade of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's writing career came the dawn of the popular illustrated magazine. This lecture looks at the artists who helped shape his characters over more than 40 years. Not just Sidney Paget and his defining depictions of Sherlock Holmes, but also the painstaking military art of W B Wollen for the Brigadier Gerard stories, and Harry Rountree's glorious visualisation of Conan Doyle's imaginative fantasies in the adventures of Professor Challenger. These and other artists in both books and the popular magazines of the day such as the *Strand*, *Windsor* and *Pearson's*, enhanced Doyle's magnificent storytelling. Richard will bring various original magazines to the lecture.

Sherlock Holmes and his Contemporaries

The development of popular detective fiction from the 1880s to the 1920s. In an arena dominated by one iconic figure in a deerstalker, there were dozens of other contenders from the title of 'The Great Detective' in the pages of popular monthly magazines. From Arthur Morrison's painstaking sleuth Martin Hewitt to Baroness Orczy's devious Old Man in the Corner, the richly diverse gallery of inspired creations are given centre stage here, along with anti-heroes such as the gentleman burglar A J Raffles, that master of disguise Colonel Clay, the inspired confidence trickster Romney Pringle, and Mrs Meade's remarkable creation, the terrifying Madame Sara. All of these intriguing characters succeeded in breaking free from the shadow of Sherlock Holmes, and here they are given their proper due. Richard will bring original magazines to the lecture.

Arthur Conan Doyle in London - A Stout Heart in the Great Cesspool

This lecture examines the early influences and later experiences which shaped the Conan Doyle's work, including his most famous creation, Sherlock Holmes. From his first visit to London in 1874, through his later experiences there – medical, literary and theatrical – the impact of the city on Conan Doyle's life was tremendous. Here are the publishers and the theatres which had such an impact on his professional life, the hotels and clubs which formed a thread through his rise from provincial doctor and part-time author to public figure, the venues which hosted his final struggle for the cause of Spiritualism. We look at the background to his short-lived attempt to become an eye specialist, the location of his practice and the hospital where he worked before he almost died and literature won the battle over his medical career. Richard will bring early printings of Conan Doyle's work to the lecture.

Conan Doyle at War - From 'The White Company' to the Western Front

A lively survey of the author's writing on military subjects. Never a soldier himself, Conan Doyle was drawn to that world and saw it close-up in different parts of the British Empire. His first great novel was a meticulously researched and vividly-realised account of 14th Century warfare, *The White Company*. His favourite era was the Napoleonic/Regency period which he brought vividly to life in short stories, novels, plays and even poetry. From his early novel *The Great Shadow*, with its masterly evocation of the battle of Waterloo, to his stories about the bare-knuckle boxers and Regency rakes, his fascination with that time never waned. Sherlock Holmes aside, perhaps the greatest of Doyle's stories was the series narrated by his heroic French cavalry officer, *Brigadier Gerard*, a storyteller who strikes the perfect balance between humour and detail, between action and romance. Richard will bring early printings of Conan Doyle's work to the lecture.

Duty Before Fiction - Arthur Conan Doyle and the Boer War

The author's medical work in the South African war zone during the 1899-1902 conflict, his writings about the war, and its influences on his later fiction, are explored here. In 1900, at the height of his fame, and almost a decade after he had given up his medical career, Conan Doyle went out to the Boer War as a hospital administrator. We look at his work there under terrible circumstances in Bloemfontein and his remarkable achievement in writing a history of the war whilst it was still underway. Also how his war work did not end with his return to England, and the manner in which he threw himself with customary vigour into one of the most significant propaganda campaigns ever launched by one man. Richard will bring early printings of Conan Doyle's work to the lecture.

The Great Divide - Arthur Conan Doyle and the Great War

How Doyle's writings changed course completely during the First World War, including his remarkable history of the war and 'His Last Bow: The War Service of Sherlock Holmes'. The Great War saw Doyle give up writing fiction (with two important exceptions) for the duration, but far from being idle he was never busier. Whether working in propaganda (including his military poems), battling censorship with his history of the conflict, or dining with generals on the Western Front, Doyle's profile as both author and public figure was never greater. He also began what would be the final, and for him the most important, phase of his working life: his writing and lecturing in Spiritualism, a subject which not only evolved for him through long study of the subject, but also struck a tremendous chord in the contemporary atmosphere of tragedy and loss. Richard will bring early printings of Conan Doyle's work to the lecture.

Shakespeare's London and the First Folio

The First Folio, Shakespeare's collected works compiled by John Heminges and Henry Condell, two of his closest friends and colleagues, is the greatest key to unlocking our knowledge of his art and performance. When viewed in the context of London and the Elizabethan playhouses, it supplies many surprising insights. (Richard studied Renaissance Drama as part of his degree, and has performed in cue-script productions and workshops using the Folio text with the Original Shakespeare Company. This, in combination with his knowledge of theatre history and Shakespeare's London, provides a distinctive academic/practitioner perspective on the subject. Richard will bring a variety of Folio and Quarto facsimiles to the lecture.)

David Niven and Friends - From Movie Extra to Hollywood Institution

Niven's remarkable life and career in cinema is explored, with an examination of his enduring place in public affection. Rising from studio extra to Hollywood leading man, although Niven remained characteristically modest about his abilities they were in fact considerable, as this lecture demonstrates. Particular attention is paid to his military film roles, and insights are offered into his writings, and the huge range of his wartime activities. From his personification of an ideal young subaltern in *The Way Ahead*, to the reality of being a Lt.-Colonel on Eisenhower's staff, there was much more to this unique actor than a moustache and a smile. Richard will bring original film stills, magazines and other memorabilia to the lecture.

Alfred Hitchcock's London - Shaping a City for Suspense

How the great film director used London, and how it influenced his life and his art. Still both instantly recognisable and widely acclaimed over 40 years after his death, Hitchcock's greatest and best-remembered movies are usually selected from his Hollywood days. However, he spent almost exactly half his life in London and Essex, and the influences of these formative years on his later work were enormous. From his inventive use of London locations in the 1920s and '30s in classics such as *The Lodger* and *The 39 Steps*, to his inspired deployment on film of the West End's theatre stars, Hitchcock never forgot the city. And as it helped shape his life and imagination, so he shaped it on the cinema screen. Richard will bring stills, magazines and postcards to the lecture.

The Flashman Stories and the Film Screenplays of George MacDonald Fraser

How the author deployed his impeccable sense of history and feel for character in print and on screen. Best known for his Flashman series of novels, George MacDonald Fraser possessed a remarkable ear for the voices of the past, and a huge knowledge of, and affection for, popular literature and cinema. From his comic stories of military life based on his own experiences in the Gordon Highlanders, to his nimble and vivid scripts for the 1970s *Three Musketeers* films, this lecture looks at the way in which Fraser dovetailed fiction with history in his novels, and brought a unique perspective to his film work. Richard will bring film stills and other material to the lecture.

Jack Wild - The Lost Voices of an Artful Dodger

Best remembered for his signature role as the Dodger in the musical film *Oliver!*, this is the story of the popular actor's remarkable life and career; a vivid snapshot of the world of popular entertainment from the 1960s to the early 2000s. This lecture also demonstrates how most of the media clichés applied to Jack are wide of the mark, and reveals a clearer image of that outstanding performer's achievements. (Richard did the archival research which assisted Jack's widow in completion of Jack's autobiography *It's a Dodger's Life*, and subsequently narrated the audiobook of it. He brings a unique knowledge and insight, as well as access to much unpublished material, to this complex and fascinating story.)

Talking About Audiobooks

Audiobooks are commonplace today, and taken entirely for granted. This lecture looks at just what goes into making the finished product familiar to us; the process of preparing and recording audiobooks, and their increasing importance as an alternative to the print version of any book. Also the way in which the audio version can help serve the author's intentions, and a look at the history of talking books (which goes back much further than the cassettes of the 1970s). Richard has recorded over 180 of them, from weighty political texts, via popular history, romances, thrillers and science fiction, to children's stories. He brings an insider's knowledge and enthusiasm to the subject.

"Ralph Lynn Asks You To Laugh Again": The Painstaking Art of a Master of Mirth

His trademark: a monocle. His career: a 60-year mission to make people laugh. Best known for his leading roles in the era-defining comedy plays of the 1920s and 30s known as the Aldwych farces, Ralph Lynn worked diligently at his craft before success came to him aged 40 in 1922 in a play described as 'The Laugh of the Century'. For the rest of his life the dapper man with the husky voice devoted himself to the very serious matter of making people laugh. This lecture looks at his whole career, from provincial touring in the Edwardian era, through his biggest success in World War 2 — opening to a packed theatre when the VIs had begun to hit London — to his final bow as a sprightly 79-year-old, still delighting audiences in the age of the 'angry young men'. Illustrated with rare postcards and stills, the lecture also provides an unusual opportunity to look at the evolving design of theatre programmes and advertising covering Ralph's career over six decades. "Ralph Lynn asks you to laugh again", was a request to audiences in the dark days of the 1940s. This lecture invites you to look again at the career of this "most unassuming and perfectly charming" man, a dedicated master of a most exacting art. Richard will bring original images and theatre programmes to the lecture.

Novelist, Playwright, Teacher and Soldier: The Remarkable Careers of Ian Hay

How many former public schoolmasters were there who became both best-selling authors and decorated First World War army officers? And from that short list, which among them also wrote plays with P G Wodehouse and film screenplays for Alfred Hitchcock? Step forward John Hay Beith, who wrote under the pen name 'Ian Hay', one of the most popular and prolific authors of the first half of the 20th Century. A schoolmaster when his first novel was published in 1907, he served with distinction in the Great War and touched the pulse of the wartime nation with his best-known book *The First Hundred Thousand*. He became a significant figure in propaganda work, seconded to Washington to advocate the entry of the United States into the war. Another successful career as a film script writer saw him working on key movies for Alfred Hitchcock, including the first classic adaptation of *The 39 Steps*. He wrote over 20 plays, including three joyous West End hits written with P G Wodehouse (who later said 'Ian Hay has done all the work'). The lecture will pay particular attention to two of his greatest theatre successes, *Tilly of Bloomsbury* and *Housemaster*. Early book and magazine illustrations and a wide range of theatre programmes and images form a major part of the lecture celebrating the remarkable careers of the man once called Britain's 'happiest novelist'. Richard will bring original letters, theatre programmes, and early editions to the lecture.

Pictorial Perfection: Gabrielle Ray and the Art of the Theatre Postcard

The Edwardian era saw the new fashion in picture postcards elevated to an art form in its own right. This was especially true for the major postcard companies such as Rotary, Philco and Beagles whose studios produced striking images of plays, musicals and the popular stars of the stage. This lecture looks at the golden age of postcards through the medium of one of the most photographed women of her day, the actress and dancer Miss Gabrielle Ray. From her star-making role in *The Orchid*, the debut production of the new Gaiety Theatre in 1903, through to some of the biggest hits of the Edwardian era including *The Dollar Princess* and *The Merry Widow*, 'Gabs' worked alongside many of the greatest and best-loved stars of early musical theatre. Postcards of her sold in their thousands, and the main challenge for the photographers was to find ways to capture the extraordinary vitality and energy she brought to the stage. A visually stunning story of a defining age in the late history. Richard will bring original magazines, programmes and postcards to the lecture.

The Theatrical Exploits of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

When Conan Doyle was 15 and on his first visit to London, he saw and admired Henry Irving as Hamlet. Within 20 years he had progressed from star-struck teenager to author and dramatist. Although he claimed not to be very successful in this area, in one year he had two plays running in the West End and several provincial tours: an enviable achievement and part of the story explored by this lecture through programmes, postcards and contemporary magazines. A copyright battle evolved into a determined effort to put Sherlock Holmes on stage, just one of the stories investigated here. Others revealed include one-act pieces such as *A Pot of Caviare* with its devastating sting in the tail, and lavish melodrama in the form of his Regency epic *The House of Temperley*. Among those performers we will encounter: the great actor Lewis Waller, who embodied two diverse heroes in *Brigadier Gerard* and *The Fires of Fate*; Dorothea Desmond, who proved an ideal heroine in two plays; H A Saintsbury and Lyn Harding matching wits twice over in *The Speckled Band*; and not forgetting Sir Henry Irving himself as old Corporal Brewster in Doyle's *Waterloo*. From the hazards of staging boxing matches, to the challenges of working with a rock python named 'Mystery', this is a story with all the makings of a classic Conan Doyle tale. Richard will bring original magazines, programmes and theatre postcards to the lecture.

'Dreadful Walls of Newgate': Dickens' Oliver Twist and the Architecture of Justice.

Drawing on personal experiences both from his childhood and his work as a journalist, in his second novel Charles Dickens immortalised some remarkable areas of London, from the heartbreaking poverty of Field Lane to the grim justice meted out at Hatton Garden Police Court and Bow Street; with the shadow of the Old Bailey and Newgate Prison falling across them all. This lecture looks at what remains of the key locations in the novel, as well as the major changes which swept away Fagin's den at the end of Dickens' life. It also looks at two significant adaptations of the book, which drew heavily on the original art of George Cruikshank and the architecture of London: Beerbohm Tree's celebrated Edwardian stage version and the musical film *Oliver!* directed by Tree's son Carol Reed. (Richard did much of the research which enabled the completion of Jack Wild's autobiography 'It's a Dodger's Life', and also narrates the unabridged audiobook version. He will bring a selection of theatre and film material to the lecture.)

Shadows in the Smoke: Bleak House and Dickens' Legal London.

Considered by many to be Dickens' greatest novel, this lecture looks at *Bleak House* in the context of the architecture of legal London, both present and vanished. From his experiences as a young law clerk for two firms at Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn, to his later battles with both publishers and literary pirates, Dickens developed his knowledge of the law in a particularly personal form. The lecture uses maps, photographs and early illustrations to demonstrate how the seemingly unchanged Inns of Court have in fact altered considerably. In retracing the original steps of Miss Flyte, Mr Tulkinghorn, Inspector Bucket, and the Wards in Jarndyce, we see how Dickens recorded in meticulous and vivid detail much that would vanish in the late nineteenth century.

Ghosts of Ice and Fog: Investigating the Landscape of Dickens' A Christmas Carol.

A Christmas Carol, perhaps Charles Dickens best-known work, has been adapted for stage, screen and radio countless times, and is capable of infinite re-invention. The timelessness of the story was helped by Dickens' decision (unusually for him) to give very few clues as to the locations in the story. This lecture reveals where those clues lead us, especially in London, and why the hints Dickens left behind were part of a deeply personal history. A visual feast of old and modern photographs, maps, theatrical material and early illustrations bring the hidden aspects of this classic tale to life.