

The Finest Assorted Collection

A Review by Dean Richardson

Much attention has been given to the exhibit “Sherlock Holmes in 221 Objects” that recently opened for a limited time in New York City. It displays that number of items from the vast collection (more than 7,000 items) of Glen Miranker, including first magazine appearances, first editions, and original art by Paget and Steele, among other treasures. My first thought is, *What does it take to amass such a collection (besides huge amounts of money), and how does one proceed?* (Only a non-collector would ask why.) Here is a book that suggests some answers.

The Finest Assorted Collection: Essays on Collecting Sherlock Holmes, edited by Peter Eckrich and Rob Nunn (Gasogene Books, 2022; 232 pages; \$26.95), includes 27 personal accounts of the hobby (obsession? illness?), reflecting a wide variety of approaches and interests. Of course, you would expect books to be a major focus, but it’s surprising how many ways a collection can diverge from that initial path.

Denny Dobry collects items that would be appropriate for Sherlock’s sitting room, which Dobry has recreated in his basement. Barbara Rusch collects ephemera of the era (letters, postcards, promotional items, play programs, even a pair of knickers worn by a certain VR). Charles Prepolec collects bound volumes of *The Strand*, and not just those containing ACD material. Don Hobbs collects foreign language editions of the canon (“Collecting Books I Cannot Read”). Howard Ostrom and Steven Doyle focus on film- and television-related matter. Joe Eckrich collects autographs. Al Shaw collects pipes (a multi-pipe problem). Robert Perret collects Sherlockian toys. Ashley Polasek and Monica Schmidt collect memories (hey, those I can afford). Amanda Downs and Jerry Margolin collect original art. There are many other specialties described (confessed?) in this fascinating volume, but you get the idea.

You’ll find helpful advice, inspiration, amazement, and perhaps most useful, concrete proof when you need to say to your spouse or significant other, “Look. It could be worse!”