

# Silent Sherlock

## Sherlock Holmes and the Silent Film Era

by

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### Part Nineteen (1923 - 1924)

It would seem Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a fan of Eille Norwood's performances. Doyle stated, "He has that rare quality which can only be described as glamour, which compels you to watch an actor eagerly. He has the brooding eye which excites expectation and he also has a quite unrivaled power of disguise." The year 1923 would give us fifteen more short films ("The Last Adventures of Sherlock Holmes") and one more feature film ("The Sign of Four") from Stoll Pictures with Norwood. This gave them a grand total of forty-five short films and two feature films, and forever secured a place for Eille Norwood in the film history of Sherlock Holmes.

To see Eille Norwood's power of disguise check out "All Change" - "A Rapid Make-up" study of Mr. Eille Norwood in 'The Return of Sherlock Holmes' at the Princes Theatre, London at: <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/all-change>

#### "The Last Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"

**1923** - "**Silver Blaze**", Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - "**The Speckled Band**", Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - "**The Gloria Scott**", Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - "**The Engineer's Thumb**", Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - "**His Last Bow**", Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Cardboard Box”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Blue Carbuncle”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)



**1923** - **“The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Three Students”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Missing Three Quarter”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Mystery of Thor Bridge”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Stone of Mazarin”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Mystery of the Dancing Men”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923** - **“The Crooked Man”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923 - “The Final Problem”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Hubert Willis as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

**1923 - “The Sign of Four”**, Eille Norwood as Sherlock Holmes and Arthur M. Cullin as Dr. Watson. Stoll Pictures (U.K.)

In the feature length “The Sign of Four”, Nowood’s final film, Hubert Willis was replaced by a younger looking actor Arthur M. Cullin to better facilitate the storyline of Watson's wooing of Miss Mary Morstan.

We would also get our first Czechoslovakian Holmes in 1923.

**1923 - “Únos Bankéře Fuxe, or, “The Banker Fuchs”** - Eman Fiala as Sherlock Holmes II. Elektafilm (Czech.)

### (1924)

Following the flood of Eille Norwood Sherlock Holmes films by Stoll Film Co. from (1921 - 1923), and the high success and long run of Barrymore’s “Sherlock Holmes, and with ‘talkies’ on the horizon, the golden age of Sherlock Holmes in silent films was beginning to come to a close. One very popular film would still surface in 1924, that being “Sherlock Jr.” starring Buster Keaton.



**1924 - "Sherlock Jr."**- Buster Keaton as Sherlock Jr. Buster Keaton Productions.

"Sherlock Jr." - "A projectionist is studying to be a detective and is in love with a young lady. When he proposes her, his rival steals the chain watch of her father and incriminates him. The disappointed young projectionist returns to his job and while projecting the film, he dreams on being the detective of the story. Meanwhile, the girl finds the truth and acquits the guilty of the projectionist to her father."<sup>1</sup>

"It is not generally known that Fatty Arbuckle directed Buster Keaton's 'Sherlock Jr.' His name on the screen as director appears as Will B. Good! Thus adding a comedy touch - if you get it."<sup>2</sup>

Watch Buster Keaton in "Sherlock Jr." at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwL1y1uITwg>

In paging through 1924 "Photoplay" magazines I came across many good reviews for "Sherlock Holmes", "Sherlock Brown", and "Sherlock Jr." I also came across many bad reviews for Stoll's "Return of Sherlock Holmes", "The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" and "The Last Adventures of Sherlock Holmes", which concurred with my earlier feelings that perhaps Eille Norwood is a bit overrated as a great Holmes (at least according to American film reviewers and fans).

For the rest of 1924 we have the films which follow.

**1924 - "The Telephone Girl"**- a series - Fourth Episode entitled "**Sherlock's Home**" - Alberta Vaughn (1904 - 1992) as Gladys Murgatroyd. Film Booking Offices of America.

"Sherlock's Home" - "Gladys falls for a prizefighter who has invited his entire hometown to watch his fight in New York City. However, he gets crazy jealous when he sees Gladys at the fight sitting next to Jimmy. After the bout is over, he sets out for the hotel to teach Jimmy a lesson."<sup>3</sup> Only connection to Sherlock Holmes seems to be title.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0015324/>

<sup>2</sup> Photoplay Magazine Jul-Dec 1924. Vol 26-27 pg. 73

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0781484/>



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**1924 - “The Mysterious Mystery!”**- Mickey Daniels (1914 - 1970) as



Sherlock Hawkshaw and Joe Cobb (1916 - 2002) as Watson. Hal Roach Studios.

“The Mysterious Mystery!” - Our Gang has Mickey Daniels doing an impersonation of Sherlock Holmes and Joe Cobb being Watson as the two try to discover the whereabouts of a young rich kid who has gone missing. While trying to find the kid the gang must also try and avoid a dumb detective also working the case.”<sup>4</sup>

Watch “The Mysterious Mystery!” at: <https://archive.org/details/TheMysteriousMystery>

**1924 - “Trailing Trouble”**- Buddy Messinger (1907 - 1965) as a detective, studying under Sherlock Holmes. Century Film.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0235610/>



"Trailing Trouble" - "Buddy Messinger is a would be detective, studying under Sherlock Holmes, who in this case, has a young daughter and a designing sister who plans to get his home away from him "<sup>5</sup>

End of Part Nineteen  
(1925 - 1930) Begins in Part Twenty

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<sup>5</sup> "The Film Daily" (Volume 27-28) Jan - Jun 1924 Pg. 12