

# Canadian Holmes

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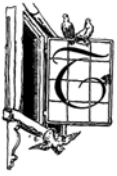
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One-hundred fifty-first issue

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# Graces of Bootprints

## *Because it is 2017*

Canadian Holmes didn't set out to have an all-female issue but we're pleased to present one.

The Bootprints realized midway through planning the Summer 2017 edition that the potential contributors of most of the featured articles were women. We believe this is worth noting, since it's a good indication of the breadth and depth of writing talent in the Sherlockian world in Canada and beyond today.

In this issue, we welcome first-time contributor Lyndsay Faye, a renowned author and no stranger to the wonderful world of Holmes. In fact, Lyndsay provides readers with insight into the challenges involved in creating a Sherlock Holmes pastiche. We also meet Karita Kuusisto, who provides a better appreciation of illustrator Sidney Paget and his work, not to mention a fascinating look at the Victorian printing process. Laura de Boer, also new to these pages, informs us of James Moriarty's stint as a barkeep in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Making a return to *Canadian Holmes* in this issue is Sonia Fetherston, who shows that a kiss is hardly just a kiss, especially in the Canon. Thelma Beam, a two-time Meyers, examines the relationship between Arthur and Jean Conan Doyle through the lens of 10 letters the author penned while on tour in America in 1923. Also returning in this issue is illustrator Laurie Fraser Manifold, who created the artwork on the cover, as well as that accompanying Sonia's article.

We would be remiss to not also mention two regular columns - Mrs. Hudson's Kitchen, by Wendy Heyman-Marsaw, and Letters From Lomax, the work of Peggy Perdue. In fact, this issue's Lomax column is about women who write fiction inspired by the Canon. Rounding out this issue are book reviews and Bootmakers' Diary.

While Conan Doyle did create some strong female characters - with Irene Adler and Mrs. Hudson, of course, leading the way - one of the reasons his work lives on today is because of writing done by women like the ones featured in this issue.

# From Mrs. Hudson's Kitchen



*This column is by Mrs. Hudson herself and dictated to Wendy Heyman-Marsaw, a Sherlockian and Master Bootmaker living in Halifax. Mrs. Hudson provided this photograph of herself at age 24, taken on the occasion of her betrothal to Mr. Hudson.*

“The modest virgin, the prudent wife, and the careful matron, are much more serviceable in life than petticoated philosophers, blustering heroines, or virago queens. She who makes her husband and her children happy, who reclaims the one from vice and trains up the other to virtue, is a much greater character than ladies described in romances, whose whole occupation is to murder mankind with shafts from their quiver, or their eyes.”  
– Oliver Goldsmith *The Vicar of Wakefield*

In her *Book of Household Management*, Mrs. Beaton describes no less than 54 duties and virtues of “the mistress of the house,” covering everything from “Early Rising,” “Friendships,” “Hospitality” and “The Important Subject of Dress and Fashion.” Essentially, a Victorian upper- or middle-class woman’s life was dictated by societal expectations and restrictions. These values were exemplified by Queen Victoria herself, who was a role model for familial closeness and duty. Only the advent of the Industrial Revolution brought about some changes for the women of lower classes as they were needed to add to the workforce. However, these women’s wages were lower than men’s for the same work and she was expected to perform all the wifely chores and duties of maintaining a family and household. Women were the chattel of men – divorce for a woman was almost unattainable and if she did succeed she was cast out of society, never to see her children again. Women were perceived to be unable to comprehend the superior knowledge of men and were deemed the weaker sex in general. Her role was completely and utterly subordinate to males.

I was extremely fortunate that my solicitor father regarded my formal education with the same importance he ascribed to that of my brother Robert. In this more liberal household I was not treated as a “possession” to be handed over with all my worldly goods to any “suitable” husband. Indeed, my father ensured that I should have a prenuptial agreement

guaranteeing access to my own property of jewels, pin money and other worldly goods in an estate that I may possess for my sole and separate use not subject to the control of my husband. I am indeed thankful that I met and married Alec Hudson, who shared these values and respected the human rights of women. But despite this point of view and attempted safeguards for a legacy of my own, the Married Woman's Property Act of 1870 nevertheless provided that all property in a woman's name before marriage still belonged to my husband after marriage. Once married, the only way that women could reclaim property was through widowhood. It was only through the tragedy of Alec's murder that I was able, as provided in his will, to inherit property and a financial settlement. It wasn't until 1893 that the Third Woman's Property Act gave women control of their own property.

Thus I came to inherit 221B Baker Street and become the landlady to Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson. The rental of their rooms augmented my inheritance, which amounted to a healthy and steady annual income. My earlier education prepared me for the efficient running of a household and for that I thank my insightful father. Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson took up their rooms originally in 1881 but by 1889 Mr. Holmes paid me a rather "princely sum" as Dr. Watson described it in "The Adventure of the Dying Detective." This, of course, was due to my increasing involvement with Mr. Holmes's consulting practice and the very real dangers it imposed.

I also became involved with the Women's suffrage movement, beginning in 1898 with the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and changing to Mrs. Pankhurst's group, The Women's Social Political Union (WSPU) which was more politically radical. Coincidentally, the WSPU held its afternoon tea meetings at the Criterion Restaurant, the locale of Dr. Watson's meeting with Mr. Stamford that resulted in the good doctor's subsequent sharing of rooms with Mr. Holmes at 221B. The Criterion was chosen by the WSPU due to its renowned afternoon teas. I am pleased that the Criterion of today still offers lovely afternoon teas – albeit at exceptionally high prices.

# *Canonical Canoodling: Kisses from the pages of Sherlock Holmes*

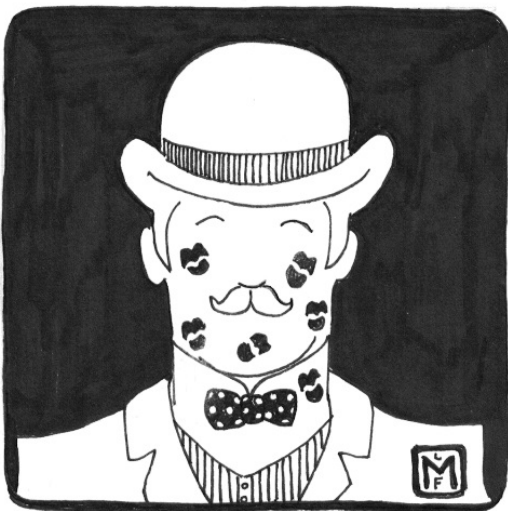
By Sonia Fetherston

*Sonia Fetherston, BSI (The Solitary Cyclist) is a freelance writer who lives on the West Coast of the United States. Follow her on Twitter: @221blonde*

*Artwork for this article is by Laurie Fraser Manifold*



When the lips of actress Sophie Thompson gently brushed those of actor Jeremy Brett for the 1992 *Sherlock Holmes* episode called “The Master Blackmailer,” it was the smooch heard ’round the Sherlockian world. Sticklers were scandalized. Besides the un-canonical nature of that moment, it seemed terribly out of character for Brett’s emotionally stunted Holmes to share a kiss with anybody. (Never mind that his Holmes was, in fact, not precisely *in* character – at the time he was masquerading as the plumber, Escott.) Still, before and after Granada Television’s momentous kiss several other Holmeses have been joined at the lip with other women, including the very newest crop of Great Detectives found in film and on TV. But if the *real* Holmes never puckers



up in the One True Canon, there are nonetheless more than a dozen instances of other characters doing so in its pages. Let’s purse our lips and consider how kissing enriches our understanding of the following stories.

For some fortunate Sherlockian characters a kiss is affectionate and even romantic. Take Ettie Shafter and Birdy Edwards, pretending to

be Jack McMurdo, in *The Valley of Fear*. They share a couple of memorable osculatory encounters that place them in the top tier of canonical kissers. At one point, Ettie impulsively throws her arms around Birdy/Jack, telling him how afraid she is for his safety. “What chance have you against a dozen of them, with Boss McGinty and all the power of the lodge behind them?” she wants to know. We imagine her eyelashes batting and her bosom heaving. Like a quintessential manly man, McMurdo “disengaged her



hands, kissed her, and gently pushed her back into a chair.” He follows up their kiss with one of the Canon’s throatiest lines: “There, acushla, there! Don’t be disturbed or fear for me.” Many pages (and a couple more “acushlas”) later they share what seems to be a much more prolonged lip-lock. “He gathered her into his arms and kissed away her fears and doubts,” Dr. Watson writes. With this monumental spit-swapper, Ettie and Birdy/Jack vault into first place as the Canon’s most enduring kissers, though they admittedly fall short of the Guinness World Record for the longest kiss. That was achieved in 2013 by two smoochers from Thailand: 58 hours, 35 minutes and 58 seconds.

Compared to the passion of Ettie and Birdy/Jack, the kiss shared by another romantic couple in the Canon may seem a bit uninspired. But appearances are deceiving! This is the kiss in *A Study in Scarlet* that’s shared by Lucy Ferrier and Jefferson Hope. It occurs in the “American part” of the novel when the young lovers contemplate a future together in the Old Wild West. With “her cheek against his broad breast,” (the same board breast in which beats a “volcanic, untamed heart,” mind you) Jefferson, or maybe she called him Jeff, suddenly stoops and plants one on her. He clammers onto his horse and gallops off into the sunset leaving Lucy breathlessly gazing after him, “the happiest girl in all Utah.” If this buss seems harmless, aficionados of the genre will tell you the interaction between Lucy and Jeff positively smolders with unadorned lust. Über-



Cowboy Gary Cooper succinctly explains its implications: “In Westerns you were permitted to kiss your horse but *never* your girl.” (1)

Those kisses stand in sharp contrast to the paternal peck Alexander Holder bestows on his young niece, Mary, in “The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet.” Holder thinks the world of this girl, describing her at one point as a “sunbeam in my house.” On the fateful evening, after enquiring whether she’s secured their home before bedtime, he bids her good night. “I kissed her and went up to my bedroom again, where I was soon asleep,” Holder tells Sherlock Holmes. For the record, Holder is no creepy uncle. There is no indication that this was anything more than a simple kiss on the cheek or forehead, the equivalent of an affectionate hug, and completely appropriate. One might venture to say, with Louis Armstrong, that it is a “kiss to build a dream on,” since he has high hopes Mary will one day wed his son. As luck would have it, Holmes finds out that Mary is not really worthy of Holder’s regard. “Whatever her sins are, they will soon receive a more than sufficient punishment,” the detective tells the banker.



Not every kiss is romantic, or even affectionate. Two instances of canonical kisses are aggressive and clearly intended to frighten the recipients into submission. “The Adventure of the Red Circle” is a sterling case in point. Evil Gorgiano pushes his way into Señora Lucca’s home. She later relates that he “seized me in his mighty arms, hugged me in his bear’s embrace, covered me with kisses, and implored me to come away with him.” Gorgiano is dominant, animalistic and violent. He seeks to intimidate Señora Lucca and bend her to his will. Her own lips were – at least intermittently – free to form a scream for help, and so her husband rushes in to thwart her assailant. (2) A comparable attack takes place in “The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist” where the odious Woodley wages a steady campaign of harassment against Violet Smith.

Woodley begins by ogling her “for ever.” The situation escalates when he tries to bargain with her, offering to trade diamonds in exchange for her acquiescence to his overtures. Finally, when he is alone with her, Woodley grabs her and forces himself on her. “He seized me in his arms one day after dinner – he was hideously strong – and swore that he would not let me go until I had kissed him.” Violet doesn’t say that she gave in to his demand. But later, when she is kidnapped and “wed” to Woodley her scream of horror is suddenly cut off “with a choke and a gurgle.” This, surely, was the sound of Woodley stifling her cries (“you may now kiss the bride”) with a gauche *galoche*.

Gorgiano and Woodley are plain revolting. Their unwanted kisses, however, fade before the erotic puckerings of Jack Crocker, first officer on the liner *Rock of Gibraltar*, in “The Abbey Grange.” To say that Crocker is deeply smitten with passenger Mary Fraser doesn’t begin to address the magnitude of the man’s weird obsession. “From the first day that I met her, she was the only woman to me,” he confesses to Holmes. “Every day of that voyage I loved her more.” Other seafaring men may swab the deck, but Crocker undertakes to *snog* it. “Many a time since have I kneeled down in the darkness of the night watch,” he tells Holmes, “and kissed the deck of that ship because I knew her dear feet had trod it.” His crawling about – a full year after Mary sails on his ship – kissing and kissing and kissing the deck is just bizarre. It is not like the grateful tarmac-kissing Pope John Paul II famously engaged in following his many flights around the globe. Nor is it the happy, successful kiss Jamaican runner Usain Bolt gave the track when he won gold at the London Olympics in 2012. Crocker’s kisses are disturbed, and disturbing.

Crocker, by the way, is not the only one in the Canon to plant his lips on an inanimate object. In “The Gloria Scott,” when James Armitage recalls his frightening adventure on a convict ship, he describes a suggestion made by the mutineer Prendergast. Prendergast tells Armitage he should “kiss the Book” and join up with the bad guys. This, of course, is a reference to kissing the Bible. It’s not clear whether Prendergast is speaking literally or figuratively, but the gesture itself is indeed considered a binding form of “symbolic speech,” like taking an oath. In fact, about one-third of United States presidents, starting with George Washington, see fit to incorporate Bible-kissing as part of their inaugural ceremonies. (3) It’s a demonstration of the seriousness of the pledge, while implying that God approves of it.

The Bible is a very ancient book, and it should not surprise us to find several other timeworn kissing customs that pop up in the Sherlockian Canon. First is that of kissing someone's hand, a practice with roots in feudal times to pay homage to a person of a higher station in life. We see a kiss of this sort in "The Naval Treaty," when Watson's distraught friend, Percy Phelps, seizes Holmes's hand and kisses it. The joyous impulsivity of this gesture aside, Phelps is re-enacting the practice of vassals in medieval times who knelt to kiss the hands of their Lords. By this kiss he is acknowledging the supremacy of Holmes. A second type of old kissing tradition is found in "The Crooked Man," when Nancy Barclay ritualistically kisses her friend Miss Morrison. This kiss indicates that a pact is made between the two women regarding silence concerning their chance meeting with Henry Wood. "When I promised her I would say nothing she kissed me," Miss Morrison says. This harkens back to Roman



times, when a kiss was employed between parties arranging contracts and business agreements. Mrs. Barclay effectively seals the bargain with her lips. (Coincidentally, this is the Canon's only girl-on-girl kiss.) A similar kiss-in-accord is bestowed by Grant Munro on little Lucy Hebron in the story "The Yellow Face." After he considers, for "a long ten minutes" (two minutes in British editions) what to do about the biracial child who is at the heart of his marital predicament, Munro finally answers by kissing the girl. It's a sign that he agrees to the terms Fate is offering; henceforth he, Effie and Lucy will be a family. For a final example of an old, stylized smooch we look in again on that other Lucy – Lucy Ferrier of *A Study in Scarlet*. Early in the American look-back, when she is still a small child, this Lucy demands that her adoptive father engage in a ritual familiar in many homes and cultures. Exhausted from carrying her through the desert, John Ferrier accidentally sets the girl down too hard. Lucy cries out that she is hurt, and

then she rubs a spot on the back of her head to show him where. “Kiss it and make it well,” she tells him. “That’s what mother use to do.” While the healing power of a parental kiss has roots in folklore, at least one physician feels that it’s “better than medication at times. Everybody wants to be loved.” (4) Another doctor, Faustus, seemingly takes the notion of healing one step further when he appeals to Helen to “make me *immortal* with a kiss!” (5)

Scientists tell us it takes dozens of muscular contractions to pull off a good, thorough kiss. As that happens, some 80 million bacteria are exchanged between the kisser and kissee. Over the course of a normal lifetime humans spend roughly 20,000 minutes, or two solid weeks, engaging in kissing. (6) Other primates, like chimpanzees and bonobos, kiss in much the same way we do using their lips and even their tongues. Some animal species (such as moose, squirrels and cats) brush noses and mouths. It’s all about “bringing two individuals closely together for courtship, bonding, or conflict....and can serve to define relationships – whether between friends, partners, enemies, [or] family members.” (7) These facts aside, the Canon’s kisses add a physical dimension to our appreciation of a handful of Sherlockian tales. If Jeremy Brett’s Holmes can indulge in an extra-canonical kiss for the sake of television viewers, the least we readers can do is consider the kisses that are actually in the Sherlockian tales and see how they enhance the text before us.

## Endnotes

(1) “Well, It Was This Way,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 17 March 1958.

(2) As a sidelight, it’s curious that Gorgiano “implored” her to join him. His begging shows that Señora Lucca retains the upper hand despite the assault.

(3) Frederick B. Jonassen, “Kiss the Book....You’re President,” *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal*, (2012) p. 885. Many other American presidents, including Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover, kissed the Book at their inaugurations.

(4) Dr. Hyman Tolmas, clinical professor of pediatrics emeritus at Tulane University School of Medicine, quoted in “Kissing Therapy,” *salon.com* 2 February 2000.

(5) Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus* (12.83). Italics in the quote are mine.

(6) *The Oregonian*, 28 July 2015.

(7) Sheril Kirshenbaum, *The Science of Kissing: What Our Lips Are Telling Us*, Grand Central Publishing, New York, 2011. p. 29.

# *Lot 86 – 10 letters that tell a story*

By Thelma Beam

*Thelma Beam is a long-time member, a Master Bootmaker and served as Meyers, Toronto twice. She has won the prestigious True Davidson Award three times, including for this paper, which was presented in November 2011.*



Toronto Public Library has obtained a series of 10 letters written by Arthur Conan Doyle to his wife Jean while on tour in America in 1923. The letters are a rich source of information about the relationship between the two spouses. They are also full of references to people, places and events that were occupying Conan Doyle's life at the time. The purpose of this article is to provide a context for readers of the letters, so that they can be better understood and appreciated. Events and relationships are explained, and some observations made, about Sir Arthur and Lady Jean Conan Doyle as a married couple.

Originally known as "Lot 86" at Christie's, the auction house from where they were obtained, the letters are from the early segment of the 1923 tour, when Jean waited in New York with the children while Conan Doyle lectured in Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. The time frame is less than two weeks (from April 15 – 26).

## *Letters to Jean*

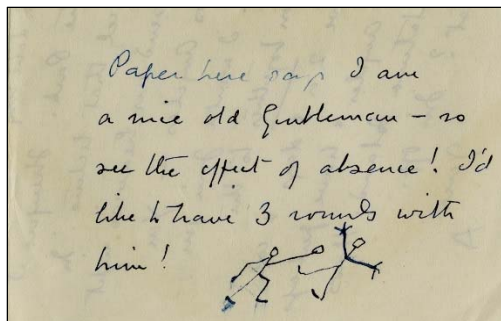
During the years 1922 and 1923, the Conan Doyles led an intrepid life, touring through America on a quest to spread Spiritualism to the masses there. In 1923, the family was on its second American adventure. Appreciative audiences flocked to sold-out lectures to hear him speak. The tour was conducted at a breakneck pace, covering 18 cities in America from New York to Seattle, and seven in Canada, all between April 3rd and August 4th.

The Conan Doyle entourage consisted of Conan Doyle, Lady Jean Conan Doyle, their three children – Denis, Adrian and Jean – governess Miss French, and 20 large pieces of luggage. Their base of operations was the Biltmore Hotel in New York, where a private suite had been put at their disposal. As the stops were numerous and so was the family, it was decided that Conan Doyle would travel to some of the smaller venues alone, leaving Jean and the children comfortably ensconced in the larger



*Conan Doyle and family en route to America, 1923*

special personal endearment; “My own girl!” or “My own girlie,” “My own sweet love” or simply “My own.” At this time, Jean was a woman over 50 years of age and had been married for 15 years, but in her husband’s eyes, she was still the “girlie” who had captured his heart long ago. And, while being over 60 years of age himself, Conan Doyle still wants to appear youthful and virile to his wife. He writes from Pittsburgh, “Paper here says I am a nice old Gentleman – so see the effect of absence! I’d like to have 3 rounds with him!”



*The back of one of ACD’s letters featuring him going three rounds with a journalist.*

### *Domestic details*

Despite this promising start to the letters, for the most part they are not romantic or sexy. Instead, they are full of little domestic details and what to do about them. He writes, “Darling, don’t worry if you forgot the coat. It could not be helped.” (The coat eventually shows up.)

With regard to their travelling arrangements, he has much to consult with Jean about. He tells her, “I’ve been thinking. Please think also. Yellowstone Park is a day out of our way and is simply Jasper Park – just the same.” Later he writes, “The Y Stone Park settles itself for it does not open till June. ... In that case we could send our heavies right from

Chicago to Los Angeles – You would go on to Denver. I would join you there. We would go on together to the Colorado Canon + have 2 or 3 days + we could then get to Los Angeles + have perhaps 2 days in Catalina Island. How’s that?”

There is quite a bit about the frustrations of travelling. From Pittsburgh, which he loathes, Conan Doyle writes: “This is a hateful place – hell upon earth. Glad you are not with me – for once. Will write soon – only just got in & no lunch yet. Oh, it is a hole.” And then a few hours later, “I have had lunch and a sleep so am better – but it is a hole, all the same.”

From Cincinnati, “I had a fearsome journey, hurried out at 6 a.m. at a Junction, saw reporters – was in another train reaching here at 10.”

### *Chicago’s Bridewell Prison*

And then, from Cincinnati he writes, “Have applied to see the Jail but don’t suppose they will allow me.” Conan Doyle made a habit of touring jails in different places where he visited and was an enthusiastic proponent of penitentiary reform. On his 1914 trip to New York, he toured Sing Sing Prison and told *The New York Times* that “it ought to be burned down” (May 31, 1914). On this trip he did not get to tour the jail in Cincinnati, but he did visit Bridewell Prison in Chicago, which he found appalling. He wrote, “The prison left a dreadful impression upon my mind. What right can we have to treat our fellow-man so! What feeblest reflection of the teaching or spirit of Christ is there in such an institution – a manure-heap where human garbage is thrown to reek and fester, cared for by no one as long as it is decently concealed.” (1)

### *Missing Jean*

All of these mundane details are evidence of a man who is used to the comforting companionship of his wife, and who misses it when he hasn’t got it. They are attempts to fill the void of her absence by telling her about his day, much as he might if he were at home.

That Conan Doyle misses his wife there can be no doubt. He longs for her and writes, “Oh my love it will be good to see your dear kind eyes once more. I just grind along at present.” Clearly, he feels that she is essential to him; a part of him.

To Conan Doyle, his wife represents an ideal. The letters are also remarkable for what they do not contain. They do not contain a single word of complaint, reproach or annoyance for anything she says or does or doesn’t do. He tells her, “All you do seems to me very perfect. I am sorry to directly offend the Hearsts but your dignity is precious to me.” William Randolph Hearst lived with the actress Marion Davies. Unfortunately they were not married, and it may have seemed to Lady Doyle that it was

beneath her to visit with them. Her dignity must have been precious indeed, as Hearst controlled much of the media, which could publicize the tour and thus give their cause a boost.

For her part, Jean sees herself as a partner in their important mission. In her husband's absence, she takes a turn as a medium and holds séances, gives newspaper and radio interviews, meets with friends and mediums, and attempts psychic photography. ("I take it there was no psychic effect on our films," Conan Doyle writes to her.) Indeed, much of the correspondence has to do with psychic matters. Conan Doyle met with a number of spiritualists on this trip and attended séances.

### *John Ticknor*

From Cleveland, Conan Doyle tells Jean, "Tell the Ticknors I have sent in a report on his mediumship to the American SPR." John Ticknor, a powerful medium, had rooms at the Biltmore, where the Conan Doyles were staying, so it was easy for Jean to give him this message about the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR). When in trance, Ticknor had two primary spirit personalities: Colonel Lee, who professed to have been a veteran of the Civil War on the abolitionist side, and Black Hawk, a Canadian Indian. During one séance, Conan Doyle took Ticknor's pulse before, during and after his trance states. He discovered that the resting heartbeat was normal before and after entering trance, very high when Black Hawk was in the foreground, even higher when Colonel Lee was present, and alarmingly weak as each Control spirit was passing out of the trance state. This was a most convincing demonstration of psychic power for Conan Doyle. (2)

From Pittsburgh, Conan Doyle writes: "If we can arrange a Bird-Bessinet séance at Chicago that house would do well for it. It's awkward in a hotel." The séance did in fact take place with Ada Bessinet, a Direct Voice medium from Toledo who greatly impressed Conan Doyle. There were typically three phases to one of Miss Bessinet's séances. First, spirit voices sang, and occasionally manipulated records on a gramophone. Then, faces of departed friends were shown to séance participants. Finally, there was the production of voices in a trumpet and writing on pads of paper which had been placed on the table. (3)

A very satisfactory séance was held with Miss Bessinet during this phase of the American tour, just before Conan Doyle met up with his wife in Chicago. He writes in *Psychic Science*, 1925:

"In the case of Miss Bessinet the manifestations include the Direct Voice, two or more often sounding at the same time. One masculine control, named Dan, has a remarkable male baritone voice, and anyone who has heard it can certainly never doubt that it is independent of the



lady's organism. A female voice occasionally joins with Dan to make a tuneful duet. Remarkable whistling, in which there seems to be no pause for the intake of breath, is another feature of this mediumship. So also is the production of very brilliant lights. . . . The most remarkable, however, of all her powers is the appearance of phantom faces which appear in an illuminated patch in front of the sitter. They would seem to be mere masks, as there is no appearance of depth to them. In most cases they represent dim faces, which occasionally bear a resemblance to that of the medium when the health of the lady or the power of the circle is low. When the conditions are good they are utterly dissimilar. Upon two occasions the author has seen faces to which he could absolutely swear, the one being his mother and the other his nephew, Oscar Hornung, a young officer killed in the war. They were as clear-cut and visible as ever in life."

*J. Malcolm Bird and Margery*



*Mina "Margery" Crandon  
(1888–1941)*

Malcolm Bird is referred to twice in the letters. In addition to the Bird-Bessinet séance, Conan Doyle also writes, "As I have not heard, I presume that Malcolm + you got no psychic results. Hard luck!" This may be a reference to Jean's own attempts as a medium. Conan Doyle thought highly of Bird.

In 1922 the journal *Scientific American* offered to pay \$2,500 for any objective demonstration of psychic phenomena, and appointed an investigating committee of five prominent people, which included Harry Houdini. Doyle was not optimistic for this committee, and speculated that "I fear that nothing can be hoped for from that body." (4)

However, Conan Doyle did respect the secretary of this committee, J. Malcolm Bird. (In *Our Second American Adventure*, he muses "They cannot continue to think that I am a credulous fool so long as my observations are corroborated by such a man as Bird.") As secretary of the *Scientific American* committee, Bird was involved in researching the most famous medium of them all, Mina Crandon, whom he wrote about as "Margery" in order to protect her from undue publicity.

Margery's spirit control was her brother Walter, who had died in 1911 in a train crash. In 1923, Bird asked Margery to submit to the *Scientific American* committee for testing. The tests began in January 1924 under very strictly controlled conditions. She submitted patiently to an exhaustive number of tests devised by the researchers. In one test, her body was encased in a wooden box, leaving her arms and legs out, which were held onto by the researchers while she went into trance. Even thus she was able to ring bells, snuff out candles, make chairs move and so on. Another experiment had the researchers filling Margery's mouth with coloured water in order to see where the spirit voices originated. With her mouth full of water, Margery was still able to manifest Walter and other spirit voices which answered questions from the researchers. Afterwards, the coloured water was found to be intact. They also tried the spirit voices test with a balloon inflated in Margery's mouth, with the same result.

One night, Houdini (who had vowed to discredit Margery through any means possible) brought an electric doorbell to the séance and challenged the spirits to ring it. Walter objected and directed Bird to take the doorbell and check it for trickery. On examining the doorbell, Bird was furious when he found that Houdini had placed pieces of rubber which would prevent the doorbell from ringing. Once the rubber was removed, the doorbell rang while Walter chided, "How does that suit you, Mr. Houdini?"

Houdini's tricks to confuse Margery were methodically uncovered by Walter and his attendance in the séance room became more and more infrequent. However, after six weeks, when it looked like the committee was about to give Margery the prize money, Houdini became furious and published a pamphlet titled "Houdini Exposes the Tricks Used by the Boston Medium Margery."

Bird wrote favourable articles about Margery in *Scientific American* but the committee could not reach a unanimous decision and the \$2,500 was never awarded. Bird resigned from the committee. Shortly afterward, he became a research officer for the ASPR until 1930. After this he disappears from the annals of history. (5)

### *Mrs. Pruden*

Finally, from Cincinnati, Conan Doyle informs Jean, "I sit with Mrs. Pruden in the afternoon." This séance took place with Laura Pruden, the slate-writing medium.

In 1925, Conan Doyle wrote an account of this séance in *Psychic Science*. "It was our good fortune now to come once again into contact with a really great medium in Mrs. Pruden of Cincinnati, who had come to Chicago for my lectures. We had a sitting in the Blackstone Hotel,

through the courtesy of her host, Mr. Holmyard, and the results were splendid. She is an elderly, kindly woman with a motherly manner. Her particular gift was slate-writing which I had never examined before.”

“I had heard that there were trick slates, but she was anxious to use mine and allowed me to carefully examine hers. She makes a dark cabinet by draping the table, and holds the slate under it, while you may hold the other corner of it. Her hand is free and visible. The slate is double with a little bit of pencil put in between.”

“After a delay of half an hour the writing began. It was the strangest feeling to hold the slate and to feel the thrill and vibration of the pencil as it worked away inside. We had each written a question on a bit of paper and cast it down, carefully folded, on the ground in the shadow of the drapery, that psychic forces might have correct conditions for their work, which is always interfered with by light.”

“Presently each of us got an answer to our question upon the slate, and were allowed to pick up our folded papers and see that they had not been opened. The room, I may say, was full of daylight and the medium could not stoop without our seeing it.” (Source: *Psychic Science*, 1925)

J. Malcolm Bird also had a sitting with Mrs. Pruden in Cincinnati on a different date, and later wrote to Doyle that it was “Altogether extraordinary, both in phenomena and in extent of control.” (6)

The host, Mr. Holmyard, was also present at this séance with Mrs. Pruden. In the book, Conan Doyle writes about him as “an indefatigable worker at psychic subjects.” Privately he writes to his wife “Holmyard bores me to death but he means kindly. Saxby is here also.” Unfortunately, Mr. Howard Saxby, an old friend of Doyle’s from a previous tour, was ill and did not attend the séance, though Conan Doyle saw him privately in his home. (7)

All of these references to Spiritualist matters indicate that Jean was just as much a part of the Spiritualist movement as her husband, and he treated her as an equal partner in their missionary work.

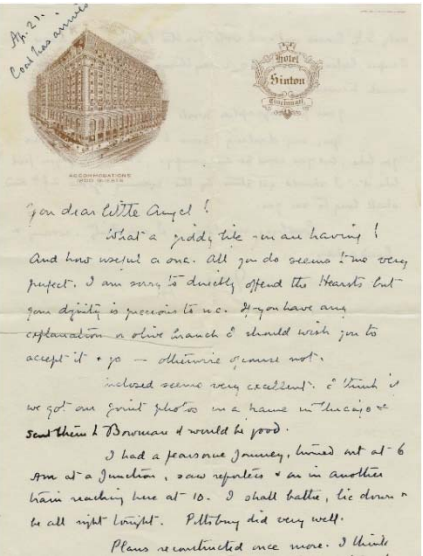
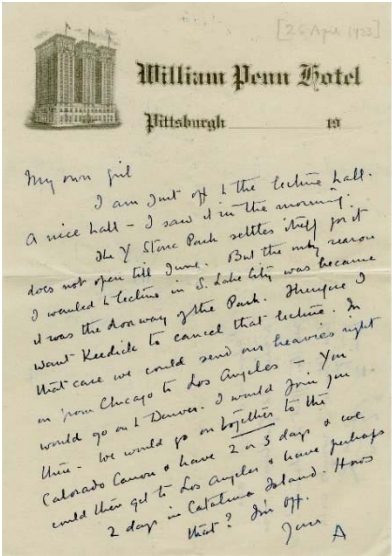
### *The Hylan Incident*

When she needs to be, Jean is also a formidable defender of her husband and their work. While Conan Doyle is in Pittsburgh, he reads in the newspapers that Jean is having a rather public quarrel with the Mayor of New York City, John Francis Hylan. It is noteworthy that Jean does not tell him about this quarrel, he finds out through other sources. Hylan has made disparaging remarks about the Doyle’s Spiritualist work in the press. It is not the first time either.

During the previous tour in 1922, Mayor Hylan made disparaging remarks at the 10th anniversary dinner of the Broadway Association, and these remarks appeared in the *New York Times* of April 20, 1922.

“You have no doubt been reading in the papers,” said the Mayor, “that the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is in a new line of business, and from all reports the shekels are rolling in to him as fast as when he told how easy it was for the famous detective of fiction to get out of tight places. We have heard much about ‘etheric bodies’ and the rejuvenation that awaits all who pass to the shadowy realms on the other side. The gullible portion of the public and the British sympathizers, of whom there seems to be no end in this country, and particularly in this city, will see to it that Doyle’s daily deliveries are well attended. On the subject of spiritualism Sir Arthur has told us nothing that has not long been dismissed as ‘wool gathering.’ But the lure of the unknown is always fascinating and there will always be a large audience to listen to airy nothings. Mr. Doyle intends to spread them at so much per spread.”

This was so patently disrespectful to a man whom Mayor Hylan had never met, that Public Service Commissioner William A. Prendergast felt compelled to rise and appeal for courtesy to their famous guest.



Two of the letters in the collection from ACD to his wife.

“I have always been an admirer of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I believe a tribute is due to this noted writer. Hospitality is due to this distinguished Britisher, even if here on a misguided mission.” Mr Prendergast’s appeal for courtesy won a quick and hearty response. Prolonged applause sounded in the dining hall.” (*New York Times*, April 20, 1922).

Indeed, although Conan Doyle seems generally happy with the publicity he receives on the tour, Hylan and his cronies are a pain in his backside as he becomes the butt of a sort of running joke that was well covered by the press.

On May 9th, 1922 (*New York Times*), George McAneny, the executive secretary of the New York Civil Service Commission... “joined yesterday with ex-Governor Alfred E. Smith in expressing a wish that Mayor Hylan might get somebody from the spirit world through Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to explain to him the transit situation as well as the Port Authority so that the Mayor could understand it.”

### *Lady Doyle fights back*

A year later, in 1923, it was just the same. Mayor Hylan tells readers “The less the people of this city have to do with so-called séances and spiritualistic manifestations the better it will be for both their souls and their peace of mind. The great mass of people who place their faith in the hereafter still cling to the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religions of their forefathers. They are good enough for them. No new hokum can stir them. No visitors from other shores can belittle or attack the faith of their fathers and get away with it... If he really believes all he says he does, I’m just sorry for him.” quotes the *New York Times* on April 19, 1923.

This time however, Hylan did not count on being publicly reprimanded by Lady Doyle. On April 21, 1923, she tells readers of the *New York Times*, “In every movement there have been black sheep and camp followers... Mayor Hylan and Professor Dunninger (a magician and mental telepathist who exposed tricks of bogus mediums) are apparently in this class. When the first railroad came in, men of the same mentality jeered and laughed. When flying and the wireless were introduced they jeered and laughed. These are the types now that are jeering and laughing at Spiritualism. But it won’t make the slightest bit of difference. Nothing can stop the progress of knowledge.”

“My husband,” she continued, “has given up his health and strength and a very fine income to spread this knowledge which he knows to be true. When people like Mayor Hylan try in a few words to brush aside my husband’s life work I cannot help but defend him. Do you think that with his keen analytical mind, he would advance such views unless he was convinced of their validity?”

Conan Doyle is amused. He writes to his wife, “I hear vaguely that you have been giving Mayor Hylan what he deserves. Dear spirited soul, you are wonderful.” And later, “I only saw today the full text – or part of it – of your Hylan remarks. Splendid! I was very amused. Dear brave darling.”

*What about the children?*

Another thing that the letters to Jean do not contain is any allusion to the children who are travelling with them. Conan Doyle never enquires how the children are, sends no messages for them, nor gives any instructions about them. Perhaps he received a report about them in Jean’s letters so had no need to ask, but in any case, their absence from the correspondence is noteworthy. It is as if his world contained only Jean and himself and there was no room in it for anyone else, not even the children.

In summary, there is more information in the 10 letters than first meets the eye. Through them, we are able to get an intimate view at the world of Conan Doyle, the all-encompassing relationship with his wife, insights about his family life, the people who were important to him on his Spiritualist quest, those who were an annoyance, and the current events of the time. They are definitely worth a read for Sherlockians everywhere.

Endnotes

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# *Why do you not write them yourself? – Crafting a Sherlock Holmes pastiche*

By Lyndsay Faye

*Lyndsay Faye, BSI, ASH, is an internationally best-selling author, an active Sherlockian and a member of the Baker Street Babes. Her collection of Sherlockian pastiches, The Whole Art of Detection: Lost Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes, was released in March 2017. (Editor's note: See review of this book on page 35)*



Let's commence by dispensing with any pretences of lofty art or gatekeeper mentalities here: we write Sherlock Holmes pastiches and Sherlock Holmes fanfiction because we are huge nerds, nerds driven to do so with an overwhelming compunction. I must sit down at once and write a short story about the Giant Rat of Sumatra, we think. But featuring H. G. Wells! And we can hardly contain ourselves until it is finished. This is a grand and a glorious thing, because it places us on a level playing field—if you're writing a dark and stirring literary account of Sherlock Holmes's troubled childhood to be published by a major publishing house, well and good; and if you are writing a "crack fic" about BBC Sherlock and John being transported to the bridge of the Federation Starship Enterprise, I applaud you.

So bear in mind that this little craft discussion is based squarely in the world for which I myself am best known: writing a traditional canonical pastiche, usually from the point of view of Dr. John Watson. Fifteen of my own stories were recently published in collection so I've certainly had some practice. With that in mind, what follows are what I personally consider to be important considerations when penning a work of this type. And the very best of luck to anyone embarking on such a venture, because it means I'll have more pastiches to read!

Victorian language is, if you'll pardon me, a sticky wicket. The reason it's difficult for us to emulate Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's elegant yet vivid prose isn't merely because he was a genre fiction genius with a canny knack for style and economy of metaphor—that would be hard enough. We have to imagine ourselves in a time period during which a very different syntax was employed, and the temptation is to write in such a complex manner that Charles Dickens himself would raise his eyebrows and whistle. Avoid this at all costs! Yes, some of Doyle's sentences are long and complex and even verging on the poetic, but he wrote in what was—at the time—everyday vernacular. Sherlock Holmes doesn't always

run about manically rattling off observations and inferences; sometimes he slouches out the door with a laconic, “I’ll be back some time, Watson.” Without these simpler variations, the reader’s eye will get so bogged down in arcane vocabulary that he or she will drop a bookmark in the spine, shrug, and wander off to go get a coffee and croissant.

London is a major character in the adventures of Holmes and Watson, it goes without saying, though they don’t all take place there—so atmosphere is key. Hansom cabs and fog and cobblestones are a must, of course, as are the more specifically familiar objects like the dressing gown, and the Stradivarius and the gasogene. Writing a historically accurate setting elevates any pastiche; conversely, confuse a bullseye lantern with a flashlight, and the canny reader will blink in dismay. But it’s hard to accomplish this level of detail if all we know about 1895 is what we’ve already read about in the original Canon—how then do we come up with new clues from which Holmes can draw his conclusions? There are myriad ways of studying Victorian England but my favourites are always those actually written during the time period in question. Henry Mayhew is an excellent place to start, for instance—try his *London Labour and the London Poor*, and you’ll discover a whole treasure trove of minutiae for your detective to use for his parlor tricks.

Finally, the most important consideration when writing about the Great Detective and the Good Doctor is that their loyalty and abiding regard for one another shine through within the narrative. After all, the solutions to the Holmes mysteries are mere hat tricks compared to the most beautiful literary friendship of all time, are they not? Whether Holmes is sneakily making deductions about Watson in the reflection of their coffee urn, or Watson is throwing himself in the path of a deadly hellhound at Holmes’s side, their relationship is the reason why I myself keep returning to their stories time after time. And doing my small part to create new ones, so that their memory will be evergreen—the dearest hope of any pastiche author.

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# *In Pursuit of Mrs. Moriarty*

By Laura de Boer

*Laura de Boer is a Sherlockian living in Nova Scotia, a member of the Spence Munros, and an archaeologist. When not delving into the past through the works of Conan Doyle, she investigates with a trowel and a mud-covered grin to dig up Atlantic Canada's history from the Pre-contact period through to the Victorian age and beyond.*



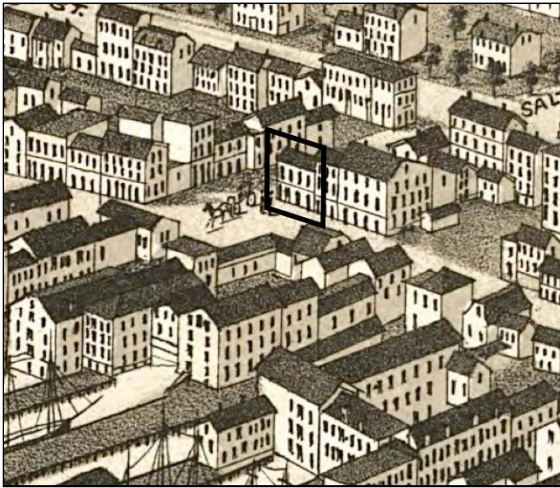
he notorious Professor Moriarty is difficult to trace, and his little-known wife is not much different. But here in far-removed Halifax, Nova Scotia, there are records that begin to tell us a story that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle never saw fit to publish in the pages of *The Strand Magazine*.

What we know for certain from the Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics is that James Moriarty married Margaret Dooley, an Irish Roman Catholic, in Halifax on November 12, 1877. (1) Their ages and occupations are not recorded – an unusual omission in otherwise good clerical practice at the time. Perhaps the priest and the clerk were “persuaded” that less information was the wiser course of action where these two were concerned. Based upon their ages at death it seems likely that both were not young when they married; Margaret, who was 78 when she died, (2) would have presumably been 59 at this time.

Was it love that prompted this civil union? It’s hard to be certain. Both James Moriarty and his blushing bride were past the age of youthful dalliance by Victorian standards. Perhaps she admired his mathematical mind, or perhaps – more pragmatically – this was an alliance of two notorious individuals looking for a fresh town to conquer.

Margaret was the correct age and nationality to have come to Canada as a young adult during the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s and 1850s. Perhaps she travelled alone or with a first husband – records of Irish immigration to Canada are difficult to trace from that time. Presumably, any previous lovers had gone by the wayside in one way or another by the time she chose to engage herself to this criminal mastermind.

By 1879, the Moriartys were established in Halifax at the border between respectability and notoriety – they had begun selling liquor at the northwest corner of Lower Water and Salter streets. (3) They lived above their workplace on the second floor of a wooden building, like many shop and bar keepers of the time.



*The black square outlines where Mrs. Moriarty's establishment was in Halifax.*

Water Street in the Victorian period was a thriving spot, and many occupants along this right of way formed three facets of maritime urban life: they owned wharves and warehouses, they were ship chandlers or suppliers, or they sold food and alcohol to the rowdy sailors who came to shore all along this waterfront. The legacy of dozens of bars and saloons on Water Street can still be seen

at the old Robertson Store beside the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic: the brass rails along the base of the large glass windows prevented drunks from falling through them! (4)

It is likely, moreover, that Moriarty's liquor establishment sat on the opposite corner from the original location of Halifax's most famous historic watering hole, the Split Crow, which had been established as the Spread Eagle by John Shippey in July 1749 – just a month after Halifax was founded. (5) Around the time the Moriartys set up shop, a saloon was being run in direct competition with them on the southwest corner of Salter and Lower Water by Mrs. Bridget Cahill. (6) Though it is not listed by name – bars and saloons never were at this time – it seems likely based on other records that this was, at some point, the Split Crow. One can only hope that the Moriarty's establishment also had a colourful name to suit this colourful couple, but sadly we may never know what sign hung above their doors.

It is clear that James Moriarty was among those who profited from sailors looking for a drop or two to drink, along with the many local dock workers, labourers and skilled tradesmen who boarded in upstairs rooms all along this street. Competition between him and the owner of the Split Crow may have been fierce, but there was certainly no shortage of patrons. We can only assume that this business was ideal for his true goal: the establishment of a network of crooks and criminals stretching by sea to the far reaches of the known world, or, at the very least, Victoria's empire.

Halifax's importance on a global scale during this time may surprise many readers. As the largest ice-free harbour in the world, and a powerful British garrison town, Halifax has been labelled "the Warden of the North" for many years. While certainly not so metropolitan as Victorian London, 19th-century Halifax saw travellers of countless nationalities visit its shores, including some with no nationality at all – it was not uncommon for Halifax residents to be listed as "born at sea" and therefore not belonging to any nation by birth. Many of Halifax's biggest names were expatriates of other countries seeking greener pastures on the docks of Nova Scotia. Our brewer and businessman, Alexander Keith, is perhaps the best-known example of this phenomenon.

In this complex commercial climate, the Moriarty saloon remained in the annual Halifax city directories until the year 1883, when James was suddenly absent and instead it was *Mrs.* James Moriarty who was the proprietor of the "saloon" at Lower Water Street. (7) Interestingly there is no notation of her being a widow at this time, though this could be a function of *Mrs.* Moriarty having an occupation to describe instead of her marital status.

We have no record of James Moriarty's death in Halifax. Could this be due to the gap years of 1878 to 1907 in our provincial death records? Perhaps. But with our knowledge of the events at Reichenbach in 1891, it seems more likely that the professor chose to abandon his wife in 1883 and return to London to continue to build his empire of crime.

Did he leave of his own volition, or had six years of marriage begun to wear on both parties? It seems unlikely that *Mrs.* Moriarty was a shrinking violet; if James had wanted to be rid of a shrewish or sheepish wife he would have had the connections to do so in a quick and deadly manner. Instead he left her in charge of his saloon – or perhaps it was hers in all but name to begin with. What kind of wife escapes the Napoleon of Crime unscathed? Surely a woman of steel and grit, though perhaps lacking in a certain moral fibre, based on her marriage choice.

In the years that would follow it appears that James Moriarty's shady saloon began to fall *out* of disrepute under the watchful gaze of his wife. In 1889, *Mrs.* Moriarty made the notable jump from liquors to "temperate drinks." (8) A precise Victorian definition of what kinds of drinks a teatotaler might find at a converted saloon has not been easy to find but certainly liquor was off the menu. One has to picture a once-criminal *Mrs.* Moriarty daintily serving tea and cakes, playing up her stern moral character for the patrons who had decided to abandon the "demon drink." All this while her absent husband was up to the worst kinds of crimes across the Atlantic.

In 1890, city directories suddenly list the Moriarty establishment as “house & shop unoccupied.” (9) This listing continues until Mrs. Moriarty’s death six years later, after which time a new, unrelated occupant is listed. To our Sherlockian methods of deduction the cause of this is clear: with Sherlock Holmes hot on the trail of her husband in England, Mrs. Moriarty found it essential to keep a low profile in Halifax, in part by refusing to provide her information to the McAlpine’s City Directory staff. Their publication could no doubt be checked by an agent of Holmes at any time. Her choice to lie low continued even after her husband’s 1891 death, as Holmes continued to seek out members of the professor’s crime syndicate.

Mrs. Moriarty, willing or not, had no doubt played a key role in her husband’s New World shady dealings, and as such, it was necessary to seem as if she had left town for good. During this time, was she a reformed woman playing the lonely widow, or a crime lord in her own right maintaining an office in her “unoccupied” residence? A few irregulars on the streets could perhaps have given us that intelligence if we had had the chance, but sadly we’re left to imagine for ourselves. Records show that Mrs. Margaret Moriarty died a widow at age 78 in 1896, in Halifax. (10)

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- (3) McAlpine 1879:488.
- (4) Kline c.1980.
- (5) Borrett 1948:24.
- (6) McAlpine 1882:471.
- (7) McAlpine 1883:466.
- (8) McAlpine 1889:451.
- (9) McAlpine 1890:460.
- (10) Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics 1896.

# *Beekeeper*

By Clarissa Aykroyd

*Clarissa Aykroyd grew up in Victoria, Canada, and now lives in London, England, where she works as a publisher. Her poetry has appeared in international journals and she blogs about poetry (occasionally in relation to Sherlock Holmes) at [www.thestoneandthestar.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.thestoneandthestar.blogspot.co.uk).*

Some nights, he walks from the silent house  
out to the chalky light of the cliffs.  
He sees into the night sky's loneliness,  
reads the hands and faces of the stars.  
He takes their pulse, and thinks of the doctor.

Some nights, he gazes down to Eastbourne.  
The pier is a bell of light on the sea.  
He hears the hum of distant thoughts, those lives  
like the flash and flow of the beehive.  
His mind is listening to them, in darkness.

“Beekeeper” was first published in *The Ofi Press Magazine*.

# *Sidney Paget and The Strand Magazine: Before Holmes and the effects of the printing process*

By Karita Kuusisto

*Karita Kuusisto is a PhD student at the School of English, Communication and Philosophy at Cardiff University. Her research currently focuses on the work of the artist and illustrator Sidney Paget and the role of the illustrator in the process of making illustrated periodicals in the late Victorian era.*



Sidney Paget may not be a name everyone recognizes, even if they know the literary character whom he helped to create visually: Sherlock Holmes. While there is debate over who contributed most to the character as it is visioned today (the illustrators, the theatre and TV/film productions), there can be no doubt that one of the most influential representations of them all was the rendition that Sidney Paget created for the pages of *The Strand Magazine*. It could be argued that it was, in fact, Paget's illustrations that made Holmes and Dr John Watson so adaptable to other formats, such as TV and film, as the illustrations had already given the characters distinguishable and, arguably, 'fitting' physical characteristics. (1) The illustrations have also played a part in serving as the inspiration for sets for dramatization, as the combination of the text and the illustrations have been used to create the interior of 221B Baker Street on many occasions. In his illustrations, Paget quite often included objects and furniture that were not mentioned in the text, thus becoming a co-creator not only of the characters but also their surroundings, and therefore, serving as a direct influence on the theatre and TV/film productions that frequently re-create the dwellings of Holmes and Watson.

In an article published in *The Strand Magazine* in July 1895 in which the magazine introduces some of its artists, Sidney Paget is said to have been "born on October 4th 1860, in London, fifth son of the late Robert Paget, vestry clerk of Clerkenwell," and that he studied painting in Heatherley's School of Art. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts at 18 years of age, 'and constantly since that time'. (2) In his studio, Paget painted portraits and small pictures, while also illustrating books and articles for illustrated papers, consisting of "chiefly war subjects of Egypt

and the Soudan.” (3) According to the Royal Academy of Arts’s records, Paget became a student of the Academy on 6 December 1881, at the age of 20. At the time, training to be a painter lasted for six years. The influence of Paget’s formal art training can easily be seen in his illustrative work: for example in his balanced compositions and highly skilled use of lighting. One of the most notable skills that he had, however, was his ability to make the different characters distinguishable from one another – a trait that many illustrators in the Victorian era seemed to lack, even though it was one of the most important skills that an illustrator could have.

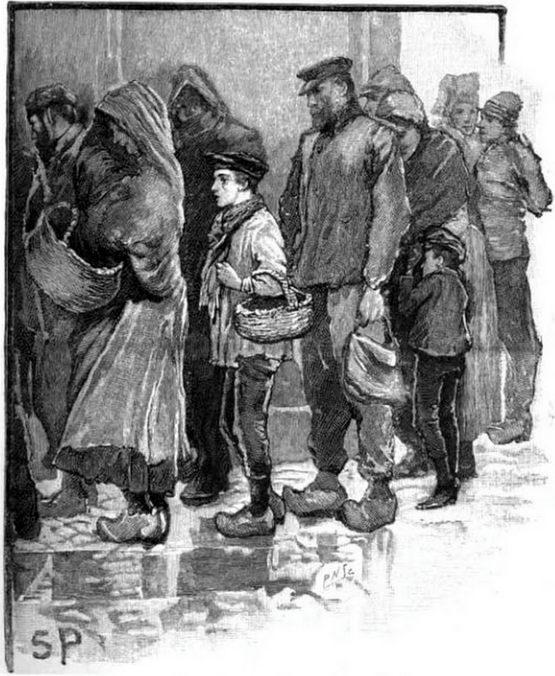
Paget went on to illustrate the Holmes stories from their first publication in *The Strand Magazine* in 1891 until the publication of “The Adventure of the Final Problem” in 1893, and resumed as the illustrator of the stories in 1901 for *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and in 1903 for *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. He continued to illustrate the stories until his early death in 1908. During the time when the Holmes stories were not published, Paget went on to illustrate many other stories by Arthur Conan Doyle (and others) for *The Strand Magazine*.

### *Before Holmes*

Created by George Newnes in 1891, *The Strand Magazine* is well known for having been a highly entertaining and lavishly illustrated monthly publication. Assigning Paget as the illustrator of the Holmes stories seems to have happened by (a lucky) mistake. According to Paget’s daughter Winifred Paget, *The Strand Magazine*’s Art Editor, W.H.J. Boot, had actually intended to hire Sidney Paget’s brother, Walter Paget, for the job. Boot, however, had forgotten Walter Paget’s first name and addressed his letter to “Mr. Paget,” and the letter was subsequently opened by Sidney. (4) As Sidney Paget had previously worked for the magazine the presumption that the offer was meant for him does not come as a surprise. Paget had illustrated three stories for *The Strand Magazine* in the first half of 1891, before illustrating the Holmes stories: ‘The Architect’s Wife’ by Antonio Trueba, which Paget illustrated with the art editor W.H.J. Boot; ‘Scenes from the Siege of Paris’ by Alphonse Daudet, for which Paget made 11 illustrations; and ‘How the Redoubt Was Taken’ by Prosper Mérimée, for which Paget made four illustrations. The stories were translated from French and Spanish as part of *The Strand Magazine*’s effort to publish translated articles and stories in addition to commissioned ones. The illustrations made for ‘Scenes of the Siege of Paris’ are especially interesting, as they include some dynamic compositions. The article consists of two stories, ‘The Boy Spy’ and ‘Belisaire’s Prussian,’

but in this instance, I will only focus on two illustrations from 'The Boy Spy.'

The first illustration of 'The Boy Spy,' 'He Would Take His Place in the Long Line,' is quite a large one (Image 1), taking up over half the page. The prominent and familiar signature 'SP' is clearly visible in the lower left corner, leaving no doubt as to the illustrator's identity. The image



*Image 1 – He Would Take His Place in the Long Line.*

presents the viewer with a queue of people, with the people facing left. Shown in a way that suggests that we are only looking at a small section of the queue, the image is cut off at the left, showing the continuation of the queue ahead and the fading of the people standing further back in the queue to the right of the image, suggesting that the queue stretches out further than what we are privy to see. The crowd is depicted homogenous in colour, but not without distinct features. Each person that is fully visible to us, is distinguishable from the others, as every figure has been given different types of clothing, postures, heights and distinct faces. The folds of the clothing make the different textures stand out, and the wet ground in between the queue and the viewer shows a play with light, reflection and shadow. When looking at the image, it becomes immediately clear who the protagonist is. While the positioning of the boy in the middle of the image is a clear indication of his importance, it is in fact Paget's highly skilful use of light and shadow that make the boy stand out, with his face and coat almost lit up against the prevailing grey that engulfs the other people in the queue. In the text, the boy is described as 'delicate-looking' and 'pale.' This description was utilized and emphasized in the illustration, where it became part of a pictorial method in making a character recognizable. He wears a cap and a scarf,





*Image 2 – The Men Gave Them a Drop of Coffee.*

while also holding an empty basket on his left arm. His expression is the same as the people around him: tired and blank from having waited for such a long time for their rations.

In a further image of the same story, 'The Men Gave Them a Drop of Coffee' (Image 2), a similar use of light and shadow can be seen.

In this image,

however, the techniques in the positioning of the characters and the composition resolve the problem of recognizing the characters. The image presents six people, four of whom are seated on a bench that is placed at an angle, leaving them facing slightly to the left. The two people not seated are standing behind the bench. It is clear from their uniforms that four of the people presented to us are soldiers, two of them are standing behind the bench, while the other two are seated further from the viewer at one end of the bench. Little Stenne, the protagonist, is seated next to the soldiers, and 'the big boy' is seated closest to the viewer. As the first image of the story has already introduced the protagonist's appearance to us, we are equipped with the visual clues needed to easily find him again in further illustrations. In addition to being positioned in a similar way as in the first image, facing left and surrounded by people, we can recognize the hat and the scarf, along with the small size of the boy in comparison to the people around him – he is after all introduced to us in the text as 'Little' Stenne. The composition of the image, more than anything else, speaks to the importance of the particular character. While the fire in the lower left corner shines a dim light on everyone seated on the bench, all three people are looking at Little Stenne as he drinks coffee from a cup that he is holding in his right hand. This composition speaks to Paget's career as a painter, as the gaze of the people around the protagonist is used to guide the viewer's gaze to the main character, a technique that is often used in paintings. The use of light and shadow with stark white as a way of highlighting either textures or important characters is a technique that Paget uses even in his preparatory sketches. He is highly skilful in using

white paint to accentuate certain parts of an image. This skill is of course very advantageous to an illustrator, since with black and white illustrations, the use of colour as a way of distinguishing characters is impossible.

### *Printing Process and the Illustrations*

Paget's original black and white drawings are a testament to his background as a Royal Academy trained artist and to his profession as a painter. The painterly style of the original pen, ink and wash drawings beautifully emphasize the use of shading and highlighting with white paint, which does not always translate to the finished illustrations on *The Strand Magazine's* pages. This is simply due to the printing process of the illustrations: after Paget had finished the original drawing, both the engraver and the printer would work on the image as well, leaving their mark on the work. The printing process also affected the amount of detail that could be included in the finished illustration as the images would be scaled down considerably – something that Paget would have needed to take into account when producing the drawings. Sometimes the original placement of the illustration on the page would also change, resulting perhaps in an even smaller image that was originally intended and a less clear appearance.

There is a shift in the style and the overall look of the finished 'Sherlock Holmes' illustrations in *The Strand Magazine* in the year 1892. According to Alex Werner this occurred when Paul Naumann became the engraver of the Holmes illustrations. (5) It is possible that *The Strand Magazine* was not satisfied with the quality of engraving and printing with the previous illustrations, and wished therefore to change engravers. As *The Strand Magazine's* records have been lost, it is impossible to know exactly why the change happened. The photomechanical engraving process and printing mechanisms used for the images before 1892 seem to have left the images appear rather 'smudged' when compared to the later illustrations that involved the work of Naumann. This comparison can easily be made by using three illustrations showing train carriage scenes: 'We Had the Carriage to Ourselves' from "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" (Image 3), 'The View Was Sordid Enough' from "The Naval Treaty" (Image 4) and 'Holmes Gave Me a Sketch of the Events' from "Silver Blaze" (Image 5). (6) The illustration from 1891, engraved by Swain, is quite unclear and blotchy when compared to the later ones by Naumann. While the textures of the surfaces and garments are still very noticeable, the overall darker appearance of the image requires more work



Image 3 – Boscombe Valley

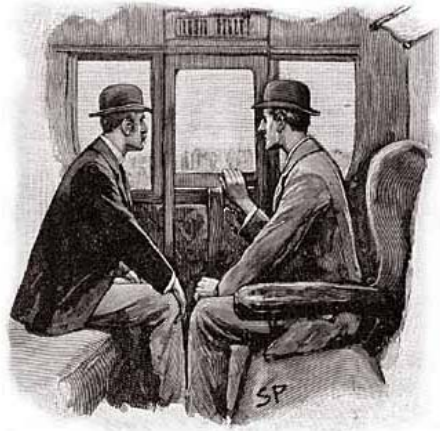


Image 4 – Naval Treaty

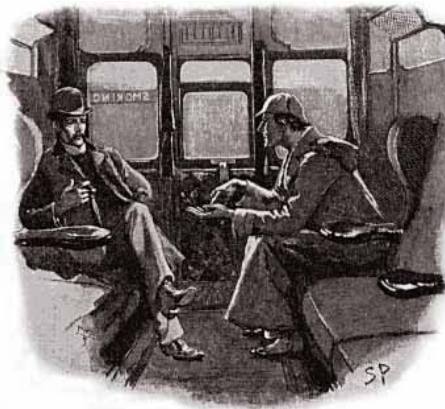


Image 5 – Silver Blaze

from the viewer, especially in terms of recognizing facial expressions. Naumann, as Werner points out, must have used a type of photomechanical process but lines and hatchings are also clearly visible in the illustrations, as opposed to the earlier images. (7) After the changing of engravers, the compositions and topics of the illustrations also became more varied, perhaps resulting in a more enjoyable reading experience as the clearer images made recognizing different

characters of the story easier. It is interesting to note that this was not the first time Paget’s work had been engraved by Naumann. When inspecting the first image discussed (Image 1), the signature of Paul Naumann, recognizable from the train carriage image from “Silver Blaze,” can be observed in the middle of the image, below the man standing behind Little Stenne, in the reflective pool of water.

When examining Victorian illustrations more closely, it becomes clear that the many stages of the illustration and printing process all contributed to the appearance of the finished illustrations. The illustrations made for

*The Strand Magazine* were no exception. In fact, this process seems to be highlighted in *The Strand Magazine*, as it was so profusely illustrated.

Sidney Paget had become a well-known illustrator and a household name in the late Victorian era. While Paget is, of course, best known for his illustrations for the Holmes short stories, his other works, before and after Holmes, should be examined and appreciated. Paget worked for many different periodicals and newspapers, including the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic*, illustrating both fiction and current events. He had a distinct realistic style that is easily recognizable, despite the changes in engravers and printers.

While the Victorian imagery may seem dull to a modern viewer, the pictures contain within them a unique insight into Victorian art and culture. Because illustrations were such an important part of Victorian life, not unlike images in our society are today, it is important to analyze the reasons why they look as they do and the meanings that were generated by them.

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Newnes, George. 1895. 'Artists of the Strand Magazine' in *Strand Magazine* 1895.2, pp. 786-788.

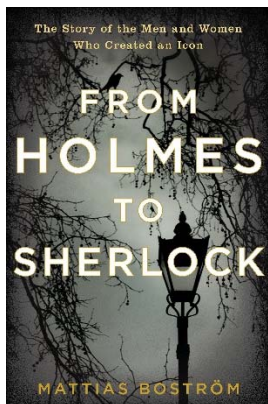
Paget, Winifred. 1980. 'The Artist Who Made Holmes Real' in *A Sherlock Holmes Compendium*, ed. Peter Haining (London: W.H. Allen), pp. 41-45.

Werner, Alex. 2014. 'Sherlock Holmes, Sidney Paget and the Strand Magazine' in *Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Ebury), pp. 101-125.

## Endnotes

- (1) Coppa, 2012: 210
- (2) Newnes, 1895: 786
- (3) Newnes, 1895: 786
- (4) Paget, 1980: 41
- (5) Werner, 2014: 115-116
- (6) Werner, 2014: 115-117
- (7) Werner, 2014: 115-116

## “Holmes gave me a brief review”



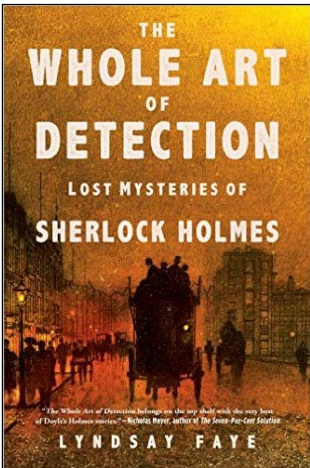
*From Holmes to Sherlock: The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon* by Mattias Boström (2017 Mysterious Press \$27.00 USD)

How does a simple detective character, created in 1887, manage to stay in the public eye and still be a pop culture sensation some 130 years later? Boström’s unique, incredibly ambitious and wide-ranging volume *From Holmes to Sherlock: The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon* aims to answer that question. This isn’t a straight-up biography of Arthur Conan Doyle, the character of Sherlock Holmes, or any other individual, nor is it a history of the BSI, or modern online fandom, or a survey of film, television and stage productions, instead it combines elements from all of these forms and is an examination of the entire Sherlock Holmes phenomenon; tracing the steps from inception in the mind of Arthur Conan Doyle, to the various idiotic acts of his heirs, to the formation of the BSI, right through to the people and events that shaped the latest film and television productions, and the explosion of online Sherlock fandom, all presented in a chronological narrative form. The book is exactly what it claims to be in the subtitle, it is literally ‘The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon.’ It is our story. By utilizing the narrative story form, rather than a dry documentary format, Boström makes the reader part of the events as they unfold and gives us a better sense of the key players as what they are, or were; real live human beings with all the foibles, quirks and flaws that implies. While it reads like a work of fiction, almost a literary mystery, it is a rich tapestry, filled with real-world heroes and villains (the ‘marrying Mdivanis’ spring to mind). Boström, using a wealth of facts as foundation (Boström and Matt Laffey have been exhaustively researching newspaper archives for mentions of Holmes and Conan Doyle for a series of books, currently up to three volumes, called *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle in the Newspapers*, published by Wessex Press), extrapolates and provides us with scenes that make us privy to the thoughts and motivations behind their actions. The chatty, almost gossipy style is engaging, deceptively masking the wealth of information the reader is being handed, but never losing the thread of the story at its heart. While you will meet an almost bewildering array of people and cover 130 years of events, vignettes, tales of greed and

heartbreak, Boström puts it all together in a cohesive form that is never less than compelling and will have you turning pages at the pace of a Dan Brown thriller. Whether you're familiar with the elements of the history of Sherlock Holmes in print and media, were ever curious about the rights splitting between the heirs, Andrea Plunkett's ownership claims, the rise of the Baker Street Babes or a complete newcomer, I guarantee you'll learn something new in this monumental work that explores the 'big picture' of the Sherlock Holmes phenomenon and how it came to be.

Bottom line: I can't recommend this book highly enough, as it is likely the most important work connected to Sherlock Holmes published in 2017 and a must-read for anyone with an interest in the character, the history or the fandom surrounding him.

– Charles Prepolec



*The Whole Art of Detection – Lost Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes* by Lyndsay Faye (2017 Mysterious Press \$36.50 CND.)

When you combine a gifted storyteller and a penchant for authentic pastiches, you produce a book such as Faye's latest.

This 388-page hardcover contains 15 short stories that take the reader down a variety of Victorian alleyways with Holmes and Watson in the lead.

Reading these stories is like slipping on a mouse-coloured dressing gown, putting your feet by the fire and stepping back in time to the period when you read the original

stories for the first time.

Two of the stories are from Holmes's pen, a take on the adventures that is more difficult for most writers as we don't have the dozens of stories to base the work on like we do those told by Dr. Watson. In these two tales, "Memoranda upon the Gaskell Blackmailing Dilemma" and "Notes upon the Diadem Club Affair," Faye's versatility shines. Both are fine mysteries which are well told, but they also shine a light on the relationship between Holmes and Watson in a way not often explored.

For pastiche lovers, or those who have read Faye's other works, the book is well worth reading and takes you back to an age where it is always 1895.

– Mark Alberstat

# Letters From Lomax

*Musings and comments from Peggy Perdue, Curator of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection of the Toronto Reference Library*



When I heard from our editors that this issue of *Canadian Holmes* was going to have more than the usual proportion of the feminine touch, it prompted me to think about the status of women in the ACD Collection. Now, it must be admitted right away that the holdings of this collection are overwhelmingly about three men: Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes, and Dr. John H. Watson.

That being said, female representatives are by no means lacking, whether they be characters or authors. Taking the canonical ladies first, I'd like to ask you what woman comes to mind first when you think of women in the original Holmes tales? Is it Irene Adler, known for all eternity as *the* woman? She appears in innumerable pastiches, and plays the starring role in many of them. Carol Nelson Douglas's Irene Adler series, which begins with *Good Night, Mr. Holmes* and continues on to a total of eight books, is the Grand Dame of the Adler pastiches, but recent years have turned up a few new contenders. The *Sherlock, Lupin and Me* series is written from the point of view of a young Irene Adler and is intended for young readers. There are 14 books in the original Italian series, four of which have been translated into English so far. Most recently, Irene has her own comic series, *Swords of Sorrow*, by Leah Moore (Dynamite, 2015.) The most unexpected Adlerian thing we have in the ACD Collection is still probably one of the mid-20th century items – *Freud for the Jung*; or, *Three hundred and sixty-six hours on the couch*, ostensibly written by Irene Adler herself (Cresset Press, 1963.)

Unswayed by either Irene's pulchritude or her continuing popularity with writers of pastiche, I'd personally vote for Mrs. Hudson as Woman of the Canon. Oft have I railed at the tyrannous boundaries of time and reality that have prevented me from tasting Mrs. Hudson's breakfast fare, and who better to have on one's side when there's a gunman taking pot shots from across the street? An entire "Letters From Lomax" column was dedicated to Mrs. Hudson not long ago, so I'll just mention here that there are three pastiche series dedicated to Mrs. Hudson's investigative powers in the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection, as well as a couple of plays and cookbooks. She even rules as White Queen on the chessboard set that stands ready to greet visitors to the room.





Misri's three Portia Adams books.

Arthur Conan Doyle Collection. Countless new female characters have been added to the original storyline by writers of non-canonical tales. Some are well known, such as the Mary Russell series by Laurie R. King, in which Holmes takes a partner and eventually, a wife; others are steadily making a home for themselves in Sherlockian hearts, such as the Portia Adams series by the Bootmakers' own Angela Misri. In this series, Portia is Holmes's granddaughter and she has inherited 221B Baker street.

If Sherlock Holmes ever walked into the Arthur Conan Doyle Room himself (Oh frabjous day!), he would no doubt be surprised by the number of female relatives he's acquired over the years. In addition to the two series noted above, he has a niece, in the manga series *Young Miss Sherlock* by Kaoru Shintani, a little sister, in the *Enola Holmes Mysteries* by Nancy Springer, and a great grand-niece, in *The Adventures of Shirley Holmes*, a television and book series created by Ellis Iddon and Phil Meagher.

If Arthur Conan Doyle ever walked into the Arthur Conan Doyle Room (Calooh! Callay!), he'd also probably be surprised at the number of women who have settled into the world of his imagination and made themselves at home. I like to think he might have mellowed since the time he didn't think women should get the vote, and maybe he'd accept these incursions by the gentler sex. One can only expect so much of a rather traditional Victorian gentleman however, so I still think I'd be inclined to steer him clear of *Ms. Holmes of Baker Street*.

Any Sherlockian worth his or her salt could talk about Mrs. Hudson, Ms. Adler, the Violet bunch and the rest of the canonical women all day long, but if we only spoke of women in the original Holmes stories we would be ignoring a huge component of the Ying side of the



# OOTMAKERS' DIARY

... it is a page from some private diary.

— *The Five Orange Pips*

Sunday March 12, 2017

At 6 pm Doug Wrigglesworth, John Gehan, Kathy Burns, Peggy Perdue, David Sanders, Angela Misri and her husband Jason sat down to dinner to welcome Master Bootmaker, and co-editor of *Canadian Holmes*, JoAnn Alberstat, who was visiting Toronto.

— David Sanders

Saturday April 8, 2017

The Bootmakers of Toronto meet for the second story meeting of the year at the Elizabeth Beeton Auditorium of the Toronto Public Library. Fifty-one members and guests are in attendance;

The meeting is called to order at 1:04 pm, by Meyers 2017, Michael Ranieri.

Announcements:

The Silent Film Festival for the Gillette *Sherlock Holmes* on April 6 was well attended. Many of the postcards with our yearly schedule were distributed. To encourage people to attend our meetings, first-time attendees will be allowed in free of charge.

The Bootmakers Executive has initiated a new policy for the Annual Awards. The Master Bootmaker Awards committee will remain the same. The Derrick Murdoch, True Davidson and Warren Carleton awards will be voted on by the membership at the meetings. Mike distributed a score sheet for this meeting, the Blue Carbuncle Dinner on January 28 and the February 25 meeting on *The Noble Bachelor*. The scores will be tallied and the winners will be decided from the results.

Frank Quinlan is interested in starting a Sherlockian Movie Night. The first film will be *Sherlock Holmes in New York*.

The first presenter is Don Roebuck with *Red Herrings*, *Black Swans* and *Blue Carbuncles*. He gives a history of garnet gemstones. Garnets are found in many colours, including red, orange, yellow, green, purple, brown, blue, black, pink and colorless, with reddish shades most common.

Although they are extremely rare, there are blue garnets. So, the blue carbuncle is a real gem.

Our next speaker is author Melodie Campbell. *The Toronto Sun* called her Canada's "Queen of Comedy." She got her start writing stand-up comedy. Melodie has won 10 awards for fiction, including the 2014 Derringer and Arthur Ellis. She was a finalist along with Margaret Atwood for the 2015 Arthur Ellis (Atwood won.)

Melodie has over 200 publications, including 100 comedy credits and 40 short stories. Her 11th book, a mob caper titled *The Bootlegger's Goddaughter* was published in February 2017.

Her presentation is on the *History of Humour: What makes us laugh and why?* She speaks about comedy throughout the ages, and includes research on what make us laugh and why. She tells about how hard it is to incorporate humour into a mystery book.

At the end of her talk, Mike Ranieri presents her with a thank you gift from the Bootmakers.

After the break, Karen Campbell takes up the quiz on *The Beryl Coronet*. The winner with a score of 27 out of a possible 28, is John Gehan. David Sanders and Marilyn Penner tie for second with scores of 24.

The next speaker is Craig Copland with *From the Beryl Coronet to Vimy Ridge*. What part do the events of the case in *The Beryl Coronet* play in the beginning of the First World War?

The Beryl Coronet did not exist. There was a Sapphire Coronet, designed by Prince Albert for Queen Victoria.

Alexander Holder was actually Edward Charles Baring, 1st Baron Revelstoke, senior partner of the family banking firm of Baring Brothers and Co. The town of Revelstoke in British Columbia was renamed in his honour, for his role in securing the financing for completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. (He was the great-great-grandfather of Diana, Princess of Wales)

Sir George Burnwell was actually a spy.

The man who borrowed the money from Holder's bank was not Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, as is often assumed. After going through a list of suspects, it is revealed that it was Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, Queen Victoria's favourite grandson.

Wilhelm needed the money so he could buy plans for the compound steam turbine invented by Charles Parsons. He thought he would not have to repay the loan because he had already instructed Burnwell to steal the coronet.

Great Britain had already built a battleship with the compound steam turbine called the Dreadnought.

With the plans Germany built a battleship which was the equal of the Dreadnought, so they could match the power of the British Navy. So Kaiser Wilhelm thought he could match Britain's military power, which led to the beginning of the war.

Could Sherlock Holmes have prevented war? Probably not, because he did not know enough.

Karen Gold leads us in her original lyrics for *Who Stole the Beryls/Alexander's Ragtag Clan*, sung to the tunes of *Roll Out the Barrel* and *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.

Instead of having a story introduction, which gives away answers to the quiz, we will have story denouements. Steve Wintle presents the first one. Miss Mary Holder was actually a jewel thief. Under the assumed name of Rachel Howells, she stole some of the gems from the crown found in the Musgraves' basement. She was also Catherine Cusack of *The Blue Carbuncle*. Her only problem was that she always chose idiots for partners. Recognizing her talent Sherlock Holmes employed her under the name Martha in *His Last Bow*.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

– Bruce Aikin

Friday April 21, 2017

Peggy & Pat Perdue, Barbara Rusch, Donny Zaldin, James Reese and David Sanders welcomed California Sherlockian and Sherlockiana collector, Glen Miranker, for dinner at the Artful Dodger Pub on Isabella Street

Barbara Rusch brought a few treasures from her collection, including an example of trench art, a box built by a soldier in WW1, and a surgeon's amputation kit which had been presented to its owner by Dr. Joseph Bell, Doyle's university instructor, along with several WW1 diaries written by soldiers on the front, or their loved ones back home.

– David Sanders

## Diary erratum

Two corrections need to be made regarding the Spring edition's Diary Notes. On page 38 it was reported that Michael Ranieri's singing toast was the first in the history of the Bootmakers. This was false news. We don't know when the first one occurred, but at the annual dinner on January 29, 2011 Cliff Goldfarb gave a musical toast titled "The Doc Watson travelling wound blues."

Also, on page 40 we erred in missing Hartley and Marilyn Nathan in the list of Canadians who attended the BSI weekend. We also regret to say we didn't report that Cliff Goldfarb gave the toast to Mycroft at the dinner gala.



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