



# Canadian Holmes

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Cover: Enokoro Koubou of Japan created this wonderful picture of Ronald Howard as Sherlock Holmes. You can see more of her art through Twitter at [@enokoro1999\\_e](https://twitter.com/enokoro1999_e)

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Volume 44 Number 1

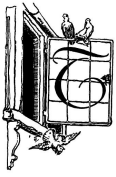
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One-hundred sixty fifth issue

(number corrected due to an error in 2016)

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# Graces of Bootprints

## *Enola Holmes and a certain regularity*

There is a certain regularity to life. The seasons come and go, the calendar months flip by and we all mark milestones of various sorts, some life changing, some not so much.

In the Sherlockian world each time a Sherlockian “major motion picture” is announced the flurry and flutter of excitement begins. Who are the Sherlockian consultants? What script is being used? Who is playing Holmes? Etc. Etc. Slowly more details come out, the flurry begins again but this time there are added voices. People decrying the choice of Moriarty, Holmes, Mrs. Hudson or the horse in the two-second scene as not being Victorian enough.

This all happened again when *Enola Holmes* was released on Netflix. We knew long ago that Millie Bobby Brown was playing Enola but when it was announced that Henry Cavill was playing Holmes, the hue and cry began, mainly centred around the actor being too handsome to play our favourite detective. If only the same kind of remarks were flung at your faithful editors, but, sigh, after 10+ years at the editorial desk, this just isn’t going to happen.

*Enola Holmes* premiered in September. Overall, the reviews were positive, Sherlockian and otherwise. Yes, Cavill is handsome and rugged but plays a decent Holmes and Enola is fun, headstrong and, on occasion, talks directly to the camera. The hue and cry we heard earlier has died out and, one can hope, *Enola* will bring in even more fans and create new Sherlockians.

In this issue Barbara Rusch reaches her arm out for a commonplace book, Ray Betzner remembers back to the 1960s for his first brush with Holmes. Nick Dunn-Meynell discusses Percy Phelps, a memorable if not sad character in the Canon; Samuel J. Hardman, a new author in these pages, gives us his ideas on the background of Holmes’s violin playing; Liese Sherwood-Fabre puts on her glad rags and tells us about the Victorian clothing industry; and a long-forgotten interview article with ACD is translated and revived. This bit of history is followed by Charles Prepolec’s look at Raymond Massey. We then round up the issue with a quiz by Karen Campbell, Fran Martin is the topic of “Strictly Personal,” books are reviewed and the “Diary Notes” remind us of a meeting many of us attended via Zoom.

# *The view from the bow window*

*Barbara Rusch explores various aspects of Victorian and Edwardian life as they relate to the canonical tales. Bow Window illustration by Laurie Fraser Manifold.*



The keeping of commonplace books has enjoyed a long tradition dating back to ancient times. Precursors were compiled by Roman and Greek philosophers documenting their daily musings and included noteworthy quotations of other great thinkers. Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* was a testament to these profound thoughts and fascinating anecdotes. In the 16th century, Leonardo da Vinci describes his notebook as "a collection without order, drawn from many papers, which I have copied here, hoping to arrange them later each in its place, according to the subject of which they treat." By the 17th century, "commonplacing" had become a recognized practice that was formally taught in such institutions as Oxford University. Samuel Pepys, celebrated diarist and Secretary of the Navy, took the convention to a whole new level. A voracious reader and bibliophile, his wide-ranging interests led him to the accumulation of what Pepys referred to as "Vulgaria," the printed throwaways of his day. In 1700 he pasted about 1,000 examples of street literature, including ballads, broadsides and advertisements – essentially the ephemera of everyday life – from 1650 through the 1690s, into two enormous leather-bound volumes which he titled "London and Westminster," chronicling, amongst other things, the plague of 1665 and the Great Fire the following year. Today Pepys's enormous collection is maintained in 12 specially constructed bookcases in Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Commonplacing flourished well into the 19th century and by mid-century, it had become something of a consuming pastime, especially for women and children with an artistic bent, whose talents found expression in elaborately designed scrapbooks filled with greeting cards, die-cut reliefs, chromolithographed advertising cards, hand-coloured illustrations and newspaper clippings, interspersed with observations drawing inspiration from the writings of noted poets, philosophers and novelists. With the feel of a memoir or a friendship album, the books were as individual as those who fashioned them, a reflection of personal tastes and revealing as much about their own preoccupations as the insights they offer. A unique form of ephemeral journalism, they provide extraordinary

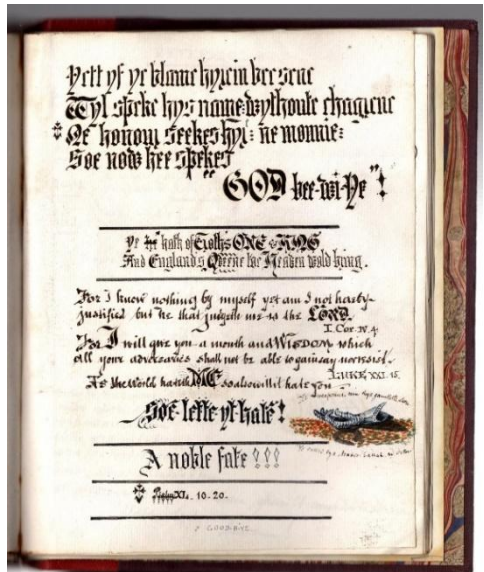
evidence of an individual and a valuable historical record of a community and a nation. While the obsession lost its sheen during the 20th century, the hobby has continued to evolve, and today scrapbooking has once again become all the rage.

While Sherlock Holmes’s commonplace books might be regarded of lesser artistic and literary merit than those of some of his contemporaries, they are equally instructive. He is all too cognizant of the value of records as evidence, filing as complete a dossier as may be imagined, culled from the agony columns of the various London newspapers and journals. Over the years, there is hardly a missing person or mislaid possession of which he is unaware. It seems as though everyone is searching for something – or someone – and Holmes has been tasked with singlehandedly monitoring this enormous lost and found department. Moreover, he has developed his own peculiar system of docketing all manner of people and events, most especially ones relating to crimes and those who commit them, reflecting his immense knowledge of sensational literature, including every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.

“My collection of M’s is a fine one,” he boasts. “Moriarty himself is enough to make any letter illustrious, and here is Morgan the poisoner, and Merridew of abominable memory, who knocked out my left canine in the waiting-room at Charing-Cross, and, finally, here is our friend of tonight,” referring to “Moran, Sebastian, Colonel.” These and innumerable other entries he meticulously clips and pastes into the bulging scrapbooks he refers to affectionately as “good old index,” which take pride of place on a shelf of the sitting room at 221B.

In countless ways, Holmes is a man ahead of his times. Long before the technology existed, he serves as an ambulatory search engine, his commonplace books a vast database, every bit the rival of Google or Wikipedia.

*A commonplace book that’s anything but, dated 1874, filled with entries of a spiritual and philosophical nature, in poetry and prose, beautifully calligraphed and embellished with watercolour and pen and ink illustrations. From the collection of the author.*



# Those Daffy 1960s

By Ray Betzner

Ray Betzner is the Associate Vice President for Communications at Temple University in Philadelphia. He has been a Holmes fan since bell bottom jeans and Captain & Tennille were in style. In 1987, he was invested as “The Agony Column” in *The Baker Street Irregulars* and is a Morley-Montgomery Award winner. He has large a collection of Vincent Starrett’s works and blogs about him at [www.vincentstarrett.com](http://www.vincentstarrett.com).

Having been born in the 1950s and growing up in 1960s America, the Warner Brothers characters were a dominant force in my life via *The Bugs Bunny Show*. The animated show started in prime time in 1960 and lasted long after I should have stopped watching “kiddie” shows. Using recycled Warner Brothers cartoons from the late 1940s through the 50s, this was how I learned about high culture (*What’s Opera Doc?* and *The Rabbit of Seville*), about how to paint tunnels on mountainsides that you can run through, and about Sherlock Holmes.

Except it wasn’t a Holmes that Arthur Conan Doyle would recognize. For those who have somehow managed to avoid the confluence of Holmes and Daffy Duck, allow me to introduce you to *Deduce you Say*, a 1956 Looney Tunes short that takes a broad swipe at the most familiar Holmes characteristics. (The cartoon is available at several sites online.)

Daffy plays Dorlock Holmes, with Porky Pig as Mr. Watkins, his assistant and the story’s narrator. As a clueless egotist, Daffy’s ability to accumulate clues is surpassed only by his inability to prevent himself from being pulverized every 30 seconds or so.



*Dorlock Holmes and Mr. Watkins on the trail of the Shropshire Slasher.*

Warner writer Michael Maltese certainly was familiar enough with his source material to pull off this animated parody, as you can hear from Watkins' opening narration: (Note: We will save you from reading most of Porky's stutter. You're welcome.)

"W-w-w-when I glance over my notes and records of the cases solved by the great detective, Dorlock Holmes, one inevitably rises to mind, The Case of the Shropshire Slasher. It all began in our Beeker Street digs one gloomy September night."

The camera pans up the stairs to No. 221 7/16 Beeker Street, where Dorlock was "moodily engaged in his favourite pastime: deducting." There follow several puns on income tax deductions. That should give you a sense of what level of parody we're talking about here.

Dorlock correctly predicts that a messenger would arrive, which he does by falling face forward into their flat. Dorlock pulls out a magnifying glass to examine the body and shouts, "It's clearly a case of curare poisoning of one of her Majesty's Cold Cream Guards." In fact, the guard has just tripped over the top step.

And so it goes.

Dorlock dons his deerstalker and pipe and heads for the local pub (Henry the Eighth's Fifth). Here Dorlock finds a nasty knife bearing the engraving, "Please Return to 30 Pudding Lane and Oblige the Shropshire Slasher. Return postage guaranteed."

Holmes: "A CLUE!"

Watkins: "Really, Holmes. You never cease to amaze me."

Dorlock makes a series of erroneous deductions and fails at apprehending the Slasher, even while using "gee-u-jitsu." The Slasher beats him senseless, which is not that far from Dorlock's normal state.

Watkins, who treats the Slasher without the contempt that Dorlock exhibits, carries on the investigation.

Watkins: "Name?"

Slasher: "Shropshire Slasher."

Watkins: "Occupation?"

Slasher: "Shropshire Slasher."

Dorlock interrupts Watkins. "Enough of your bumbling."

Watkins: "Bumbling upsets Holmes to no end."

After being beaten by the Slasher a second time, Dorlock retires and Watkins convinces the rogue to turn himself in.

Dorlock then threatens an older woman selling flowers without a licence. She turns out to be the Slasher's mother, and the detective gets a third thrashing before the killer and his mother head for Scotland Yard.

Watkins: "Tell me Holmes, at what sort of school did you learn to be a detective?"





*Dorlock Holmes after his encounter with the Shropshire Slasher.*

Holmes: “Elementary, my dear Watkins. Elementary.”

That’s all folks.

But that wasn’t all for the youngsters of the 1960s. Holmes, it seemed, was all around.

Growing up outside Pittsburgh, I could rely on television broadcasts of Sunday Mystery Theater, which recycled the Rathbone/Bruce films of the 1940s mingled with Charlie

Chan movies. In Chicago, and later in other cities, the Rathbone films were shown with new introductions by Rathbone himself. I realize now that seeing Holmes race after Nazis as a child made it easier to accept the time travelling pastiches that would flourish in the succeeding decades.

The local stations were also airing the Ronald Howard 1954 television series. Despite their rough production values, here were Holmes and Watson in adaptations of the original stories or new tales with the feel of the originals. Before I knew what the word “pastiche” meant, I had watched them on TV.

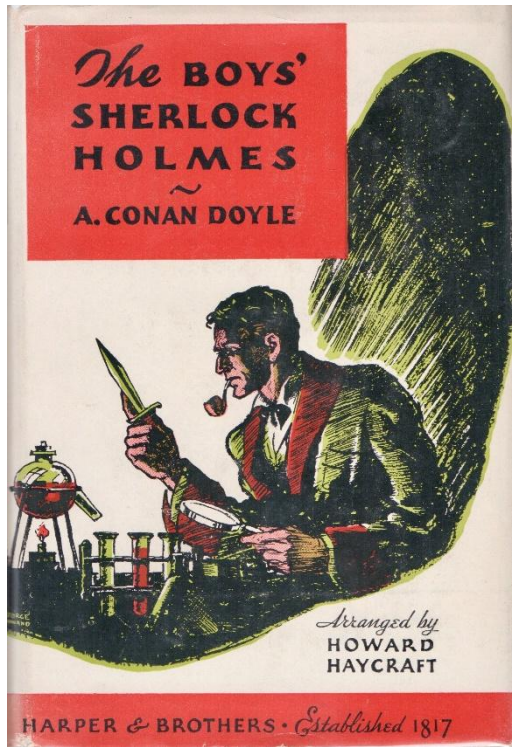
There were other Holmes-like characters on television at the time. The most popular was undoubtedly Mr. Spock, the first mate on the USS Starship Enterprise on *Star Trek*, which ran from 1966-69. Spock, as portrayed by Leonard Nimoy, was six feet tall, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. He was unemotional, logical and, with the exception of a once in every seven years mating spell, was unwilling to be romantically involved with women. Spock used science to collect clues to help him recommend how Captain Kirk and company could escape the crisis of the week. Certainly, this was a Sherlock simulacrum serving on the Enterprise bridge.

It would not be for another three decades before Baker Street Irregular and Star Trek feature film writer/director Nicholas Meyer would confirm the connection. In 1991, Meyer has Mr. Spock say in *Star Trek VI: An Undiscovered Country*: “An ancestor of mine maintained that if you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the solution.” Nick made official what we had known all along.

It wasn’t just the television set that offered us kids of the 60s a Holmes or pseudo-Holmes. The other great source was the local library.

Now I have to stop here for a moment and present an ugly truth about the 60s: it was highly sexist. I have a distinct memory of pulling down a copy of *The Boys' Sherlock Holmes* while visiting my local library. There was not, so far as I can find, an edition of *The Girls' Sherlock Holmes*. As I said, the 60s were a sexist time. I suppose girls were being encouraged to read Nancy Drew and Trixie Belden mysteries. In fact, I hope that girls just ignored the sexist title and read the Holmes stories all the same.

This volume sticks in my memory as much for its intriguing cover as for the stories inside. The cover



showed a handsome Holmes in his dressing gown, pipe firmly affixed, with a large magnifying glass in the left hand and lethal looking dagger in his right (Come to think of it, both the glass and knife look like they could have come from *Deduce, You Say.*) I've since purchased that book, which was edited and arranged by Howard Haycraft and published in 1961 by Harper & Brothers, and have it sitting here as I write.

Open it up and you are greeted by a handsome two-page map of Sherlock Holmes's London, created for Harper & Brothers by famed cartographer George Annard. Helpfully identified are Scotland Yard and the British Museum, Regents Park and, with a large circled star, "221B" on Baker Street. I didn't know much about maps as a boy, but I did know that if it was on a map, and the map was in a book, it was real. If I had any doubts about the "reality" of Sherlock Holmes, they were wiped away by the black-and-white reality found here.

Inside were *A Study in Scarlet* (with the flashback removed), *The Sign of the Four* and five short stories: "Speckled Band," "Noble Bachelor," "Beryl Coronet," "Copper Beeches" and "Blue Carbuncle." Haycraft contributed an excellent introduction (which ended by suggesting the reader hunt up a copy of Vincent Starrett's *The Private Life of Sherlock*

*Holmes*), and an essay by Dr. H.E. Jones on “The Original of Sherlock Holmes.” The latter was originally published in *Collier’s* magazine and written by a classmate of Conan Doyle’s at medical school in Edinburgh.

A lot of that went over my head, although it did set the stage for later inquiry into the origins of the character and, more importantly, the life of Sir Arthur. For now, I wanted to read about Holmes and the snake and the mean joke-telling man and the goose with the gem in its crop. The stories were thrilling, and I recall flipping back and forth between the map and the narrative to follow Holmes and Watson as they raced around London and beyond.

But for all its excitement there were tremendous challenges for a youngster of the 60s. What, for example, was a billycock? Or a goose’s crop? How about the assizes, a landau, a contralto and a groom? Or, for that matter, a blue carbuncle?

These questions went largely unanswered until later in the decade when a set of annotated children’s classics showed up under our family Christmas tree. Published by the Classic Press Inc. of Santa Rosa, California, Volume 7 was *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*. It was not the *Casebook* as Sir Arthur knew it, but several Holmes tales gathered under that name: *A Study in Scarlet* (again without the flashback), “Speckled Band,” “Scandal in Bohemia,” “Blue Carbuncle” and, for my first time, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. What joy!

Best of all, this was an annotated volume. All those words that were familiar to British readers of long ago were now defined for young readers of the 60s, often with small illustrations that made everything seem so much more sensible. Little did I know that this slim volume was preparing me for future, more fulsome works by William S. Baring-Gould and Leslie Klinger.

From these scattered influences and many more too numerous to mention here, a child of the 1960s could feel he or she had a decent working knowledge of Sherlock Holmes and his adventures. And as random as they were, each helped build a foundation for future Holmes work.

And I can blame it all on Daffy Duck.

# *Was Percy paranoid?*

by Nick Dunn-Meynell

*Nick Dunn-Meynell has nothing in his life he need be personally ashamed of, with the possible exception of the pseudo-pastiche 'A Proof Reader's Adventures of Sherlock Holmes,' to be edited and abetted by David Marcum and published by Belanger Books in 2021.*

*Editor's note: This article first appeared in the October 2014 edition of The Log, the journal of The Sydney Passengers.*

“I begin to believe that I am the unconscious centre of some monstrous conspiracy.” (Percy “Tadpole” Phelps, “The Adventure of the Naval Treaty”)

**W**as the theft of the Anglo-Italian Naval Treaty a chance event? Or was Percy Phelps right to suspect that he was a tadpole encircled by unseen sharks that might at any instant casually and incidentally gobble him up without troubling to swallow? It is certainly easy enough to put this troubled young man's fears down to paranoia resulting from his unhappy school days, when he hardly dared to walk alone for fear that the school bully, John “Hittim” Watson, might at any moment leap out and proceed to hit him on the shins with a wicket.

Phelps was unknowingly involved in events that would ultimately result in the greatest catastrophe in human history a quarter of a century later. Was the Great War an accident? Or did Von Bork really set the combination of his safe to August 1914 four years earlier? Which would you rather believe?

To determine the truth, we first need to determine whether the theft of a not particularly important naval treaty related to far more significant events occurring at that time, and to do that we must date the theft precisely. Easier said than done, for since when did any two Sherlockians entirely agree on the dating of the Canon? Watson tells us that the case occurred in the July immediately succeeding his marriage, which is usually but not always dated to late 1888. Let us start by supposing that the investigation was made in July 1889 and see what would follow from that.

The theft, we are told, occurred on May 23. Four days later Lord Holdhurst moved the Second Reading of the Naval Defence Bill. The motion was agreed to and the *Naval Defence Act* received the Royal

Assent on May 31. By it the Royal Navy was to be so dramatically increased in strength that it was hoped an arms race with other powers would be inconceivable. Interestingly, Kaiser Wilhelm II would attempt the same trick on his hated uncle, Edward VII, some years later. It did indeed render his uncle speechless and sombre. He went home and warned the British government that the arms race had better be accelerated.

In 1889, though, Germany was still England's ally and it was France and Russia who were the great enemies. There were ominous signs that was about to change. In 1888 the old Kaiser died, to be followed to the grave by his successor and son, Kaiser Wilhelm's father, three months later. The young and immature Wilhelm II became Emperor. Friction between himself and the British royal family soon developed. Wilhelm was at times an extreme Anglophobe, largely because his mother was English. At other times he was an extreme Anglophile largely because his grandmother Victoria was half German, had married a German and was the ruler of the British Empire. There were occasions when he seems to have dreamt of a union between "the two Teutonic nations" and a worldwide country under a flag which would be a quartering of the red, white and blue with the red, white and black. From these moments he soon recovered.

Holmes was contacted about the theft of the treaty 10 weeks after it occurred, which is to say at the end of July. On August 2, perhaps only two days after he had returned the missing treaty to Percy Phelps, Kaiser Wilhelm was at Cowes, the royal estate on the Isle of Wight, and thrilled because his grandmother had made him an Admiral of the Royal Navy.

In regard to honorary titles, Victoria tended to think of them as a meaningless vulgarity and refused to allow her son Bertie, the future Edward VII, to accept them. In the case of her grandson she made an exception because a major rift between Wilhelm and the British royalty was threatening to sour political relations between the two countries. Someone seems to have whispered into her ear that an important-sounding name and a pretty uniform would thrill Wilhelm and put all right, which for a time it did.

Wilhelm, who fancied himself as a very stable genius, then announced to his stunned chancellor Bismarck that "He would have the right, as Admiral of the Fleet, to have a say in English naval affairs and to give the Queen his expert advice." (1) Similarly, he wrote to his grandmamma that "I now am able to take [an] interest in your fleet as if it were my own." (2) Here we see the difficulty. He believed that her fleet was practically his fleet because he failed to understand that it was not really hers either.

Sure enough he started sending her his plans for the Royal Navy's future. In December 1889 she received his instructions for reorganizing it. Most particularly, he assured her that "The French look down upon the British

Mediterranean Squadron with disdain and are sure of doing away with it in short time after the opening of hostilities!” (3) Therefore, the number of battleships in the Mediterranean had to be increased from five to 12. Wilhelm desired war between England and France and his recommendations, if anyone had taken any notice of them, might have resulted in one.

Slowly it would dawn on him that he had been duped. He was not in charge of the Royal Navy at all! Had they taken him for a fool? He would show them. The German navy would be expanded to rival the British one. Wilhelm desired this chiefly for purposes of prestige, as his royal yacht resembled a battleship, although its armaments were largely decorative. It was no more of a fighter than was Wilhelm in his military costumes. By contrast Admiral Tirpitz took the view that the German navy should be taken out of its box and put to use. As for the British, they knew that the security of their country and empire depended on ruling the waves. Since Germany already possessed the world’s greatest army the possibility that they might one day match the Royal Navy was unacceptable. This became one of the key considerations leading to the declaration of war in 1914.

What has all this to do with the stolen naval treaty? Possibly very little, for the simple reason that there may never have been any such agreement between England and Italy in 1889 – Tadpole’s treaty was a fantasy. Lord Holdhurst said that it was only to be kept secret for a few months and would soon be announced. That was not true of any such treaty at the time. We cannot identify it as the treaty brokered by Bismarck in 1887 between Britain, Austria-Hungary and Italy since not only was it of a different nature but its secrecy was maintained. We are forced to consider the possibility that this Anglo-Italian naval treaty was a fiction. Its theft, too, has to be reconsidered.

There were certainly rumours of such a treaty in the press and the denial of any such agreement would only have increased interest. Once stories began to spread that it had been stolen its assumed importance would have increased further. The urgent need to recover it, and the insistence by the government that the nonexistent treaty had not been stolen, would have turned it into the central topic of interest for many in the ruling elites of England and elsewhere. The result was that insufficient attention was given by certain key thinkers to the implications of the *Naval Defence Act* and to the spurious elevation of Wilhelm to commander of the British Fleet. The recovery of the document days before Wilhelm’s appearance at Cowes would have led to a sigh of relief and a false sense of security. In such a mood Wilhelm’s meeting with Victoria would have been taken as proof of a renewed amity between England and Germany.

Probably there were only two men in England at that time capable of grasping the full implications of the Act and of foreseeing the later behaviour of Wilhelm, and both their names began with M. One of them was Mycroft, although at that time he was evidently not as significant a force in British politics as he would later become, hence he was not asked to contact Sherlock to ask him to locate the missing treaty. Someone may, however, have thought it best to ensure that Mycroft did not speculate too deeply on the course that events might take and the theft and recovery of an apparently vital treaty would have supplied a useful distraction.

This would have been one reason why Percy Phelps was selected for the task of copying out the treaty. He had known John H. Watson, who was the only friend of Sherlock Holmes. This useful coincidence was akin to the chance meeting of Stamford with Watson on the very day that Holmes happened to be looking for someone to go halves on some nice rooms in Baker Street. Phelps may not have been the only one at the centre of some monstrous conspiracy.

Consider, too, the utter pointlessness of the task given to poor Percy. He was to copy out a difficult document in French and was to do it at night after a hard day's work when he was tired and the chances of human error were greatly multiplied. In the case of such a document no errors could be permitted, besides which he could hardly have copied the most important features of all – the signatures.

Note, too, that in the month after the theft Holmes found himself investigating the case of “The Stockbroker's Clerk,” in which one Hall Pycroft was set to work unnecessarily marking all the hardware sellers in a Paris directory purely to keep him distracted while a burglary was in progress. The next year came the case of “The Red Headed League,” in which the dim-witted Jabez Wilson was similarly employed copying out the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, again to keep him busy while robbers prepared for their heist. There are clearly family resemblances between these three crimes, the chief difference between them being that in the case of the last two the dupes were given their tasks to make thefts possible, whereas in the first case the theft itself may have become the distraction.

Nevertheless, the same hand may be detected ghostwriting all three plots. Furthermore, the cases show a progression as the scheme is reworked and made ever wittier. In part that may have been art for art's sake and to avoid boredom on the part of the plotter. It may also have been to ensure the continued interest of Holmes.

If the naval treaty was intended to distract at least one of the Holmes brothers, or perhaps both, then we are dealing with an exceptional intelligence, one that was perhaps capable of making and marring the destinies of nations and fully intended to do so. This great brain would also

have commanded considerable resources, particularly if Lord Holdhurst had been instructed to give the treaty to Percy. Holdhurst may have done it for the money – after all, Professor Moriarty paid his right-hand man more than the Prime Minister, or at least more than the official salary of the Prime Minister. Holmes notes that Holdhurst cannot afford to buy a new pair of shoes. Or it might have been a matter of blackmail.

Phelps was chosen not only because he knew Watson but because of the psychological damage the latter had caused him during their school days. The constant bullying and the humiliation at Watson's hands had left the sensitive Phelps permanently scarred and likely to fall to pieces in a crisis. This was probably ensured by means of drugs administered by Dr. Ferrier, the medic who just happened to be on the train that took Phelps home after the theft and who insisted that there was no need for anyone to accompany them.

Phelps says he was transformed into a raving maniac immediately after Ferrier appeared, which is probably to say just after he was given the very medicine that was supposed to prevent such an attack. This course of drugs could have been maintained. We note, for example, that when Phelps becomes overexcited while telling Holmes of the theft, the nurse, presumably on Ferrier's instructions, gives him a stimulant when obviously he needed something to calm him down. It may have been Ferrier, too, who supplied a sleeping draft for the commissionaire Tangey, so ensuring that Phelps had to go in search of his coffee while the thief entered his room for the paper.

The theft was made to appear spontaneous by the simple expedient of ringing the bell in Phelps's room, so making it seem that the visitor had no intention of stealing the document when first he entered. That could not have been the case. Within seconds of the bell ringing Phelps was running back. It is quite inconceivable that before he had arrived the visitor could have discovered the treaty, studied it sufficiently to understand its importance and then escaped with it. The theft was obviously very carefully planned.

Harrison, if it was he, did not enter by the main entrance as one might have expected him to do. Instead he used a side entrance that he either knew would be unlocked and unguarded, which seems unlikely, or that he opened with a skeleton key. He could then have removed his shoes to ensure that there were no footprints, mounting the stairs to wait until he heard Phelps open his door and leave in search of his coffee. Having collected the document he left disguised as the char lady Mrs. Tangey, who had departed earlier after having told her husband that Phelps needed a drink. The old woman seen by the constable less than five minutes before Phelps questioned him could not have been Mrs. Tangey, for we know she



left the building quickly, at least 20 minutes earlier than Phelps. She did see the constable, and noticed that Charles Street was empty, but that was probably just before he took his place at the corner of that street. Since he only saw one person during the 15 minutes he was there, it is impossible that both she and Harrison left the building that way and at the same time.

The chief result of the deception with the female impersonator was to send an increasingly frantic Tadpole darting to and fro after the missing treaty until brain fever set in. Ferrier then intercepted him at the train station, gave him something to exacerbate his condition and took him home. Once there, he and Harrison ensured that he was not allowed to go to his own bedroom but was instead bundled into Harrison's, where the treaty had already been concealed in a secret compartment only Harrison knew of. There it would remain while with every passing week rumours of a missing document vital to Britain's security grew ever more exaggerated. Then, a few days before Wilhelm was due to appear at Cowes, someone casually reminded Phelps that his dear old friend Watson knew a clever chap by the name of Holmes who would solve the mystery in a jiffy.

As further evidence that both the theft and the recovery were contrived, note that Annie stands guard in the room and so prevents her supposed brother from recovering the treaty. It is highly unlikely, though, that they really were brother and sister since their resemblance to each other is about as clear as that between the brother and sister Stapletons in the case of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which may date from the previous year. Just as Beryl Stapleton looks suspiciously tropical, so Annie's olive complexion and Italian eyes are not typical of the average native of Northumberland. Almost certainly she and her "brother" were in reality partners in the scheme to fake the theft of a false treaty. That such a partnership of a brother and sister is so similar to the one in *The Hound* again suggests a common hand ghostwriting the plots.

One possible candidate would be Moriarty. At the time of *The Valley of Fear*, probably in January 1888, he had been nothing more than a highly respected university professor living and working outside London and running a small consultancy service for criminals. His spectacular use of England's greatest detective to unwittingly flush out his American counterpart, on whom the Professor had a contract, would instantly have transformed him into a superstar among criminals. Soon afterwards he moved to London and began acquiring control of its underworld.

However, the timing of *The Valley of Fear* case suggests that his ambitions were far greater. In February 1888 Bismarck gave a speech worthy of Mycroft in which he accurately foretold the causes of the First World War that would commence in the Balkans, "a war whose issue no

man can foresee. At the end of the conflict we should scarcely know why we had fought.” (4) The German Emperor died the next month. Moriarty would have recognized that it was Bismarck who had kept the peace in Europe and that if there was to be a world war his removal was essential. Assassination would turn him into a martyr. He had to go in such a way that the future Kaiser would utterly repudiate his policies. It was necessary that Wilhelm’s father should die as quickly as possible after succeeding the old Kaiser so that the immature and unstable Wilhelm might take the throne. A clash between him and the domineering Bismarck would then be inevitable.

The death of Wilhelm’s father three months after becoming Kaiser was convenient to say the least. He died of throat cancer but he might have lived for several more years had he been permitted the recommended operation. His English wife forbade it on the recommendation of the English specialist Sir Morell Mackenzie, who insisted that his condition was not serious. It is possible that Mackenzie was bribed by Moriarty to say this.

As Moriarty had calculated, Wilhelm dropped Bismarck and things soon began to fall apart. A crucial treaty with Russia was not renewed, in part because the Russians initially insisted that they deal with Bismarck. The chancellor had made enemies aside from Wilhelm, who realized that to renew the treaty might lead to his return. Therefore, the treaty was allowed to lapse. Russia then began to make overtures toward France. World War One came a step closer.

After his downfall, Bismarck found himself in a railway waiting room about to leave Berlin. Someone had placed a globe wreathed in black in the room. (5) We will never know who did this but the black humour would have been typical of a certain expert in eclipses astronomical and spiritual. He could have made Phelps’s “monstrous conspiracy” all clear in a minute.

#### Notes

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. p.108.
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5. Ibid. p.124.

# Boston Globe serial

In 1930-1931 *The Boston Globe* and several other newspapers published a comic strip version of "The Naval Treaty" by American illustrator Leo O'Mealia. There were 39 parts with four illustrations each. Here is a sample.

**SHERLOCK HOLMES—The Naval Treaty—Seven Clues—By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**



F.20  
On Phelps' emphatic "No" to his question about Miss Harrison, Sherlock Holmes walked to an open window and held up the drooping stalk of a moss-rose "What a lovely thing a rose is," he murmured. "Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers."



Percy Phelps and his nurse looked at Holmes with surprise and a good deal of disappointment written upon their faces. He had fallen into a reverie with the rose between his fingers, and it lasted some minutes before Miss Harrison broke in with a touch of asperity in her voice: "Do you see any prospect of solving this mystery, Mr. Holmes?" © 1930 By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



"Oh, the mystery," Holmes exclaimed, coming back with a start to the realities of life. "Well, it would be absurd to deny that the case is complicated, but I can promise you that I will look into the matter and let you know any points which may strike me."



"Do you see any clue?" Miss Harrison asked, as Holmes moved toward the door. "You have furnished me with seven clues, but I must test them before I can pronounce upon their value. . . ."

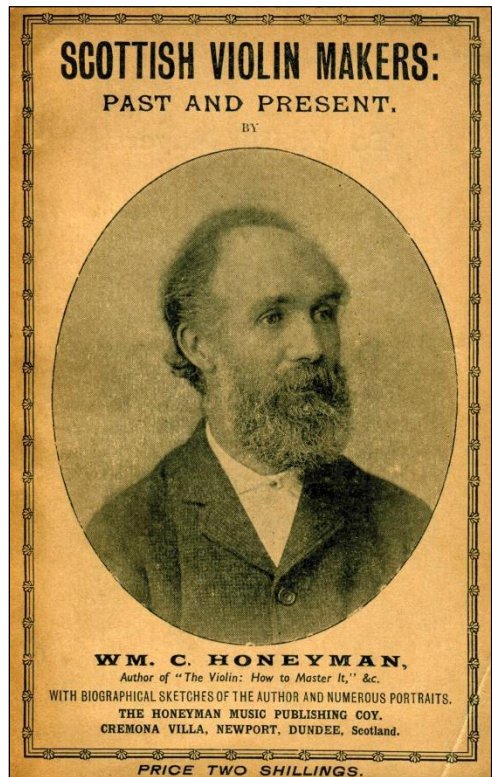
# Sherlock's violin

By Samuel J. Hardman

*Samuel J. Hardman was educated privately in music and art history. He currently resides in Commerce, Georgia, USA. Hardman has written widely on a variety of topics. This is his first article in Canadian Holmes.*

**M**y interest in violins began when my mother gave me a handsome Scottish violin. When I wished to know more about its maker, I consulted William C. Honeyman's *Scottish Violin Makers*; hence, my first contact with William Crawford Honeyman. Later, through genealogical connections, I learned more about Honeyman and his literary work. When I was a boy, I received a copy of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (1930). The portrait of Holmes on the dust cover thrilled me. Stuck fast to my hero, I soon adopted Holmes's deductive method.

In her note about William Crawford Honeyman – who also wrote police detective novels under the pen name of James McGovan – in *The McGovan Casebook*, Mary Anne Alburger demonstrates that she is an able sleuth, especially when she links Honeyman and Holmes's musical sensibilities: “But it is likely that Honeyman, always seen with his Stradivarius, and a leading writer of detective fiction, unknowingly supplied Doyle with the idea of making musical sensibilities central to Holmes's character.” When writing about Honeyman, Alburger obviously did not know about the 2014 article “Sherlock Holmes' Kiwi Connection” by Tom Hunt, or “A Scottish Sherlock Holmes, M'Gov'an, The Edinburgh Detective” by Norval



Scrymgeour. That Alburger did not know about these works adds luster to her Holmes-like deductions.

Scrymgeour's interview with Conan Doyle was reported in *The Scotsman* on November 30, 1930. During the interview, Doyle told Scrymgeour "that when a student at Edinburgh University he read with zest the detective stories of James M'Govan, and although he did not say so, I took it that these then immensely popular sensations, as much as the queer foible of his teacher, the eccentric Bell, influenced him towards evolving the logical processes that in time flowered into the Sherlock Holmes series." When Scrymgeour told Doyle that he "had known intimately the man who had made famous James M'Govan," he sensed Doyle's "sudden respect." That Conan Doyle was not surprised by Scrymgeour's revelation indicates that he knew Honeyman was the author of the McGovan stories.

Was Conan Doyle aware of Honeyman's keen interest in rare violins and that Honeyman was the author and creator of James McGovan? If not, Conan Doyle lived alone in a dark hole and could not have written the Holmes Canon. A list of Honeyman's McGovan stories appeared under his name in the 1890 catalogue of Battersea Central Library, and the following note was published in *The Violin Times* in 1896: "Mr. Honeyman, so well-known by his 'Violin: How to Master it,' is also the creator of that super-natural detective, 'James McGovan.'" Indeed, Honeyman made no secret of being the author of McGovan and this information appeared in books and magazines in the UK and America during the period 1890-1939.

Honeyman was well known in Edinburgh as a violinist, writer and editor when Doyle lived in the city. Like Holmes, Honeyman played the violin quite well. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Dr. Watson makes the following remark: "That he [Holmes] could play pieces, and difficult pieces, I knew well, because at my request he has played me some of Mendelssohn's Lieder, and other favourites. When left to himself, however, he would seldom produce any music or attempt any recognized air." In Doyle's original notes, Holmes was a collector of rare, antique violins. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes, like Honeyman, "prattled away about Cremona fiddles, and the difference between a Stradivarius and an Amati." Both Holmes and Honeyman owned Stradivarius violins. Further, there are clues in Honeyman's "The Romance of a Real Cremona" that link Honeyman to Doyle's Holmes. Hence, an acceptable case for William C. Honeyman being Conan Doyle's real-life model for the violin-playing Sherlock Holmes.

# *Where did you get that dress?*

*By Liese Sherwood-Fabre*

*Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD is a Sherlockian living in Texas and a member of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star. She has recently published The Adventure of the Murdered Gypsy, case two of The Early Case Files of Sherlock Holmes. This book is available at all major booksellers, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo and Apple.*

Clothing in Victorian England, especially women's dress, served as one of the major indicators of class and status. Watson often included a description of the clothing worn by a visitor to 221B for just this sort of designation. Were the clothes frayed? Dusty? Lined with silk? Seedy? Even without Holmes's ability to deduce any number of characteristics and history from a person's dress, the casual reader would have been able to learn much from Watson's description because perhaps, as in no other era, did "clothes make the man."

While men's fashions changed little during the 19th century, women's clothing passed through several transformations. Menswear became more business-like, favouring dark, plain colors for those in the middle and upper classes. Trousers, white shirts and a dark coat (no checks or stripes) were considered acceptable apparel. Labourers favoured heavier fabrics, shorter jackets and cloth caps. On the other hand, women's magazines and other publications promoted changes that required women to purchase new clothes for each season to remain fashionable. (1) This emphasis on alterations in women's fashions originated after the French Revolution and a shift in gender roles. Women were to display "conspicuous consumption, conspicuous leisure, and conspicuous waste" as evidence of their husband's financial standing. (2) One magazine suggested the minimum wardrobe for women should include "a walking dress, a country dress, a carriage or visiting dress, an ordinary evening dress, a dinner dress, and a ball dress." (3)

Of course, only a few could afford such frequent wardrobe changes and those with lower incomes fuelled a thriving business in second-hand clothing. For those below an annual income of £50 (a little over £6000 in 2020 figures), the purchase of "new" items were those that had been discarded by the upper classes once they showed wear, or were replaced with the latest style. (4) When a dress was no longer in fashion, a lady would pass it on to her maid, who might remake it or pass it on to another servant for the "ragbag." Either way, many made it into the second-hand

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clothing trade. (5) Such purchases allowed those with lower incomes to maintain a “respectable appearance” above their economic level. (6) Interestingly, clothing was the item most often stolen during the Victorian period. Seamstresses would sell the items they had been paid to alter or laundresses those they were to wash. (7)

In addition to second-hand clothing, some purchases were made at “slop-shops,” where cheap, ready-made clothes were sold. The term “slop” referred to ready-made breeches worn by sailors but became associated with any “off the rack” item. (8) With the introduction of the bandsaw to cut multiple garment pieces at the

same time, the ready-to-wear clothing industry began to affect the income of skilled dressmakers. Manufacturers of such mass-produced items would hire women to stitch together garments for piece-rate wages. These sweat shop workers often labored 14-18 hours a day in their homes for below-subsistence earnings. Most of these items, often ill-fitting but serviceable, were shipped to the US to supply immigrant populations there. (9)

In addition to seamstresses, others involved in the clothing trade were “cobblers, tailors, dressmakers..., milliners, mantua makers, hatters, importers, shop girls, weavers, dyers and textile workers.” (10) Altogether, this industry was the second-largest employer of women in England (the first being domestic service). In part, because the work was considered

“respectable” as it often involved needlework—a skill considered within a woman’s sphere. (11)

During his efforts to solve “The Adventure of Silver Blaze,” Holmes finds a Bond Street milliner’s bill for more than 37 pounds – a rather hefty sum and not something that a servant – or horse trainer – could afford. A visit to the dress and hat maker confirmed the identity of the purchaser and a second woman in Straker’s life. If only she’d been less inclined to keeping up with fashions, Straker might have been spared his life. In this case, Sherlock uncovered the answer to “where did you get that dress?”

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## Deux Jours chez SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

ON CONNAIT, dans le cours du temps, trois sir Arthur Conan Doyle : celui qui fut médecin, l'auteur de *Sherlock Holmes*, et l'apôtre spiritualiste. Mais il en est un autre encore, et de qui il a été peu parlé : c'est le sir Arthur Conan Doyle *af home*, — en pantoufles, dirions-nous, — celui qui se dérobe aux honneurs, aux meetings, aux banquets, aux conférences, au tumulte et aux travaux de la ville, lorsque, retiré dans sa résidence d'été, il réclame à sa gloire le délassant privilège de le laisser vivre au milieu de sa famille, dans le cadre de riants jardins, en marge d'une belle forêt. C'est là que, jouissant enfin d'une existence paisible, il s'offre parfois le trop court bonheur d'aller méditer l'antique adage : *Magna servita est magna fortuna*.

□ □

Le nom de cette « retraite » est Bignell Wood, près de Lyndhurst, Hampshire, et c'est là qu'un matin de septembre, nous sommes allés, non point surprendre, mais, accourant à leur flatteuse invitation, visiter sir Arthur, lady Conan Doyle et leurs enfants. Notre voyage avait un double objet : d'abord, vérifier comme l'illustre écrivain pratiquait l'art — si difficile aux hommes réputés dans le monde — de n'être plus, temporairement, une « statue sur la place publique », ainsi que disait Montaigne, et, ensuite, tirer de notre hôte un bon nombre de précisions sur le long voyage qu'il est au moment d'entrepren-

dre, à l'imitation de ceux qu'il fit, naguère encore, au Canada, aux États-Unis, et ailleurs, pour propager, devant des foules, ce *Crede spiritualiste* auquel il s'est si ardemment rallié, avec toutes les forces de son esprit et de son cœur.

Sur ce point, sir Conan Doyle voulut être bref. Il nous dit seulement qu'en faisant route, cette fois, vers le Sud-Africain, il ajoutait un chaînon logique à cette « œuvre de missionnaire » qu'il s'était volontairement et allègrement imposée depuis douze ans. Tout fatigué qu'il était par sa constante présence au créneau d'où il combattait le matérialisme par la parole et par l'écrit, il avait pensé à faire d'une pierre deux coups, — en anglais : *Kill two birds with one stone*, tuer deux oiseaux avec le même caillou, — en traversant des mers et des mers, où l'air pur et le repos à bord lui vaudraient grand profit, et en s'en allant, dans un pays de langue anglaise, « délivrer un message », conduire une féconde campagne au profit de la cause spirituelle qui est devenue l'objet essentiel de sa vie. Au retour, il s'arrêterait — c'est son projet positif et, dès maintenant, organisé — dans les grandes capitales européennes et y ajouterait à son labeur de propagandiste. Partout, le thème qu'il traiterait serait la survivance de l'âme à la mort, et l'immortalité de la créature. S'ilôt ces enseignements jetés, à certains point dans le vent, mais dans les consciences », nous dit-il, son intention était, sans jamais s'éloigner de la bataille, d'y



SIR CONAN DOYLE.

moins lutter de ses propres armes, d'assister de loin aux combats de plus jeunes capitaines, et d'achever ses jours en ne se consacrant plus qu'à son œuvre littéraire.

Nous ne pûmes nous retenir, à l'entendre ainsi construire si vaillamment son avenir, de lui déclarer que nous recommissions en lui l'âme d'un saint homme, le cerveau d'un détective, le courage d'un lion. Et il répondit, en souriant :

— Ajoutez : la peau d'un hippopotame !

□ □

Nous nous attirions cette joyeuse et confiante réplique, le premier matin de notre arrivée, dans le cadre des beaux jardins qui parlent de leurs senteurs infiniment variées le rustique cottage de Bignell Wood. Cette demeure a une curieuse histoire qu'il n'est peut-être pas inutile de rapporter. Il y a encore deux



SIR CONAN DOYLE PRENANT SON THÉ A BIGNELL WOOD.

# *Two days with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1928)*

*Editors' Note: "Deux jours chez Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" (Two Days with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) was an interview/article written in French by John Lewis and Pascal Forthuny and published in Les Annales Politiques et Littéraires No. 2322 on November 15, 1928. Lewis and Forthuny visited Conan Doyle at Bignell Wood, Hampshire. We believe this is the first time the article has been translated into English.*

*Translation by Ophélie Raymond  
Proofread by Llori Patterson*

In 1928, John Lewis & Pascal Forthuny paid a visit to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at his home in Bignell Wood, Hampshire, and drafted a detailed account of their meeting in *Les Annales Politiques et Littéraires* (French political and literary journal) No. 2322, dated November 15, 1928.

Over the course of time, we would come to acknowledge three Sir Arthur Conan Doyles: the one who was a doctor, the one who created Sherlock Holmes, and the apostle of Spiritualism. Yet, there is another one of whom very little has been said: the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at home – in slippers, let's say – the one who shirks away from honours, from meetings, from banquets, from conferences, from the tumult and work of the city when, in the privacy of his summer residence, he sings the praises to the delightful privilege of enjoying life with his family, against a backdrop of picturesque gardens, on the edge of a beautiful forest. It is here that, able to savour a peaceful existence at last, he occasionally treats himself to the joy, be it ever-so short, of pondering over the ancient maxim: *Magna servita est magna fortuna*.

The name of this "retreat" is Bignell Wood, near Lyndhurst, Hampshire, and this is where, on a morning in September, we went along to visit Sir Arthur, Lady Conan Doyle and their children, by no means to surprise them but in response to their flattering invitation. The aim of our journey was twofold: first, to establish how the illustrious writer embraced the art – quite difficult for the honoured men of this world – to no longer be, be it for a short while, a "statue on the public stage" as Montaigne would say, and then, to obtain a good deal of details from our host about the long journey he was currently undertaking, like those he took until recently to

Canada, the United States, and elsewhere, to disseminate to the crowds this spiritualistic credo to which he has so passionately rallied, with all the strength of his soul and heart.

On this point, Sir Conan Doyle wished to be brief. He only told us that, on the way to South Africa that time round, he had added a logical link to this “missionary work” which he had voluntarily and joyfully imposed on himself for 12 years now. Tired as he was from being constantly present in the niche from which he fought materialism with the spoken and written word, he had thought of killing two birds with one stone, by sailing from sea to sea, where fresh air and rest onboard would be of great benefit for him and where, by heading for an English-speaking country, he could deliver a message and lead a fruitful campaign for the benefit of the spiritual cause which had become the essential aim of his life. On his return, he would stop – this is his positive project and, henceforth, organized – in the major European capitals and which would complement his work as a propagandist. Everywhere the theme he would deal with would be the survival of the soul at death and the immortality of the being. As soon as he let fly these teachings, “obviously not to the top of my own hat, but to people’s minds,” he stated, without ever walking away from the combat, his intention was to fight less with his own arms, to watch the combats of younger captains from afar and to see in his old days by devoting himself solely to his literary work.

We could not restrain ourselves, upon hearing him planning his future so gallantly, to declare to him that we could see in him the soul of a holy man, the brain of a detective, the courage of a lion. And he answered, smiling:

“Don’t forget the skin of a hippopotamus!”

We were gifted with this joyous and confident line, the first morning of our arrival, in the surroundings of the exquisite gardens which perfume the rustic Bignell Wood cottage with their infinitely varied scents. This dwelling has a curious tale to be told which is probably worthwhile mentioning. Two years before, it was just a modest, lonely, thatch-roofed dwelling on the edge of the New Forest, whose centuries-old trees stretched to brush the cracked walls with their branches. Now, Bignell Wood is what we like to call, across the Channel, a picturesque country residence, extended with new buildings whose architecture was scrupulously kept in line with the primitive style of the old. How did its current owners come upon this “little paradise”?

“All my life,” Lady Conan Doyle told us, “I’d dreamt of some sort of country abode. In my musings, three typical features stood out: a forest nearby, as well as a river and a thatched roof. A delicate combination to achieve. But one day, guided by inspiration, I felt pushed towards this

region. I knew I'd find what I was looking for. As if I was sure, I headed for a forest concentrated in the distance. There was a river, on the edge of the woods, overflowing with rainbow trout. And the house, roofed with thatch, stood before me, just like in my dreams. Sir Arthur bought this little paradise as a gift for me. We surrounded it with lawns and flowers. I designed and planted everything. There's the vegetable garden, the chicken coop, the golf course and the tennis court and the garage. What else could you wish for?"

In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's home, it would be pretty amazing if no one spoke about "extraordinary phenomena." So out of the blue, we commented on the adventure which had happened to motorists the other night on the road to Stratford-on-Avon, nothing less than meeting a ghost, a woman wearing a grey veil, and who was ringing a bell. Malcolm, Sir Arthur's youngest son, immediately found the solution to this mysterious problem:

"It must have been a leper."

A joke, of course, because it would be rather absurd to believe that credibility is blindly bestowed on all the crazy rumours, as regards apparitions, in the home of the great British Spiritualist. This was demonstrated when the young man instantly, and very severely, reinforced his wise opinion:

"These drivers must have been drunk."

But there again, as we walked along the river, we addressed a more troubling subject: fairies. Do fairies, leprechauns, elves, gnomes exist? In the very same region, a certain Tom Charman claimed to have seen many dancing on the grass, to have discussed with all this little world of elementals for years, and even to have photographed them. We went to greet him, following the tracks, right into this "village of Utopia" which he, the great idealist, founded in Godshill, Fordinbridge, by bringing together a community of farmers, weavers and potters. He was literally so surrounded by friends the day we passed by that he could only give us a little of his time, but he promised to come, very soon, to Bignell Wood, to take snapshots of ballerina fairies in the surrounding meadows. Alas! We would be gone by then and would miss out on that!

Sir Arthur firmly believes that such an experience is possible. His charming book: "The Coming of the Fairies" is very recent. He talks about them as friends and neighbours. In his gardens, he has set up delftware representations of them everywhere: the comic house-goblin, with his sack on his back, stick in his hand, pipe in his mouth; another one, bedecked in a white moustache, smiles between the twigs of the hedge; a third one, on the riverbank, watches trout swimming past. Sir Conan Doyle does not lose hope of taking pictures of the fairies one day himself. He showed us

the clearing where, with his Kodak, and an eight-year-old girl who could see the elementals, he posted himself, a patient hunter, waiting for the “little spirits” which would be attracted, one evening, by the melody of the music box. He has already obtained a foggy human figure on the plate. “I’ll do better,” he says. This declaration and others relating to such astonishing strangeness led to much irony in England. But the Master of Bignell Wood lets them laugh, and continues to believe. He’s not fooled by himself or by anyone else. The other day, an American journalist came to see him, photographed fairies in the clearing, with incredible ease. But Sir Arthur – on that particular morning became Sherlock – and discovered the trickery. The plate was rigged!

The family harmony in his own home is undoubtedly the most beautiful spectacle. Lady Doyle is his companion all of the time, on all trips, accompanying him in everything he does, his “guardian angel.” She shares his ideal, runs with him into battle. She will go with him to South Africa. Their sons, Denis and Malcolm – eighteen and nineteen years old – will be on the tour as well... Denis, who may become a doctor, unless he decides to be an admiral; Malcolm, the sportsman philosopher, the “driver” for whom driving a hundred kilometres an hour is child’s play. And let’s not forget their sister, Billy, who we’d be tempted to call “the third boy,” because of her brazen personality and tastes. The father is known as “Pop,” simply a brother to his own kids. At times, Sir Conan Doyle is the physician, in spite of himself. On the second day, we were walking and talking about Plato. In the twilight, a scream. On the road, a car and a motorbike had just collided. My host ran forward. A lady, in the ditch, was moaning. Broken collarbone. In a jiffy, a solid improvised bandage. I said to the injured:

“You’ve been treated by Sir Conan Doyle.”

She stopped crying. She was happy this happened. She blessed the heavens for her good fortune, while Malcolm arrived with the car that would drive the victim to Southampton Hospital.

“Such a famous surgeon!” she kept repeating, as she was carried along on the cushions.

While dining, we asked the writer:

“What work is currently in progress?”

“A distraction. I’m reducing my six volumes of the British Campaigns in Europe, 1914-1918 to a thousand pages.”

Of course, this was only a distraction, nothing really.

Toward the end of the evening, Lady Doyle opened a door, turned on a switch. Lights flooded from the ceiling, illuminating a salon where everything was purple, the wallpaper, the curtains, the bulb covering. This was the “psychic chamber,” the one in which Sir Arthur and his family



# *Canadian Holmes on screen: Raymond Massey - The Speckled Band (1931)*

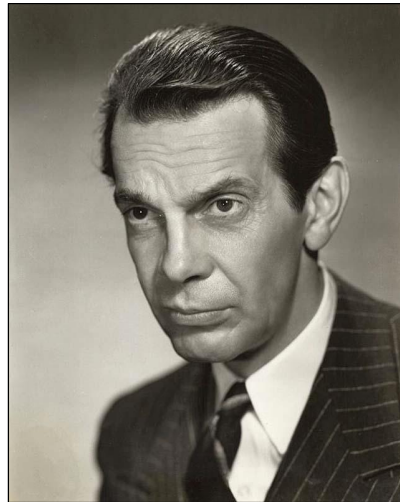
*By Charles Prepolec MBt, BSI*

*Charles Prepolec, M.Bt., BSI (“The Man with the Twisted Lip”) is a Calgary AB Sherlockian, former mystery specialty bookshop owner, collector and freelance editor. His most recent fiction anthology is Gaslight Gothic: Strange Tales of Sherlock Holmes (2018 EDGE)*

**R**aymond Massey: Academy Award nominated actor best known for playing Abraham Lincoln (four times), John Brown (two times), replacing Karloff in the film *Arsenic and Old Lace* and the recurring role of Dr. Gillespie on the television series *Dr. Kildare*.

## **The Canadian Connection:**

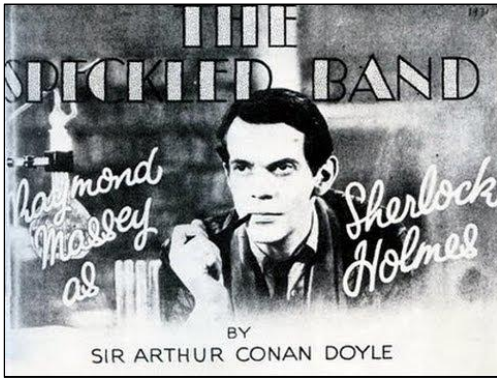
Born Raymond Hart Massey (August 30, 1896 – July 29, 1983) in Toronto, Ontario to Anna and Chester Daniel Massey, owner of the Massey-Harris Tractor Company, known today as agricultural



equipment behemoth Massey Ferguson. He attended classes at Upper Canada College, Appleby College in Oakville and the University of Toronto before graduating from Balliol College, Oxford in 1919. During the First World War Massey served as a lieutenant in the Canadian Army in the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery, before being wounded during action in Belgium. He was recalled to active service in 1918, serving in the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force during the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War. During the Second World War Massey again served in the Canadian Army, was wounded and sent home in 1943. He became an American citizen in 1944. Massey’s brother, Vincent, was the first Governor General of Canada who was Canadian born.

## The Sherlock Holmes Connection:

Massey's first credited screen role was as Sherlock Holmes in the 1931 British & Dominion Studios early talkie (the third sound Holmes film,



following on from Clive Brook and Arthur Wontner) adaptation of "The Speckled Band." The role had originally been offered to one of the top actors of the English stage, 58-year-old Sir Gerald Du Maurier, who declined and recommended the 35-year-old Massey in his stead, making Massey one of the youngest actors to play

Holmes on screen. The film's script is a hybrid of the classic tale combined with Doyle's own 1910 stage play, utilizing the name variants of the latter, so we get Grimesby Rylott instead of Roylott and Violet Stonor instead of Julia Stoner, although sister Helen, who was rechristened Enid in the play, is Helen again in the film. We also have Watson bringing the case to Holmes as an old friend of the Stonor sisters. Interestingly, Rylott in the film is portrayed by Lyn Harding, who essayed the role during the play's

original run at the Aldephi Theatre starting on June 4, 1910 and would continue in the role over a couple tours and again in the 1921 revival, which likely explains his top billing over Massey. The film is a surprisingly faithful, if modernized (Holmes employs a team of typists at 107 Baker Street, uses a voice recorder, intercom and a computer-like



crime index in an art deco setting) telling of the tale, and Massey as a reasonably solid, somewhat cold, Holmes is surprisingly effective, whereas his Watson, Athole Stewart, makes little impression at all. It's a tight and atmospheric film, particularly during the nighttime snake vigil and reveal, with some sharp cinematic flourishes from cinematographer Freddie Young, who would achieve major critical acclaim, and Oscars, for his work on the likes of *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Doctor Zhivago* (1965). In his autobiography, years later, Massey wrote of the film: "I





could not avoid a sense of guilt at my participation in this travesty of a classic..." which seems more than a little harsh. Unfortunately, for modern viewers, it is difficult to appreciate the film or performances since, due to a failure of copyright protection landing the film in the

public domain, the only available prints are incredibly dark, damaged and murky and likely to remain so; as few studios are willing to take on the cost of restoration for a film that anyone could release.

### The Curious Connections:

Raymond Massey has a couple of trivial further Sherlock Holmes connections through two of his three children. His daughter, actress Anna Massey, was married to Jeremy Brett from May 24,



1958 to November 9, 1962. Massey's son, Daniel, starred in the Granada television adaptation of "The Problem of Thor Bridge" as J. Neil Gibson, opposite Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes. Curiously, both Anna and Daniel share the middle name of Raymond.

Next: John Neville - *A Study in Terror* (1965).



# *The Adventure of Silver Blaze quiz*

This quiz was created by Karen Campbell and presented to the Bootmakers on July 12, 2019.

1. At the beginning of the story, Holmes keeps rambling about the sitting room at 221B, charging and recharging his pipe. Where is his chin?

- (a) On his hands (b) On his chest (c) On his knees (d) On the table  
(Hint: can you do this? I tried. I couldn't.)

2. What does Holmes ask Watson to bring along on their trip to Dartmoor?

- (a) His revolver (b) His medical kit (c) His pajamas (d) His field glass

3. What two newspapers did Watson consult about the case?

- (a) *The Times* and *Pall Mall* (b) *The Telegraph* and *The Chronicle* (c) *The Gazette* and *The Post* (d) *The Metro* and *The National Enquirer*

4. How many racehorses did Colonel Ross keep?

- (a) 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (d) 4

5. What dinner did Edith Baxter bring to the stable boy, Ned Hunter?

- (a) Curried chicken (b) Curried mutton (c) Curried beef (d) Curried turkey

6. What did the stable boy do after he ran out after Fitzroy Simpson?

- (a) Locked the door (b) Tied up the dog (c) Rang a bell (d) Grabbed a stick

7. What piece of cloth did the dead John Straker have clutched in his hand?

- (a) A scarf (b) A handkerchief (c) A cravat (d) A ribbon

8. Who was the second favourite for the Wessex Cup?

- (a) Marlborough (b) Scarborough (c) Millborough (d) Desborough

9. As Holmes investigates the scene of Straker's death, where does Holmes put his chin?

- (a) On his hands (b) On his chest (c) On his knees (d) On the mat  
(Hint: I tried this. I could do it.)

10. What quality does Holmes say Gregory lacks?

- (a) Imagination (b) Irritation (c) Meditation (d) Sanitation

11. Which of the following terms does Holmes use to describe Silas Brown?

(a) Villain (b) Bully (c) Ruffian (d) Cad

12. What has happened to some of the sheep?

(a) They have gone astray (b) They have gone lame (c) They have gone bald (d) When they hear the word curry, they start to worry

13. At Winchester Station, Colonel Ross, “in his drag,” meets Holmes and Watson and takes them to the racetrack. What does “in his drag” mean?

(a) Colonel Ross’s horses are very slow (b) Colonel Ross’s horses are very fast (c) Colonel Ross’s coach has indoor and outdoor seats (d) Colonel Ross wore a dress of dove coloured silk with ostrich feather trimming

Additional questions: (1 point per answer.) Some questions might have more than one answer: list as many as you can!

14. Watson makes several clever observations/inferences himself in this story. List as many as you can.

15. Arthur Wontner starred in a film version of *Silver Blaze*. Who played Watson in this film?

16. A Canadian actor played Holmes in a television version of *Silver Blaze*, and then went on to star in a major Holmes film. Who was the actor? What was the film?

17. In the Granada version of *Silver Blaze*, what iconic line was changed? (Incredible Imbecility!)

18. *Silver Blaze* is a thoroughbred. How is a standardbred horse race different from a thoroughbred race?

19. How is a quarter horse race different from a thoroughbred race?

20. Gypsies are suspected in this case. In what other case are they suspected?

21. In another story set on Dartmoor, a dog does something in the nighttime. What story is this?

Answers

1.b, 2.d, 3.b, 4.d, 5.b, 6.a, 7.c, 8.d, 9.a, 10.a, 11.b, 12.b, 13.c, 14. • Holmes intends to investigate *Silver Blaze*’s disappearance/Straker’s murder • Asks whether the stable boy locked the stable door • Suggests that Straker’s wound was caused by his own knife • Knows Holmes isn’t daydreaming when he does not get out of the carriage – knows Holmes has made some important connection • Sees the tracks of a man and horse going away from King’s Pyland. 15. Ian Fleming. 16. Christopher Plummer, *Murder By Decree*. 17. The dog did nothing in the nighttime. 18. The horse pulls a small cart where the driver sits. 19. The racecourse is shorter: only a quarter of a mile. 20. “The Adventure of the Speckled Band.” 21. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

# *Strictly Personal*

Where a Canadian  
Sherlockian goes under the  
microscope for all

**Name:** Fran Martin

**Age:** 68

**Birthplace:** A little village near  
Heidelberg, Germany.

**Occupation:** Retired executive  
administrator in a German accounting  
firm

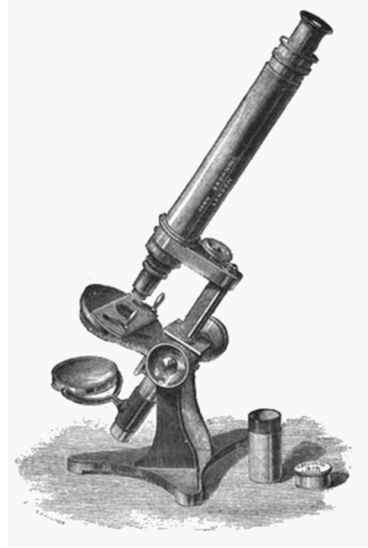
**Current city of residence:** New Westminster, B.C.

**In school I excelled at:** Art and theatre. In college my class mounted a production of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

**Goal in life:** My pre-Sherlockian goal was to travel to as many well-known tourist sites as possible. I have accomplished most of this goal with the exception of seeing the pyramids in Egypt. My post-Sherlockian goal was to obtain each of the books, publications and articles which John Bennett Shaw listed in the 1987 Spring edition of *Canadian Holmes*. I now have almost half. My non-Sherlockian goal was to win a Tony award or hopefully a full EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony) and get to thank all my friends and family who stood by me through the years.

**Other hobbies and interests:** I love meeting up with friends regularly for coffee to discuss current events and past events. I enjoy watching documentaries about archaeology and unexplained mysteries. When the mood strikes me, I crochet my "franny" square blankets for family and friends, and am now getting into needlework.

**Favourite dining experience:** In 1992 I attended a conference in Bradford, England hosted by the Northern Musgraves. I dined with some incredibly interesting Sherlockians. Another very special dinner experience took place in Boston in 2018. I was honoured to be one of the first women to be invited to dine with The Speckled Band of Boston.



**First Sherlockian memory:** I remember reading my first Sherlock Holmes adventure at school. It was “Silver Blaze.” I hadn’t thought of Sherlock Holmes again until the Granada series starring Jeremy Brett.

**Three favourite canonical tales:** “The Speckled Band” has always been my favourite, followed by *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and “The Dancing Men.”



**Favourite non-Sherlockian reading:** I like the old classics by Charles Dickens, Agatha Christie and the Wooster and Jeeves series by P.G. Wodehouse because these stories make me laugh out loud. I also like ghost stories, either fiction or non-fiction because besides laughing, I like a good fright.

**Favourite Sherlockian movie:** Basil Rathbone’s *Hound of the Baskervilles*.

**Favourite non-Sherlockian movie:** That would be the first movie I saw at the theatre when I was old enough to go alone with a girlfriend from school. It was “My Fair Lady”. I loved the costumes, the singing, and instantly had a crush on “Freddy,” who I later found out was played by Jeremy Brett.

**Most prized possession in my Sherlockian collection:** This is like asking me which is my favourite child. I have many items given to me by people on various occasions. Each has a special meaning. But, one of my most prized possessions is the silver shoehorn and certificate I was awarded by The Bootmakers of Toronto in 2014 in recognition of becoming a Master Bootmaker!

**If I could live anywhere in the world it would be:** I have always had a soft spot for England.

**If I could live at any time in history, it would be:** Victorian era. So many exciting inventions. I also like the dresses (bustles and corsets included)

**If I could ask Holmes, Watson and Doyle each one question, it would be:**

Holmes: What do you think about all these societies around the globe getting together to discuss your work and your life?

Watson: Do you have any advice as to how to handle the pandemic we are experiencing?

Doyle: What do you make of all the disagreement over the copyright of your work?

**First learned of the Bootmakers:** My ex-husband had read an article in a newspaper back in the '80's which mentioned the Bootmakers of Toronto and he suggested that I write to them to inquire as to membership and if they produced a magazine to which I could subscribe. He found an address and I immediately fired off a letter to Thelma Beam, who welcomed me as a member and sent me a membership card. I still have her letter and the card. She also informed me that a group was being formed in Vancouver and I may want to look into joining them as well. That group became known as The Stormy Petrels of BC, which I have been president of on and off for 23 years of the 32 years of the society (a scion of the Bootmakers).

**I would like my epitaph to read:** She tried her very best.

**My last words will be:** Please accept this award on my behalf...

**I wish I had been asked:** Would you like a role in the next Sherlock Holmes movie?

## “Holmes gave me a brief review”

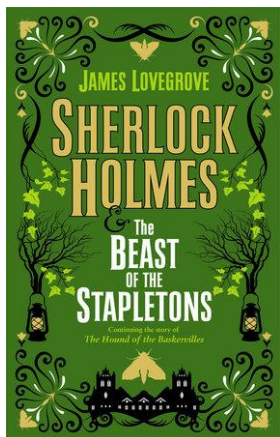


*Jeremy Brett Playing A Part* by Maureen Whittaker (2020, MX Publishing \$155.00 hardcover, \$53.00 paperback CAD).

Whittaker transcends a simple chronology of Brett's career by documenting it with primary sources, hundreds of photographs and unique insights into the classically trained, superb actor. There is a personal foreward by David Burke, Brett's first Watson. The section devoted to Brett's portrayal of Sherlock Holmes is a *tour de force*. Whittaker knows the Canon and provides astute and scholarly insight into

Brett's interpretation. Stephen Fry perhaps best sums up Jeremy Brett's portrayal of Holmes: "I have no doubt that few performances in the history of television drama were as perfect, as passionate, exquisitely realized and definitively delivered as that of Jeremy Brett's extraordinary Sherlock Holmes." The book is over 400 pages but hard to put down.

- Wendy Heyman-Marsaw



*Sherlock Holmes & The Beast of the Stapletons* by James Lovegrove (2020, Titan \$25.99 CAD)

Trouble is afoot – again – at Baskerville Hall. That means Sherlock Holmes is back in Dartmoor.

The Great Detective returns five years later, drawn by the murder of Sir Henry Baskerville's new wife. The body of Lady Audrey, a young mother, is found on the moor with the blood drained from her body through a hole in the neck.

Holmes arrives on the scene with Cpl. Benjamin Greer, an Afro-American soldier and friend of Sir Henry's through their shared brotherhood in the Freemasons. Holmes and Greer soon hear reports of similar grisly attacks on local farm animals, coupled with rumours that a monstrous winged creature has been spotted on more than one occasion.

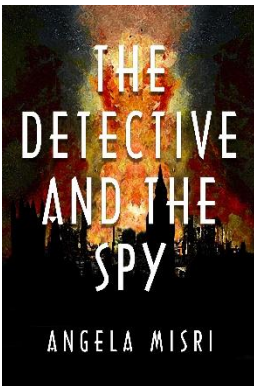
For Holmes, delving into the latest tragedy means not only a return to the moor but reconnecting with more than a few people associated with past events around the Grimpen Mire.

Multiple characters from Hound are brought back to play a role in Lovegrove's latest Holmes novel. Catching up with the cast adds to the intrigue of the fast-moving story, which also benefits from the presence of new characters like Greer.

In fact, the American war veteran plays the role of Holmes's sidekick for the first half of the story. Dr. Watson is still present as narrator but does so using third-person accounts from the detective.

When the action shifts from Devon to a more exotic locale for the second half, which includes an action-packed sea voyage, the doctor is back in the thick of the action and, of course, the danger.

- JoAnn Alberstat



The Detective and the Spy by Angela Misri (2020, Cormorant \$22.95 CAD)

Portia Adams's latest adventure opens with a bang – literally.

An incident at a London rail yard leaves the young consulting detective unable to hear or speak. Adams, also a senior law student, soon finds herself linked to more bombings as the carnage continues.

Although unable to communicate properly, Adams must race against time to not only stop more deadly explosions but clear her name. Scotland Yard and the Secret Service are both on her tail and

fast closing in.

Adams's latest adventure is set in 1935 and the plot is driven by historical events. Protests, violence and anti-royal sentiment form a backdrop to the story. The detective's own challenges, personal and professional, cleverly mirror the unrest of the era.

This series began as YA fiction but has matured over time and the target audience today is adult readers. Some historical figures make an appearance here, as do some of our favourite characters who also happen to be Adams's relatives.

The novel moves at a quick pace, although this is anything but a mindless read. The plot is clever and complex, even though the novel is short. Spy agencies and arms deals make for happenings that are murky indeed. Every scene, character and encounter counts. Pay attention to the details and you'll be rewarded by an entertaining read.

- JoAnn Alberstat



# Bootmakers' Diary

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

— *The Five Orange Pips*

*Saturday, September 19, 2020*

## *The Solitary Cyclist*

On Saturday, September 19th the Bootmakers of Toronto met via Zoom on the internet. After the attempt to have a meeting on the 5th was thwarted by some “Zoom bombers,” there was more security in place for this meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Meyers, also known as Mike Ranieri at 1:01 p.m. There were 55 participants from across Canada, the US and Europe.

Mike showed a clip from the Granada Sherlock Holmes version of “The Solitary Cyclist” which was the fight scene between Holmes and Jack Woodley.

Some announcements were made:

- Please support the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library. There is a new Sherlock Holmes Escape Room available online.
- If you are not already doing so please subscribe to *Canadian Holmes*. (Visit the Bootmakers website at [Bootmakers.ca](http://Bootmakers.ca) and look under Membership.)
- Mike’s partner at I Grok Sherlock is taking a break and he is looking for guest co-hosts. If anyone is interested, please contact him.
- There is a new Baker Street Irregulars Game and Puzzle out. See The Original Sherlock Holmes and his Baker Street Irregulars: <https://www.baskervilleproductions.com/shbsi>.
- James Reese has recently become a Canadian citizen.

Chris Redmond presented the Sherlockian World News which included:

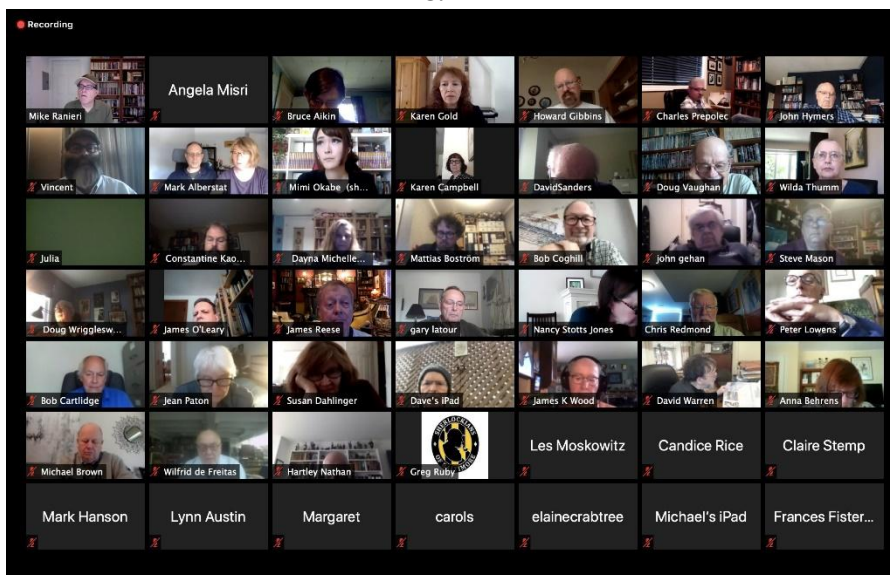
- The COVID pandemic has brought many changes to the world of Sherlock Holmes. One advantage has come out of it in that many people who could not attend meetings in person can now

do so by Zoom. The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis are having a meeting with people present and also using Zoom.

- Sherlockians are still reading and writing books. He recommended two books: *Sherlockian Musings: Thoughts on the Sherlock Holmes Stories*, by Sheldon Goldfarb. (Note: Sheldon was the guest speaker at our last in-person meeting on February 22nd, before the COVID restrictions were put in place.) And *Arthur Conan Doyle's Art of Fiction: A Revaluation* by Nils Clausson. It is available from Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- The MX Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories series is up to Volume 21. (All royalties go to Stepping Stones School for children with learning disabilities at Undershaw, the home of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle from 1897 – 1907.)
- There is a Sherlock Holmes tartan available from Scotland.
- Redbubble has Sherlock Holmes face masks available.
- The Royal Mail of Great Britain has several sets of Sherlock Holmes stamps available. There is a set of six stamps from the BBC Sherlock series with hidden blacklight messages.

Jim Ballinger, coming to us via Zoom from Nova Scotia, did a song he wrote called *Lasting Impressions* which he first performed in 1997.

Our guest speaker was Vincent W. Wright of the Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis. He is the creator of the Historical Sherlock blog and the title of his talk is “Misadventures in Chronology.” He began by saying that the main rule of Sherlockian Chronology is that all of the stories have to have



happened before they were published. Is Chronology important? He has spreadsheets of 28 different chronologies and he recently found two more. All of the chronologists only agree about 40% of the time. Chronology is important if we want to understand the historical Sherlock. He compared Watson to Nostradamus, who often used codes, strange language and fake prophecies to hide the truth. His talk was followed by an interesting question and answer period.

Mike showed a video of World Champion Artistic Cyclist, Viola Brand.

Our next speaker was Mark Alberstat, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, one of the editors of *Canadian Holmes*. The title of his talk is “ACD and the Bicycle,” also known as “ACD on Two Wheels.” The bicycle is mentioned in five of the stories. The bicycle was a great benefit for many people in Victorian London. It allowed an inexpensive means of travel. Many people took weekend excursions into the countryside to breathe the fresh air. Arthur Conan Doyle owned several bicycles. He had one with three wheels which allowed him to carry his wife Louisa as a passenger. He invested heavily in a device which attached a gas-powered motor to a bicycle but the venture failed.

Karen Campbell presented the Quiz on “The Solitary Cyclist.” The winners are Bruce Aikin and John Gehan, who will receive an electronic version of *The Universal Sherlock Holmes* from Dr. George Vanderburgh.

Karen Gold then presented her “Solitary Cyclist” song parody, “She Loathes You,” about Jack Woodley, sung to the tune of the Beatles, “She Loves You.”

Bruce Aikin then gave the Story Wrap-up, Who Was the Real Violet Smith?

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

- Bruce D. Aikin, M. Bt., Sh.D.



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