The Journal of the Bootmakers of Toronto
Volume 44 Number 3 – Summer 2021

Canadian Holmes is published by The Bootmakers of Toronto, the Sherlock Holmes Society of Canada.

Bootprints *(editors) are Mark and JoAnn Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3A 2M2, Canada, to whom letters and editorial submissions should be addressed. E-mail: markalberstat@gmail.com and on Twitter at @CanadianHolmes*

Membership and subscription rates
(Full details online at www.torontobootmakers.com)
Canadian Premier - $40.00 CAD
US or International Premier – $40.00 USD
Canadian Regular - $30.00 CAD
US or International Regular - $30.00 USD
Full-time Student - $25.00 CAD or $25.00 USD
Past Issues of *Canadian Holmes*, including postage - $12.00 CAD per copy

Further Subscription information and details are available on the society's website, www.torontobootmakers.com.

Business correspondence should be addressed to The Bootmakers of Toronto, 2045 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Suite 3303, Etobicoke, ON, M8V 2Z6, Canada.

Copyright © 2021 The Bootmakers of Toronto. Copyright in all individual articles is hereby assigned to their respective authors.

Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement Number 40038614, The Bootmakers of Toronto, 2045 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Suite 3303, Etobicoke, ON, M8V 2Z6, Canada. Return postage guaranteed.

ISSN 0319-4493.
Printed in Canada.

Cover: Cover art is by Denis Zilber: https://www.deniszilber.com

Canadian Holmes
Volume 44 Number 3
Summer 2021
One-hundred sixty seventh issue

Contents
Canadian Holmes
Summer 2021
Volume 44 Number 3

Traces of Bootprints 1
By JoAnn and Mark Alberstat

The view from the bow window 2
By Barbara Rusch

ACD and the Olympics of 1912-1916 4
By Mark Alberstat

The place of William Clark Russell in the Sherlock Holmes Canon 13
By Richard Brown

Obituary of Mary Calamai 23

Canadian Holmes on screen: Christopher Plummer – *Murder by Decree* (1979) 24
By Charles Prepolec

Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper 27
By Hartley R. Nathan

Moriarty: A Napoleon (of crime) with constant “Waterloos” 33
By John Linsenmeyer

Reviews 35

Bootmakers’ Diary 39

Traces of Bootprints

Conan Doyle's competitive nature

Our Sherlockian book collection has at least two shelves of biographies about Conan Doyle. They range from books that cover his entire life, to ones that concentrate on only a few years while others sweep the entire horizon like *From Holmes to Sherlock* and even chronologies tracking down Conan Doyle's day-to-day movements. To truly appreciate Conan Doyle's writing we strive to understand and know the man and his life.

In this issue, half of your editorial team looks at Conan Doyle and the British Olympic movement in 1912 as they prepared for the 1916 Games. Conan Doyle saw the Olympics as one more sporting event at which Britain could excel. He often wrote of the virtues and values of sport and competition.

Doyle was, of course, a keen competitor. We may like to picture him as a genteel man in his cricketing whites or going for a 30-mile spin on a bicycle, but the competitive flame burned strong within him. Through the first half of his life he strove to be the best cricketer he could, and that ambition earned him a spot in several first-class and international matches. This facet of his nature was also evident in his writing. Sport was often laced throughout his fiction, but he also spread his stories over far more journals than *The Strand*, with which he is most closely associated. We can find his writing in *Cornhill*, *Lippincott's*, *Blackwood's* and others. Although Conan Doyle brimmed over with stories to tell, no doubt he spread his fiction around not only to promote his name and build his renown as a writer, he was also serving notice to other writers that there was a new literary lion in town. The publishing field was as much a competitive process for him as was the boxing ring, and it was another sport in which he excelled.

In this issue, Barbara Rusch also tackles a sport theme in the Bow Window: martial arts. Moving on from sport, Richard Brown then looks at William Clark Russell, Dr. Watson's favourite author. There is also a short obituary note remembering Mary Calamai, followed by Charles Prepolec's look at Christopher Plummer. Hartley Nathan delves into the topic of Jack the Ripper and Sherlock Holmes, and the issue wraps up with John Linsenmeyer wondering if Moriarty really was the Napoleon of crime. We also have our usual smattering of book reviews and Diary Notes.

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.

Martial arts date back centuries, with boxing matches, or fisticuffs, taking place as early as the Olympic Games of ancient Greece. The first recorded prizefight occurred in Britain in 1681. Combatants fought with bare knuckles, and there were no weight divisions or referees. Attacking opponents after they had fallen was permitted, and continued until one of them was incapacitated. In 1783, a British boxer introduced the first official regulations after unintentionally killing an adversary in the ring. In 1867, the Queensberry rules set new regulations for the sport. Named after their sponsor, the Marquess of Queensberry (though he did not create them himself), they formed the basis of modern boxing. The new code called for padded gloves, a 10-second count for fighters knocked to the ground, and introduced weight divisions. Allusions to boxing have entered the English lexicon in such expressions as "hitting below the belt," "fancy footwork," "punching above one's weight," "throwing in the towel," and "down for the count."

Holmes boasts some proficiency in "the good old British sport of boxing," which is referenced in no fewer than 14 stories. "Occasionally it is of service; to-day, for example, I should have come to very ignominious grief without it." Watson confirms that Holmes is capable of great muscular effort and "undoubtedly one of the finest boxers of his weight that I have ever seen." Apparently Holmes acquired his expertise, along with fencing, at college. Though an amateur, he went three rounds against McMurdo in Alison's rooms on the night of his benefit in *The Sign of Four*. "I am a born sportsman," he claims. Nor is he averse to demonstrating his pugilistic skills in the public forum, emerging the victor against Jack Woodley and Joseph Harrison, while surviving the attack in the street perpetrated by one of Moriarty's agents. Nevertheless, Holmes does not always prevail unscathed, as when Merridew of abominable memory knocked out his left canine in the waiting room at Charing Cross.

Singlestick, a martial art first popularized in the 16th century, was essentially swordplay with wooden rods or cudgels, the bouts decided by the drawing of blood from the head of one of the contestants. During the 19th century, the practice was used as weapon training in the military, the rod standing in for the sabre or cutlass used in battle. By the early 20th century, singlestick was already in decline as a sport.

In Watson's list of Holmes's strengths and weaknesses, we are informed that he is an expert singlestick player, boxer and swordsman. The fencing classes at which he excelled in college no doubt gave him an excellent grounding in the sport of singlestick. Once again, he puts this specialized knowledge to use when attacked in Regent Street by one of Baron Gruner's ruffians.

Bartitsu is an eclectic martial art and self-defence technique originating in England in 1898, incorporating the best elements of boxing, jujitsu, cane fighting and French kickboxing. Invented by E.W. Barton-Wright, the first European known to have studied the Japanese martial arts, bartitsu combined circuit and cross training, in many ways anticipating the mixed martial arts of the 21st century.

By 1902, the popularity of bartitsu was on the wane, and might have been entirely forgotten had it not been for the corrupted reference to "baritsu" in "The Empty House," in which Holmes acknowledges that this "Japanese system of wrestling … has more than once been very useful to me." He credits his knowledge of the specialized skill with saving his life at the brink of the Reichenbach in his death struggle with Professor Moriarty. Two intriguing questions present themselves: How did the name get misspelled? And where did Holmes learn this esoteric sport? The first question is easily answered. An article in *The Times* in 1901, two years before the publication of "The Empty House," titled "Japanese Wrestling at the Tivoli," reported on a demonstration in London, misspelling the name as "baritsu." Conan Doyle would have been well advised not to take everything he read in the newspapers as gospel. As for the second question, innovator Barton-Wright established the Bartitsu Academy of Arms and Physical Culture, known as the Bartitsu Club, located in Soho, which in addition to its male members, was one of the first establishments to teach women the art of self-defence. Its membership boasted a number of London's elite, including several suffragists – and, apparently, Sherlock Holmes.

When it comes to our champion, though he may at times suffer a missing tooth, a cut lip or a discoloured lump upon his forehead, he has survived unchallenged, never hitting below the belt, demonstrating his fancy footwork, often punching above his weight, rarely throwing in the towel, and though he may be down, we ought never to count him out.

ACD and the Olympics of 1912-1916

By Mark Alberstat

Mark Alberstat, MBt, BSI, is co-editor of Canadian Holmes *and has written several articles on Conan Doyle and sports. He is also co-editor of* Canada and Sherlock Holmes *(2016)*

In April 1912 Conan Doyle introduced Professor Challenger to the reading public in the pages of *The Strand Magazine*. The Summer Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden was going to be a showcase of British athletic prowess. Four years earlier Great Britain hosted the Games and dominated the podium with 56 gold, 51 silver and 39 bronze for a total of 146 medals, well ahead of the second-place Americans with only 47 medals.

The Stockholm Games, which ran between June 29 and July 22, with the opening ceremonies held on July 6, were far from a replay of 1908. Great Britain fell to third place overall with only 41 medals, more than 20 medals behind the first-place United States and second-place Sweden. Almost a week before the closing ceremonies London's *Evening Standard* newspaper wrote:

> We have made a very poor show indeed. We are conspicuously inferior not only to big America, but to little Sweden, with its population less than that of Greater London…Have we lost our stamina, our virility? (1)

With typical British reserve the same paper on September 6, 1912 called the results "disappointing." The newspaper report goes on to quote a preliminary report by the British Olympic Association, which concludes "our comparative non-success is due:

First, to the failure of the general public of the United Kingdom to take the Olympic Games seriously – a failure which necessarily reacted on the enthusiasm of individual competitors: and

Secondly, to the lack of adequate opportunities for training under the direction of trainers acquainted with the best scientific methods." (2)

Great Britain's poor showing stung at the heart of many but none more than Conan Doyle. An all-round sportsman his entire life, he took Great Britain's failure at the Games seriously. The nation must do better next time.

The modern Olympic movement began, arguably, in 1859 with a series of events held in Athens's city square. The IOC (International Olympic Committee) was founded in 1894, with the first Olympics under its auspices in 1896 in Athens. By 1912, the four-year cycle was well underway, with more countries competing each time.

Before the 1912 Games were even finished it was obvious that the team from Great Britain was outclassed. On July 18, Conan Doyle wrote a letter to the editor of *The Times* saying, in part, that maybe next time there should be "a British Empire team – instead of merely a British team? The Americans very wisely and properly send Red Indians, negroes and even a Hawaiian amongst their representatives…[this proposed squad would be a] united team in which Africans, Australians and Canadians would do their share with men from the Mother Country under one flag and the same insignia." (3) Although Conan Doyle writes "men" in this letter, women first participated in the Olympics in 1900 and the 1912 Games were the first time women could compete in aquatic events.

Not surprisingly some racist views quickly appeared against the British Empire team and Conan Doyle shot back on July 22 with another letter to the editor, this time in the *Evening Standard*. In reply to an earlier letter by a reader who signed their letter "H.A.S" Conan Doyle replied: "Could anyone conceive a meaner position than to say that the Sikh, the Ghoorka, or the Rajpoot may fight for the Empire in war, but not play for it in peace?" (4)

These letters to the editor were not Doyle's first foray into the Olympic realm. In 1908 he was a special correspondent for the *Daily Mail* when the Olympics were in London. It was at these Games that Conan Doyle became unwittingly embroiled in the controversy over an Italian runner, Dorando Pietri, who stumbled near the end of the marathon and was disqualified when some spectators helped him across the finish line. The

photo of this incident shows a man whom some believed to be Conan Doyle – it was not. Conan Doyle, however, felt sorry for the runner and created a fund to honour him.

Despite his interest in creating a British Empire team, Doyle was still a man of his time and in a late July 1912 interview with the *New York Times* he stated that his unified team would "include representatives of the dark races."

Conan Doyle also told the reporter that he had a nephew who showed some athletic promise. The nephew "has already thrown a cricket ball nearly 100 yards. I am going to give him a chance with the discus and the javelin, allowing him to practice in a field at my place." (5)

The idea of a British Empire team did not originate with Conan Doyle. Nor did it start after the Stockholm Games. A January 1912 *San Francisco Call* article, a full five months before the Games began, said "Great Britain and her colonies will enter the Olympiad as one team under the title of 'the British empire team.' " This article goes on to say that this team was being created to wrest "the laurels away from this country, as on the performance of the athletes in the several countries concerned none of them as individual nations could hope to displace the United States from its proud and lofty position as 'the champion athletic nation of the world.' (6) An interesting note is that the article says that "Canada has some men who compare favorably with the Yankee pole vaulters. In this branch, the Canadians will be the favored ones." This prediction proved correct with William (Bill) Halpenny, born in Prince Edward Island in 1882, winning the bronze.

We now know that the 1912 Olympics did not feature a British Empire team. The idea, however, was far from dead.

To repair Britain's tarnished sporting tradition, Conan Doyle once again put pen to paper and sent another letter to the editor of *The Times*. In his July 30, 1912 letter he outlined five steps that should be taken to prepare for the 1916 Berlin Games. These steps were:

1) Formation of a British Empire Team;

2) "Annual, or even bi-annual, games" which would mimic the Olympic Games. These events were to be held in London and "the provinces," with "handsome prizes." These events would prepare the athletes for "metre distances…and the unusual competitions, such as the discus and javelin." By holding these events around the country, an athlete might emerge from the population which had been overlooked;

3) Prepare England to send their best to the Games and not hold them back for internal competitions such as Wimbledon or Henley;

4) The proposed team should be brought together and housed at "special training quarters;"

5) Every branch of sport would have one person responsible to make sure the athletes understand and adhere to all the Olympic rules and regulations. (7)

This last point was added due to two British equestrians being disqualified in Stockholm, one in show jumping and one in steeplechase.

At the end of July 1912 a letter appeared in *The Evening Standard* by a German resident of London saying that Conan Doyle "the great novelist recognizes that in making this suggestion [a British Empire team] is tacitly admitting that you have no longer in your country of England the men fit to compete with those of other nations in a field which you once rightly considered to be your own … Your people are getting over-civilized, and you are becoming what you call 'Soft'! You are no longer the hardy, strenuous race you once were. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle knows this, and that is why he asks that your victories shall be won for you by the hardier men of your Colonies…And when you get beaten by some other nation at cricket or football or swimming, you do not get up and begin to practise cricket or football or swimming again. No, you sit down in your easy chairs, which make you fat and heavy, and you write letters to the editor." (8)

The notion of scouring the countryside for the next Olympian was taken seriously by some and joked about by others.

The London Standard of August 19, 1913 quoted William Henry, founder of the Royal Life Saving Society and a champion swimmer, in an article whose multi-tiered headline was: Olympic Games Appeal – Committee's Scheme – Hunting for Embryo Champions – Hidden Talent: "The Talent is here right enough … the difficulty is to find it. When found it must be properly trained. The highways and byways should be searched, and the capable men will be found." (9)

Others found the idea a funny one, including the satirical magazine *Punch*, which ran a series of images like the one on pages 8 and 12. Conan Doyle saw no humour in it and wrote *The Times* on September 13, 1913 questioning "all those persons, including Mr. Punch, who are making our Olympic task more difficult…If they are not [prepared to stand down from the Olympics] what is it that they want to do?"

Even with all his pro-Olympic lobbying, there were two sports that Conan Doyle felt should not be in the Olympic Games: boxing and wrestling. In 1912, boxing was not an Olympic sport due to the sport being illegal in Sweden. Wrestling was an Olympic sport, although Britain was shut out of the medals in this event. Those who know Conan Doyle's writing career may be surprised with his thoughts on Olympic boxing, as he was a fan of the sport and wrote about it not only in the Holmes stories but other works of fiction as well.

In a September 2, 1912 article in *Pittston Gazette*, of Pennsylvania, Conan Doyle is quoted as saying:

> In boxing the men seek to defeat each other by heavy blows – I say nothing against this as a sport – and with competitors of different nationalities, unable to understand each other's language and oft-times accustomed to box under rules that widely vary in the letter and perhaps more widely in practice, there is so much danger of heat and ill-temper being engendered that it would be unwise to restore boxing to the program. What I have said about boxing holds good to some extent with regard to wrestling.

Opposition to Conan Doyle's views were widespread throughout England and other countries and both sports continued to be part of the Olympic program.

Conan Doyle's next step to "put the flag on top at Berlin" (10) was to suggest the creation of a fund and a committee. He came to this decision after he received a telegram from Lord Northcliffe, the British newspaper and publishing magnate and owner of *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Mirror*. The telegram let Conan Doyle "in for about as much trouble as

THE SEARCH FOR OLYMPIC TALENT.
A KEEN 'BUS-CONDUCTOR MAKES A POINT OF NOT STOPPING HIS 'BUS (WHILST APPEARING TO DO SO), IN THE HOPE THAT HE MAY DISCOVER A GOOD HALF-MILER.

The Search for Olympic Talent.
A keen 'bus-conductor makes a point of not stopping his 'bus (whilst appearing to do so), in the hope that he may discover a good half-miler.

any communication which I ever received" and left him "on my guard against Northcliffe telegrams after that."(11)

Northcliffe urged Conan Doyle as "the one man in Great Britain who could rally around me the various discordant forces which had to be united and used," to promote the British Olympic movement. (12) When Conan Doyle looked into the British Olympic Committee (BOC), headed by Lord Desborough, he found chaos and a group that was out of touch with the press and the public. The group consisted of 50 members, too large, Conan Doyle stated in *The Times*, for "executive purposes." (13)

Conan Doyle's suggestion, which was accepted by the BOC, was the creation of a Special Committee. The BOC created the committee with the famous Middlesex county cricketer, J.E.K. Studd, as Chairman. Other members included fellow Middlesex cricket star B. J. T Bosanquet, British member of the IOC Theodore Andrea Cook, Conan Doyle and Lord Forster, a politician who later served as the seventh Governor-General of Australia from 1920 to 1925.

One of the first actions of this new committee was to establish a fund to hire professional coaches and plan for the next Olympiad.

Conan Doyle writes in *Memories and Adventures* that he was out of country when the executive committee met to set the amount. In Conan Doyle's mind "£10,000 would suffice. I was horrified, therefore, when I returned from my holiday to find that they had appealed for £100,000. The sum was absurd, and at once brought upon us from all sides the charge of developing professionalism." (14)

From Brian Pugh's chronology, however, we can see that Conan Doyle was out of the country in mid-June but was in England through most, if not all, of July and August. The appeal was sent out on August 18, 1913 to 3,000 newspapers and periodicals throughout Great Britain.

Despite being "horrified," Conan Doyle still supported the committee and on August 21, 1913 *The Evening Standard* and other newspapers published a list of the fund's first subscribers. On that list was Conan Doyle with £25.00. Interestingly, also on the list with identical subscriptions of £105.00 are two pairs of brothers, Slazenger and Spalding, two early sports equipment makers whose brands are still known today.

The London Evening News was clearly behind the committee and the amount when it ran the John Bull cartoon (page 10) on the day of the appeal. The only thing missing from it is a caricature of Conan Doyle yelling: "All aboard!"

By fall of that year, however, apathy and outright contempt of the Special Committee's appeal seemed to take root across Britain. To breathe new life into the appeal, the Special Committee called a meeting with the

John: "No more your beggarly thirds for me! First this time, and blow the expense!"

[It is felt that Britain must recover at all costs the loss of prestige entailed by her lowly third position at the last Olympiad.]

leading sporting editors of the British press at the Hotel Metropole, in London, on October 21. "The conference emphasized the need to increase the appeal fund to at least £25,000 before the end of the year. The Special Committee resolved that the money 'should be obtained in order to justify the committee in proceeding with their work.' " (15)

One of the plans to find the next band of British Olympians was the creation of the British Olympic Proficiency Badges and Diplomas Scheme.

"The object of the scheme is to promote all-round development in the youth of the country. The tests are graduated according to the age of the candidates, and, to avoid the possibility of over-taxing his strength, every candidate must first produce a medical certificate as to his physical fitness." (16)

There was some criticism of the scheme and a few days later, in *The London Evening News*, Rev. R.S. de Courcy Laffin, vice-chairman of the

BOC, wrote that the scheme's "sole object is to produce Olympic champions" is a false one and that the aim is to make "greater efficiency of physical and athletic training in the United Kingdom." (17)

The badges and diplomas were to be given if the athlete performed average or better in five out of nine sports. Those events were: athletics (running and field events), boxing, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, swimming and wrestling.

On January 16, 1914, *The Times* ran a letter from J.E.K. Studd, chairman of the Special Committee, announcing that the committee has resigned. The committee had raised just under £11,000.

Years later, Doyle wrote:

> This matter was spread over a year of my life and was the most barren thing that I ever touched, for nothing came of it, and I cannot trace that I ever received one word of thanks from any human being. (18)

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand II was assassinated, and Europe was soon plunged into the First World War, putting any thoughts of international sporting competitions on the back burner.

Following the war's end in 1918, the next Olympics were held in Antwerp, Belgium in August and September 1920. The British team placed third overall with a total of 43 medals, well behind the first-place Americans with 95.

The BOC launched another campaign for funds from the British public to help restore the former sporting glory. The campaign for £30,000 fell short and many called for Britain's withdrawal from future Olympics.

Today we can look back and know those calls went unheeded. In 1948 London hosted the Olympics again, although did poorly on the medal platform placing 12th overall. In 2012 the Olympics returned to England, with Great Britain placing third with a medal total of 65, behind China's 91 and the USA's 104.

Although a British Empire Team has never taken the field in an Olympics, today sports fans can watch the Commonwealth Games, which began in 1930 as the British Empire Games and ran under that name until 1950 when it was changed to the British Empire and Commonwealth Games, and became the Commonwealth Games in 1978. The first British Empire Games were held in Hamilton, Ontario and were inspired by the Inter-Empire Championships, which were part of the 1911 Festival of Empire to celebrate the coronation of King George V.

References
(1) *The Evening Standard*, London, UK, September 17, 1912, p.8.
(2) *The Evening Standard*, London, UK, Friday, September 6 1912, p.8.
(3) *The New York Times*, New York, US, July 21, 1912, p.21.
(4) *The Evening Standard*, July 22, 1912.
(5) *New York Times*, July 31, 1912, p 4.
(6) *The San Francisco Call*, January 17, 1912, p. 10
(7) *The Times*, London, UK, July 30, 1912, p.6.
(8) *The Evening Standard*, London, UK, July 20, 1912.
(9) *The London Standard*, UK, August 19, 1913, p.7
(10) *The Times*, London, UK, August 2, 1912, p.4.
(11) Doyle, Arthur Conan, *Memories and Adventures*, Chapter XXII, p169.
(12) Ibid.
(13) *The Times*, London, UK, August 8, 1912, p.6.
(14) Op. cit. Doyle.
(15) Llewellyn, Matthew P., "A Nation Divided: Great Britain and the Pursuit of Olympic Excellence, 1912-14", *Journal of Sport History*, Spring 2008.
(16) *The Evening Standard*, UK, December 11, 1913 p.12
(17) *The Evening Standard*, UK, December 20, 1913 p.4
(18) Op. cit. Doyle.

The Search for Olympic Talent.
The squire insists upon his clay birds being thrown by hand in the hope of discovering a born discus-thrower.

The place of William Clark Russell in the Sherlock Holmes Canon

By Richard Brown

Richard Brown is a Sherlockian living in Halifax. A long-time member of the Spence Munros, he is also a professor in psychology at Dalhousie University and guest lecturer at many universities around the world.

In his book, *Through the Magic Door*, Arthur Conan Doyle takes the visitor on a tour of his library, describing the books on his shelves and his affection for them.

> Come through the magic door with me, and sit here on the green settee, where you can see the old oak case with its untidy lines of volumes. Smoking is not forbidden. Would you care to hear me talk of them? Well, I ask nothing better, for there is no volume there which is not a dear, personal friend, and what can a man talk of more pleasantly than that?

In chapter XI of this book, Conan Doyle takes the visitor on a tour of his "travel shelf," starting with Knight's *Cruise of the Falcon*, and continuing on to the *Voyage of the Discovery in the Antarctic* by Captain Scott and Bullen's *Cruise of the Cachelot*, "a book which is full of the glamour and the mystery of the sea, marred only by the brutality of those who go down to it in ships." (1) In considering what books from his library to take on a sea expedition, he says: "If I had to choose a sea library of only a dozen volumes, I should certainly give Bullen two places. *Tom Cringles Log* should have one for certain. Then there is Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* and Stevenson's *Wrecker* and *Ebb Tide*." And then Conan Doyle wrote: "Clark Russell deserves a whole shelf for himself, but anyhow, you could not miss out *The Wreck of the Grosvenor*." (2) The final two books on his travel shelf were Darwin's *Journal of the Voyage of the Beagle* and Wallace's *Malay Archipelago*.

Conan Doyle at sea

Conan Doyle, of course, had served as surgeon on the SS *Hope*, a whaling ship, in the North Atlantic Ocean from February until August 1880, when he was 20 years old.

In his *Memories and Adventures,* Conan Doyle says:

> It was on the Hope, under the command of the well-known whaler, John Gray, that I paid a seven months' visit to the Arctic Seas in the year 1880. There were fifty men upon our whaler. I went on board the whaler a big, straggling youth, I came off it a powerful, well-grown man. (3)

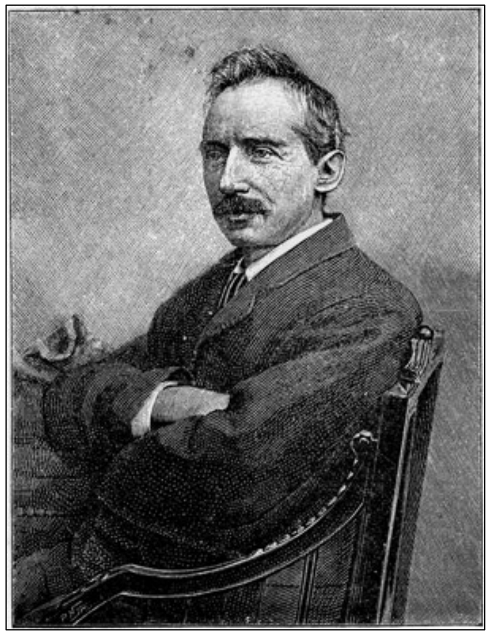
On this trip to Greenland, he took a small sea library consisting of books by Carlyle, Morley and Boswell, and including Macaulay's *Essays* and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. As well as Captain John Gray, Conan Doyle met with "unusual characters, dangerous situations, new lands and danger, loneliness and terror" (4) during his seven months at sea.

After receiving his MD in 1881 Conan Doyle spent a second term as ship's surgeon. From October 1881 to January 1882 he served with the African Steamship Company on the *Mayumba*, which he described as "a bit of a tub and very dirty." He travelled "steaming from one dirty little port to another dirty little port" (5) down the west coast of Africa as far as the Niger basin and back again, stopping at "the same dirty little ports" on the way north. As on his previous sojourn, he took a ship's library, including books by Oliver Wendell Holmes and Carlyle.

Watson reads Clark Russell

Like Conan Doyle, Dr. Watson was also a fan of Clark Russell's books and in "the latter days of September" 1887, Watson was sitting by the fireplace, "deep in one of Clark Russell's fine sea stories, until the howl of the gale from without seemed to blend with the text, and the splash of the rain to lengthen out into the long wash of the sea waves," when John Openshaw arrived at the door with a streaming umbrella to begin "The Adventure of the Five Orange Pips." It is possible that Watson was, in fact, reading *The Wreck of the Grosvenor* on that rainy evening. The 1877 book, subtitled *An account of the mutiny of the crew and the loss of the ship when trying to make the Bermudas*, was Clark Russell's second novel and was, according to John Sutherland in *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Literature*, "the most popular mid-Victorian melodrama of adventure and heroism at sea" (6). The title was based on the wreck of the *Grosvenor* in August 1782 off the coast of South Africa, but the novel is very different

from the true story of that wreck. Of course, Watson was familiar with the sea route from England to Capetown and on to India, which he would have taken during his years as an army surgeon. Watson was wounded in the Second Anglo-Afghan War at the Battle of Maiwand (July 1880), after which he suffered enteric fever and was sent back to England on the troopship HMS *Orontes*. Thus, he was experienced with life aboard ocean-going ships.



William Clark Russell in 1893

W. Clark Russell

William Clark Russell (1844-1911) was born in New York in February 1844, the son of the English composer Henry Russell and his wife Isabella Ward. He was sent to Winchester School in England and a private school in Boulogne, France, but he lusted for travel and adventure, and quit school at the age of 13 to join the merchant navy as a midshipman. During his eight years at sea, he sailed to Australia, Asia and Africa. He left the merchant navy at the age of 21 due to ill health. At the age of 24 he married Anna Maria Alexandrina Henry and they had six children, two boys and four girls. During his early years as a writer, he worked as a journalist for *The Leader*, the *Kent County News*, and a variety of other newspapers, including the *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle* and *The Daily Telegraph*, for which he wrote articles about the sea. Much of his early writing was published anonymously or under various pseudonyms so many of his stories have been lost. Once he began writing nautical stories, however, he began to excel "in the power with which he described the cruel mystery of the sea, its dangers, and the crimes and superstitions of the men who do business upon it" (7). During the last years of his life, Russell became disabled by arthritis, a legacy of his time at sea. Russell was a prolific author who, between 1865 and 1907, wrote over 80 novels, 40 of which were sea stories, including *A Sailor's Sweetheart* (1880), *A Voyage to the Cape* (1886), *The Ship's Adventure* (1901) and *The Mystery of the Ocean Star* (1905). Because of his ill health,

he frequented several health spas and finally settled in Bath, where he died in 1911, age 67.

The Nautical stories of Clark Russell

At the start of his writing career, Clark Russell wrote newspaper articles, historical essays, biographies and short stories but he became best known for his novels about life at sea. His books were among the favourite reading of King George V and Robert Louis Stevenson (8) as well as Conan Doyle. Clark Russell began his writing career as one who "churned out genre fiction according to a winning formula" (9) but in his novels of the sea, he developed a distinctive voice and an innovative approach. He realized that the readers of fiction were mostly female so he developed female characters, was sensitive to women's experiences, and his "nautical fiction began to feature seafaring heroines and cross-dressing women sailors." His nautical novels were set almost entirely at sea, and his idea of the "romance" of the sea was focused on the realities of life at sea in his portrayal of the "ordinary sailor's working conditions." (10)

A Clark Russell sea story was "a thrilling nautical adventure, usually with a love story running through it, filled with figurative descriptions of ships and sea life that were the author's hallmark." (11) As well as novels, Clark Russell wrote many short stories for Victorian magazines including *The Strand Magazine*. For example, in *The Strand Magazine* of May 1891 he published "Captain Jones of the *Rose*." In this story, the crew complained that the ship was not seaworthy, the food was rotten, and the ship was undermanned. Here Clark Russell took the side of the sailors against the captain and the owners. "There are societies in Great Britain for the prevention of the ill-usage of most things living from women to dogs, from children to dicky-birds, but there is no society for the prevention of cruelty to sailors," he wrote. (12) In the story, the *Rose* gave chase to the *Martha M Stubbs*, a barque from Windsor, Nova Scotia. After catching the barque, the *Rose* returned to England, where the men of the crew were disciplined for not following the captain's orders. Clark Russell concludes his story by saying that "the magistrates found the captain in the right, and punished the men by a term of imprisonment far in excess of any penalty of jail and hard labour which they would have inflicted upon a man who had merely broken his wife's skull with his heel, or who had only been systematically starving and cruelly beating his child of ten." (13)

"Captain Jones of the *Rose*" seems to have been based on an incident witnessed by Clark Russell himself. In an autobiographical chapter (14), he recalls that:

> It chanced one day that a big ship, with a mastheaded colour, telling of trouble on board, let go her anchor in the Downs. I then lived in a town which overlooks those waters. The crew of the ship had mutinied: they had carried the vessel halfway down Channel, when, discovering by that time what sort of provisions had been shipped for them, they forced the master to shift his helm for the inwards course. The crew of thirteen or fourteen hairy, queerly attired fellows, in Scotch caps, divers-coloured shirts, dungaree breeches stuffed into half wellingtons, were brought before the magistrates. The bench consisted of an old sea captain, who had lost a ship in his day through the ill conduct of his crew, and whose hatred of the forecastle hand was strong and peculiar; a parson, who knew about as much of the sea as his wife; a medical practitioner, and a schoolmaster. I was present, and listened to the men's evidence, and I also heard the captain's story. Samples of the food were produced. A person with whom I had some acquaintance found me an opportunity to examine and taste samples of the forecastle provisions of the ship whose crew had mutinied. Nothing more atrociously nasty could be found amongst the neglected putrid sweepings of a butcher's back premises. Nothing viler in the shape of food ever set a famished mongrel hiccoughing. Nevertheless, this crew of thirteen or fourteen men, for refusing to sail in the vessel unless fresh forecastle stores were shipped, were sent to gaol for terms ranging from three to six weeks." (15)

This experience forms the basis for Clark Russell's best-known novel.

The Wreck of the Grosvenor

The Wreck of the Grosvenor was the book that made Clark Russell famous. In this book, Edward Royle ships out as second mate on the *Grosvenor*, a 500-ton fully-rigged ship built of softwood in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The captain is named Coxon and the first mate is Ephram Duckling. The *Grosvenor* leaves the East London Docks bound for Valparaiso, Chile, with a cargo of commercial goods: toys, hardware, cutlery and metal goods from Birmingham and Sheffield, bird cages and pianos. Very early in the voyage the crew complains about the terrible state of the food, so the captain unloads them at Deal and gets a new crew. As the *Grosvenor* enters the Atlantic Ocean there is a violent storm and a wreck is sighted, the *Cecelia*. Royle demands that a longboat be sent to save the passengers, and Miss Mary Robertson and her father are taken aboard the *Grosvenor*, much against the captain's wishes. Royle is put in chains but the new crew is even more angry about the food and their

treatment by the captain and first mate and they mutiny, killing the captain and first mate and making Royle the new commander of the ship. After more storms, the mutinous crew leave the *Grosvenor* to sink off the coast of Florida but Royle, the boatswain; Joshua Forward and two sailors, with the help of Mary Robertson, who turns out to be a brave girl who can sail a ship, take the ship almost to Bermuda before it sinks. Those on board the *Grosvenor* take to an open boat and are rescued by a steamship and returned to England where Royle and Mary fall in love and get married. The story has minute details of how to trim the sails of a ship at sea and how the greed of the captain and owners, in serving rancid food to the crew, turns them mutinous.

Did Conan Doyle know Clark Russell?

Since Conan Doyle and Clark Russell published at the same time in *The Strand Magazine*, it seems that they should have been acquainted, but I can find no evidence of this. Did they ever meet at the offices of the magazine? Conan Doyle was a member of the Reform Club. Was Clark Russell also a member? They may have corresponded but there are no letters to or from Clark Russell on the website containing many of Conan Doyle's letters (16). John Addy suggested that Conan Doyle derived the name Sherlock from Clark Russell's detective novel *Is He the Man?* (1876), in which Colonel Kilmain meets an old acquaintance whose name is "Mr Skerlock," an "investigating magistrate" who seems to do more investigating than the local police and with greater efficiency and common sense (17). However, neither Andrew Lycett (18) nor John Dickson Carr (19) in their biographies mention any friendship between Conan Doyle and W. Clark Russell.

In an interview with Robert Barr in *McClure's Magazine* in November 1894 (20), Conan Doyle stated that there were more than a dozen promising British writers at that time. These were "Barrie, Kipling, Mrs. Olive Schreiner, Sarah Grand, Miss Harraden, Gilbert Parker, Quiler-Couch, Hall Caine, Stevenson, Stanley Weyman, Anthony Hope, Crockett, Rider Haggard, Jerome, Zangwill, Clark Russell, George Moore — many of them under thirty and few of them much over it. There are others, of course. These names just happen to occur to me."

In 1898, Conan Doyle published an article for *Munsey's Magazine* (21) on his favourite authors and their best books. Although he found books to admire in almost every type of fiction, he named the romances of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Reade's great historical novel, *The Cloister and The Hearth*, as his favourites. He did not mention Clark Russell. In *the Sign of the Four*, Holmes recommended Winwood Reade's book *The Martyrdom of Man* as "one of the most remarkable ever penned." And so

the answer to the questions of whether or not Conan Doyle knew W. Clark Russell personally, and who were his favourite authors and favourite books, remains up in the air. One might conclude from all of this that Conan Doyle's favourite book of the moment found its way into his discussions with journalists and into the hands of Holmes or Watson.

The real story of the wreck of the Grosvenor.

A stamp issued by Transkei, an unrecognized state in the southeastern region of South Africa, in 1988 commemorating the wreck of the Grosvenor.

In his book *The True Story of the Grosvenor*, Kirby (22) states that the *Grosvenor* was a merchantman sailed by the East India Company. It was built of British oak by the firm of Well at Deptford (Rotherhithe) on the Thames at the east end of London. The captain's name was John Coxon and the first mate was Alexander Logie. The second mate was William Shaw. It was on its fourth and final voyage from India, as the East India Company only allowed each ship four trips to India, after which they were worn out. Each round trip between London and India took two years. Kirby describes the *Grosvenor* and the nature of life on board the ship when she was at sea, as taken from the original log books. The *Grosvenor* left India on June 2 1782 and ran ashore in South Africa on August 4 1782. There were 52 officers, petty officers and tradesmen plus passengers, for a total of about 141 people on board when the *Grosvenor* was wrecked (as listed in Appendix 8 of Kirby's 1953 book, *A Source Book on the Wreck of the Grosvenor East Indiaman*). The exact numbers are unclear.

The ship broke up on the rocks and despite the high waves, 123 people survived the wreck, with 15 people lost at sea. The survivors then began the long trek along the shore of South Africa in an attempt to reach a settlement. The natives congregated at the shipwreck and took anything of metal that they found. The survivors did not know where they were and

ended up in three different groups, attempting to walk to the nearest farms or towns. On August 11 the second mate, Shaw led a party away from Captain Coxon's group and they were never seen again. By November 5 only six members of Coxon's group were alive and by November 14 only Hatterly survived to reach a village, where he obtained food. He was finally rescued on January 14 1783. The carpenter's party of 24 people separated from the Captain around August 20 and by December only six had survived. The Captain's party of 47 people started travelling down the coast on August 11 and only nine survived. Captain Coxon vanished with many of his group. After the rescued sailors were found on December 4 1782, rescue parties were sent out but found only skeletons. In the end, there were nine European survivors who were taken to Capetown and returned to England and nine Indians, seven men and two women, who were returned to India. News of the wreck of *The Grosvenor* did not reach England until April 1783. (23) William Huberly, one of the survivors of the wreck of the *Grosvenor*, kept a journal that is held in the Durban Museum. This journal goes from August 4 to November 22 1782 and is 225 pages long. Using this journal and official records, Kirby tried to reconstruct the lives of the survivors from the time of the wreck until their rescue. The story of those that survived was told in *The Caliban Shore: The Fate of the Grosvenor Castaways* by Stephen Taylor.

The wreck of the *Grosvenor* featured in many novels, essays and stories in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. About the relationship of W. Clark Russell's novel and the real wreck of the *Grosvenor*, Kirby says:

> But in spite of its intriguing title, The *Wreck of the Grosvenor* has nothing whatever to do with our East Indiaman. The author gave the name of the famous ship to the vessel round which his story turns, and he also christened her master Captain Coxon. And that is all. The story itself is briefly explained by its sub-title: 'An account of the mutiny of the crew and the loss of the ship, when trying to make the Bermudas.' But Russell's use of the names of the *Grosvenor* and of her commander seems to indicate that he depended upon them to some extent to sell his book.

The legend of the treasure

The story of the real *Grosvenor* wreck in 1782 is the stuff of fiction in itself. The *Grosvenor* was supposed to be a treasure ship and ever since the wreck, fortune hunters have been searching for the fabulous riches that were reputed to have been on board. When it left Madras, the *Grosvenor* had a cargo of "coast goods" (24) and some valuable diamonds as well as the money held by the passengers. The diamonds were worth about £7600. In 1880 some gold and silver coins were found near the site of the wreck

and the rumour that it was a treasure ship was started. A Mr. Turner from Durban, South Africa made an attempt to locate the wreck and its treasure but only found some coins and other relics. There was another search for the treasure between 1905 and 1907 that found little of interest. Kirby claims that the legend of the treasure was invented. Although not the treasure ship of myth, the cargo was valued at £300,000, which would be over £50 million today.

In 1921 the Grosvenor Bullion Syndicate was formed in Johannesburg by the Webster brothers, who claimed that the treasure comprised 19 boxes of precious stones worth £517,000, 720 gold bars worth £420,000, 1450 silver bars, and coins worth £717,000. The total value of the treasure was estimated to be £1,714,710. The promoters claimed that they had a plan for boring through the seabed to the hull of the submerged ship. Just as the syndicate was about to go bankrupt in 1923, there was an unsubstantiated rumour that the *Grosvenor* was carrying "the famous Peacock Throne of the Great Moguls." However, there is no evidence that this throne was ever on the *Grosvenor*. Other attempts to find the wreck occurred in 1930, 1938 and 1950, with no success.

Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes, and the wreck of the Grosvenor

According to Andrew Lycett, Conan Doyle had an interest in the *Grosvenor* wreck and poured money into the Grosvenor Bullion Syndicate. Conan Doyle purchased at least 1,000, and possibly 2,000 shares, and in a letter he said: "Distance prevents me from taking a more active part in your enterprise, but it seems to me to be approached in a very workmanlike manner and to offer every prospect of success. . . . There are obvious risks, but the stake is a large one, and it seems to be a good speculative venture." But the syndicate collapsed and ceased operation in 1924 after spending some £12,500 and leaving behind an incomplete tunnel to what was believed to be the hull of the *Grosvenor*.

In *Memories and Adventures*, Conan Doyle reports that he received a letter addressed to Sherlock Holmes regarding the *Grosvenor*. He said that "Buried treasures are naturally among the problems which have come to Mr. Holmes. One genuine case was accompanied by a diagram … It refers to an Indiaman which was wrecked upon the South African coast in the year 1782. If I were a younger man, I should be seriously inclined to go personally and look into the matter." He went on to say that: "The ship contained a remarkable treasure, including I believe, the old crown regalia of Delhi. It is surmised that they buried these near the coast … The scene of the wreck is a lonely part of the country, but I shall be surprised if sooner or later, some one does not seriously set to work to solve the mystery– indeed, at the present moment there is a small company working to that

end.” (25) Conan Doyle does not mention that he had bought shares in that company.

In 1995, the Octopus Maritime Archaeological Association was formed to search for the wreck of the *Grosvenor*. They found over 5000 artifacts, including coins, cannon balls, lice combs, a brass pistol, shards of glass and porcelain, sewing pins, navigational dividers and brass bowls, many of which were displayed at the East London Museum in South Africa in 1999. What became of the legendary treasure remains unknown.

References

(1) Doyle, Arthur Conan, *Through the Magic Door,* Chapter XI, George Bell and Sons, London, 1907, p.67.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Doyle, Arthur Conan, *Memories and Adventures,* Chapter IV, *“Whaling in the Arctic Ocean,”* Little Brown, Boston, 1924.
(4) Lycett, Andrew, *Conan Doyle. The Man who Created Sherlock Holmes,* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 2007.
(5) Doyle, Op. cit.
(6) Sutherland, John, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Literature,* p.681 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wreck_of_the_Grosvenor#cite_note- sutherland-2).
(7) Larabee, M.D., “The prose Homer of the Great ocean: William Clark Russell,” *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* Vol.59, No.1, 2016, pg.122-125.
(8) Ibid.
(9) Nash, Andrew, “William Clark Russell and Chambers Journal: Elopement and the Victorian Nautical Novel,” *Victorian Periodicals Review*, Vol. 43, No.1, 2010, pg.42-56.
(10) Ibid.
(11) Ibid.
(12) Russell, W. Clark, “Captain Jones of the *Rose*,’” *The Strand Magazine*, 1891, Vol.1, Jan-Jun, p.496.
(13) Ibid., p.500.
(14) Russell, W. Clark, “The Wreck of The Grosvenor,” *My First Book*, Introduced by Jerome K Jerome, London, 1894, Chatto & Windus.
(15) Ibid.
(16) The Conan Doyle Encyclopedia (https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/Letters#From_Clifton_House.2C_Aston_Road.2C_Birmingham_.281879-1882.29).
(17) Addy, John, “William Clark Russell source for the origin of the name ‘Sherlock Holmes,’” *Canadian Holmes* Vol.35, No.2, 2012-2013, pg.14-18.

(18) Lycett, Op. cit.
(19) Carr, John Dickinson, *The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,* Harper, New York, 1949, (Reprinted in 1975 by Vintage Books).
(20) Barr, Robert, "Real Conversations. —V. A Dialogue between Conan Doyle and Robert Barr," *McClure's Magazine,* November 1894.
(21) Doyle, Arthur Conan, "My favorite novelist and his best book," *Munsey's Magazine*, January 1898.
(22) Kirby, Percival R., *The True Story of the Grosvenor, East Indiaman*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1960.
(23) Ibid.
(24) Ibid.
(25) Doyle, Arthur Conan, *Memories and Adventures,* Chapter IV, *"Whaling in the Arctic Ocean,"* Little Brown, Boston, 1924.

Mary Calamai died on January 12, 2021 at the age of 77. She was a well-known face at many Sherlockian gatherings as the constant companion and foil to her husband Peter Calamai, who died on January 22, 2019 (See *Canadian Holmes*, Spring 2019). Mary was an avid world traveller, having lived in London, Nairobi, Washington D.C., Vancouver and Ottawa as she accompanied Peter at his various postings with Southam News. In later years they delighted in travelling together with a group of friends from University affectionately referred to as "The Dorking Dozen." Mary moved to Stratford with Peter in 2016 to spend their retirement closer to friends and the theatre they loved.

Canadian Holmes On Screen: Christopher Plummer – Murder by Decree (1979)

By Charles Prepolec

Charles Prepolec, MBt, 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)*

Christopher Plummer: Emmy, Tony, Genie and Academy award-winning Canadian film, television, radio and stage actor, best known for his breakout role as Captain von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* (1965). Other appearances in a long and varied career include Harlan Thrombey in *Knives Out* (2019), General Chang in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991), and Rudyard Kipling in *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975).

The Canadian Connection:

Arthur Christopher Orme Plummer (December 13, 1929 – February 5, 2021) was born in Toronto into an affluent, culturally aware and well-educated family. His father John Plummer was a secretary to the Dean of Science at McGill University, while his mother, Isabella Mary (Abbott) Plummer was the granddaughter of Prime minister John Abbott. Raised in and around Montreal, he spoke English and French fluently and attended Jennings Private School. After training with the Canadian Repertory Company in Ottawa, he made his professional stage debut in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* at the age of 17. Roles on CBC Radio followed and his first

television appearance came in a 1953 CBC production of *Othello*. By 1954 he was appearing on Broadway, and was hailed by *The New York Times* as "a Shakespearean actor of the first rank." During the mid-to-late 1950s, Plummer divided his time between leading roles in the Shakespeare Festival Company at Stratford and various television appearances. After a few minor film roles, he received instant recognition by appearing as Captain von Trapp in the 1965 film *The Sound of Music*. During the course of his career, he led three of the world's top repertory companies in both the UK and Canada. In 1968, he was invested as a Companion of the Order of Canada and in 1998 inducted to Canada's Walk of Fame. Married three times, he made his home in Weston, Connecticut, but never gave up Canadian citizenship. He died on February 5, 2021 at the age of 91, after a fall in his home.

The Sherlock Holmes Connection:

In 1976, Highgate Associates Ltd. shot "Silver Blaze" as part of a six-episode anthology package under the banner *Classics Dark and Dangerous*. Plummer, then 47, made up with a rather sallow complexion and slicked-back blackened hair, gives a somewhat coolly distant performance as Holmes, alongside a mildly bumbling Thorley Walters as Watson. It's clear that Plummer's pallid make-up and extravagant hand movements influenced Jeremy Brett's later performances. The script by Julian Bond was remarkably faithful to Doyle, with one unfortunate exception; the classic "Curious incident of the dog in the night-time" exchange rendered as "The curious incident of the dog, when the horse was led out of the stable." The end result is a faithful, yet strangely unengaging, Holmes production that was first broadcast in Canada on January 20, 1977 and in the UK on November 27, 1977. Within a year, Plummer was once again under the deerstalker and before the cameras as Holmes, but this time for the big screen production, *Murder by Decree*.

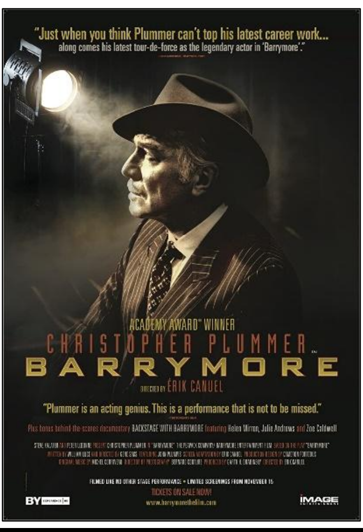
Given a renewed interest in both Jack the Ripper and Sherlock Holmes in the mid-70s, it's no surprise that Canadian-based producer, writer and director Bob Clark (*Porky's*, *A Christmas Story*) decided it was time again

for Holmes to face the historical serial killer. Budgeted at about CAD $5 million, with $3 million coming from Canada, *Murder by Decree* is not exclusively a Canadian production but it did utilize a good number of Canadian stars (Geneviève Bujold, Donald Sutherland, Susan Clark, Chris Wiggins) including Plummer as Holmes (with English actor James Mason as Watson). The plot, far darker and a more realistic take than 1965's *A Study in Terror*, makes much use of Stephen Knight's popular but discredited Masonic conspiracy theory, largely featuring historically accurate names, characters and events. While *A Study in Terror* was a Holmes film first and foremost, *Murder by Decree* is a Jack the Ripper film with Holmes in it. Plummer, now with a warmer look to suit a warmer take on Holmes, is excellent and James Mason, no Brucian bumbler, is a fine Watson. The 'You squashed my pea' scene is a fan favourite. Nominated for eight awards in Canada's first Genie awards (1980), it won five, including Direction for Bob Clark, and Actor in a Leading Role for Christopher Plummer, making him surely the finest 'Canadian Holmes' to date.

The Curious Connections:

Plummer was a second cousin to Rathbone's Watson – Nigel Bruce. Plummer had a long stage run performing a one-man show as John Barrymore, who himself played Holmes on screen in 1922. Curiously, Frank Finlay plays Lestrade in both *A Study in Terror* (1965) and *Murder by Decree* (1979).

Next: Matt Frewer – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (2000).



Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper

By Hartley R. Nathan

Hartley R. Nathan, Q.C., MBt, BSI is one of the founders of the Bootmakers of Toronto and served as Meyers on two occasions. He is the author of Who Was Jack the Ripper? *(2011), on which subject he taught a course at Ryerson University and lectured at the University of Toronto and the Art Gallery of Ontario. He recently retired from his law practice of a half century.*

For 70 days from August 31 to November 9, 1888, fear filled the crowded slums of Whitechapel, a poverty-stricken district in Victorian London. The city, and ultimately the entire world, was torn apart by the gruesome and bloody murders of five women, among them prostitutes, four horribly mutilated. All were attributed to the serial killer who came to be known as "Jack the Ripper," a name which speaks of serial murder, butchery and terror. Sadly, these murders were all too real and our favourite fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, could not step off the pages to solve the crime, although, over the years many writers have merged the two.

The Victims: The Canonical Five

All five victims were strangled, their throats cut with a knife left to right, in one case her intestines placed over her left shoulder in a sort of ritualistic manner. In two cases, all the organs were removed from the victims' bodies, and in another the heart was removed with sufficient skill to suggest at least a rudimentary knowledge of anatomy on the murderer's part. This is how the official report (the "Macnaghten Memorandum") describes the victims:

1. 31st August 1888. Mary Ann Nichols – at Buck's Row – who was found with her throat cut – and with (slight) stomach mutilation.
2. 8th September 1888. Annie Chapman – Hanbury St. – throat cut – stomach and private parts badly mutilated and some of the entrails placed round the neck.
3. 30th September 1888. Elizabeth Stride – Berner's Street: Throat cut, but nothing in shape of mutilation attempted.
4. 30th September 1888. Catherine Eddowes – Mitre Square, throat cut, and very bad mutilation, both of face and stomach.
5. 9th November 1888. Mary Jane Kelly – Miller's Court, throat cut, and the whole of the body mutilated in the most ghastly manner.

It is generally assumed Mary Jane Kelly was the last victim, after which Jack the Ripper passed unidentified into macabre legend.

Jack's London

In 1888, the Whitechapel district of London's East End was the most notorious in the city, where half the population lived in constant poverty. It was a world of thieves, bullies, drunkards, pickpockets, burglars, opium and gambling dens, gin shops and houses of both male and female prostitution. Thousands of desperate people, crowded seven to a room, typically without sanitation, lived – or barely survived – in a perpetual state of despair.

The "Dear Boss" Letters

On September 27, three weeks after the second murder, the Central News Agency in London received the first of a number of letters from a person identifying himself by that infamous moniker Jack the Ripper, and claiming credit for the crimes. The first, postmarked 25 September 1888, London East Central. The letter was inscribed in red ink and signed with the chilling signature, "Yours truly, Jack the Ripper." It was sent to Scotland Yard on September 29 and was followed by a postcard in the same handwriting. A few weeks later, George Lusk, head of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, received a battered cardboard box that contained a note with the return address, "From hell" and half a kidney, said to have been torn from the most recent victim. The anonymous villain claimed he had fried and eaten the other half. These messages were reproduced in newspapers and posted in police stations in hopes that someone would recognize the handwriting. Ultimately, authorities received hundreds of letters, including a postcard dated October 1, signed "Saucy Jack," purporting to be from the killer. But there remains a fierce debate amongst so-called "Ripperologists" whether the initial letters received by authorities were authentic. A forensic linguist has concluded that at least two may have been written by the same person, though likely not the Ripper. The prevailing opinion seems to be that many of the letters were hoaxes penned by enterprising journalists with a view to increasing newspaper circulation.

The Investigation

Wynne E. Baxter was the officiating coroner at the inquests, the jury returning a verdict of "willful murder against some person or persons unknown." In charge of the investigation was Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Charles Warren. A more ill-suited and more inept official would be difficult to imagine. A major-general in the Royal

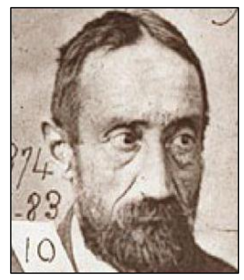
Engineers, his qualifications consisted of brutally putting down a Bantu rebellion, a technique he used against rioters supporting the Irish cause in Trafalgar Square on "Bloody Sunday," in November 1887. The first action he took was to remove the words, "The Juwes are The men That Will not be Blamed for nothing," scrawled in white chalk on the wall near the body of Catherine Eddowes, the second of two victims murdered on September 30. Warren refused to even allow the message to be photographed, fearing an anti-Semitic backlash. At the time, Whitechapel had a large Jewish population. Of course, this destroyed a very vital clue, as handwriting experts might have compared it to the letters received by the authorities. Warren's obvious mistakes are reminiscent of the criticism Sherlock Holmes often levelled against the regular force. Referring to Athelney Jones, the Scotland Yard agent in "The Red Headed League," he observed, "He is not a bad fellow, though an absolute imbecile in his profession."

The Suspects

Though innumerable suspects have been suggested as the perpetrator over the more than 130 years since the crimes took place, several have assumed special significance and have never been entirely eliminated. In his memorandum, Sir Melville Macnaghten, Chief Constable of Scotland Yard, himself singled out three:

Montague John Druitt was a 31-year-old barrister and assistant schoolmaster who had been dismissed from a school in Blackheath shortly after the murders. His mother had died of "melancholia," and his sister of suicide. On December 31, his body was found floating in the Thames, a presumed suicide. His family strongly suspected him of the crimes, and with his sudden death, the murders abruptly ceased.

Aaron Kosminski was a 23-year-old Polish Jew and resident of the area. He harboured a hatred of women, especially prostitutes, and was thought to have strong homicidal tendencies. He was detained in a lunatic asylum around March of 1889. In 2007 author Russell Edwards purchased a shawl reputed to have been found near the body of Catherine Eddowes, victim number four, containing DNA from her blood and semen from Kosminski. Ripperologists have cast doubt on both these assertions.



Michael Ostrog was a 55-year-old Russian doctor who was incarcerated for several petty crimes and detained in a lunatic asylum prior to the Ripper atrocities, though it was never proven that he committed any murders. Recent investigations indicate he was imprisoned in France in 1888 during the period when Jack the Ripper went on his killing spree in Whitechapel. He died sometime after 1904.

In 2005, *The Guardian* speculated that there have been as many as 140 suspects over the years, including: Queen Victoria's grandson Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence; his tutor James Kenneth Stephens; Sir William Gull, the Queen's physician; and Dr. Thomas Neill Cream, a graduate from McGill University. Actor-producer Richard Mansfield, who brought the play *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to London in 1888, was for a time suspected solely on account of his riveting portrayal of a character whose crimes closely resembled those of the Ripper. The play was forced to close after only 10 performances amid an uproar of controversy.

Much has been made of a possible connection to the Freemasons. According to the Old Testament, the construction of the First Temple in Jerusalem was conducted under King Solomon. According to the ritual of Master Mason, the three masons, Jubela, Jubelo and Jubelum, known as the "Juwes", murdered the overseer Hiram Abiff when he refused to divulge the secrets they demanded. When King Solomon passed sentence, they requested to be put to death "with [their] throat cut across, [their] tongue cut out, [their] left breast torn open and heart and vitals taken from thence, and thrown over [their] left shoulder."

The mutilations of four of the five victims matched those of the Masonic legend. The intestines of both Annie Chapman and Catherine Eddowes had been placed on the right shoulder of the corpse, while the location of the remains of the third victim, Elizabeth Stride, was Mitre Square, a name rife with Masonic ritual and allegory, referring to implements used by the ancient stonemasons.

Jack the Ripper and Sherlock Holmes

As the case grew ever colder, Sir Robert Anderson, head of Scotland Yard's CID, offered this insight: "One did not need to be a Sherlock Holmes to discover that the criminal was a sexual maniac of a virulent type." If only the world's first consulting detective had been consulted. Within the 60 canonical tales, Sherlock Holmes never attempts to solve the Ripper murders, though the first story, *A Study in Scarlet*, was published only months before the atrocities took place. Nevertheless, there

is one oblique connection. In "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box," written in 1892, four years after the murders, Miss Susan Cushing receives a parcel in the mail that contains two severed human ears packed in coarse salt, all too reminiscent of the gruesome contents of the battered cardboard box received by George Lusk and the Ripper's threat in a letter sent to the Central News Agency to send the ears of one of his victims to Scotland Yard. In fact, third victim Elizabeth Stride's left ear was torn and there was an oblique cut on fourth victims Catherine Eddowes's right.

Though Sherlock Holmes never speculates as to the identity of Jack the Ripper, his creator Arthur Conan Doyle entertained a somewhat far-fetched theory that the killer might have been a woman, or possibly a man disguised as a midwife, who would not arouse suspicion rushing from house to house covered in blood and carrying a surgical bag. This "Jill-the-Ripper" hypothesis caused Conan Doyle more than a little embarrassment, while a satirical front-page article in a Portsmouth paper called on him, as a known spiritualist, to use his psychic powers to solve the murders.

Jack the Ripper in Popular Culture

The horrific murders have spawned a virtual cottage industry of novels, movies and TV series, many of which propose "solutions" to the crimes. Though Sherlock Holmes neglects to solve the case in the original tales, he does so time after time on the printed page and on screen, no doubt because they are perfect foils – Holmes the epitome of justice and the master crime fighter, the Ripper the incarnation of evil and the ultimate criminal.

Jack el Destripador is possibly the earliest pastiche, written in Spanish in 1915.

Sherlock Holmes versus the Ripper by Ellery Queen in 1967 has the detective matching wits with the serial killer.

The West End Horror: A Posthumous Memoir of John H. Watson, M.D. was Nicholas Meyers's 1976 follow-up to his bestselling novel *The Seven Percent Solution*. Though not technically a reference to the Ripper murders, it does contain subtle references to the killings.

The Last Sherlock Holmes Story, written in 1978 by award-winning author Michael Dibdin, not only pits Holmes against the Ripper, horrifyingly they turn out to be one and the same.

Dust and Shadow: An Account of the Ripper Killings, published in 2009 by bestselling Sherlockian author Lyndsay Faye, proved hugely popular.

In addition, there have been literally hundreds of historical assessments in books and magazines, from experts to amateurs, purporting to solve the crimes.

Linking Holmes and the Ripper in film and on stage has been an equally popular theme, perhaps the most successful being *Murder by Decree* in 1978 starring Christopher Plummer as Holmes and James Mason as Watson. The plot revolves around the theory that the Queen's grandson was the murderer, with overtones of Masonic devilry. *Sherlock Holmes y El Destripador* was a short-lived Spanish stage play. *From Hell*, a 2001 film starring Johnny Depp, while lacking the presence of Holmes, is a dark and disturbing version of the crimes, once again pointing the finger at the Freemasons.

Conclusion

Had Sherlock Holmes been on the case, no doubt Jack would have been brought to justice. Nevertheless, part of the allure of the Ripper is that his identity has remained shrouded in mystery. Though it's entirely possible that the name history has been desperately seeking is one which has appeared on the roster for the past 133 years, it is just as likely that the monster who perpetrated the most heinous crimes of the century was a complete unknown. Perhaps Oscar Wilde expressed it best when he met with Conan Doyle in August of 1889 and as noted in Brandreth's *Jack the Ripper; Case Closed*: "Giving a name to Jack the Ripper," he observed, "has turned a monster into a myth – and a myth that will last longer than any I have created. Now your Sherlock Holmes, Arthur, he will stand the test of time." Their legends live on – on the printed page, on screen and in our imaginations – one in fame, the other in infamy, while both have become equally mythologized.

Bibliography

Dibdin, Michael, *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story*, London, England, Jonathan Cape, 1978.

Brandreth, Gyles, *Jack the Ripper: Case Closed*, London, England, Corsair, 2017.

Faye, Lyndsay, *Dust and Shadow: An Account of the Ripper Killings*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2009.

Meyer, Nicholas, *West End Horror: A Posthumous Memoir of John H. Watson, M.D.*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1976.

Queen, Ellery, *Sherlock Holmes Versus Jack the Ripper*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1967.

Moriarty: A Napoleon (of crime) with constant "Waterloos"

By John Linsenmeyer

John Linsenmeyer, BSI, is a retired commercial barrister, an investitured Baker Street Irregular for which he edited the Baker Street Journal *for five or so years, and is a member of the Five Orange Pips, the Toronto Bootmakers, etc. He Lives in Riverside, Connecticut.*

According to Holmes (1), Moriarty came from a respectable background and on the strength of a brilliant paper on the binomial theorem (2), won in his 20s "the mathematical chair at one of our smaller universities." He also wrote a favourably noticed book on asteroids. But, although he "had, to all appearances a most brilliant career before him," he had a "criminal strain in his blood." "Dark rumours gathered round him in the University town and eventually he was compelled to resign his chair and come down to London," where he set up shop as "the organizer of half that is evil and all that is detected in this great city."

Having been sacked from his respectable employment in the groves of Academe, this great mind was reduced to setting "up as an Army coach," more commonly known in those days as a "Sandhurst crammer."

In those days, admission to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, was by competitive examination to set subjects. Young men whose level of ability in one or more of the set subjects occasioned insecurity would resort to crammers, a level of teaching which seems a huge drop from a chaired professorship of mathematics at even a 'smaller university.' The best of the crammers "had perfected a technique of anticipating the questions… and drilling pupils in the answers. He provided not an education but rote learning." (3)

So, Moriarty was a very small player in the world of Academe. But how does his Napoleonic stature stand up in the criminal realm? He was insufficiently discreet in his criminous activities at the 'smaller university' to avoid being sacked in disgrace. So, he came down to London with a cover-job as an Army crammer to set up as a criminal mastermind, a sinister reputation possibly augmented by Moriarty's "protruding face…slowly oscillating from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion." In short, "the Napoleon of Crime." (4)

Was he then? Consider what Moriarty himself said to Holmes when visiting him in Baker Street: in less than four months, January to April, Moriarty claimed that Holmes had "crossed my path," then "incommoded me," "seriously inconvenienced" him, "absolutely hampered" his plans, and then by the end of April "I am in positive danger of losing my liberty." Moriarty then demanded that Holmes "withdraw" or else face his "inevitable destruction." It is tempting to recall the ravings of King Lear on the Heath: "I shall do such things—what they are as yet I know not, but they shall be the terrors of the earth." (5)

Consider next these attempts on Holmes's "destruction?" Someone tried to run over Holmes at Oxford and Bentinck Streets with a two-horse van, and then, as he walked down Vere Street, someone else tossed a brick at him from a roof. Later that same day, Holmes was attacked by a hoodlum with a bludgeon, whom Holmes promptly knocked down and turned over to the police. (6) And even in their final confrontation in Switzerland, an unarmed Moriarty's great plan was to tussle with Holmes by a waterfall and end up tossed off a cliff to his death.

Is such repeated futility the way a Napoleon of Crime seeks to eliminate his nemesis, his dauntless pursuer? Really? I have no claim to expertise as a criminal mastermind but I'm fairly sure that if I were and had a *bête noir* who threatened my actual incarceration, I would simply have detailed off some thug in my stable of hooligans to take his revolver, empty it into Holmes and then depart on a fast horse. (7)

Some "Napoleon!" General Jubilation T Cornpone, famous for snatching defeat from the jaws of victory is more like it! (8)

References

[1] "The Adventure of the Final Problem"

[2] The Binomial Theorem in algebra expresses the possibility of expanding any power of ***x+y*** into a sum of all the forms, where each is a positive integer known as a binomial coefficient. It had been generalized by Cambridge's Sir Isaac Newton around 1665, and expanded by Newton's rough contemporary Gottfied Leibniz. Perhaps Moriarty's brilliance was in finding something new to say about it.

[3] *The Valley of Fear*

[4] Keegan, John, *Winston Churchill,* Viking /Penguin, New York, 2002, p.28.

[5] Shakespeare, William, *King Lear,* Act 2, Scene 4

[6] "The Adventure of the Final Problem"

[7] Ibid.

[8] The futilities in Holmes's attempted "destruction" by agents of the supposed Napoleon of Crime remind me of the efforts of James Bond's

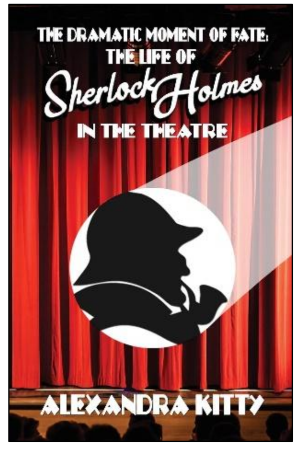
movie villains to dispose of the great 007. They never just shoot him and toss the body in a dumpster; they invariably say "Well, since you'll be dead shortly let me tell you all about my complex plot" and leave him tied up [loosely] in front of some buzz-saw or on a little island surrounded by hungry alligators, and then go away and leave him. Moriarty seems cut from their cloth rather than that of the more successful gangsters who simply kill their enemies with crisp finality.

"Holmes gave me a brief review"

Adler by Lavie Tidhar & Paul McCaffrey (2021, Titan Comics $22.99 CAD)

This trade paperback collects the five-issue 2020 comic book series written by award-winning fantasy novelist Lavie Tidhar and artist Paul McCaffrey. Set in 1902, this steampunk alternate universe romp is superficially a riff on Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* premise, where a group of literary adventure characters band together to defeat a threat, but with a decidedly female focus and twist. A wounded Jane Eyre is looking for lodgings in London, after a medical stint in the Boer War, and is introduced by her inventor friend Lady Estella Havisham to adventuress Irene Adler, with whom she agrees to share lodgings in St. John's Wood. Seem familiar? Before long Moriarty, Moran, Grimesby Roylott, Lestrade, A.J. Raffles, Nicola Tesla, Rupert of Hentzau, the vampire Carmilla, and a detective name Fogg (we are told Holmes and Watson are in the West Country on the Baskerville case) all turn up in a hair-brained plot that has our heroines attempting to stop the warrior queen Ayesha (She Who Must Be Obeyed) from taking revenge against the imperialist machinations of the British Empire, represented by a toad-like Queen Victoria kept alive by Henry Jekyll's chemicals, with some device based on Marie Curie's recent experiments. While Tidhar's writing in this medium is a tad choppy, it's a lively enough over the top fantasy adventure tale whose weaknesses are more than made up for by the stunningly beautiful artwork of Paul McCaffrey.

– Charles Prepolec



The Dramatic Moment of Fate: The Life of Sherlock Holmes in the Theatre by Alexandra Kitty (2020 MX Publishing $18.00 CAD)

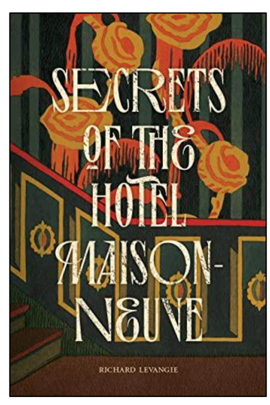
An Ontario journalist and writer, Kitty mines the rich, varied and sometimes bizarre world of Sherlock Holmes on the stage. Her examination spans the late 19th century to contemporary adaptations and includes drama, comedy, musical and parody. North American productions predominate, especially plays in Canada. There's also a strong emphasis on the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A whole chapter is devoted to Broadway productions and the London West End isn't overlooked either, starting with William Gillette. Plays in smaller North American cities and other countries are also sprinkled throughout the book. Two of the most substantial chapters are devoted to productions of Hound and noncanonical adaptations.

With modern plays, the author relies on critic reviews to round out basic facts about the show and its actors. Besides delving into plot, Kitty also looks at the way Conan Doyle characters are portrayed. While Holmes and Watson are the focus, other characters in the Canon are featured too.

The theatrical appeal and timeless quality of Sherlock Holmes shines through in this work, which is also a useful quick guide to 120-plus years of stage adaptions – good and bad. Readers may also discover a fact or two about theatre and its history. At the very least, the book will bring back memories of stage performances seen over the years.

– JoAnn Alberstat



Secrets of the Hotel Maisonneuve by Richard Levangie (2020 Trap Door $12.95 CAD)

This is a hidden gem of a young adult novel by the Halifax author, with a plot that combines Sherlock Holmes and secret treasure.

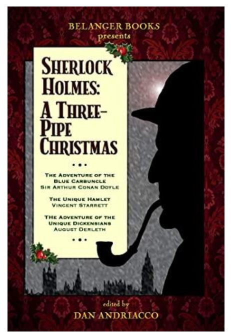
Jacob Jollimore is a 13-year-old Montreal boy whose life is turned upside down when his family's comfortable circumstances change. He finds himself spending the summer helping relatives renovate the rundown Hotel Maisonneuve, located in The Main district.

The teen finds the long days and nights spent scraping, sanding and painting to be both boring and tiring. But Jacob's luck changes when he discovers a wooden box tucked in an antique bureau. Inside the box is a letter written in 1913 by a youth named Elliott, whose family owns and operates the hotel at that time.

The letter invites Jacob to embark on a search for seven more clues hidden in the historic hotel. Elliott's words also warn that finding the clues, and the treasure they bring, will require the finder to "think like a master detective."

The search for clues is what gives Levangie's debut novel its Sherlockian theme and collectors in particular would appreciate the finds. The treasure hunt also allows Jacob to escape from other challenges, including a neighbourhood bully who stalks him and a surly Vietnamese woman whom the teen is obliged to look after.

Jacob peppers his narrative with allusions to literary works, including Doyle's, that befit a youth of his age and wit. But the book also has a compelling side, one that develops through the century-old story shared by Elliott through his letters. – JoAnn Alberstat



Sherlock Holmes: A Three Pipe Christmas, Dan Andriacco, editor, (2020, Belanger Books, $24.95 USD)

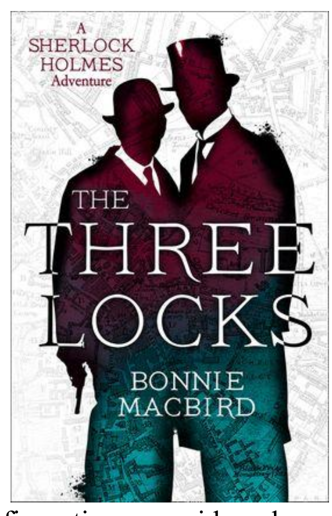
This book examines three stories with similar themes and settings, all concerning Sherlock Holmes in one manner or another. The commentaries on the three stories are illuminating. The three stories: "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," "The Unique Hamlet" and "The Adventure of the Unique Dickensians" share a connection to Christmas and themes of forgiveness, and friendship. The "The Unique Hamlet" and "The Adventure of the Unique Dickensians," also share a satirical view of book collectors and their obsessions.

"The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" benefits from the strongest essays and notes that this story, while taking place two days after Christmas, has become the Christmas story in the Sherlockian world. One essay observes that screen adaptations of this story frequently move its events to before Christmas to allow the falsely accused John Horner to spend the holiday with his family. The three commentaries on this story allow a reader to view this well-known adventure in a new light. Sherlockians have long revered Vincent Starrett's "The Unique Hamlet." The commentaries on this story note that Starrett intended it to be a satirical look at book collectors, for an audience of a few friends, while

only marginally a Sherlock Holmes story. The essays trace how this story moved from satire to beloved Holmes adventure. "The Adventure of the Unique Dickensians," by August Derleth is likely the least familiar to readers. Featuring Derleth's stand in for Holmes, Solar Pons, the story is a gentle pastiche, a satire of book collectors, and a parody of *A Christmas Carol*. The essays on this story, while still good, are the weakest in the book.

In his introduction, Andriacco observes that in a collection like this there's bound to be some duplication. The original illustrations by Jeffrey B. McKeever, Karen Goddelin, and Brian Belanger are excellent and add greatly to the stories.

– Pat Ward



The Three Locks by Bonnie MacBird (2021 Harper Collins $32.99 CAD)

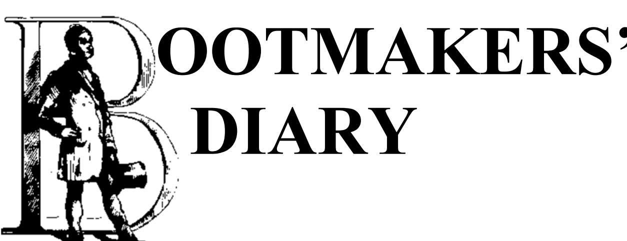
A severed finger sent to an escape artist and magician on tour in London. A Cambridge clergyman concerned about a young female parishioner who's gone missing.

Holmes and Watson are juggling a pair of cases set in two different locations during a stretch of balmy weather in the late summer of 1887. On top of that, the doctor has received a mysterious locked box from a long-lost aunt – an item that may hold the clue of a terrible family secret.

Restraints in many forms – both literal and figurative – provide a clever theme to MacBird's fourth novel in the series. This work is a prequel, set six years after Holmes and Watson have taken up shared lodgings on Baker Street. The 34-year-old detective has received acclaim in police circles for his work, although he's not yet famous and still unknown outside of London.

While the dust jacket summary gives away too much – it mentions events that happen in the second half of the book – what it doesn't reveal is the intriguing mix of illusion and science that drive the plot. Indeed, some of the stage tricks and laboratory experiments are groundbreaking for the time. Also of note is the fact Holmes isn't above spoilers either. He reveals how some of the music hall conjuring and sleight of hand are done.

– JoAnn Alberstat



... it is a page from some private diary.
— The Five Orange Pips

Saturday February 27, 2021

At 1:05 Mike Ranieri welcomed 80 attendees from near and far to the second virtual meeting of 2021 to look into the case of Charles Augustus Milverton. He showed a one-minute clip of a new Netflix series, 'The Irregulars,' based on the street urchins Holmes occasionally employed.

Hartley Nathan introduced Diane Gilbert Madsen who was coming to us from Florida and making her first visit to Toronto, albeit virtually. In the "Criminality of Holmes and Watson in the 56 Stories" Diane gave an outline of those in which the pair either broke or skated close to breaking the law.

Mike introduced Rich Krisciunas, a retired lawyer and Sherlockian from Detroit. Rich propounded the theory that it was Holmes and Watson who killed Milverton, not some mysterious woman whom Watson never names, and was never seen fleeing the grounds.

Quiz mistress Karen Campbell presented the Milverton Quiz, Mike doing the computer mechanics due to Karen's broken wrist from a fall. Winners were Bruce Aiken and Barbara Rusch. Again, George Vanderburgh donated the prizes.

Lassus, Karen Gold, led us in a rendition of "Charles Augustus Milverton" to the tune of the Beatles's "Maxwell's Silver Hammer."

Donny Zaldin's wrap up spoke of a real life blackmailer Charles Augustus Howell, a possible model for Milverton, who like him came to a bad end, his throat being cut by a possible victim in 1890.

The meeting adjourned at 3p.m.

- David Sanders MBt

Saturday, April 3, 2022 – The Six Napoleons

On Saturday, April 3rd, the Bootmakers of Toronto met via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by Meyers, Mike Ranieri, at 1:07 p.m. There were 67 participants from across Canada, the U.S., the UK and the world.

Mike Ranieri introduced our first speaker, Jayantika (Jay) Ganguly, of the Sherlock Holmes Society of India. She told us about the society, which was founded in 2001. They have 200 core members and over 2,500 domestic and international members on Facebook. She is the editor of their semiannual online magazine, *Proceedings of the Pondicherry Lodge*, which is published on June 1st and December 1st. She can be contacted at: jay@sherlockholmessocietyofindia.com.

Mike then introduced our guest speaker, Bradley Harper, a retired US Army Colonel and pathologist with extensive experience in autopsies and forensic investigation. A life-long fan of Sherlock Holmes, upon retirement he received his Associates Degree in Creative Writing from Full Sail University, to help him write the book *A Knife in the Fog* and a sequel titled *Queens Gambit*.

The title of his talk was *Sherlock Holmes as Science Fiction: Examining the Mysteries of the Past*. At the time of writing the Sherlock Holmes stories were science fiction because the science mentioned in them had not been developed yet.

Our next speakers were Cliff Goldfarb and Hartley Nathan. The title of their presentation was “ACD: The Boxing Connection.” Arthur Conan Doyle was a great fan of boxing, with 14 of the Sherlock Holmes stories mentioning boxing. His non-Sherlockian writings about boxing include *Rodney Stone; The House of Temperley*, a play based on *Rodney Stone; The Lord of Falconbridge*, *The End of Devil Hawker*, *The Croxley Master*, and *The Bully of Brocas Court: A Legend of the Ring*. One of the Brigadier Gerard stories, “The Brigadier in England,” has humorous references to boxing. He also wrote a poem about boxing called *Bendy’s Sermon*. There were a number of Jewish boxers in the area of Whitechapel, Stepney and Houndsditch. ACD wrote a humorous story about his family’s involvement with boxing called *The Forbidden Subject*.

Karen Campbell presented the quiz on “The Six Napoleons.” The winners were Brenda Rossini and Rich Krisciunas. Prizes for both provided by Dr. George Vanderburgh via email.

Karen Gold then presented her Sherlockian song parody, “Six Busts of Napoleon,” sung to the tune of the Country Western song “Six Days on the Road.”

Rich Krisciunas gave a wrap-up of the story.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

- Bruce Aikin

Return Postage Guaranteed
The Bootmakers of Toronto
2045 Lake Shore Blvd. West
Suite 3303
Etobicoke, ON
M8V 2Z6
Canada