



The Journal of the Bootmakers of Toronto
Volume 45 Number 1 – Winter 2021/2022

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.

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ISSN 0319-4493.

Printed in Canada.

Cover: Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes by Dorian Terkelsen. See more of Dorian's artwork at <http://frustration-ink.blogspot.com/> or at <https://www.artstation.com/dorianterkelsen>

Canadian Holmes

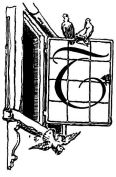
Volume 45 Number 1

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One-hundred sixty ninth issue

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Graces of Bootprints

Winter reading is upon us again

The deluge of Summer Reading Lists is well behind all of us who enjoy such things. Many of the books on those lists are still unread but in various TBR (To Be Read) piles, be it beside a bed or on the floor beside a favourite reading chair.

Avid readers always see these lists in June and imagine those long summer afternoons with nothing but the back deck and a book. Truth be told, few of us have those afternoons. It is summer, family visits, staycation trips, lawn mowing, cottage upkeep and impromptu bbqs rob us all of those idyllic afternoons. What we should be looking for are Winter Reading Lists. When that north wind blows, the temperatures fall and the highs of the day still feature a negative number the time is perfect to dive into the TBR pile. The fireplace is roaring, a cup of warming tea or coffee is within reach and you sink into the Victorian age with the latest from Bonnie MacBird, Nicholas Meyer or this edition of *Canadian Holmes*. Winter is the perfect reading season.

With this issue you are in for a Wintertime treat, far better than a pumpkin spiced latte. We kick off with Barbara Rusch's Bow Window column, where she balances her two pages with the popularity of the bicycle in Victorian times. Daniel and Eugene Friedman return to *Canadian Holmes* with an article about William Burton, the man who saved Sherlock Holmes. We then celebrate Dr. Watson with a toast by Wendy Heyman-Marsaw. Yours truly looks at the oddly convenient 1885 pairing of two articles – one mentioned Dr. Doyle and the other Netley Hospital. Peter Liddell then looks at the history of Baker Street, with a special look at one house's ownership. Frequent contributor Liese Sherwood-Fabre tells us about yellow-backed novels while Karen Campbell quizzes us on "The Greek Interpreter." Michelle Birkby has her first article in *Canadian Holmes* with a piece defending Laura Lyons, and Mark Jones is back, this time he restarts a regular column examining Conan Doyle's non-Sherlockian works in *The Strand*. In this issue Jones examines the first appearance of Brigadier Etienne Gerard. We then put Calgary native Charles Prepolec under the Strictly Personal microscope and the issue is rounded off with reviews and Diary Notes. Put up your feet and enjoy this chapter of your winter reading.

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.



By the early 19th century, European engineers had long been experimenting with manumotive (i.e., man-powered) vehicles, with two, three or four wheels. In 1817, Baron Karl Drais of Germany patented the first rudimentary cycle, the Draisienne, or Velocipede, a wood and metal contraption consisting of a crossbar to which a saddle was affixed. Propulsion was achieved by the rider pushing one's feet alternately along the ground. An improved model, the Hobby Horse, by London coach maker Denis Johnson, became a cultural phenomenon. By the 1860s, the addition of cranks with pedals made the entire operation less strenuous on the feet, though its uncomfortable ride led to its nickname, the "Boneshaker." The following decade saw the advent of the Ordinary, or Penny Farthing, whose front wheel was much larger than the rear, while "A Certain Gracious Lady" preferred the tricycle. During the 1880s, the Safety model, with its brakes, chain drives, improved frame and pneumatic tires, made cycling a practical pastime, a design that has remained essentially unchanged.

In terms of technology, the bicycle was the middle link between the horse and the automobile. Its social and cultural impact cannot be overemphasized, offering millions an economical means of transportation, improved health and opportunities for adventure. For most middle and lower income Victorians who lived their entire lives within a 6.5 kilometre radius, the bicycle democratized travel and helped lower social barriers. In a hard-fought battle, women availed themselves of the bicycle to escape chaperones, sedentary lifestyles and traditional domestic roles. Amelia Bloomer helped liberate women of their restrictive clothing with the apparel named in her honour. In 1895, *Demorest's Family Magazine* predicted, "The bicycle will accomplish more for women's sensible dress than all the reform movements that have ever been waged." Perhaps not surprisingly, many men, threatened by the possibility of women "wearing the trousers," rejected both the Bloomers and the concept of women abandoning home and hearth on two wheels. In response, Ann Strong, reporting in *The Minneapolis Tribune* in the magical year of 1895, wrote,

“The bicycle is as good company as most husbands, and when it gets old and shabby, a woman can dispose of it and get a new one without shocking the whole community.” The following year, *The Lady Cyclist* observed that the “wheel women of this country . . . have rendered untold aid to the cause of equal suffrage by dispelling the mistaken idea of women’s dependence and helplessness.”

As if to confirm that theory, Violet Smith of “The Solitary Cyclist,” who Holmes deduces is an ardent bicyclist by the condition of her shoe, is fiercely independent and financially self-sufficient, the very embodiment of the “New Woman,” riding unaccompanied along a lonely country road.

Bicycles are mentioned or play a significant role in five of the adventures. In yet another thrilling tale of abduction, pursuit and rescue, there are not one but two such conveyances in “The Priory School,” the first providing the clue that leads Holmes to the murdered German master, the second to the child’s recovery and the discovery of the villain.

In a third hot pursuit by bicycle out into the countryside as a result of a mysterious disappearance, Holmes, on the hunt for Godfrey Staunton, the eponymous “Missing Three-Quarter,” demonstrates his athletic prowess on two wheels, keeping pace with a brougham and pair for some distance. In addition, he can identify 42 different tire impressions and the direction in which a bicycle might be heading by the tracks it leaves behind. It seems the bicycle moves the action of the stories along in more ways than one.

Arthur Conan Doyle, himself a cycling enthusiast, declared in an 1892 article in *The Scientific American*, “When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking.” We would do well to heed his advice and get it in gear.



Three-dimensional stereopticon view, 1897: “The New Woman: Wash, Dry.” Men’s worst fears realized: Bloomer-clad women go off cycling, abandoning their domestic responsibilities to their henpecked husbands. From the author’s collection

William Burton: The Man who Saved Sherlock Holmes and Japan

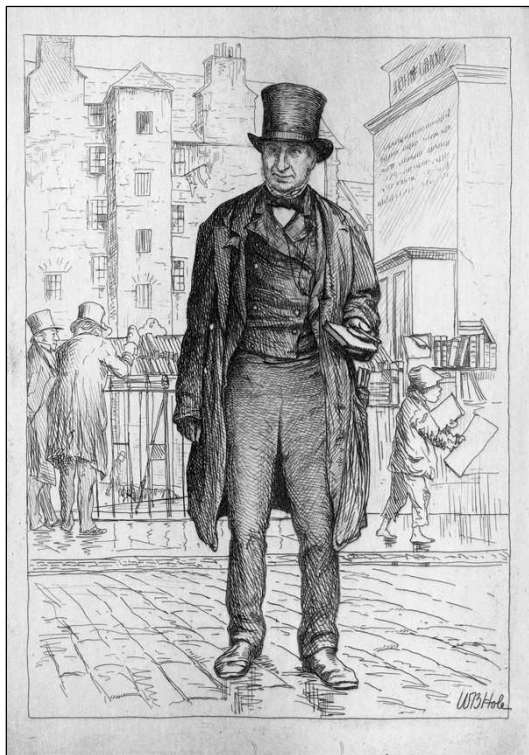
By Daniel L. Friedman, M.D. and Eugene B. Friedman M.D.

Dan and Eugene Friedman are practising pediatricians and the authors of The Strange Case of Dr. Doyle: A Journey into Madness and Mayhem.

Sherlock Holmes is the perfect exemplar of genetic engineering gone right, made from DNA taken from four doctors – Joseph Bell, Henry Duncan Littlejohn, William Rutherford, and, of course, Arthur Conan Doyle. Nevertheless, there were occasions when Conan Doyle was forced to modify his literary creation in order for this master detective to adapt to new, and sometimes, potentially deadly, situations. Conan Doyle was fortunate enough to have an exceptional network of friends he could turn to in times of trouble, men who sometimes resided on far away continents.

When Conan Doyle introduces us to Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*, Watson tells us Holmes is “an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.” And while these fighting skills gave him the ability to defend himself against many adversaries throughout the Canon, they were of little use to him when it came to facing off in a battle to the death against Professor Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls. In “The Final Problem,” Watson tells us that Holmes has been thrown off the cliffs, but in “The Empty House,” Holmes returns from the dead, telling Watson he had been able to defeat Moriarty because of his knowledge “of baritsu, or the Japanese system of wrestling.” It was this style of martial arts that allowed him to slip out from the evil mathematician’s grip, to give him the edge he needed against his worthy opponent. But baritsu is not at all the name of the “Japanese system of wrestling.” The word is the familiar Sumo. Could Conan Doyle have erred here? or did the term ‘baritsu’ hold a poignant secret meaning to him? Might he have been paying homage to his recently departed best friend? By exploring Conan Doyle’s past while simultaneously taking a closer look at the Canon, the answer stands before us.

The first clue as to the origin of the word ‘baritsu’ may be present in “The Illustrious Client,” where, in order to trick Baron Gruner into



John Hill Burton from the frontispiece of his 1889 book The Book-Hunter.

permitting Watson into his home, Sherlock instructs his partner to pretend he is “Dr. Hill Barton, 369 Half Moon Street,” a wealthy collector of Oriental pottery. Hill Barton is a play on the name John Hill Burton, an influential and revered friend of the Conan Doyle family. The actual Dr. Hill Burton was a prominent advocate lawyer who was appointed Historiographer Royal for Scotland. In 1866, Fukuzawa Yukichi, regarded as one of the architects of modern-day Japan, translated Hill Burton’s *Political and Social Economy for Use in Schools* into Japanese. His book went on to become a bestseller and helped convince a then isolationist

nation based on feudalism to gradually engage in free trade and diplomatic relations with the western world.

Edinburgh Sketches and Memories states: “Dr. Burton was an indefatigable pedestrian, thinking nothing of a walk of fifty or even sixty miles in a day, over any tract of country and in any kind of weather.” Surely Holmes’s journey from Reichenbach to Florence would have been similar to one of Burton’s hikes. Coincidentally, John Hill Burton was the father of Conan Doyle’s beloved childhood friend, William Kinninmond Burton, who also had an illustrious career of his own. After a five-year apprenticeship at the prestigious Brown Brothers and Company’s Rosebank Ironworks in his home city of Edinburgh, William moved to London and joined his Uncle Cosmo Innes’s engineering firm to design a water filtration system for the cholera-plagued city. William, who had expertise in the emerging field of modern photography, managed to find time to author the textbooks, *The ABCs of Modern Photography* (1884) and *Modern Photography* (1887). William Burton and Conan Doyle were

both frequent contributors to *The British Journal of Photography*, and there were many occasions when Conan Doyle came to the defence of some of his friend's more controversial research. It is only fitting that Conan Doyle's third Holmes tale, "A Scandal in Bohemia," centres around a tell-tale cabinet photograph.

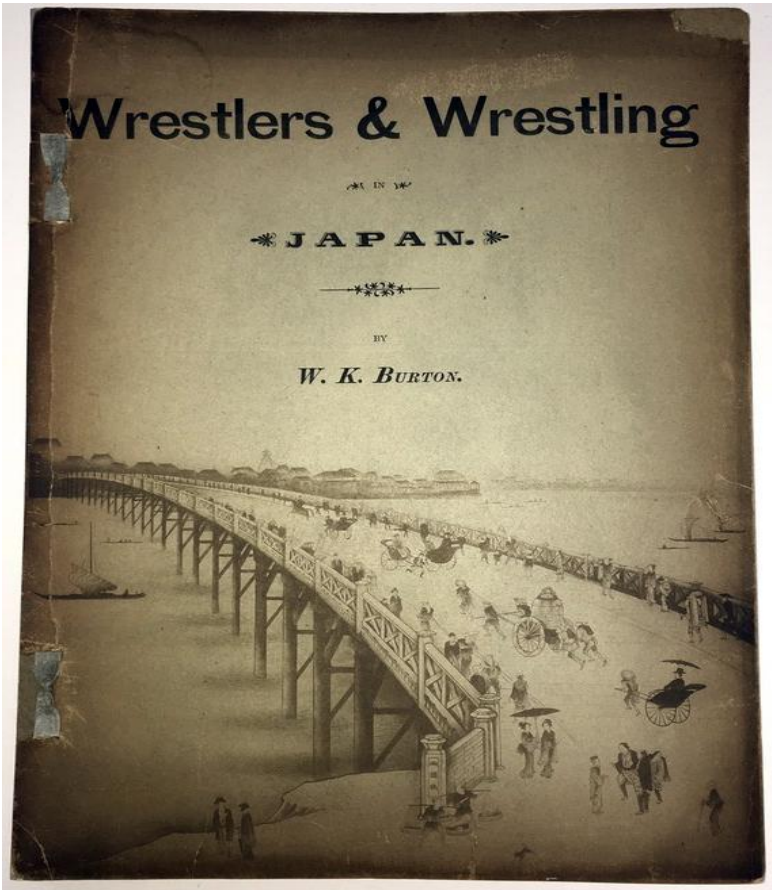
While Conan Doyle was writing *A Study in Scarlet*, William was leaving for Japan to supervise an engineering project that was slated for completion within a year's time. Once there, Burton immediately fell in love with Japan and its people, learned its language, and decided to move there permanently. Even though a foreigner, he soon drew the notice of Japan's most accomplished academics and was named the first Professor of Sanitary Engineering and lecturer in Rivers, Docks, and Harbours



W.K. Burton with Ozutsu, plate XII from Wrestlers and Wrestling in Japan.

at the prestigious Imperial University of Tokyo. His expertise in irrigation and water filtration made him the government's top choice to design a new water and sewage system for Tokyo and its surrounding towns. The success of this project put an end to the cholera epidemic that had plagued his adopted land, and saved millions of lives. At the same time, he designed Japan's first skyscraper (equipped with the nation's first elevator), the octagonal 12-storey Ryoukaku Building. Unfortunately, the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923 created unfixable structural damage that forced the landmark to be demolished.

William Burton also worked with British geologist John Milne in photographing the country's many volcanoes, and studied and photographed the destruction that followed in the wake of Japan's 1891 earthquake. While all of these achievements are impressive in their own



Wrestlers and Wrestling in Japan, 1895, by W. K. Burton.

right, Sherlock Holmes would surely have regarded Burton's historical and descriptive account of *Wrestlers and Wrestling in Japan* as being the most significant one of them all. It was this book that introduced the western world to the ancient art of sumo. Found in its pages were photographs of its most celebrated practitioners demonstrating the proper techniques required for competition. Sumo is the Japanese system of wrestling which was regaining popularity during the Meiji era (October 23, 1868 to July 30, 1912). Another popular Japanese martial art, jujitsu, centres on using the attacker's energy against him, and was the approach adopted by Holmes during his hand-to-hand combat with Moriarty.

So how are these little tidbits related to one another? Before that question can be answered, we must address the popular misconception that Holmes was skilled in bartitsu (spelled with two letter Ts). First, bartitsu is a totally English martial art form that was developed between 1898-1902. As Holmes's battle at the Reichenbach occurred in 1891, and he had personally stated to be proficient in this discipline for several years, there is no possibility that he defended himself using a fighting style that didn't yet exist. Additionally, bartitsu is a combination of boxing and cane fighting, and is not at all based on the elements of Japanese wrestling. And so, the most likely etymology of Sherlock's baritsu (as opposed to bartitsu) is that Conan Doyle substituted the 'u' in Burton for an 'a' (as he did in "The Illustrious Client") to create the name Barton, and then replaced the first three letters of the word 'jujitsu' with the 'bar' of Barton, yielding the heretofore unknown martial art baritsu. Since William Burton wrote the book *Wrestlers and Wrestling in Japan*, and Holmes was only able to survive the Reichenbach Fall because of his knowledge of Baritsu, it follows that William Burton was responsible for saving Holmes from a premature death.

And this was not the only time a member of the Burton family indirectly aided Holmes with one of his more difficult cases. In "A Scandal in Bohemia," Holmes is commissioned to retrieve a cabinet photograph from the American-born soprano Irene Adler. Although he does know it is hidden somewhere in her Bijou Villa, he doesn't know its exact location. Sherlock devises a scheme aimed at tricking Irene into revealing its secret chamber. He has Watson launch a "plumber's smoke-rocket, fitted with a cap at either end to make it self-lighting" into Adler's apartment. How can any of this be traced back to the Burton family? This sewer rocket contained a type of gunpowder, a design that owes its genesis to Cosmo Innes, William Burton's uncle and mentor. A rocket of this type would have emitted smoke (instead of a volatile liquid) for 10 minutes to detect defects in sewer pipes. Holmes's smoke bomb was refitted to clear out a

room, and if it hadn't been for Cosmo Innes's ingenuity, Holmes would never have learned where Adler had stored the compromising photograph.

And when Conan Doyle needed technical information regarding the complexities of hydraulic presses for "The Engineer's Thumb," he knew exactly who to turn to for advice – his best friend William Burton. Doyle would pay secret tribute to William in that story by disguising his name in the form of the mad Colonel WarBURTON. Conan Doyle officially acknowledged William Burton in his non-Holmes tale, *The Firm of Girdlestone*.

To my old friend Professor William K Burton, of the Imperial University, Tokyo, Who first encouraged me, years ago, To proceed with this little story, I desire affectionately, to dedicate it.

Sadly, William K. Burton died prematurely in his adopted city of Tokyo at the age of 43 and was soon recognized by a grateful country as one of its national treasures. The water purification sand filtering system he engineered remains fully operational in Shimonoseki after more than a century. And the labels on the water bottles produced and sold by this facility are graced with William Burton's portrait. And dozens of Burton-designed water filtration systems are found throughout Japan, including plants based in Tokyo, Nagasaki, Osaka, Okayama, Kobe, Hiroshima, and Takamatsu.

The members of the Engineering Society of Japan pay an annual visit to William Burton's gravesite to honour his enduring contributions to the health and welfare of the people of his adoptive land. William Burton's book on Japanese wrestling saved the life of Sherlock Holmes, while Burton's unique gifts and talents in the field of sanitary engineering saved millions of people living in Japan.

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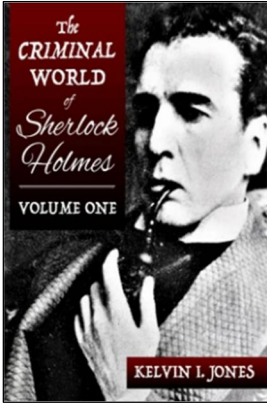
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Book reviews continued from pg. 35



The Criminal World of Sherlock Holmes: Volume 1 by Kelvin Jones (2021, MX Publishing, \$23.00 USD)

This is the first installment of a three-volume collection on crime and criminals in the Canon and beyond. Volume 1 explores early European criminologists and their work in such areas as profiling, toxicology and fingerprinting. Also examined is the influence of emerging forensic science on the studies, early investigations and methods of Sherlock Holmes. This includes delving into real-life criminals – notorious murderers, burglars and poisoners – mentioned in the stories or who otherwise influenced the tales.

While the focus is on the Canon, some of Conan Doyle's other writing is referenced for their criminal elements.

Poison, including opium, is a recurring theme in several chapters. Likewise, Jack the Ripper is another subject that keeps cropping up. ACD's interest in the Whitechapel murders is looked at, along with newspaper coverage of the ongoing police investigation, and discussion of the most likely suspects.

The book includes reference materials that serve as a handy quick guide to Canonical crime. These lists and indices include victims, wrongdoers, and criminal investigation terms used in the stories. In addition, the volume has an introduction by Mark Alberstat, co-editor of *Canadian Holmes*.

While illegal acts and criminology are Jones's focus, he does touch on a wide range of Victorian-era social issues. These include attitudes toward women, pornography, prostitution and family violence

Jones's enthusiasm for all things Sherlockian and Doylean is on display in this opening volume of the series. New and longstanding fans of the detective and ACD will be informed, entertained, and maybe even horrified by the depth and breadth of criminal deeds put under the microscope here.

– JoAnn Alberstat

A toast to Watson

By Wendy Heyman-Marsaw

Dr. John H. Watson knew Sherlock the best,
And accompanied and chronicled his various quests.

Seventeen years he worked by Holmes's side,
Thus allowing his practice of medicine to slide.

He was known as a ladies man and thus married thrice;
It must have been challenging to live as his wife.

He was stolid and stoic and loyal as can be.
And served as a doctor in "Afghanistan I see."

His gifts were many, his qualities varied indeed,
But he neglected his patients in their hour of need.

He could be counted on to carry his handy service revolver.
And was known on three continents to have been quite the lover.

Holmes trusted Watson utterly, and relied on his loyalty,
Whether dealing with giant hounds or European royalty.

Though his wound may have wandered, his attention did not.
He was a singular man who endured quite a lot.

The good doctor was Holmes's touchstone, a most reliable friend,
Trusted to see adventures right through to their end.

So I toast the good doctor and keep a glass handy,
In case he should need a cigar and a brandy!



"HOLMES PULLED OUT HIS WATCH."

That Netley nettle

By Mark Alberstat

Mark Alberstat is co-editor of Canadian Holmes, founder of The Spence Munros in Halifax, a member of the BSI (investiture Halifax) and author of many Sherlockian articles and presentations. He lives in Halifax.

In the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course prescribed for surgeons in the army. – *A Study in Scarlet*

As readers of fiction, we often wonder where authors find their ideas and the details that lift the stories off the page and into our lives. In some ways the best of them are able to create seemingly real lives for their characters. Our search into Conan Doyle's influences is never far from the surface of many articles in this and other journals.

When we look over the lives of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, we can fill in certain details that are either stated in the 60 stories or we are able to tease out by extrapolation. One of those details is Watson's route to become a doctor. In fact, it is the first thing we read, as the above quote is the first line in *A Study in Scarlet*.

Imagine the young Dr. Conan Doyle in Portsmouth. It is 1885 and with time on his hands he turns to writing fiction for pleasure and profit. He has also joined the local rugby club for camaraderie and exercise. May of that year brings the promise of warmer weather but also the end of the rugby season. Dr. Conan Doyle's club did well for its first season, winning more than losing and although it was only their first season they are pleased with the outcome.

In celebration of the season end, the club holds its first annual meeting and dinner at the Blue Anchor Hotel. A few days later the *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* reports on the meeting. The article not only discusses the dinner and end of season report but lists all those present including a "Dr. Doyle," who would soon celebrate his 26th birthday.

Encouraged by his play that season and seeing his name in print associated with a successful rugby club, it is not hard to imagine Conan Doyle clipping out the article, or the entire page, and saving it in a commonplace book, or maybe even tucking it under a blotter on his desk.

Less than a year later, Conan Doyle picked up his pen and began writing *A Study in Scarlet*, creating Watson, a former army doctor, washed up on

the shores of the great metropolis. But why an army doctor? Why did Conan Doyle decide to send his newly minted doctor to Netley and not follow a more traditional route, such as he himself had?

Doylean scholars believe the novel was written during March and April 1886. His rugby team's second season was ending in a few weeks and he comes across the previous year's clipping. He reads through it again and then notices, just under the article about his team, is another article titled: "A Visit to Netley Hospital" and the young doctor simply incorporates that thought into the opening line of his new novel to add some detail to the line.

Could it be a coincidence that an article on the Netley hospital was just under an article mentioning himself? His name appears in the latter half of the article, just a few inches from the next article with that enticing headline. As Holmes tells Watson in "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box:" "The matter was entirely beyond coincidence."

PORTSMOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB.

On Wednesday evening the above Club held their first annual meeting and dinner at the Blue Anchor Hotel, Kingston-cross.—A highly satisfactory report was presented by the Secretary, from which we take the following:—In closing their first season the members of the Portsmouth Football Club may fairly congratulate themselves upon the measure of success they have achieved. Started in October last, the Club is numerically almost as strong as any in the immediate neighbourhood, has kept itself free from debt, and has won a decided majority of its matches, though meeting some of the best Clubs in the town and district. The Club was, it need hardly be explained, established in no spirit of antagonism to any of the existing Clubs. They play under Rugby Union Rules, and our object was to popularise the Association game, which, strictly followed, may be regarded as less hazardous to life and limb. Out and home fixtures have taken place with the Hayling Island, Havant, Southsea, Chichester, Fareham, and Cowes Clubs, and of these only two have been lost, but we twice suffered defeat at the hands of strong teams captained by Mr. Bernard Paras, who had, however, the advantage of the services of some of our best players. Scratch matches also came off with the North Lancashire Regiment and the Royal Artillery (Hilsea), the former being won and the latter lost. The most severe reverse sustained by the Club was due to three of the team being absent through a misunderstanding, and to our being handicapped by two indifferent substitutes. In all, however, we scored forty goals against twenty-five made by our opponents. Thus it will be seen that the Club has a satisfactory record, especially when it is considered that it was originally intended, for the first season at all events, to only engage in friendly matches amongst ourselves. We departed from that intention because we found ourselves stronger than our modest beginning had led us to expect. The promoters of the Club had the moral courage to pass a rule that outsiders should not be selected to play in preference to members, even though the latter might not compare with the non-members for skill in football; and, notwithstanding this rule is more honoured in the breach than in the observance by some other Clubs, it has not been found to operate disadvantageously. The report having been adopted, and other business transacted, the members adjourned to the dining-room, where a highly creditable dinner was served by Mr. R. Brooke. The chair was occupied by the President, Alderman G. R. Kent, J.P., and were won also present the Mayor (J. Moody, Esq.), Dr. Doyle, Dr. Snowden, Messrs. A. I. Emanuel, W. J. Tuck, F.C., A. R. Holbrook, E. Hall, J. W. Boughton, G. Peters, B. Pares, G. F. Green, Harris, Hardy, Chinneck, W.

A VISIT TO NETLEY HOSPITAL.

Now that one's thoughts are busy with the prospects of war and its concomitant evils I do not think much apology is necessary if I trouble you with a short account of a recent visit which I paid to Netley Hospital. Well, to begin, I must tell you that a young friend of mine, with more spirit than discretion, who had joined the Black Watch, had been invalided in the Malabar from the Soudan, and so, to console his friends, I was asked to go over and report upon his condition. Now, I hate a railway journey above all things in the world, and so resolved, the day being somewhat gloomy and overcast, to forego "shanks's pony" and hire somebody else's. The road through Gosport, I need hardly say, is prosaic enough to have satisfied Mark Tapley himself, and little of interest occurred until we reached the picturesque village of Stubbington. This, from the slight view in passing which I obtained of it, seemed a model village, and made up for much of the previous disappointment. And now we go speeding through genuine Hampshire lanes, freckled with the primrose, cuckoo-flower, and marsh marigold. But the east wind seemed to have blown down and

221B Discovered again

By Peter Liddell

Peter Liddell currently lives on the north-west coast of England and has maintained an interest in Sherlock Holmes and his world for well over 60 years. Many years ago, the issue of the chronological sequence of the 60 tales caught his imagination. He has repeatedly been reminded that the Canon 'is only fiction' but nevertheless clings limpet-like to the 'what if' scenario - "what if Holmes and Watson had been real people?"

In Sherlock Holmes's time there were at least five Baker Streets in London, including three in what might loosely be described as "Central London." These three were:

1) Baker Street in Lambeth, a large area south of the Thames. Maps of the 1870s show Baker Street running east from the Brixton Road to Chryssell Road, north of Vassall Road, a short distance to the south of The Oval cricket ground. There would have been 29 addresses on this relatively short street. In 1883 the short street across the Chryssell Road junction, Clarendon Retreat, was absorbed into Baker Street, adding a further 18 addresses. The 'new' Baker Street was re-named Blackwell Street in 1937. The street disappeared to make way for redevelopment in the 1950s. Brixton and Vassall Roads can still be found on maps today along with Chryssell Road, although the course of the latter has changed considerably with the development of the Holland Town Estate.

2) Baker Street in Clerkenwell, an area north of the Thames lying to the south and east of King's Cross railway station. As shown on maps in the 1870s, this Baker Street ran from Farringdon Road in a north easterly direction to the south west corner of Lloyd Square. The thoroughfare continued along the south-east side of Lloyd Square and, as Upper Baker Street, ran the short distance thence to Amwell Street. In 1937 the thoroughfare was integrated as Lloyd Baker Street, which it still is today.

3) The third, of course, is 'our' Baker Street.

The other two Baker Streets were both in the east end of London. Both have been renamed, one is now Damien Street and the other Bacton Street. Damien Street is in the eastern part of Whitechapel whilst Bacton Street is in Globe Town, just south of Bethnal Green. Interestingly, they are not that far from each other.

Thus, thanks to name changes and redevelopment, today there is only one – Baker Street in Marylebone – but is this sufficient evidence to confirm that this one example was Holmes's Baker Street?

Of course, it is a bit of a leap to presume, when he quotes the address as “Baker Street,” that this was not a flight of Watson’s imagination. After all, if he really meant ‘Baker Street’ we know that the ‘221B’ must have been such an invention so, if the house number were invented, why not the street name as well? The whole of the narrative could be pure fiction, of course – if Holmes never lived his address hardly matters – in which case any invented location or address would do equally well. On the other hand, if we have even a slight interest in the possibility that there might be some truth in the narratives then curiosity might well bloom. Did Holmes live in Baker Street? If he did, it could not have been at ‘221B’ as there was no such address, so just where did he live? If we were able to identify a probable address, what do we know of that building?

If we choose to follow this line of reasoning we would, I believe, in the first instance turn to “The Empty House,” as therein, following the startling reappearance of Holmes in Watson’s Kensington rooms, the good doctor goes on to describe their subsequent tortuous journey from there to Cavendish Square and thence to Camden House. Only the latter part of their route is described in detail and, if we follow this path either on a map, or better on the ground, we will find we are led to one specific part of the real Baker Street. Watson’s account ended as follows:

We emerged at last into a small road, lined with old, gloomy houses, which led us into Manchester Street, and so to Blandford Street. Here he turned swiftly down a narrow passage, passed through a wooden gate into a deserted yard, and then opened with a key the back door of a house. We entered together, and he closed it behind us.

‘A small road...with...gloomy houses’ describes what was then South Street (today this is that part of Blandford Street that runs between Manchester Street and Marylebone High Street near its end-on junction with Thayer Street). Manchester Street and Blandford Street still bear those names today and the ‘narrow passage,’ in my opinion, having walked the route, was undoubtedly Kendall’s Mews. At the end of their journey, Watson says:

“Surely that is Baker Street”

and Holmes replies:

“Exactly. We are in Camden House, which stands opposite to our own old quarters.”

Thus, we are presented with a reasonably accurate identification of their true address.

If we accept this narrative, it would seem that the name ‘Camden House’ was, like ‘221B’, an invention. Of course, the whole narrative could be a fiction, but for now we are presuming that the description contains at least a kernel of truth.

The narrative in “The Empty House” places ‘221B’ on the west side of Baker Street between Blandford/King Street (King Street was incorporated into today’s Blandford Street in 1930) to the north and George Street to the south, that is to say between what were then number 70 and number 78 Baker Street. Analysis of the “Empty House” text, together with studies of the maps of the time, strongly suggest that 72 Baker Street was the location of the pair’s rooms.

Given this conclusion, the history of number 72 is worthy of a more detailed description.

Exploration of the history of the area usefully might start with a study of Richard Horwood’s map from the mid-1790s that can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/qmoqc3t>. This map was created as a series of plates and the first eight to be produced covered the western part of the map. The plate that includes Baker Street was produced in 1794. A study of the map will show Baker Street to have been, apparently, structurally complete although only a selection of the buildings on the west side had their addresses recorded. King Street, Blandford Street, Manchester and South streets together with Kendall’s Mews are clearly marked. If we track to the east, to Cavendish Square, we can use this map to postulate possible routes the pair might have followed to reach South Street.

The largely undeveloped countryside to the north of New Road (today’s Marylebone Road – the name was changed in 1851) and the areas still to be developed to the west of Gloucester Place are nostalgic of simpler times. At the time of Horwood’s work, Baker Street was about as far north-west that the London built up area extended.

On Horwood’s death in 1803 his plates passed to William Faden, who both completed Horwood’s planned coverage and updated those of his plates that had already been produced. He issued revisions of the map in 1807, 1813 and 1819 (the latter can be seen at <https://tinyurl.com/yx569hy7>). By this time, all buildings on Baker Street had recorded addresses and development was proceeding to the north of the New Road. Note at this time the use of the name ‘Baker Street North’ for that section later to become Upper Baker Street and eventually part of the integrated Baker Street we see today.

These early maps confirm the practice of numbering along the right-hand side of the road and then back along the left. As early as the 1790s, house numbers in Baker Street were established that were to remain in use until the incorporation of York Place in 1921. Thus, for the entirety of

Holmes's occupancy, the addresses were as noted in Horwood and Faden's original work.

Of course, it is one thing to know which building had which address but, of far more importance, we really need to know who lived at which address and when. In 1799, the Post Office began work on a new annual Directory – the first edition was dated 1800 – and these publications now comprise a most valuable resource. Initially, the Directory listed the names, in the first instance approximately 2,200 names, of tradespeople, along with their addresses. The publication of these directories was taken over by Frederic Festus Kelly, the chief inspector of letter carriers, in the mid-1830s. His company, Kelly & Co., became Kelly's Directories Ltd. in 1897.

With the passage of time, the published list of names and addresses grew but it remained primarily a trade directory. If one's interests concern particular geographic areas, there is no alternative but to trawl through the lists looking for specific addresses. However, all this changed in 1841 when a Street Directory was added to the annual publication. From that date, study of the developments at given addresses is relatively straightforward. The Preface to the 1841 Directory, apropos the new Street Directory, included the following note:

The "Street Directory," now first introduced, is on a plan more comprehensive than that of any other London "Street Guide;" it includes GENTRY as well as MERCHANTS and TRADESPEOPLE; and the superiority of its arrangements will be observed by anyone requiring, for any purpose, a "Street Directory."

The inclusion of Gentry is of the utmost importance as we henceforth have data not just on Tradespeople but on private residents also. However, it must be remembered that entries were requested by the customer and not introduced as a matter of course by the Post Office.

One point to bear in mind when studying these Directories is that their press date was the previous September or October – note the 1799 start date often quoted for these directories but the 1800 date of the first edition. They developed into considerable volumes, or sets of volumes, running in some cases to 2,000 or 3,000 pages so their production using the technology of the time will be seen to have been a considerable undertaking. Thus the 1883 Directory, to take one example not entirely at random, paints a picture as of September/October 1882.

Access to these directories is not easy – the main collection, unfortunately not fully complete, is held at the Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, in the City of London. However, Ancestry.com has

scanned the volumes and, with an Ancestry subscription, the directories can be found therein and perused at leisure. However, the scanning is not always consistent, and it requires more than a little perseverance to determine where in each scanned issue sought information is to be found. A very few of the directories are available to download free from various sources but the vast majority are inaccessible in this way.

If one peruses the “complete” collections, it is possible to put together a comprehensive history of number 72’s occupancy from 1841 to dates well beyond Holmes’s working lifetime.

The 1841 Baker Street listing did not cover all addresses, however, and number 72 was one of those without an entry. Between King and Crawford streets, according to the list on the Directory’s pages 10 and 11, only 70, 71 and 74 had entries. As a word of warning, there is a clear misprint here in this directory as this block of buildings ran from King Street down to George Street, not Crawford Street which lay two blocks to the north at what then was the upper end of Baker Street. I have yet to find copies of the 1842 and 1843 Directories but in 1844 number 72 was listed as the residence of a Mr. John Coleman. In 1845, 1846 and 1847 the occupant was listed as Mrs. Coleman – John’s widow, perhaps?

In 1849 and 1850, the occupant was listed as William Wenham, watch manufacturer. Between 1850 and 1852 (I could not find a copy of the 1851 Directory) occupancy transferred to Bening Arnold, first listed as watch and clock maker.

Bening Arnold lived to the age of 105 and in a memoir recorded on his centenary he stated: “I left the printing trade because it was unhealthy.....somehow I got into the jewellery trade....heard of a man who had a house and shop in Baker Street. The upper part of the house I let to a dressmaker, a Miss Thomas, who had a good connection among the aristocracy. I married her.....”

We know that the man who had a house and shop was William Wenham and that, by 1849 at least, part of the premises at number 72 had been configured as a shop. Bening’s Baker Street jewelry business ran from the very early 1850s to 1901.

The Misses Ophelia and E. Thomas appear as residents from 1853 to 1861. From 1862 the second resident is recorded as Mrs. Emelia Chapman (late Misses Ophelia and E. Thomas), indicating that it was Ophelia Thomas who had married Bening Arnold, Emelia Thomas marrying later. Mrs. Chapman is recorded through to 1864 and the 1865 Directory shows a Mrs. Gutch as the second resident.

From 1857 to 1867, Bening Arnold’s trade description was amended to jeweler and watchmaker and from 1868 to 1900 he was listed simply as jeweler. The 1901 Directory shows Arnold and Co., jewellers.

There was no second resident listed from 1866 to 1869 (perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Arnold lived there?) but in 1870 the upper floors were let to a Thomas Rawle. He was a solicitor and a partner in Rowcliffe, Rawle and Co., with offices at 1 Bedford Row (close to Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Central Criminal Court). His career in the law culminated in his election as President of the Law Society, 1904-5.

Significantly, Rawle disappeared from the 72 Baker Street listings after a final entry in the 1882 Directory. In other words, when the 1883 Directory was put together through September and October 1882, Rawle had vacated the floors above Bening Arnold's jewelry shop. He moved to 6 Lancaster Gate, his occupancy there first appearing in the 1884 Directory. In the 1882 Directory, 6 Lancaster Gate was listed as unoccupied and there was no entry for this address in the 1883 Directory.

Although Thomas Rawle had disappeared from the 1883 Street Directory, that year's Law Directory, a section of the overall Post Office set, still listed his residential address as 72 Baker Street. One can only deduce that the editors of the Law Directory were a little slow catching up with changes of circumstance. The 1884 Law Directory shows his new address, matching the Street Directory in that issue.

The following brief extracts from *A Study in Scarlet* are of importance here:

He was bemoaning himself this morning because he could not get someone to go halves with him in some nice rooms which he had found, and which were too much for his purse.

"I have my eye on a suite in Baker Street," he said, "which would suit us down to the ground."

I do not wish to keep labouring this point but, despite opinions to the contrary, Watson's first meeting with Holmes could not have taken place, as many seem to suppose, at the beginning of 1881. Careful analysis of those writings left by Watson that are still available to us indicates a probable first meeting date of September 1882 (<https://tinyurl.com/wjno8pr>).

Holmes had clearly spotted the rooms recently vacated by Thomas Rawle and was keen to move quickly to secure these as his base when Watson, prompted by Stamford, turned up during his laboratory experiment at Bart's. The rest, they say, is history.

After Rawle's departure, none of the Directories show a second resident at no. 72, that is until 1901 when the listing shows a Mme. Berthe Nicholas, corset maker, who is listed until 1906. Indeed, from 1902 to 1904 Mme. Nicholas was the only resident listed. In 1905 and 1906 she was listed as sharing the building with Anthos and Co., florists.

No doubt Bening Arnold appreciated the presence of Holmes on his premises whilst the latter saw merit in not seeking an entry in the Post Office Directory (as noted earlier, entries were by request and not mandatory – even in the 19th century some people clearly preferred ex-directory status). It is clear that an entry in the Directory would have defeated whatever reasons drove Watson, no doubt with Holmes's agreement, to promote a false address for their rooms.

It is easy to see from these later entries, I think, evidence of Holmes's diminishing demands for space through this transition period from 1901 to 1907, leading to his eventual retirement and withdrawal to the south coast.

So, throughout their active period, Holmes and, for some of the time, Watson lived above a jeweler's shop in rooms rented from the shop's proprietor, Bening Arnold. Mrs. Hudson, it would seem, was employed as Housekeeper by Arnold, no doubt at least part funded out of the rent paid by Holmes and Watson. Arnold might well have seen merit in employing a pageboy, or 'buttons,' to demonstrate a little 'class' for the benefit of his customers. However, from what we can deduce from Watson's writings, this appears to have been only a limited experiment. Perhaps the costs outweighed the rewards?

The property comprised four floors with a shop at ground level and three floors above. Each of the upper floors was lit by three windows evenly distributed across the width of the property. As built, before conversion to a shop, it is probable that the ground floor had two windows and the front door – the front door being to the left of the windows. When Watson described their new sitting room, clearly on the floor directly above the shop, his description:

They consisted of a couple of comfortable bedrooms and a single large airy sitting-room, cheerfully furnished, and illuminated by two broad windows.

This fits what we know of no. 72. The third window apparently gave onto a small room above the building's main entrance which was accessed from the stairwell and, possibly, from the sitting room. The description 'airy' also implies, to me at least, a first impression gained when the windows were probably open due to there being warm summer or autumn weather outside. Had this been the beginning of January, I strongly suspect that this adjective would not have been foremost in Watson's mind.

In contrast to this description, the houses on the block from 30 to 45 Upper Baker Street where, in what was originally number 32, the Sherlock Holmes Museum is today situated, were altogether narrower, showing

only two windows on each floor. The museum once claimed: “The world famous consulting detective Sherlock Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street between 1881-1904 ... The house is protected by the government due to its “special architectural and historical interest” and the famous 1st floor study overlooking Baker Street is faithfully maintained for posterity, just as it was kept by Mrs Hudson in Victorian times.”

This claim has rather distorted our view of Holmes’s ‘real’ location. At least they do suggest that the ground floor comprised a shop.

Many buildings of the time were furnished with a feature known simply as “the area”. This term describes the gap often seen behind railings between the pavement (sidewalk) and the front of the building down which access could be gained to the basement. Access to the front door of a building thus equipped was (is) usually across a bridge over “the area.” However, this feature was absent from buildings on the original Baker Street, with access to their frontages being directly from the pavement.

In later years as Holmes’s demand for space probably diminished, it seems not impossible that part of the three floors above the shop might have been let to additional tenants. It is not entirely unlikely that Holmes retreated into the rooms on the first floor (second floor in the US) leaving the upper two floors for other occupants, such as “Mme Berthe Nicholas, corset maker” recorded as living at number 72 from 1901.

In 1921, when Baker Street and York Place were merged, the consequent renumbering, which introduced ‘modern’ odd numbers on the left, evens on the right addresses, resulted in number 72 becoming number 31. The building survived WW2 bombing – the same could unfortunately not be said of the block immediately to the north which was effectively demolished – it did not, however, survive the developments of the 1960s and 1970s, so should you seek this house today you will, I regret, be disappointed.

No doubt there will be continuing speculation and alternative theories will emerge. However, I am happy that in my world at least Holmes’s and Watson’s residence is firmly located at what was no. 72 Baker Street.

(Yellow) Paperback Reader

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre

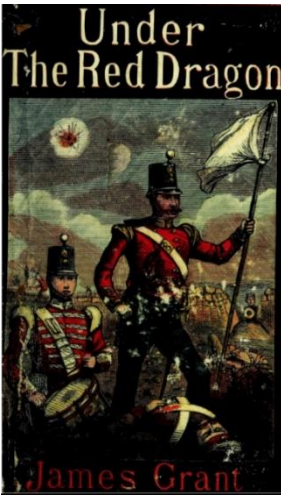
Liese Sherwood-Fabre is an American Sherlockian living in Texas. Her *Early Case Files of Sherlock Holmes* series is available at all major booksellers. She can be found at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com.

Dr. Watson tried to amuse himself while waiting for Holmes's return in "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" by reading a yellow-backed novel, and Violet Hunter read one to her employer Rucastle in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches." The creation and popularity of these novels coincided with increased railway travel and represented a highly popular innovation in British publishing that, though short lived, provided a more literate population with classics as well as original works. The public had access to Jane Austen's novels and the first British translation of Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*, among others. (1) For current historians, they provide a glimpse into the interests and lives of Victorians. (2)

The term "yellow back" comes from an advancement in engraving developed by Edmund Evans. The wood engraver developed a process in 1847 using three printings – one with the outline and two additional blocks providing colour tint. In addition, he printed these on yellow-glazed paper to give books an eye-catching cover. While paperbacks were cheaper (12.5 pence, or 25 cents vs. 25 pence or 50 cents), they were worth the added



The *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* was just one of several classic stories that W.H. Smith reprinted as yellow-backed novels in 1917.



expense. The fibreboard was sturdier, and the type had been reset, making the text easier to read. (3)

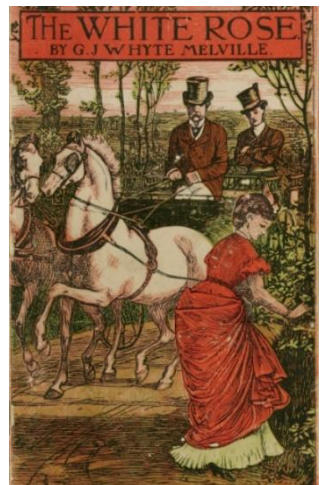
While several publishers produced these books, George Routledge was the most successful with his “Railway Library” series, offered from 1848 to 1899. Most of these would have been sold by William Henry Smith (W.H. Smith) from his railway bookstalls. Smith opened his first kiosk in the Euston station in 1848, and by 1860, he had stores on all major and many secondary lines. (4) Both the books and the stalls were designed to appeal to the railway traveller, providing light entertainment for the trip, at the end of which the book might be traded

for another, thrown away, or passed on. (5) The covers, with their bright colours and action scenes, were designed to be seen from 20 yards away. (6) Given that Watson visited the railway station prior to starting his yellow-backed novel, he most likely picked it up at that time.

The popularity of these books was also due to their subject matter. Academic circles referred to these as “sensation” novels with stories attracting an audience through tales depicting lives of moral ambiguity: fallen women, extramarital sex, and murder, such as the parson’s bewitching daughter, Nora Welby, in G. J. Whyte-Melville’s *The White Rose* (cover shown here). (7) Some theories also suggest that railway travel itself supported the popularity of such themes. Going long distances among strangers gave passengers more freedom in their reading choices without condemnation of family and friends.

(8)

Whatever lay behind their popularity, critics became concerned about the influence these books had upon the population. WH Smith personally reviewed the books and their advertisements to ensure they were not morally corrupt. (9) While mainly fiction books, other topics were also offered, including science (for example J.G. Wood’s book of what can be seen through a microscope), medicine, and sports. (10) Despite such efforts, the books had their critics. Oscar Wilde in *Dorian Gray* had his depraved main character use some of these



novels as a guide for his life, although in the end he decided such corruption came from within and not through the reading material. (11)

Given the disposable nature of these books, not many exist today, although WH Smith did reproduce some for their 225th anniversary in 2017, including *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. (12) Outside of the “classics,” many were never published except in this format, such as popular war novelist John Grant (whose novel *Under the Red Dragon* is pictured on page 23) (13) and to preserve them for social historians and others, some projects have digitized them for future readers. Emory University has more than 1000 available for download, which can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/yjwu43hm>.

While Watson found the plot in his own yellow-back thin, readers of Sherlock’s yellow-back adventures wouldn’t have found the same.

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The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter Quiz

This quiz was created by Karen Campbell and presented to the Bootmakers on April 13, 2019.

Multiple Choice:

1. Which of the following topics are Holmes and Watson discussing before they move on to the topic of Holmes's family?
(a) golf (b) rugby (c) tennis (d) polo
2. How much older is Mycroft than Sherlock?
(a) two years (b) four years (c) five years (d) seven years
3. What trait does Holmes not rank among the virtues?
(a) chastity (b) modesty (c) honesty (d) courage
4. Where does Mycroft lodge?
(a) Tottenham Court Road (b) Kensington Gardens (c) Berkeley Square (d) Pall Mall
5. What is the only room in the Diogenes Club where talking is allowed?
(a) The Bar Room (b) The Strangers' Room (c) The Men's Room (d) The Ladies' Room
6. What colour are Mycroft's eyes?
(a) grey (b) blue (c) brown (d) green
7. To what animal does Watson refer when describing Mycroft?
(a) a hound (b) a hawk (c) a seal (d) a hippopotamus
8. Who was the criminal in the Manor House case?
(a) Adams (b) Wiggins (c) Jeeves (d) Crabtree
9. What toys suggest to Mycroft that the retired soldier outside the Diogenes Club had more than one child?
(a) a rattle and building bricks (b) a rattle and a toy boat (c) a rattle and a teddy bear (d) a rattle and a picture book
10. What is the occupation of the other man that the Holmes brothers and Watson observe from the Diogenes Club?
(a) a billiard marker (b) a street vendor (c) a commissioner (d) a postman
11. Once they were in the carriage, what did Latimer take out that alarmed Mr. Melas?
(a) a knife (b) a pistol (c) a bludgeon (d) a lead pipe
12. What is one of the objects Mr. Melas sees in the mysterious house?
(a) a suit of Japanese armour (b) a porcelain vase (c) a moose head (d) a potted palm
13. How much money does Kemp pay Mr. Melas?

- (a) five sovereigns (b) ten sovereigns (c) fifteen sovereigns (d) twenty sovereigns
14. What creepy habit does Kemp have?
(a) humming (b) winking (c) scratching (d) giggling
15. What colour are Kemp's eyes?
(a) grey (b) brown (c) blue (d) green
16. Where do Kemp and Latimer release Mr. Melas?
(a) Wandsworth Common (b) Hampstead Heath (c) Kensington Gardens (d) Greenwich Park
17. What is the nearest train station?
(a) Woking Station (b) Victoria Station (c) Clapham Junction (d) Petticoat Junction
18. In what newspaper does Mycroft place the ad about the Kratides siblings?
(a) *Daily News* (b) *Pall Mall* (c) *Gazette* (d) *Evening Standard*
19. When Mr. Melas is abducted again, which Scotland Yard inspector does Holmes bring along?
(a) Gregson (b) Baynes (c) Latimer (d) Lestrade
20. How much of a delay does bringing the inspector cause?
(a) one hour (b) two hours (c) three hours (d) four hours

Answers

1(a); 2(d); 3(b); 4(d); 5(b); 6(a); 7(c); 8(a); 9(d); 10(a); 11(c); 12(a); 13(a); 14(d); 15(a); 16(a); 17(c); 18(a); 19(a); 20(a)

Laura Lyons – hounded by an unfair reputation

By Michelle Birkby

Michelle Birkby has been obsessed by the Sherlock Holmes world for years. She has written two books about Mrs Hudson and Mary Watson, as well as short stories and articles. She likes London, museums, and chocolate cake, preferably all at the same time.

Laura Lyons. With a name like that she sounds like a Wilkie Collins heroine – independent, mysterious, sexy – not quite a good woman.
All the first impressions of Laura are not good. She married her husband – an artist, without her father’s consent and has been cast off:

She married an artist named Lyons, who came sketching on the moor. He proved to be a blackguard and deserted her. The fault from what I hear may not have been entirely on one side. Her father



Richard Gutschmidt’s 1905 illustration of Laura Lyons and Dr. Watson.

refused to have anything to do with her because she married without his consent, and perhaps for one or two other reasons as well.

Several men give her money to allow her to make a living as a typist – but there is an implication there. The men pay her, not the women in the area, if any of them had need for her services. The men include the murdered Sir Charles, and as Dr. Mortimer says, she is blamed for the divorce as much as Lyons. There are rumours about Laura Lyons. Even the chivalrous Dr. Watson calls her “Mrs. Laura Lyons, of equivocal reputation.”

In Victorian England, a woman’s reputation counted for everything, and it could be shattered in a moment. Laura Lyons divorce is an automatic black mark against her. The whispers of men condemn her (and no woman, that we are aware of, gives their opinion of Laura Lyons). She lives alone. She earns a living (not the done thing for a delicate Victorian lady). She sends notes to rich men to meet her in secluded spots after dark (and it doesn’t help that the man ends up being murdered). She is marked as a bad woman before we even meet her.

When Watson visits her at home, he is shown up to her rooms and immediately Watson judges her and finds her to be wrong. Even her living arrangements are suspicious:

I had no difficulty finding her rooms, which were central and well-appointed. A maid showed me in without ceremony, and as I entered the sitting-room a lady, who was sitting before a Remington typewriter, sprang up with a pleasant smile of welcome. Her face fell, however, when she saw that I was a stranger.

There are so many implications in these three sentences. She is happy to meet men alone in her easy to find rooms; the maid is used to showing men in; and for someone who is supposedly poor, she has a nice place.

Watson says she is beautiful but: “There was something subtly wrong with the face, some coarseness of expression, some hardness.”

(Although Watson only thinks that after he has left. In her presence, he just appreciates her brunette good looks).

Single working women are not unusual in the Sherlockian Canon, especially not typists. (Arthur Conan Doyle probably knew more than a few female typists who made his handwritten manuscripts legible.) Working women weren’t quite right but at least they were honest. Divorce, however, was rare, and it is this fact that condemns her in everyone’s eyes.

Divorce in 1889 (the probable date of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*) was not easy. It was easier than it had been before 1857, when divorce was decided by the ecclesiastical courts, and needed an Act of Parliament, but



B. Widman's 1902 illustration in *The St. Louis Republic of Laura Lyons and Dr. Watson*.

it was still a struggle, especially for a woman. The 1857 Divorce Act stipulated that a man could divorce his wife on the grounds of adultery alone, but a woman had to prove her husband had committed adultery as well as a second cause – bigamy, incest, or cruelty. The fact that Laura Lyons is the one doing the divorcing indicates what kind of man Mr. Lyons was.

It was only very recently, in 1882, that women were given the legal right to keep the money they earned, even after separation, and to legally be considered a separate person.

Divorce carried a stigma, even for the innocent party. Anyone who had been divorced could not be received at Court. Divorced women had a soiled reputation, even if they were not the guilty party. Women weren't supposed to want to break free. Even under the worst circumstances they were supposed to keep their chin up and carry on. A woman wanting out of a marriage was dishonourable, a failure, and no doubt had a lover of her own she wished to marry.

This wasn't Arthur Conan Doyle's opinion. He was in favour of reforming the divorce laws. His friend J.M. Barrie had been involved in a messy divorce and Conan Doyle had supported him through it, talking to him late into the night. As Andrew Lycett noted in *Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes*, Conan Doyle told his own daughter, Mary, that it was better for a woman to be unmarried and happy than married and unhappy (a very unusual view for the time). He believed – also unusually – that a marriage of love with someone who was divorced was a true marriage. There were still many who believed a second marriage while the first spouse lived was adulterous.

And as for working women – Conan Doyle was surrounded by them. His sisters worked as governesses all over the world. His mother worked hard running a lodging house and raising a family once Conan Doyle's father was confined to an asylum. Conan Doyle knew better than to be

suspicious of a working woman. He certainly knew that women could not depend on a man to protect and support them – not after the way his father let down the family. To Conan Doyle, working women deserved respect. In the Holmes Canon, time and time again, Holmes treats working women almost as equals (no one is quite equal to Holmes) who are determined to make their own choices about their lives. Working women aren't looking for a husband in the Canon. Working women work.

Conan Doyle may have looked like Watson but he thought like Holmes. It is Holmes who changes our opinion of Laura Lyons.

First, far from sleeping with every man in the village, she is close to Stapleton, who has promised her marriage.

There can be no doubt about the matter. They meet, they write, there is a complete understanding between them. Now this puts a very powerful weapon into our hands.

Stapleton is, of course, already married, and Holmes sees Laura not as a victim, deceiver, or a scarlet woman but a weapon. Someone with a sense of honour and rightness, who will fight for the right side once the truth is known.

And when she is undeceived?
Why, then we may find the lady of service.

Even the language around Laura changed when Holmes is there. Her rooms are no longer referred to as her home but her office – marking her as a woman of business. Holmes treats Lyons not with suspicion and wariness but with complete and utter frankness. She, of everyone in the village, gets the truth.

“I wish to be perfectly frank with you, Mrs. Lyons.”

Holmes treats her as an honourable and intelligent woman. He recognizes her loyalty but also recognizes that she will give Stapleton up once she is presented with evidence of his true nature. Holmes is careful to make sure the evidence he gives her is entirely trustworthy, and well-checked. He treats her honestly and he tells her what no one else has the courtesy to say.

“I entirely believe you, madam,” said Sherlock Holmes.

Of all the men in the village, Holmes is the only one who treats her not as the scarlet woman with a soiled reputation, but as someone worthy of respect and truth. Watson sees Lyons as society sees divorced woman – Holmes sees her as Arthur Conan Doyle saw divorced women. In Lyons, Conan Doyle takes all the standard Victorian beliefs about divorced women and wipes them all away.

“a few lines upon a sheet of paper” – Conan Doyle’s other work for The Strand Magazine

By Mark Jones

Mark Jones is a Sherlockian and Doylean based in York, in the United Kingdom. He writes widely on all matters ACD and is co-host of Doings of Doyle – The Arthur Conan Doyle Podcast.

In our journey through the pages of *The Strand Magazine*, we have now reached December 1894 and the first appearance of Conan Doyle’s second greatest creation, the Napoleonic Hussar, Brigadier Etienne Gerard. “The Medal of Brigadier Gerard” (or “The Medal of the Brigadier” in the U.S.) sees our debonair cavalry hero given a secret mission by Napoleon, which he spectacularly achieves, only to discover that the Emperor has not told him all...

The story was not Conan Doyle’s first foray into the Napoleonic era, and it shows. Having written *A Straggler of ‘15* (1891) and its play version *Waterloo* (written in 1892, first performed 1894), and dramatically retold the Battle of Waterloo in *The Great Shadow* (1892), Conan Doyle was steeped in the history of the period. In creating Gerard, he drew on the reminiscences of Napoleonic officers like Marbot, de Gonnevillle and Coignet, taking inspirations from their lives to create an original character who feels absolutely at home among the larger-than-life real world cavalry heroes of the day. With such command of the history, “Medal” feels effortless, and Conan Doyle avoids the leaden historical detail that occasionally flaws his other works.

Conan Doyle seems to have found writing the Gerard stories easy and enjoyable. Their stream of consciousness flow – heavy on action and humour – are lively, almost impromptu, and immensely engaging. Reading “Medal” to American audiences in late 1894, Conan Doyle experienced the thrill and enjoyment of his readers first-hand, and it was almost certainly this that inspired him to revive the character for a series of tales. In this, he was encouraged by Sam McClure, a fellow aficionado of the period, whose failing magazine fortunes were restored by the publication of a biography of Napoleon. *McClure’s* didn’t carry the Gerard stories, but published Conan Doyle’s *A Foreign Office Romance* (1894) which has superficial similarities to the Gerard series.

The tales that were later collected as *Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* appeared in *The Strand* in 1895, starting with “How the Brigadier Held the King,” one of the finest of the series, which refined and set the format of tales to come. There was then a brief hiatus, during which Gerard appeared as a walk-on in *Uncle Bernac* (1896) and more successfully in the hysterical “The Crime of the Brigadier” (1900), before a second series, *The Adventures of Gerard*, appeared in 1902/3. A coda, “The Marriage of the Brigadier,” appeared in 1910. In these tales, Conan Doyle showed a complete mastery of the short-story form, with economic characterization and fast-paced narration. Humour, horror, tragedy, romance – it’s all there.

And at the heart of them all is our proud Brigadier, the one fixed point in a very different age. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about “Medal” is the authorial voice: rarely, if ever, does Conan Doyle so immediately

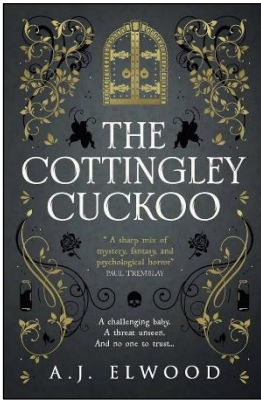


“HE HANDED OUR LETTERS TO US.”

capture a character in so complete a fashion. Even Holmes and Watson took their time to emerge. But in his first thrilling adventure, the Brigadier is as brave and patriotic and brainless as he would forever be. It is a masterpiece of writing, and a non-Sherlockian tale not to miss.

William Wollen’s illustration from the December 1894 The Strand Magazine introducing us to Conan Doyle’s latest character, Brigadier Etienne Gerard.

“Holmes gave me a brief review”



The Cottingley Cuckoo by A.J. Elwood (2021, Titan, £8.99)

Rose, whose last name is never given, has started a new job at Sunnyside nursing home and is feeling out of place. The book-loving college dropout doesn't have much in common with her care assistant peers. However, she does quickly make a connection with an elderly female resident.

Charlotte Farell shows Rose a letter dated 1921 and addressed to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It's written by Lawrence Fairclough, a Cottingley, Yorkshire man who says he and family members have seen fairies in a glen near where cousins Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths took their famous photographs.

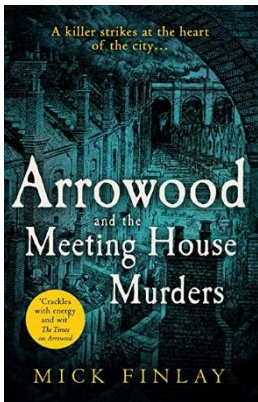
Rose is familiar with the fairy photo hoax of a century earlier and fascinated by the old, faded letters. She's also wary of Farell, a cool, aloof woman who can be dismissive and disdainful. But as more letters are shared, Rose learns of strange events in the life of the Cottingley letter writer. At the same time, she's experiencing upheaval in her personal life and plagued by a sense that things aren't what they seem.

Elwood, a pen name for Alison Littlewood, sprinkles historical details about the fairy episode throughout the narrative. The nursing home name, a nod to ACD's institutionalized father, is the first of many cleverly used facts. The story starts slowly as readers get to know Rose, with tension building as weird incidents occur in her life and that of the letter writer. The book races to a finale that is exciting and unpredictable. Be prepared for fairies that aren't the benevolent little creatures of folk lore.

- JoAnn Alberstat

Arrowood and the Meeting House Murders by Mick Finlay (HQ, \$18.99 CAD, paperback) William Arrowood is back along with his dark and atmospheric late 19th century Victorian London. This novel, the fourth in the Arrowood series, takes us back to the London that Sherlock Holmes only enters in disguise, a city of poverty, disease, filth and of course crime.

Not being a Holmes story, it isn't 1895 but just a bit off (1896) and the story is told by Arrowood's assistant, Norman Barnett. The two have been hired by Mr. Fowler of the Quakers, to protect four Africans from the



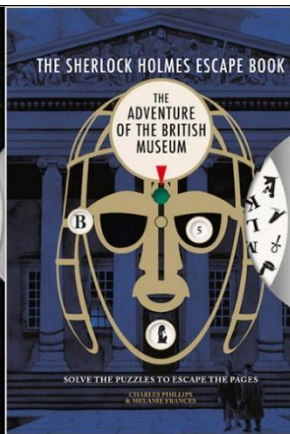
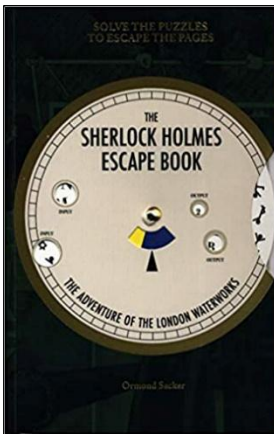
Natal, who are referred to as Zulus. The Quakers have offered the Africans a safehouse, the Quaker Meeting House, after the quartet escaped from the exploitative and dangerous Bruno Capaldi and his travelling side show of “exotics” and freaks.

After crimes are committed, Inspector Napper of Scotland Yard is called in along with Constable Mabaso from South Africa. Through various twists and turns the murder and mystery is of course solved. However, the book is more about the brutal history of British Empire. The legacy of stolen indigenous land, exploited Africans and the

creation of a system so bad that these four Africans in London are unwilling to return, despite what they faced in England.

Finlay also paints a grim picture of the cramped and difficult life of a Londoner who doesn't have the money and wealth often seen in the Sherlockian Canon.

- Mark Alberstat



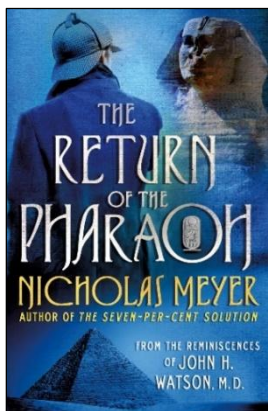
The Sherlock Holmes Escape Book – The Adventure of the London Waterworks and The Adventure of the British Museum (Ammonite Press, \$14.95 US each)

These two books are a riff on the craze of escape rooms where participants are locked in a room, or rooms,

and must solve a series of puzzles in a set period to escape. Here we have a Sherlockian twist on this game within the pages of a book. The reader has riddles, puzzles, mathematical problems and visual clues to unravel that leads them through a maze of mystery and confusion; and if solved correctly reveal the case laid out at the beginning of each book.

Both books have a front cover code wheel and play on common themes from the Sherlockian Canon such as “The Sumatran Rat Problem” and “Lord Baskerville.” Not strictly Sherlockian and not for all. However, these books are fun for the Sherlockian who enjoys puzzles and some time away from the endless news cycle.

- Thomas O’Hare



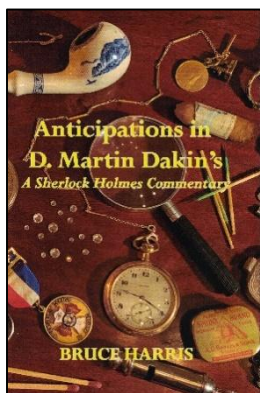
The Return of the Pharaoh (Nicholas Meyer, Minotaur, \$34.99 CAD, hardcover)

It's 1910 and John Watson is in Egypt, where his wife Juliet is convalescing with tuberculosis. Dr. Watson is surprised to encounter Sherlock Holmes, who is there under the guise of being a retired colonel and amateur Egyptologist. The undercover detective is searching for an English nobleman who has gone missing while in the country on a quest to find a pharaoh's tomb. To solve this case, Holmes and Watson will get a crash course in antiquities and need to navigate Cairo's alleys and menacing desert sands beyond.

Holmes and Watson have a riddle worthy of the Sphinx on their hands in this adventure. Our favourite sleuths find themselves immersed in early 20th-century Egyptomania and we follow along as they visit many a monument, museum and archeological dig. Howard Carter even makes an appearance, a dozen years before the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Besides giving readers a window into the history and culture of ancient Egypt, we experience the more modern country, one caught between competing colonial interests and full of intrigue in the dying days of the Ottoman Empire. With this book, Meyer has penned yet another pastiche that Sherlockians will enjoy.

A word of warning: Be prepared to yearn for a post-pandemic trip to Egypt after reading this one.

– JoAnn Alberstat



Anticipations in D. Martin Dakin's A Sherlock Holmes Commentary by Bruce Harris (2021, The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box \$15US plus \$5 shipping [within the US] and \$10 [Canada], email the author at marxman@comcast.net or the publisher at george.vanderburgh@gmail.com)

Many Sherlockians have enjoyed Dakin's seminal 1972 work but few have examined it as closely as Harris has with this 84-page volume. This book looks at a variety of quirks and conundrums that crop up in the Canon and how Dakin tackled them as well as the writings that came before Dakin or ones that he was possibly not aware of. This book is more of an addendum to Dakin's book than an homage or appreciation. Harris takes us through most of the Canon with the care of a Sherlockian curator.

– Mark Alberstat

Strictly Personal

Where a Canadian
Sherlockian goes under the
microscope.

Name: Charles Prepolec

Age: 55

Birthplace: Calgary, AB, Canada

Occupation: Freelance
editor/anthologist

Current city of residence: Calgary,
AB, Canada

Major accomplishments in life: Convincing published horror
authors I admire to write new Sherlock Holmes stories for my ‘Gaslight’
anthologies and getting to read said stories before anyone else.

Goal in life: To complete my 80-volume run of original bound Strand
Magazines. 5 left to go.

In school I excelled at: Everything I put my mind to, as long as it wasn’t
Phys. Ed. or Shop.

A great evening for me is: Getting together with close friends for a meal
and chatter in a pub.

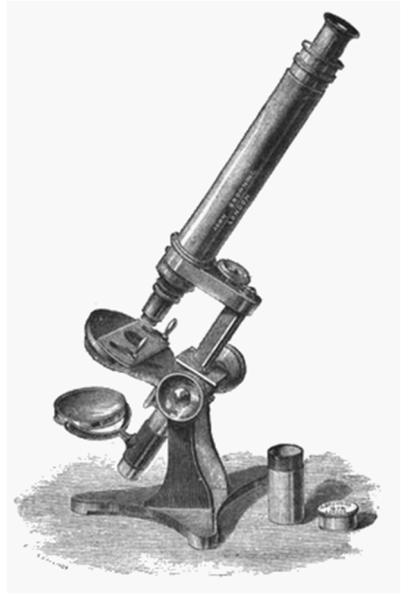
Favourite dining experience: Austrian mixed salad, dressed with Styrian
pumpkin seed oil, and veal schnitzel at the Gösser Bräu (Brewery
restaurant) in Graz, Austria.

Other hobbies and interests: Darts, sketching, Karaoke, gardening,
Victorian/Edwardian horror fiction, Hammer Films and horror films in
general.

I’m currently working on: A fifth anthology of new Sherlock
Holmes/horror stories – Gaslight Ghouls (out from Belanger Books in
2022).

Three favourite canonical tales: *The Sign of Four* (simply the
best), “The Greek Interpreter” (hello Mycroft) and “The Speckled
Band” (Gothic perfection).

Three least favourite Canonical tales: “The Mazarin Stone,”
“The Red Circle,” and “The Lion’s Mane.” I find them utterly
devoid of interest.

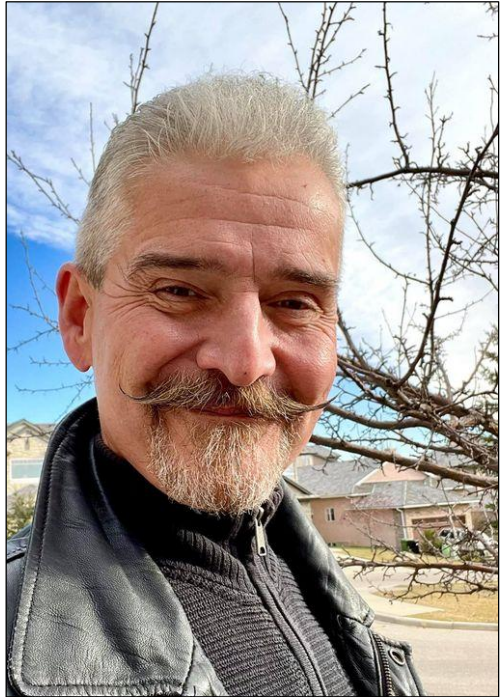


Favourite non-Sherlockian reading: George MacDonald Fraser's series of 'Flashman' books, which are basically a tour through the major military engagements of the Victorian era guided by a charming cad, bully and coward.

Favourite Sherlockian movie: Television cheat, as it's Granada's adaptation of *The Sign of Four*.

Favourite non-Sherlockian movie: *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938).

Most prized possession in my Sherlockian collection: An original bound *Lippincott's* magazine containing the first appearance of *The Sign of Four*.



If I could live at any time in history, it would be: Now (although I could do without the pandemic).

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

Holmes: What occurred in your youth that put you off of having close relationships?

Watson: What did you mean by "I keep a bull pup"?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: Why did you champion those obviously fake fairy photos?

First learned of The Bootmakers: In the late 80s when I joined a local Calgary-based Holmes society and we received a letter from The Bootmakers telling us we were a scion society of theirs, even though we'd never applied, were pretty damn sure we didn't care to be one and just who did those Torontonians think they are telling us we're subordinate to them anyway.

I would like my epitaph to read: "Somebody else is buying this round."

My last words will be: "Mine's a Guinness!"

What question do I wish I would have been asked: A juicy controversial or gossipy one about the state of the Sherlockian world today.

BOOTMAKERS' DIARY



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

— *The Five Orange Pips*

Saturday September 11, 2021

At 1:05pm Mike Ranieri welcomed 48 attendees from far and wide to look into ‘The Missing Three Quarter,’ via zoom.

Mike introduced Dean Jobb, author of *The Murderous Dr. Cream*. Thomas Neil Cream was a Glasgow-born serial killer who, as well as living for several years in the US also spent time in Canada at McGill University in Montreal, before heading over the pond to London. Unable to get a licence to practice in the metropolis Cream headed for Edinburgh, enrolling in the medical school at Edinburgh University, where Conan Doyle got his medical degree. Though there is no evidence that the two ever met, Cream was interviewed by Dr. Joseph Bell when he applied for admittance. Continuing his murderous ways in the Scottish capital, Cream was eventually caught and hanged.

Mike next introduced David Marcum, coming to us from Tennessee, who spoke on Solar Pons, created by author August Derleth. Derleth set Pons, a Holmes-like character, in his own era of the 1920s and 30s. Pons and Dr. Parker, who like Watson recounts the cases, live in Praed Street, London. Like Holmes, Pons is portrayed wearing invernness and deerstalker, and also has great powers of observation and deduction.

This was followed by Karen Campbell’s quiz. The winners were David Marcum, Barbara Rusch and Adrian Van Vroenhoven, who will receive prizes courtesy of George Vanderburgh.

Karen Gold sang *Godfrey Staunton*, to the Frank Sinatra song *One for My Baby*.

Wrap-up of the story was done by Dan Andriacco.

Mike thanked all for coming, with a reminder that the next meeting would take place Saturday, October 30, with the story being, “The Abbey Grange.”

- David Sanders M.Bt

Saturday, October 30, 2021

On Saturday, October 30th the Bootmakers of Toronto met via Zoom to consider the case of the murder of Sir Eustace Brackenstall of The Abbey Grange, and to address some other topics of interest.

The meeting was called to order by Meyers, Mike Ranieri, at 1:02 p.m. There were 58 attendees from around the world.

Some announcements were made:

- Meeting notices may be found on our website at TorontoBootmakers.com, on the Calendar page.

- You can also join the MeetUp group.

- Next year we may have a mix of Zoom and live meetings. Mike will be sending out a survey about this.

- We need to form a committee for the True Davidson Award. This is for the best formal presentation at a meeting. Please email Mike if you are interested. His email is: mranieri@rogers.com.

- A new Treasurer is needed. This is not a big job as everything can now be done on computer. Please email Mike if you would be willing to help in this capacity.

- The 50th Anniversary of the Bootmakers will be celebrated in September of 2022, with an in-person weekend. This will be in conjunction with the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection. Volunteers are needed for this event.

- Lou Coty of Gothic and Light has an original mural of 221B Baker Street available as a print, on a mug or a pillow. A puzzle is in preparation. See the mural at GothicandLight.com. To receive a 10% discount, use the code: `BOOTMAKERS10` at checkout.

- On November 18th, MX Publishing will release a book of 60 of Jim Ballinger's original Sherlockian songs. Many of these songs were premiered at Bootmaker meetings. *Sherlock Holmes in Song* is edited by Mark Alberstat.

To introduce our first speaker Mike Ranieri showed a clip from the television series *Columbo*, starring Peter Falk. He then introduced Christyne Berzsenyi, Ph.D. She is a Professor of English, techno-rhetoric and professional writing. She has been with Penn State Wilkes-Barre since 1998 and coordinates the Letters, Arts, Sciences and Liberal Arts interdisciplinary programs. She presented material from her 2021 book titled *Columbo: A Rhetoric of Inquiry with Resistant Responders*. Members can order the book from www.intellectbooks.com/columbo.

Dr. Berzsenyi began by giving some background on Columbo. The character is based on Dostoyevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*. A movie version was broadcast on NBC in 1968. The series alternated with

other movies from 1971 to 1978. A revival was broadcast on ABC from 1989 to 2003. There were a total of 69 episodes. Peter Falk (16 September 1927 – 23 June 2011) played Columbo in all of them.

What do Columbo and Sherlock Holmes have in common? Their investigative approach and that they are underestimated by the suspects. Berzsenyi then explained what she called “the Columbo Formula.”

The Columbo Method can be used in professional communication to gain the cooperation of reluctant co-workers.

Dr. Berzsenyi then answered some questions.

Mike introduced our next speaker, David Leal. He is Professor of Government and Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. His Sherlockian publications include articles in *The Baker Street Journal* and *The Serpentine Muse*, chapters in *The Adventures with Britannia* book series of the British Studies Program at UT-Austin, and a pastiche in the *MX Book of New Sherlock Holmes Stories, Part XXI* (“The Fractured Freemason of Fitzrovia”). Leal is the Founder and Warden of “M.A., Ph.D., etc. (aka the Thorneycroft Huxtables),” the professional scion society for Sherlockians in academia and higher education. He is also a member of The Clients of Adrian Mulliner and the author of multiple articles in *Plum Lines: The Quarterly Journal of the Wodehouse Society*.

His topic is Arthur Conan Doyle and Spiritualism: Dupe or Scientist? Many Sherlockians are embarrassed by ACD’s interest in Spiritualism and refuse to read his writings on the subject. They feel that he was naïve about this. Leal has read the writings and feels that the negative reaction is unfounded. Conan Doyle took a scientific approach to the topic and wanted hard evidence. He recognized that some mediums were fakes. The subject deserves more serious attention from the fans of Sherlock Holmes. At the end of his presentation, he answered some questions from the audience.

Since Karen Campbell was unable to make the meeting today the quiz on “The Abbey Grange” was presented by David Sanders with assistance from Mike Ranieri. There was a three-way tie for first place. The winners were Barbara Rusch, Bob Cartledge, and Bruce Aikin. They will each receive a PDF of Les Moskowitz’s book *Canonical Variations*, provided by George Vanderburgh.

Karen Gold then presented her Sherlockian song parody, “Captain Croker,” sung to the tune of “Davy Crockett.”

Philip Elliott gave the wrap-up of the story.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

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



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