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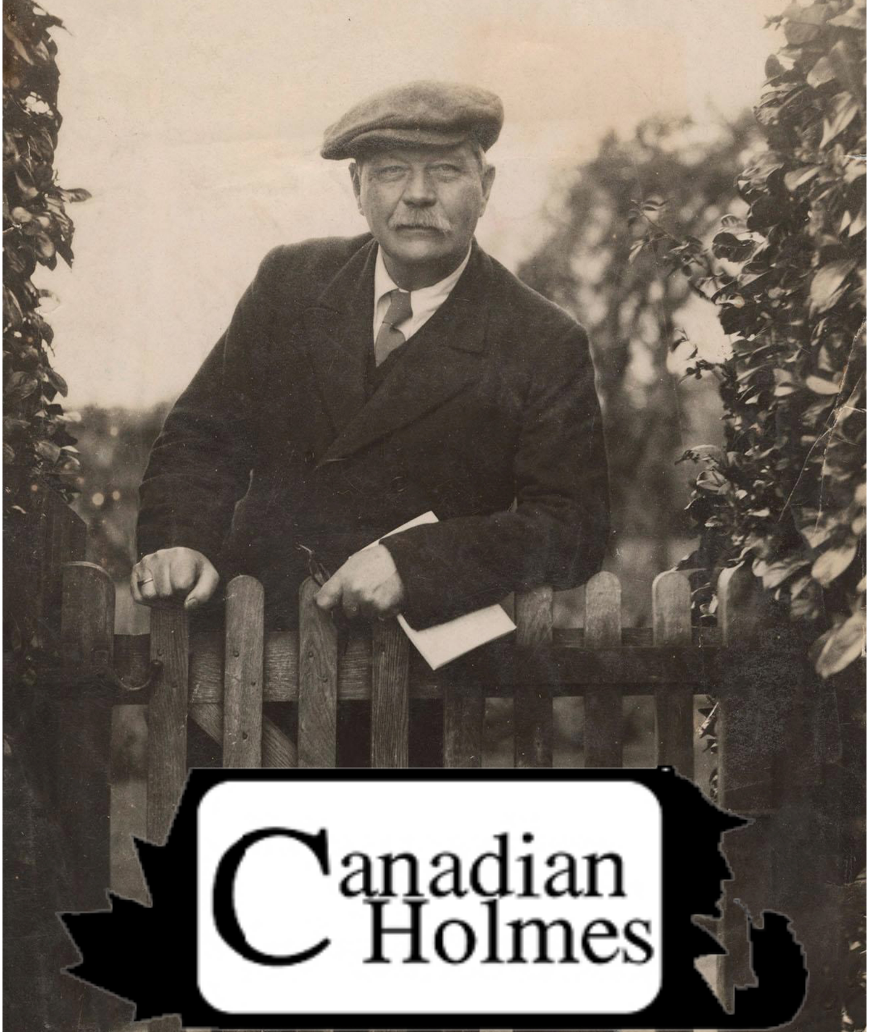

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Cover: Conan Doyle at his garden gate.

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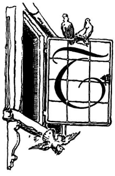

Traces of Bootprints

The milestone of 50

A few months ago we celebrated the 50th edition of *Canadian Holmes* under our editorship. Fifty issues seemed a very long ways away when we started, but day after day, and month after month the time and issues ticked by. We are now celebrating 50 years of the Bootmakers of Toronto and 50 years of the Arthur Conan Doyle collection found at the Toronto Reference Library with a conference, guest speakers and a dinner; a fitting event for a golden milestone.

In Conan Doyle's 50th year he was involved in the Oscar Slater case, he won a golf competition at the Crowborough Beacon Golf club where he was recently elected to the management committee, his play *The Fires of Fate* opened, *The Lord of Falconbridge* was published in *The Strand Magazine*, and he lobbied and spoke for reform in the Congo. It was, overall, a busy year for our favourite author.

Like Conan Doyle, the Bootmakers and the ACD Collection, *Canadian Holmes* goes from strength to strength. For us, it is the support of our readers, writers and illustrators that got us to this, our 51st issue.

Once again, we kick off the issue with Barbara Rusch's Bow Window column, this time she is shining a light on secret societies. This is followed by a deadly serious article on poisons in the Canon by co-editor JoAnn Alberstat. Larry Raisch then tells us all he knows about tobacco ash and those famous 140 varieties. Mark Jones and Robert S. Katz team up to explore the surprising link between typhoid and Conan Doyle. Diane Gilbert Madsen looks into the Victorian code and women in the Canon, an article which features artwork from Laurie Fraser Manifold. Liese Sherwood-Fabre tells us all she knows about tweed, a Scottish pattern often associated with Holmes and his deerstalker. Next you will find Mark Jones's regular column, this time he gives us some background on *The Tragedy of the Korosko*, not one of Conan Doyle's better-known works. The issue wraps up with Donny Zaldin going under the microscope for Strictly Personal, a couple of book reviews and, of course, 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.

The inherent desire to keep secrets and discover those of others is part of the human experience and the fundamental precept of the secret society. Throughout history, clandestine associations have featured oaths of loyalty, initiation rites and cryptic symbols. From the alchemists of the Middle Ages to the theosophists and spiritualists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, they may be construed as cults, border on the occult, and often engage in nefarious activities.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Moriarty is a professor of mathematics, a study associated with mysticism since the time of Pythagoras, whose theorem involved not only the three-sided figure, but geometry as a sacred belief to which symbolic and religious meanings were ascribed. The Napoleon of Crime applies his own profound knowledge of the subject to the formation of a vast criminal network. "You stand in the way of a mighty organization," he warns Holmes.

It has long been debated whether the Freemasons are a benevolent brotherhood or an ominous secret society. Tracing its origins to the stonemasons who built Solomon's Temple, by the Middle Ages the master craftsmen who constructed the English and Scottish castles had formed local lodges which became meeting places where apprentices were trained and members socialized. By the 1700s, this fraternal guild had spread to the Thirteen Colonies, where many of the Founding Fathers were members, dedicated to its doctrine of self-improvement, equality and industry. But it was also rooted in mysticism, charged with elitism, and accused of corruption and even murder for the sin of revealing its closely guarded secrets. Arthur Conan Doyle was himself a Freemason, undergoing the initiation ceremony in Southsea in 1887, the same year that his first Sherlock Holmes tale, *A Study in Scarlet*, was published. Jabez Wilson's arc-and-compass breast pin and John Hector McFarlane's watch-charm identify each as Masons. Enoch Drebber is a member, leading to questions of how closely Freemasonry was connected to Mormonism, itself a secret society whose canonical crimes include bigamy, domestic violence and murder.

The Mafia is perhaps the most notorious of all secret societies. With its roots in Sicily, disparate delinquent gangs practically controlled Italy politically and economically. When thousands of Sicilians sailed to American shores in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Mafia sailed with them, consolidating its efforts, adapting the felonious conduct of its hierarchical "Dark Brotherhood" to its new home, and creating an evil empire bound by a code of silence and "enforcing its decrees by murder." No doubt the Red Circle, allied to the old Carbonari, is a not-so-subtle reference to this sinister cabal, whose "oaths and secrets are frightful," and, as Emilia Lucca's husband Gennaro learns, "once within its rule no escape is possible." Giuseppe Gorgiano pursues him to America to ensure he keeps his bargain to perpetrate its violent crimes.

Possibly the most hate-filled secret society of them all is the racist Ku Klux Klan. Founded in the United States following the Civil War and the emancipation of slaves, its credo is based on white supremacy and the subjugation of Blacks, achieved by violence and intimidation. Like Abe Slaney's Chicago "Joint," with its cypher of dancing men, "agents of evil," the Ku Klux Klan has its equally innocuous symbology. "A sprig of oak-leaves in some parts, melon seeds or orange pips in others," objects which may appear harmless or even humorous, are encoded with threatening and even deadly meaning, spelling death for those, like three members of the Openshaw family, to whom they are directed.

The Scowrers, members of Lodge 341 of the American Order of Freemen in *The Valley of Fear*, described as "some implacable organization," is a kind of unlawful trade union comprised of vicious thugs with albeit legitimate grievances against the railway and mining companies. This unsavoury outfit is no doubt based on the disreputable Molly Maguires, the Irish secret society best known for its activism amongst coal miners in Pennsylvania. In order to outwit German spy Von Bork, Holmes himself masquerades as a member of an Irish secret society in "His Last Bow," an allusion to the Fenians, a political conspiracy whose adherents were of Catholic descent.

The many canonical references to secret societies, both actual and fictitious, imbue the tales with a sense of mystery and intrigue. While Holmes is less than successful at singlehandedly eradicating entire implacable organizations, he does manage to lift the shroud of secrecy and silence that cloaks them, exposing their dark deeds to the light of day. While he fails to save the Openshaws and Hilton Cubitt, he quite literally "takes down" the head of London's most infamous criminal enterprise and his chief of staff, the two most dangerous men in "that great cesspool." Its toxic air is sweeter for his presence.

The poisonous atmosphere of the Sherlockian Canon

By JoAnn Alberstat

JoAnn Alberstat, MBt, is Co-Editor of Canadian Holmes *and a member of the Spence Munros of Halifax and other societies in the US and UK. She has contributed to Sherlockian anthologies and written and presented on* Amazon/Mary Celeste*, the Nova Scotia-built "ghost ship" made famous by Conan Doyle.*

In the view of Sherlock Holmes, the worst poisoner of all is the doctor who commits such a crime.

"When a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of criminals," the detective proclaims in "Speckled Band." "He has nerve and he has knowledge. Palmer and Pritchard were among the heads of their profession."

The quote is famous because of its tongue-in-cheek reference to the men being skilled at poisoning, rather than medicine. While Holmes could have instead referenced any of three other medical men guilty of criminal poisoning during the Victorian era (1), his choice of William Palmer and Edward Pritchard was influenced by an experience that Arthur Conan Doyle had as a teenager.

William Palmer

Poison seeps through the Canon in many forms, starting with Holmes's experiments, his knowledge of noxious substances and, of course, his drug use. The perpetrators uncovered by the detective are a varied lot. Similarly, the methods they use are wide ranging and often exotic.

A blue-collar American uses a Russian roulette scheme, and pills made of South American arrow poison, to avenge the death of his beloved in *A Study in Scarlet*. A diminutive sidekick wields toxic darts amid the search for lost treasure in *The Sign of Four*. A teenager in "The Sussex Vampire" tries curare-laced arrows to get rid of an infant stepbrother. A fake missionary couple chloroform a well-off woman and try to bury her alive in "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax."

In "Speckled Band," the poisonous weapon is a swamp adder controlled by Dr. Grimsby Roylott, who has set his murderous sights on stepdaughter Helen Stoner for financial gain. Palmer and Pritchard were so notorious that Holmes's name-dropping is a spoiler about his suspicions of the goings-on at Stoke Moran Manor House. *Strand* readers would recognize the physicians names, even if Dr. Watson didn't indicate that he did. After the detective's revelation, what remains to be uncovered is evidence of a murder plot, including the type of poison involved.

Palmer was hanged in June 1856 for killing John Cook, a racing friend who had won big on a horse called Polestar, the same name as the ship in Conan Doyle's sea story (2). While Cook was poisoned with strychnine, the debt-ridden Palmer was also accused of using antimony to murder his wife Anne and his brother Walter for insurance money. Palmer had studied medicine at St. Bart's, where Holmes and Watson would later meet. Palmer set up practice in his native Rugeley, Staffordshire, before being drawn to horse racing and gambling. Some peg the number of victims at 17 and include Palmer's mother-in-law and four of his infant children among them (3).

Edward Pritchard

Antimony, used in small doses medicinally to induce vomiting, was also Pritchard's toxin of choice nine years later. He was tried, convicted and hanged in July 1865 after the authorities in Glasgow, Scotland, received an anonymous tip about the deaths of his wife Mary Jane and her mother. A native of Southsea, where Conan Doyle began practising in 1882, Pritchard started his medical career in the Royal Navy (4). After his marriage, the couple moved to Glasgow where Pritchard began a practice. He liked to live well and was

viewed by the city's medical establishment as a self-promoter. He was also involved with at least one of the family's servants, and another burned to death in her bed under mysterious circumstances.

The other three poisoning doctors whom Holmes could have referenced during his investigation were:

Thomas Smethurst (1859) – a bigamist convicted of using arsenic to kill his pregnant new wife, Isabella Bankes. The conviction was overturned after public outcry due to a flawed trial marred by questionable toxicology and judicial bias. An independent review found that Bankes may have died of natural cases.

Alfred Warder (1866) – suspected of killing his wife Helen using aconitine – derived from monkshood – during a Brighton hotel stay. He committed suicide by drinking prussic acid – the toxin that tempted Eugenia Ronder in "The Veiled Lodger" – while the authorities were investigating. Warder's two previous wives also died under suspicious circumstances.

George Lamson (1882) – was executed in April 1882 – a year before the Stoke Moran investigation – for murdering his 18-year-old brother-in-law using aconitine, the same rare compound chosen by Warder. Lamson's motive was the teenager's inheritance. (5)

Of the five Victorian physicians who killed using poison, Palmer was the first and the most notorious. This is one reason his name would have sprung to mind when Holmes or Conan Doyle thought about doctors who poison. The scope of Palmer's crimes was unprecedented, as was the publicity surrounding them. The 12-day trial was unusually long, as Palmer's wealthy family could afford to mount a defence by calling into question the toxicology that was part of the Crown's evidence. (6)

The ink surrounding the case was endless. Charles Dickens, for instance, called Palmer "the greatest villain who ever stood in the Old Bailey dock." (7). Dickens also wrote about Smethurst, although his name would not be top of mind for Holmes. Another writer whose work was influenced by the Palmer case was Wilkie Collins. Indeed, Palmer would be worthy of being among the criminals whose picture was on the wall at 221B.

Pritchard's case was also widely covered in newspapers and periodicals of the time and lived on in true crime chronicles. In addition, he was the last person to be publicly hanged in Glasgow (8). His crimes would resonate with Conan Doyle, who was a boy at the time Pritchard went to the gallows, because of their shared ties to Scottish medicine. The alliteration in his last name and Palmer's would appeal to Holmes because it added a touch of drama to his theory about what Dr. Grimesby Roylott was plotting.

While there are a few possible reasons to focus on Palmer and Pritchard, the most compelling is the 15-year-old Conan Doyle's 1874 trip to London to see his relatives. The visit included a memorable trip to Madame Tussauds, then located in the Baker Street Bazaar. The Stonyhurst student mentioned the outing when he wrote to his mother, noting that he: "was delighted with the room of Horrors, and the images of the murderers." (9)

Palmer and Pritchard were both represented in the Chamber of Horrors at the time and their wax figures stood next to each other (10). Of Palmer, a later exhibition catalogue in 1876 proclaimed: "The annals of crime have not produced a more cold-blooded murderer." Given such hype, no wonder the murderers exhibit made a lasting impression on Conan Doyle, and that he would go on to associate the murderous doctors in tandem.

A few years later, while studying medicine, Conan Doyle would self-administer poison while trying to identify a safe dose for treating neuralgia. The poison he used was gelsemium, a toxic root not unlike the one used to kill not once but twice in "Devil's Foot." The case could easily have had two further fatalities when Holmes did a test of his own using the mysterious red powder found at the crime scenes. He and Watson escape with their lives and go on to nab another poisoning doctor, the famed explorer Leon Sterndale.

Poison is plentiful in the Canon, although Holmes catches only one doctor using it in a nefarious way, that being self-administered by Professor Presbury. When the detective reveals the Stoke Moran plot, he does so by expressing his dim view of those who use their medical knowledge to kill. Holmes makes his point by reaching back in time to a pair of the most notorious examples, rather than mentioning more recent doctor poisoners. In doing so, he also gave a nod to the youth who was delighted by stories of murder, and murderers, and grew up to tell such tales of his own.

References

(1) There were seven poisoning Victorian doctors, according to Cheryl Blake Price in "Medical bluebeards: The domestic threat of the poisoning doctor in the popular fiction of Ellen Wood", *Victorian Medicine and Popular Culture,* No. 28, p85 See note 5.

(2) Staveley-Wadham, Rose, "William Palmer the Rugeley poisoner," The British Newspaper Archive, March 25, 2020 https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2020/03/25/william-palmer-the-rugeley-poisoner/

(3) Burney, Ian, *Poison, detection and the Victorian imagination*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 2006, p121.

(4) Emsley, John, *The elements of murder: A history of poison*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, p229.
(5) According to Blake Price, the era had two other poisoning doctors, who were too late to be named in "Speckled Band": Thomas Neill Cream (tried in October 1892) and George Chapman (1903). For more on Cream, *The Case of the Murderous Dr. Cream* by Dean Jobb is highly recommended.
(6) Burney, p121.
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(9) Lellenberg, Jon, Stashower, Daniel and Foley, Charles, *Arthur Conan Doyle: A life in letters*, Penguin, New York, 2007, p66.
(10) Madame Tussaud & Sons' Exhibition Catalogue, 1876, p43. https://archive.org/details/madametussaudson00mada/mode/2up

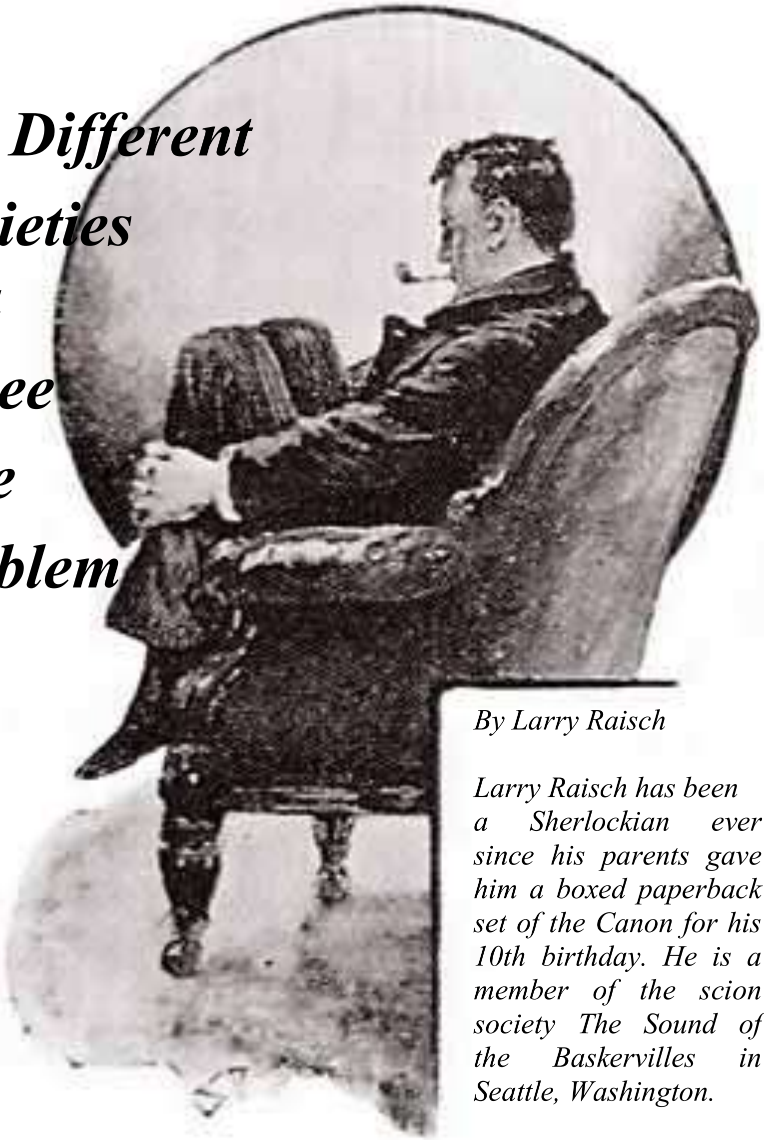
Write for

Canadian Holmes

Whether you write with an old-fashioned pen like this fellow or the the latest laptop, we are looking for you. All types of articles, toasts, thoughts or reviews are welcome. It is up to you to make *Canadian Holmes* the stand-out journal it can be. Contact the Bootprint, Mark Alberstat, today with your thoughts.

markalberstat@ns.sympatico.ca

140 Different Varieties or a Three Pipe Problem



By Larry Raisch

Larry Raisch has been a Sherlockian ever since his parents gave him a boxed paperback set of the Canon for his 10th birthday. He is a member of the scion society The Sound of the Baskervilles in Seattle, Washington.

I've been a pipe smoker for more than 50 years and Sherlock Holmes was one of the influences that led me to take up the pipe. A slip-cased paperback set of the Canon, given to me as a surprise by my parents on my 10th birthday, and the Basil Rathbone movies on rainy Saturday afternoons served as introductions to both pleasures.

At one time, probably 25 per cent of the male population of America smoked a pipe but pipe smoking is not as common these days. For that

reason, it might be helpful to share some thoughts on the prevalence of pipes, and smoking in general, in Conan Doyle's stories.

I wish to cite an article by John Hall for some of my references. Since I first presented this topic at the Sound of the Baskervilles meeting, I've become aware of a book titled *Sherlock Holmes as a Pipe Smoker* though I did not make much use of it for this paper. I found that book to be long on statistics and short on the joy of pipe smoking.

The reason for my title

"I have been guilty of several monographs. They are all upon technical subjects. Here, for example, is one 'Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos.' In it I enumerate a hundred and forty forms of cigar, cigarette, and pipe tobacco, with coloured plates illustrating the difference in the ash. It is a point which is continually turning up in criminal trials, and which is sometimes of supreme importance as a clue. If you can say definitely, for example, that some murder had been done by a man who was smoking an Indian lunkah, it obviously narrows your field of search. To the trained eye there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly and the white fluff of bird's-eye as there is between a cabbage and a potato," said Holmes in *The Sign of Four.*

So, just how prevalent was tobacco use in the Canon? At various times, it is mentioned that Holmes and Watson smoked pipes, cigars and cigarettes. In all, a pipe is cited in 22 of the 60 stories and only four of the stories fail to mention tobacco. For example, we read about Signor Goldini's cigars and the eagerness with which Holmes lit up after three days of abstention in "The Dying Detective," and the use of cigarette ash in "The Golden Pince-Nez."

Of course, we most strongly associate pipes with Holmes. There is, "a litter of pipes on the mantle" in "The Dying Detective" and a "pipe rack conveniently to hand" in "The Blue Carbuncle." Many references simply refer to smoking and we may assume that this was so common for Holmes and Watson that it did not merit special mention.

A little information about types of pipes

We know Holmes had an "old and oily clay," at least one briar and a long cherrywood. The term cherrywood may refer to the actual wood used or just a pipe made in the shape typical of pipes made with that material. At the time, the clay would still have been the most common. England was a major manufacturer of clay pipes since the 16th century and apparently pieces of broken clay pipes can still be found in the mud of the Thames at low tide.

Today, briar is the most common material used in making pipes. Briar is sourced from the burl on the root of the *Erica Arborea*, a shrub-like tree which grows around the shores of the Mediterranean.

Other woods sometimes used in pipe making include cherry, olive and strawberry tree and fossilized bog oak (morta). While there are still pipes made of clay and some porcelain examples (typically from Holland), meerschaum is perhaps the next most common pipe-making material.

Meerschaum is German for "sea-foam" (actually hydrous magnesium silicate). The use of meerschaum is sometimes attributed to a Hungarian cobbler named Karel Kovacs, who, in 1723, is thought to have made the first pipe from this material. When wet, meerschaum lends itself to elaborate carving and in fact, Holmes himself is a common subject of the pipe carver's art.

The calabash frequently referred to as a "Sherlock Holmes pipe" is made from a gourd grown in Africa. The gourds are trained into a curve while growing. After harvesting they are hollowed out, dried and typically fitted with a meerschaum bowl.

Though the iconic image of Holmes in his deerstalker is usually paired with a calabash or other curved pipe, bent pipes are not mentioned in the stories. Legend has it that William Gillette used a bent pipe as he had trouble delivering his lines with a straight stem.

Other than merely defining a pipe simply as straight or bent, there is a near infinite variety of shapes ranging from standards such as the apple, billiard, Oom Paul, Dublin, author, bulldog, Canadian, Zulu, etc. and including freehand which are limited only by the pipe maker's imagination.

Holmes says in "The Yellow Face" that "nothing has more individuality than a pipe, except perhaps watches and bootlaces."

Pipe advertisement for ADP brand from The British Trade Journal and Export World*, Volume 23, March 1, 1885.*

The only pipe brand mentioned in the Canon is an "ADP" used by Straker in "Silver Blaze." This may have been made by the Adolph David Posener Company of London which trademarked the ADP logo.

Also, in "Yellow Face" Holmes is cynical about the amber stem of Grant Munro's pipe: "a good long stem of what the tobacconists call amber. I wonder how many real amber mouthpieces there are in London? Some people think that a fly in it is a sign. Why, it is quite a branch of trade, the putting of sham flies into the sham amber." Holmes had at least one pipe with an amber stem himself. In "The Priory School" he points to a map "with the reeking amber of his pipe." Amber was an expensive and fragile material with which to make a pipe stem. Most pipes today use a mouthpiece made of vulcanite or acrylic.

Tobaccos

When they first meet, Holmes asks Watson if he objects to strong tobacco. Watson says, "I smoke ship's" (ship's would probably have referred to a strong, cheap tobacco possibly flavoured with rum or molasses). Holmes is referred to as smoking "shag" (a finely cut tobacco). In both cases, this would probably indicate a need for frugality as these would have been inexpensive tobaccos. Other mentions include Straker's "long cut Cavendish," bird's eye (a type of cut), honeydew (possibly flavored with honey) and Grant Munro's expensive "Grosvenor" mixture.

Holmes notes Watson has apparently upgraded to "Arcadia" mixture (reference in "Crooked Man") despite Holmes mentioning this was from "his bachelor days." Pipe smokers theorize that Watson may have switched blends if his wife objected.

Holmes is described as collecting plugs and dottles (the unburnt remains at the bottom of an unfinished bowl) and drying them on the mantle, keeping tobacco in the Persian slipper, and cigars in the coal scuttle. Most pipe smokers today would shudder at such habits, and I wonder if Conan Doyle included them as "conscious eccentricities."

There is a strong association among modern pipe smokers with the Holmes stories. There are a number of Holmesian tobacco blends available today. For example, until they sadly closed recently, McClelland tobacco of Kansas City produced

their 221B series (Black Shag, Arcadia and Honeydew) and Peterson of Dublin makes a Sherlock Holmes blend. For my taste, only the Arcadia made it into my regular blend rotation and if Holmes smoked anything like Black Shag, he was a strong man indeed!

Honeydew and Black shag were generic names, which causes me to wonder about the origin of the Arcadia name. In *My Lady Nicotine* (1896) we have a book-length tribute to the 'Arcadia' blend by JM Barrie, the author of Peter Pan. Barrie later admitted that this was a tobacco called the Craven Mixture. The blend was made by the Carreras tobacco company and originally created for the third Earl of Craven. Barrie's book appeared serially in the *St. James Gazette* but was published in book form in 1890 so Barrie could claim authorship.

Since Doyle and Barrie were friends, played together on a cricket team started by Barrie and even wrote an opera together, could Doyle have found his inspiration for the 'Arcadia' name here? Perhaps a tip of the deerstalker to Barrie?

Besides tobaccos, there are many pipes made even today that trade on the Canon. Peterson pipes, which may have been the models for those used in the Holmes illustrations by Sidney Paget, makes a Sherlock-themed pipe collection with shapes named after Holmes, Mycroft, Mrs. Hudson, etc.

Ardor is another maker that featured a Great Detectives series honouring Holmes, Maigret and others.

The illustrations in *The Strand* typically showed straight pipes, while those in *Colliers* include some curved. It is frequently difficult to tell if the pipe in the illustration was a clay, which would have been most common at the time. Sometimes this is likely, due to the way the pipe is shown being held by the stem. The bowl of a clay pipe will get very hot so holding the stem is a common technique.

Finally, let me mention the most iconic Sherlockian pipe, the Calabash. These are never mentioned in the Canon or shown in any of the original illustrations. As my son pointed out to me, they did not become popular in

England until after the Boer wars. They are hardly practical when away from the easy chair, being bulky and fragile, but they do smoke well.

So what is the likelihood of Holmes actually identifying ash?

Pipe tobacco, I believe, would be difficult to identify. There have been experiments to try and recreate old blends that are no longer produced by analyzing the contents of vintage tins. This has been attempted with techniques such as using tweezers to extract individual strands of tobacco to determine a blend's make up. In one case an old tin found in the pocket of a coat left hanging for years in an Irish pub was sent to a forensics lab in Israel. How successful have any of these recreations been? Since we can't make a direct comparison between today's recreations and a vintage tin from years ago, I think these are an approximation at best. Contests have been held where the top tobacco blenders attempt to recreate some famous old blend. Given the varying results they achieve, this is obviously not an easy challenge.

In pipe tobacco reviews, the phrase "burns to a fine white ash" is such a cliché it's sometimes used sarcastically. Determining the makeup of a pipe tobacco from the ash does not seem to me to be very feasible.

Possibly this would be easier for cigar ash. I suppose you could at least determine the 'ring gauge' (diameter) if the ash was not crushed and I can imagine there might be some other visual differences.

I'd like to point out, that if Holmes had smoked all 140 his cost would be a mere three pounds (about $5) based on prices listed in "Yellow Face." Also, that 140 varieties is high for individual tobacco cultivars but very low for various brands and blends that would have been available at that time.

Even today there are probably thousands of blends on the market.

Personally, I find the great variety of tobacco blends one of the attractions of pipe smoking. I have smoked well over 140 varieties myself in my quest to find my favourites. For me, curling up with a well-seasoned briar filled with Arcadia, or some other fine blend, is the perfect accompaniment to re-reading the adventures of Holmes and Watson.

Canonical Cholecystitis – Watson, Budd, and Typhoid

By Mark Jones and Robert S. Katz

Mark Jones, BSI ("Peter Jones"), MBt is co-host of *Doings of Doyle - The Arthur Conan Doyle Podcast* and writes widely on Sherlockian and Doylean topics. He lives in York, UK.

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The Stockbroker's Clerk opens unusually with Sherlock Holmes visiting Dr Watson's practice. Holmes quickly deduces that his friend has been unwell – he has been sitting close to the fire and the soles of his new slippers are scorched – and suggests a summer chill. Watson says he was "confined to the house by a severe chill for three days last week." This seemingly innocuous comment is rather more revelatory than it at first appears. While a bout of the common cold is a possibility, air-borne infectious diseases, including influenza, are rather less common in the summer. And while 72 hours of fever is also not impossible, it raises other diagnostic possibilities.

We know that Watson suffered from a severe case of "enteric fever" while at the base hospital at Peshawar (*A Study in Scarlet*). A modern medical reference indicates that... "Enteric fever is a systemic illness characterized by fever, abdominal pain, and non-specific symptoms including nausea, vomiting, headache, and anorexia. When enteric fever is caused by *Salmonella enterica serovar Typhi*, it is known as typhoid fever" (Ali). In the pre-antibiotic era, this was often a fatal disease. Yet many patients, including Watson, made what appeared to be a full recovery. However, there were often long-term effects of the infection. The organism has a tendency to survive for long periods of time in the gallbladder, if the patient is so unfortunate as to have gallstones as well. This leads to a chronic "carrier" state, which is usually asymptomatic but can result in the transmission of disease to others. The most famous example of this was Typhoid Mary, of New York City. Given his history,

22 Park St., Bristol – William Budd's practice and the birthplace of George Turnavine Budd. Source: http://cliftonrfchistory.co.uk/other/gtbudd/gtbudd.htm

one must at the very least wonder if Watson suffered a bout of cholecystitis (inflammation of the gallbladder due to stones) and was symptomatic with three days of fever.

When "The Stock-broker's Clerk" was published, our understanding of typhoid fever was still in its infancy, but no man had done more to promote the epidemiology of the disease than William Budd of Bristol (1811-1880). Born into a strongly medical family, William was apprenticed to his father in Devon before studying in Paris under Pierre-Charles-Alexandre Louis, the great pioneer of evidence-based medicine and father of the clinical trial, where he first became interested in the study of typhoid. That interest came all too close to home in 1838 when, shortly after gaining his medical degree from Edinburgh University, he suffered a near fatal attack of typhoid while working on the naval hospital ship *HMS Dreadnought*. He fully recovered and, in 1842, settled in Bristol where he became physician to St Peter's Hospital and Bristol Royal Infirmary and set up in private practice at 22 Park Street. In an echo of Conan Doyle's own experience, William's practice was slow to get going and he spent much of his free time writing, albeit exclusively on medical matters.

It was in Bristol and the surrounding area that Budd made his ground-breaking investigations. In 1847, he had the opportunity to study typhoid first-hand when residents in the Clifton suburb fell sick with the disease. Budd realized that the affected families all shared the same well and hypothesised that the disease was spread by water. His subsequent analysis of an outbreak at Cowbridge in Wales in 1853 reinforced this idea and

Portrait of a young William Budd

provided evidence of person-to-person spread, which was confirmed by local doctors. He had considered the notion of person-to-person spread as early as 1838 when he observed an outbreak around his father's practice in the Taw Valley and wrote a paper on the subject for a medical competition. In 1859, the Taw Valley study reached *The Lancet* and contributed to the growing antagonism between the contagionists – those, like Budd, who believed in person-to-person spread – and the anti-contagionists, who believed disease was spread by bad air or miasma. In 1861, Budd wrote forcibly in favour of germ theory in the *British Medical Journal* in which he characterized the work of himself and other contagionists as that of Copernicus against the Church.

Between 1857 and 1860, Budd published a series of papers in *The Lancet* that laid the foundation for his major work, *Typhoid Fever: Its Nature, Mode of Spreading, and Prevention* (1873). In addition to suggesting person-to-person and waterborne transmission, Budd argued that the mode of transmission was fecal-oral. Consequently, he became a prominent advocate for public health reform, led attacks on poor hygiene and unsanitary living conditions, promoted the greater use of disinfectants such as carbolic acid and improved water quality as an advisor to the local Water Company. During the 1866 cholera outbreak, he was able to employ preventative measures that reduced deaths to 10% of what they had been during the previous outbreak, although much was down to the improvements in sanitation over the last two decades, for which Budd was also partially responsible.

As Robert Moorhead put it in his 2002 article, "Budd had the ill luck to find himself chronologically between two epidemiological paradigms—the era of sanitary statistics with its paradigm, miasma, and the era of

infectious disease epidemiology with its germ theory." But his influence was still profound, and not just within the study of typhoid. His work contributed to the advancement of germ theory, exemplified by the famous work of John Snow, who traced the 1854 cholera outbreak in Soho to the Broad Street pump. He had limitations – Budd does not appear to have considered the symptom-free carrier – but he helped to reframe the prevailing mindset and his major work *Typhoid Fever* (1873) – coincidentally dedicated to a Dr Watson, albeit Sir T. Watson Bart., physician in ordinary to the Queen – was a landmark study for contagionists. He died in 1880, the year in which the typhoid bacillus was isolated by Karl Joseph Eberth. The discovery was later verified by German bacteriologist Robert Koch, whose investigations into the treatment of tuberculosis attracted the attentions of the striving young general practitioner Arthur Conan Doyle.

William Budd's work connects directly to the life and stories of Conan Doyle in that his son was none other than George Turnavine Budd, Conan Doyle's fellow student and one-time friend. The Budd family had a marked strain of eccentricity – the most sinister example being when William's brother, John, once undressed to join a paralyzed girl in bed, prompting her to leap from it "cured" – but in George Turnavine it reached its apotheosis. Much has been written on the bull-headed, intemperate pugilist George, but suffice to say that Conan Doyle's description of him as "half genius and half quack" is on the mark. We get an ample sense of his antics from his semi-fictional alter-egos in Conan Doyle's fictions, as Cullingworth in *The Stark Munro Letters* and Tom Crabbe in "Crabbe's Practice." There was perhaps never so great an exemplification of that tree which grows "to a certain height and then suddenly develop some unsightly eccentricity" ("The Empty House").

Conan Doyle was undoubtedly aware of the family connection. In Chapter IV of his autobiography *Memories and Adventures*, he says George Budd (alias "Cullingworth") "came of a famous medical family, his father having been a great authority upon zymotic disease." Indeed, Conan Doyle probably stayed at William Budd's practice in 1881 (the year after William's death) when he visited George at 22 Park St., prior to embarking for Africa. George had returned to Bristol and "started in great style, hoping to rally the remains of his father's patients, but his money had run out." Conan Doyle appropriated this incident for *The Stark Munro Letters,* in which Cullingworth tries to revive his dead father's "very large and lucrative practice in the West of Scotland," with similarly unremarkable results.

The state of William Budd's practice, or at least his son's attempt to revive it, may provide further evidence that he was in Conan Doyle's mind

when he wrote “The Stockbroker’s Clerk.” In Chapter 2 of *Stark Munro*, Cullingworth says “you have probably heard—in fact, I have told you myself—that my father had the finest practice in Scotland. As far as I could judge he was a man of no capacity, but still there you are—he had it.” The capacity in question is financial acumen, and Budd’s biographer, Michael Dunnill, confirms that William was naïve with money. This may too have found its way into the works of Conan Doyle when one considers Watson’s account of the practice he inherited in “The Stockbroker’s Clerk”: “As my predecessor weakened, his practice declined, until when I purchased it from him it had sunk from twelve hundred to little more than three hundred a year. I had confidence, however, in my own youth and energy, and was convinced that in a very few years the concern would be as flourishing as ever.” Perhaps we see in the Watson of “Stockbroker’s Clerk” yet another alter-ego of George Turnavine Budd.

As we have seen, typhoid makes a notable appearance in the Holmes stories in the opening paragraphs of *A Study in Scarlet*, but it also reappears frequently in the works of Conan Doyle. In *The Narrative of John Smith*, a work re-written by Conan Doyle between 1884-1893 which shares many similarities with *Stark Munro*, Dr Turner talks of a miracle vaccination that will one day become a panacea: “In time we shall have the attenuated virus of every one of these diseases, and by mixing them together will be able, by a single inoculation, to fortify the constitution against them. Zymotic disease, sir, will be stamped out. Typhus, typhoid, cholera, malaria, hydrophobia, scarlatina, diphtheria, measles and probably consumption will cease to exist — and all owing to the labours of Louis Pasteur — God bless him!” Conan Doyle makes further fleeting references to typhoid in *The Firm of Girdlestone* (1890), “A Medical Document” (1894), “The Curse of Eve” (1894), “The Story of the Black Doctor” (1898), “How it Happened” (1913) and *The Valley of Fear* (1914).

Conan Doyle had certainly internalized the key findings of Budd’s research and would see the truth of it in South Africa. Famously, Conan Doyle served as a doctor, working alongside the Royal Army Medical Corps, at the Langman Hospital in Bloemfontein, South Africa, during the Boer War. When the Boers cut off supplies of fresh water, the town became the centre of a typhoid epidemic. Conan Doyle blackly gave his hospital address as “Café Enterique, Boulevard des Microbes,” while Kipling referred to the town as “Bloeming-typhoidtein” in his poem “The Parting of the Columns.” Giving evidence before the Royal Commission in 1903, Conan Doyle was “in no doubt that those 8,000 or 9,000 cases of enteric which occurred in Bloemfontein were entirely due to drinking the water of the old wells,” although he has recently been criticized (Cirillo) for not campaigning for compulsory inoculation when he had the chance.

The event stayed with him. In "How it Happened" – another semi-autobiographical story, this time based on Conan Doyle overturning his new car – a near-death experience brings the narrator face-to-face with Stanley who "died of enteric at Bloemfontein in the Boer War."

Given the familiarity with and experience of typhoid fever in the lives of both Conan Doyle and John Watson, that perhaps trivial bout of fever acquires new significance. Was Watson's three days of illness due to inflammation of his gallbladder, with perhaps the passage of a stone through the bile duct? And if he had gallstones, was he a chronic carrier of typhoid? Let's recall that there was another resident of the home who might have contracted the disease through contact with Watson. Was that sad bereavement ("The Empty House") due to typhoid and does that give new and poignant meaning to the term "Typhoid Mary"?

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Women, Sherlock Holmes & the Victorian Code

"It's well to go carefully when there's a lady in the case."
- John Barrymore, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

By Diane Gilbert Madsen
Artwork by Laurie Fraser Manifold

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What did Sherlock Holmes *really* think about women? He makes no secret he is wary and admits he's "not a whole-souled admirer of womankind." (1) He tells Watson that "Women are never to be entirely trusted – not the best of them;" (2) that "the motives of women are inscrutable," and "the fair sex is your department." (3) Let us examine his direct dealings with women to help define more sharply his feelings about them.

Holmes, the women in his adventures, their problems and their crimes are all creatures of the Victorian age. Victorians believed their mores were the centre of the economic, social and moral universe, and like the Queen, they abhorred scandal and any consequent disgrace for themselves and their families. The strict Victorian code of behaviour stipulated ideal standards for every aspect of one's life, most especially the life of a Victorian lady. Additionally, there were many unwritten rules that could not be ignored. In "His Last Bow," Baron Von Herling notes: "They have…their insular conventions which simply must be observed." Follow all the rules, and your position in your social class was secure. Step outside and get caught, you were an outcast. Discretion was essential to maintain the appearance of respectability. One's image was everything, especially if you were female. Women, the fair sex, were considered the weaker sex, were vulnerable and, harkening back to the Code of Chivalry, needed to be protected.

This was the jungle in which Holmes maneuvered. He recognized that

widespread pretense and hypocrisy over these strict rules encouraged forbidden behaviour to flourish underground. His profession required him to grapple with the reality behind the façade. He had to navigate both worlds – one where the Code allowed zero tolerance for sexual promiscuity, crime, sensationalism or scandal, and the other where those very sins made up the purview of a consulting detective.

Conan Doyle recognized that Victorians relished reading about taboo subjects rife with disguise, debauchery and intrigue with threatened females playing key roles. He astutely designed his plots to satisfy this fondness, and most stories involving female victims carry strong sexual

Isadora Klein by Laurie Fraser Manifold

overtones where women are the prey – vulnerable to losing their virginity, their reputations and/or their fortunes. Other females make exciting villainesses when they descend into murder, revenge, espionage and betrayal. And Conan Doyle invented his Holmes character to be the one man a female could trust to extricate her from scrapes involving racy, sometimes bizarre love affairs. Victorians embraced Holmes, the gentleman, who deals with dirty laundry yet comes out clean while preventing a dreaded scandal. They also liked seeing Holmes act as a knight errant on behalf of females as he twists steel pokers, breaks down doors, engages in bar brawls, searches for treasure, evades being shot by a cannibal, and puts his own safety in jeopardy.

Some allege that Holmes puts women in the stories on pedestals, reflecting Conan Doyle's own Victorian perceptions of females. I would argue that this generalization does not accurately reflect how Holmes interacts with females in the adventures. He does encounter a few who fit the mould of passive Victorian females, the "conventional English type," (4) like Alice Turner, Violet Westbury and Maud Bellamy to name a few. Yet he also encounters Mary Holder in "The Beryl Coronet," who is described as "a sunbeam," "sweet, loving, beautiful … as tender and quiet and gentle as a woman could be," and she turns out to have a lustful flip side, entangling herself in a secret affair with a gambler then stealing from and cruelly betraying her family. Holmes comes across other females such as Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope, Irene Adler, Hatty Doran and Isadora Klein, (5) variously characterized as fiery, passionate, jealous, having a past, excitable, wild, free, impetuous and volcanic, and even a "belle dame sans merci." Generally, major female characters in the tales are distinguished by their physical appearance – good girls are thin, blonde and British; whereas most bad girls are brunette and often foreigners who find it difficult conforming to the rules of Victorian behaviour.

Females in the stories represent every strata of society from titled to lower and middle classes. Holmes also interacts with the emerging single woman who works outside the home and is independent yet still needs male protection – perhaps, the stories suggest, needs it sometimes even more than the traditional woman. Though Holmes may be initially disinterested in a case, when he takes it, he is egalitarian and does so without regard for a client's status. With female clients and victims, Holmes is solicitous and even goes so far as to assume the roles of *in loco parentis* and *locus standi* to protect young victims in cases involving male chicanery.

Conan Doyle once characterized Holmes as "a Babbage's calculating machine and just about as likely to fall in love," (6) but Holmes is surprisingly sympathetic to most of the females he encounters. He does

not treat women as he does men, except rarely and in a good cause, as when he pushes open a door with his foot; threatens a Lady with ruin; or grabs a woman who is listening behind a door. (7) Although he warns Isadora Klein about her risky behaviour, for the most part Holmes takes women as they are. He doesn't sermonize as he does with Neil Gibson in "Thor Bridge," nor does he play tricks to give them comeuppance as he does with Colonel Ross in "Silver Blaze." He does, however, often refer to their peculiarly feminine traits, proving he knows an awful lot about them. He tells Watson in "The Second Stain:" "You remember the woman at Margate whom I suspected … .No powder on her nose – that proved to be the correct solution… Their most trivial action may mean volumes, or their most extraordinary conduct may depend upon a hairpin or a curling tongs." In "Wisteria Lodge," he informs Watson that "No woman would ever send a reply-paid telegram. She would have come." In *The Valley of Fear*, he observes the "absence of the usual feminine ululation;" and in "A Case of Identity," he dissects how females oscillate at the door and ring the bell according to their state of passion.

Feminine traits, looks and behaviour do have special significance for Holmes. While he deals with a few older women, (8) most female victims are described as lovely, beautiful, dainty, small, and graceful young women who are well dressed, sensitive, with shining violet or blue eyes, parted or trembling lips, and flushed cheeks. The beauty and appeal of these females does hold sway in Holmes's decision making – not something we might expect from the cerebral Holmes. Luckily, female charms are not the only things that influence his judgments, but they do help ensure that he follows the interest of the female rather than the strict tenets of the law.

Holmes rescues many females who fall prey to con men, blackmailers, thieves, mountebanks and fraudsters. Greed motivates these crimes perpetrated by men on women who tend to be susceptible to charlatans. Many of these cases involve sexual misbehaviour on the part of the female. Holmes deals with each victim according to her individual personality and nature. For example, Lady Eva Brackwell in "Charles Augustus Milverton," is about to be married and has her respectability threatened by letters that call into question her sexual behaviour. Holmes skirts the law using disguise, breaking and entering and withholding evidence on her behalf. When he burns her indiscreet letters with those of other women who also disobeyed the strictures of the Code, his deed strikes a blow for them all. This is what his female victims expect of him, and he delivers.

Two female victims being duped by men react very differently, and Holmes must deal with them accordingly. Initially Holmes is sympathetic to Violet de Merville, an attractive female in "The Illustrious Client," in

thrall to a foreign Baron scheming to marry her and control her fortune. But he grows "furious" when Violet refuses his offer to save her. Here Violet commits a serious breach of Victorian behaviour by overruling the wishes of her family and of Holmes, her protector. Holmes shows great compassion to Kitty Winters, a former lover of the Baron, even when she takes her own criminal revenge. Holmes saves Violet, despite herself, in this dark story with its salacious overtones that penetrates the secrets of the Victorian underworld where men who lead double lives exploit females. Victorians would hope Violet learned her lesson and marries suitably in future.

Lady Frances Carfax "a stray chicken in a world of foxes," by Laurie Fraser Manifold

The other lovely victim, Violet Smith in “The Solitary Cyclist,” does not recognize the danger she is in, but knows she needs help from Holmes. He sees that this Violet is no shrinking, shy Victorian girl, but is out in the world making her living as a governess with a fiancé waiting in the wings. She is one of the new female cyclists, a fad becoming popular but still not fully acceptable for women. (9) Preachers in their Sunday sermons denounced women cyclists as indecent and vulgar, and alleged that married women should not ride the wheel as it might prevent motherhood. Women wearing cycling outfits were jeered at in the streets (10) and refused service in restaurants. (11) Holmes however doesn’t sermonize. Instead, his impression is positive if somewhat suggestive as his “keen eyes dart over” this “ardent” healthy cyclist, and he suspects “some secretive lover.” He dukes it out over her in a bar brawl, yet he is late to act to save her from a forced marriage – a true Victorian crime, and “the worst fate that can befall a woman.” Violet, the new woman, screams as Holmes saves her from being ravished and robbed of her inheritance. Victorians loved this type of pot-boiler, rife with deceit, disguise and debauchery with the new cycling fad thrown in. They wanted a happy ending where Holmes wins – good over greed – and sends Violet off to marry her fiancé, moving her from independence to domesticity and restoring Victorian world order.

Holmes takes on formidable foes for other attractive women being preyed on by men, often men in the family as father, brother and stepfather. These cases incorporate popular Victorian themes – a girl who wonders why her luxuriant hair – an important symbol of Victorian female sexuality – must be cut to secure a strange position in a house with a hidden room; a man’s desire for youth, vigour and sexual conquest that endangers his daughter and his professional reputation; a wealthy lady on her own – “a stray chicken in a world of foxes,” (12) being duped by a ruthless pair; a sister whose brother robs secret documents from her fiancé; a governess who may be in line for part of a vast fortune but must hunt for it; and a girl who fears her stepfather may kill her as he did her sister. Holmes defeats the male villains in these stories and provides happy endings by sending the women off to be married and safely enjoy domesticity. Victorians loved the drama, danger and depravity in these tales that upend the rules of the Victorian Code with their focus on greed and man’s dual nature of part beast and part knight, all highlighting female vulnerability.

A fascinating female client in “The Man with the Twisted Lip” is not at all in line with the Victorian rules. We never know Mrs. St. Clair’s given name but she is introduced as “a little blonde woman…clad in some sort of light *mousseline-de-soie*, with a touch of fluffy pink chiffon at her neck and wrists….with her figure outlined against the flood of light, one hand

upon the door, one half-raised in her eagerness, her body slightly bent…with eager eyes and parted lips.” *Double Indemnity* springs to mind where Fred MacMurray eagerly eyes Barbara Stanwyck descending that staircase. We expect Holmes not to be attracted by her looks. Yet Holmes says of her: “I have seen too much not to know that the impression of a woman may be more valuable than the conclusion of an analytical reasoner.” Did the great brain just say impressions are more valuable than ratiocination? Fortunately, Holmes reverts to logic to solve the case, and luckily Mrs. St. Clair’s looks and flimsy gown present no undue influence on our favourite detective. Holmes tracks down the literally dirty hubby who agrees to give up his con game of begging, another Victorian crime that could cause a family scandal.

Love triangles were popular Victorian plots and Holmes deals with them in many cases where they are either the motive for a crime or the reason someone is suspected of a crime. Love triangles involve money, greed and lechery, where men take advantage of women, reinforcing the Victorian dictum that society must do everything possible to protect women lest they become victims. The majority of females in love triangles are British, but some foreign women also have their lives affected. When females commit crimes and even murder, it is not because of moral weakness, mental illness or poverty (13) but because they are embroiled in love triangles and overwhelmed by their passions. Their steamy real-life love affairs happen behind the curtain of respectability. Holmes frequently pities them and deals compassionately with their unladylike criminal behaviour, as in “The Veiled Lodger,” when he pats Eugenia’s hand “with such a show of sympathy as (Watson) had seldom known him to exhibit.” “Poor girl!” he said. “Poor girl!”

Holmes acts nimbly when facing women on opposing sides of a love triangle, as in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* with Beryl Stapleton and Laura Lyons. This story has two love triangles with the male villain at the heart of both. Beryl, married to Jack Stapleton, pretends she’s single and tries to entrap Henry Baskerville, while Jack makes love to Laura Lyons. When Holmes tells each of the women they have been betrayed, luckily, they don’t kill the messenger. Instead, Holmes handles them adroitly and gets them to help hunt down their betrayer.

In most love triangles, however, Holmes deals with only one of the female victims. In a sizzling emotional and legal conundrum, Holmes offers Hatty Doran, the wild run-away American bride in “The Noble Bachelor,” “paternal advice” and dismisses any charge of bigamy as he unravels the double dealing on both sides of the Atlantic in matters of finance and the heart.

Holmes never meets Mme. Fournaye, the wife in the triangle in "The Second Stain," and he has to threaten Lady Hilda to force her to reveal her treachery so he can extricate her from a dangerous situation. When she finally confesses, Holmes forgives her and, following the Code, protects her by covering up her criminal actions to avoid a family and a government scandal. Lady Hilda is a victim of blackmail who becomes a villainess when she steals a state secret from her husband. She commits more crimes than any other woman in the Canon. Fortunately, Holmes is on her side to erase the stains of her betrayal and treason.

When Holmes enters the scene in "Thor Bridge," Maria Gibson, the Brazilian wife in the love triangle, is already dead. Holmes, "in the supreme manifestations of his genius," deduces that she herself is the hot-blooded villainess in an indelicate plot to convict the governess, her husband's lover, for murder. Further, Maria commits suicide – a crime in Victorian times. Holmes accuses the husband of dishonorably treating the governess under his care – a sin against proper behaviour in the Code, exposes the plot, and frees the innocent governess from prison. Victorians thrilled to this tragic tale in which lust, betrayal, jealousy, hatred and revenge are not undertones but are the main themes. Though a Victorian gentleman commits the sin of lust, worse crimes are committed by a foreign woman who can't be held to the strict rules of the Code, thus making the dark story more acceptable to respectable British readers.

In "The Three Gables," Holmes deals with Isadora Klein, a Spanish beauty who has had "several lovers," and now desires to marry a much younger, titled man. Isadora is a far cry from a British Victorian lady, and she wants to avoid a scandal that could stop her wedding. Watson informs us that "so roguish and exquisite did she look as she stood before us with a challenging smile that I felt of all Holmes's criminals this was the one whom he would find it hardest to face. However, he was immune from sentiment." But once Isadora confesses, Holmes keeps silent to protect her reputation, compounds a felony and blackmails her for money for the dead lover's mother. This case with its exotic foreign beauty, her titled new younger lover, a sex scandal, theft, and her head-to-head confrontation with Holmes, is another spicy "pot-boiler" in which practically none of its characters embodies Victorian conventions. Victorians enjoyed crime even more when committed by a non-Britisher, especially a female.

In "A Case of Identity," Holmes deals with a female unlike his usual attractive client. Mary Sutherland is ungainly and outrageously dressed, and he pokes fun at her appearance and treats her differently than other females. Mary is involved in a depraved love triangle, and Holmes advises her to forget her fiancé. However, by not telling Mary what he has uncovered, he dooms her to forever pine after her ghost fiancé. Does she

deserve this treatment? Holmes says there is "danger for whoso snatches a delusion from a woman." But it should not matter that Mary isn't attractive or won't accept facts. She is his client and Holmes has a moral obligation to inform her. In a similar situation in "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," Holmes does not tell Alice Turner the unholy facts he has uncovered, but his motive for withholding the truth is to protect Alice. Here he doesn't tell Mary because he believes she is so besotted she won't accept the truth. Does appearance matter? Perhaps if Mary had violet eyes, a dainty waist, and parted lips he would have acted differently, even though he's right about her delusion.

"A Scandal in Bohemia," the first short adventure, captured the Victorian imagination with a fabulous plot that touched their penchant for love affairs involving royalty, a beautiful villainess, a compromising photograph, disguises, a fire, a wedding and a woman who bests Holmes at his own game. The intriguing relationship that develops between Irene Adler and Sherlock Holmes is the stuff of legend. Irene is no ideal Victorian woman. She is not submissive, pure or domestic. Instead, she is an American with an interesting past; she lets men into her rooms at all hours; and she turns the tables on men with sexual blackmail. Conan Doyle pits Holmes against a gallant but sinful female, and Holmes and Irene both hold their own. Victorian order is restored when Irene marries, redeeming herself in the eyes of God and man with Holmes himself, disguised as a groom, witnessing the ceremony. This tale set the stage for others wherein females marry and sail off into the sunset.

Holmes meets many attractive women, some good, some bad and some a bit of both. He often comments favourably on their beauty and acknowledges their attractions to others in the male kingdom. In "The Lion's Mane" he says of Maud Bellamy: "Women have seldom been an attraction to me, for my brain has always governed my heart, but I could not look upon her perfect clear-cut face, with all the soft freshness of the downlands in her delicate colouring, without realizing that no young man would cross her path unscathed." A critical aspect of Holmes's success in dealing with females in the Canon is that he himself is never sexually stirred by these attractive women. Their problems are often linked to predatory males and these women trust Holmes not only because of his reputation but also because they perceive his indifference to sins of the flesh. Females may recognize his admiration, yet they feel confident he will not take advantage of their femininity and thus are comfortable dealing with him on all levels. Violet Hunter, Laura Lyons, Isadora Klein and Lady Hilda, though desperate, would never have confided their secrets to Holmes without this level of confidence in his detached disinterest in their charms.

Conan Doyle cleverly employs two essential elements that keep these decidedly scandalous stories from being sensational penny dreadfuls. First, his writing style is literary. He tells us about the sordid side of things in an elegant manner, never using rude, crude or salacious adjectives. And secondly, to do this, he has Dr. Watson narrate most of the tales. Watson, the prototypical Victorian gentleman, describes things from his respectable point of view. He does not see the clandestine undercurrents that only Holmes perceives and uncovers in each adventure. This is a crucial facet of Watson's role in the dynamic duo. Not only does he set the high tone for the stories, but also through his perspective he is able to showcase the genius and uniqueness of Holmes for the world to see and admire.

Conclusion:

Holmes emerges as brave, clever, open minded and honourable, and trusted by women to solve their problems and keep their darkest secrets. We approve when he imposes his own brand of justice for them, overriding the police and courts to avoid scandals that could ruin individuals, families or governments. In a Holmes adventure, the Victorian concept of fair play is everything – especially when it concerns the female sex and all its implications.

References:

(1) *The Valley of Fear*
(2) *The Sign of Four*
(3) "The Adventure of the Second Stain"
(4) Watson describes Edith Presbury in "The Creeping Man."
(5) "The Sussex Vampire," "The Thor Bridge," "The Dancing Men," "The Musgrave Ritual," "The Noble Bachelor," and "The Three Gables."
(6) Conan Doyle letter to Dr. Joe Bell dated 16 June 1892. *Historical Dictionary of Sherlock Holmes*, McCaw, Neil,. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Boulder, NY & London. 2019. p57.
(7) Annie Fraser ("Lady Francis Carfax"), Lady Hilda ("The Second Stain"), and Susan Stockdale ("The Three Gables")
(8) Mrs. Maberley, Mrs. Merrilow and Mrs. Warren to name a few
(9) https://cyclehistory.wordpress.com/2015/01/30/women-on-the-move-cycling-and-the-rational-dress-movement/

Continued on page 33.

Woven into History

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre

Liese Sherwood-Fabre is proud to announce that The Adventure of the Purloined Portrait*, the fourth case of* The Early Case Files of Sherlock Holmes *can be purchased at all major booksellers.*

While Holmes's tweed deerstalker shown in Paget's illustrations was never mentioned in the actual writings, he did wear a tweed coat in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and a tweed suit in "A Scandal in Bohemia." Other men were described as wearing tweed suits in eight other cases but the mere mention of this very popular weave was enough to evoke in the reader's mind the image of the man's suit.

Scottish farmers developed the cloth, called Clò-Mór (meaning "the big cloth") in the 1700s to protect them from the elements. Woven by hand, the fabric is a natural fibre (virgin wool) in a soft, open weave that originally was quite thick and not as colourful or intricately designed as now. (1) The wool, from Cheviot sheep, produced garments that were warm, waterproof and thick. The threads were dyed with natural plant colours such as lichens. (2)

By the 1830s, the British aristocracy were using the fabric for their staff uniforms with specially commissioned patterns for their country estates. (3) Unique designs were used to distinguish those from the different estates during hunting and other outdoor activities. Not only were the garments weather-resistant but the patterns' natural dyes served as a camouflage. (4) The most famous of these estate tweeds was the granite and crimson heather "Balmoral Tweed" created by Prince Albert after purchasing Balmoral castle in 1853. (5)

While some attribute the fabric's name to the Tweed River, most references agree that its moniker developed by accident. The Scottish word for twill is tweel and in 1826, a London milliner misread the label on a shipment of wool tweel and advertised the arrival of tweed fabric. The name stuck and has been used ever since. (6)

In the mid-1800s, automation increased production, and demand for the fabric reached beyond the aristocracy. While men's fashions included tweed jackets, suits and other accessories such as hats, by the early 1860s, women also included tweed in their wardrobe. As they pursued outdoor sports such as walking, shooting and cycling, they often wore jackets, cloaks, coats and, later, matching jackets and skirts for informal or sporting wear. (7)

To protect themselves from the rise in automated tweed mills, the weavers in the Outer Hebrides formed the Harris Tweed Authority in 1909 to safeguard the cloth and patterns from imitation. Shielded by an Act of Parliament, only those fabric sanctioned by the Authority can carry the certification of hand-woven Harris tweed. (8)

In addition to Harris tweed, other popular tweeds can be characterized by their weave, the type of sheep or their place of origin. Included among these are:

- Donegal tweed from the Irish Donegal County, with rainbow-specks of yarn in its knobby surface;
- Saxony tweed originating from Saxony, Germany, and made with merino wool;
- Herringbone tweed uses a weave that forms a V pattern on the surface similar to fish bones;
- Shetland tweed hails from the Shetland Islands and is characterized by a lighter, more delicate wool;
- Barleycorn tweed sports bumpy “barleycorn kernels” along its surface;
- Cheviot tweed is a rougher and heavier fabric from the Cheviot Hills;
- Overcheck twill uses a plain twill pattern with an overlaid check design. (9)

In the early 1900s, tweed reached worldwide popularity. Coco Chanel raised it to haute couture in the 1920s by incorporating it into her designs, and it reached the world’s pinnacle when Sir Edmund Hillary wore it when he ascended Mount Everest. (10)

With a shift in fashions, tweed’s popularity plummeted, and Harris tweed production in 2006 had dropped 90% from its peak in the 1960s. Mills closed, and workers lost their jobs following an effort by one businessman to corner the market on Harris tweed. When his venture failed, efforts by two other businessmen to revive the industry emerged. Of great concern was the loss of the centuries of patterns which the first businessman had eliminated. More than 8,000 of these designs were found in a warehouse, preserving this rich tradition, and Harris tweed is again winning export awards. (11)

It was not happenstance that Holmes wore a tweed coat while roaming the Dartmoor moors. Not only did it protect him from the elements, it also helped him blend into the surroundings—perfect for observing without being observed. One must wonder, however, if it was a houndstooth weave.

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(7) https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/fabrics-fibers/tweed
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(10) https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/tweed-weaves-tales-of-scottish-history-and-landscapes
(11) https://clan.com/blog/history-of-tweed

Continued from pg. 30

(10) "The shouts and yells of the children deafen one, the women shriek with laughter or groan and hiss and all sorts of remarks are shouted at one, and occasionally some not fit for publication. One needs to be very brave to stand all that." Kitty J. Buckman letter to Uriah, August 23, 1897. https://ccambal27.wixsite.com/research-assignment/illustrations

(11) Canadian Wheelmen's Association, later the Canadian Cycling Association was formed at St. Thomas, Ontario, in September 1882 to protect cyclists' rights, promote bicycling and organize championships.

(12) Holmes describes women like Lady Frances Carfax ("Lady Francis Carfax")

(13) *Women, Crime, and Custody in Victorian England* by Lucia Zedner. Review by: David F. Smith Albion: *A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter, 1992), pp. 683-684 Published by: The North American Conference on British Studies Stable. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4050713

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

By Mark Jones

Mark Jones, BSI (“Peter Jones”), MBt 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.

The Tragedy of the Korosko was serialized in *The Strand Magazine* between May and December 1897 and first appeared in book form in 1898. Conan Doyle adapted it for the stage as *The Fires of Fate* in 1909. It was subsequently turned into two feature films in 1923 and 1932.

To understand where this story came from we have to go back to 1895 when Conan Doyle took his ailing wife to Egypt in the hope that the hot climate would alleviate her tuberculosis. Just after new year, they boarded the *Nitocris* for a cruise down the Nile, organized by pioneering travel agency Thomas Cook. The trip took them dangerously near the contested Egyptian-Sudanese border where bands of Mahdists sought to intimidate the passengers and crew. “If I were a Dervish General,” wrote Conan Doyle in his diary, “I would undertake to carry off a Cook’s excursion party with the greatest ease.” (1)

This trip occurred at a pivotal moment in Sudanese history, and Conan Doyle rightly sensed that the British would soon have to “make serious war or lasting peace.” (2) In the early 1880s, an ethnic Sundanese uprising, led by the Mahdi, had succeeded in recapturing much of present-day Sudan from Egypt. The Anglo-Egyptian withdrawal, led by General Charles “Chinese” Gordon, descended into calamity which culminated in the ten-month siege of Khartoum. When the city fell, its occupants slaughtered, Gordon’s murder horrified the British and he was quickly canonized, despite a dubious record. Twelve years later, by the time of Conan Doyle’s voyage, the Egyptian economy and army had been rebuilt and, with European interests in North Africa threatened, Prime Minister Salisbury’s mind turned to recapturing the Sudan. Troop movements began in March 1896, and Conan Doyle filed eight reports in the *Westminster Gazette* as its unofficial war reporter in April and May.

All this is by way of contextualizing what is, to modern readers and possibly contemporaries, a racist story. The British revulsion at events in Khartoum, referenced in the first few pages, is writ large in Conan Doyle's loaded account of western tourists abducted by inhuman Mahdist rebels. The dervishes are cruel, ape-like infidels with no legitimate perspectives or redeeming qualities, a threat to European power and civilization. This characterization is exacerbated by the language barrier – the lacklustre British hero, Colonel Cochrane Cochrane, speaks little Arabic – which prevents any meaningful discourse between the westerners and their captors, save an exchange with a frothing-mouthed "Moolah." The translators are Mansoor, a treacherous dragoman who sells out the party, and Tippy Tilly, an appeaser whose name is a corruption of "Egyptian Artillery," the regiment in which he served before he was forced to join the Mahdists. In contrast, the white tourists are bastions of virtue, save for an untrustworthy Frenchman, Monsieur Fardet, who ignominiously repents his claim the dervishes are a British invention when they appear over the horizon.

At its heart, the book is a hearty defence of western civilization and the imperial civilizing mission. The Colonel insists that "behind national interests and diplomacy and all that there lies a great guiding force—a Providence, in fact." More important, though, is divine Providence. The surviving party, having lost their less virtuous members who perish preserving themselves, are told to convert to Islam or die. Refusing, their fate is apparently set, but they are saved at the 11th hour by the Egyptian Camel Corps. The fanatical dervishes, intent on martyrdom, are slain where they stand and "the nineteenth century [is] revenged upon the seventh." Colonel Cochrane laments only one death, that of "that cursed Moolah… for I believe that I could have persuaded him to be a Christian."

Even as a product of its day, *Korosko* is an enormously problematic work and has not dated well. It is nevertheless a fascinating study of British attitudes and justifications on the eve of imperial decline. A few years later, the Boer War would cement these anxieties, and Conan Doyle's attitudes would start to shift. While his belief in the civilizing mission would remain firm, the vehicle for achieving that mission moved from empire to spiritualism. It may be in the religious epiphany of the survivors of the *Korosko* that we see the first tentative steps in this direction.

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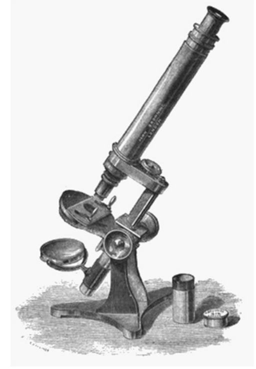
(1) Lellenberg, Stashower and Foley (eds.), *Arthur Conan Doyle - A Life in Letters,* Harper Collins, 2007, p.366.
(2) Ibid., p368.

Strictly Personal



Where a Canadian Sherlockian goes under the microscope.

Name: Donny Zaldin

Age: The same as my identical twin brother, Ronald (with whom I am very close and worked with for over 20 years), minus ten minutes, because he kicked me in the head in order to win the race to be the first-born and inherit the family birthright.

Birthplace: Toronto – which ACD visited on each of his four trips to Canada, in 1894, 1914, 1922 and 1923.

Occupation: Family man (husband, father of 6 children, with 15 grandchildren) and a Barrister and Solicitor (retired), specializing in the practice of family law.

In school I excelled at: Literature; Philosophy; Astronomy, Politics; Botany; Geology; Chemistry; Anatomy; Sensational Literature; Music (including playing the violin); Sports: an expert singlestick player, boxer and swordsman; and a good practical knowledge of Canadian law.

A great evening for me is: any evening with my own "certain gracious lady," Barbara Rusch.

Goal in life: To make a difference so that my memory endures as long as Sherlock Holmes, who never lived and so can never die.

Other hobbies and interests: Collecting, writing and speaking about Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle, Charles Dickens, Lewis Carroll and the Dionne Quintuplets.

Favourite dining experience: Either in or out, so long as it's in good company.

Three favourite Canonical tales: "The Dancing Men," "Silver Blaze" and "The Red-headed League" – because they were each based on real-life sources which I have researched and written about.

The most prized items in my Sherlockian collection are two photographs: *the* scandalous photo of The King of Bohemia together with Irene Adler, and one of Barbara (the best and wisest woman whom I have

ever known) and me together with Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke, backstage at the 1988 production of "The Secret of Sherlock Holmes" at Wyndham's Theatre, London.

What are your favourite and least favourite Sherlockian books? My favourite is the *Practical Handbook of Bee Culture, with Some Observations upon the Segregation of the Queen*, written by a certain retired consulting detective. My least favourite is *The Dynamics of an Asteroid*, by a notorious ex-professor of mathematics.

If I could live at any time in history, it would be: the Sherlockian Age (1887 to 1927) – but only if I can take antibiotics back in time with me.

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

Holmes: Oxford or Cambridge?

Watson: How many wives *did* you have and which was your favourite?

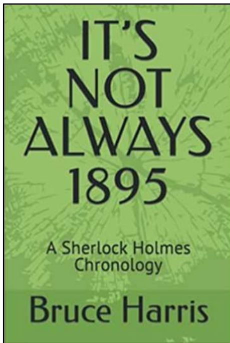
Conan Doyle: Were you justified in your belief in Spiritualism?

Major Sherlockian accomplishments: BSI investiture, ASH investiture, Master Bootmaker Award; serving as Meyers of the BOT in 1991 and as Colonel Ross of the Annual BOT Silver Blaze Race for 32 consecutive years, with three Can-Am BOT-BSI Silver Blaze Conferences at Toronto; being published in the *Sherlock Holmes Journal*, the *Baker Street Journal*, *The Serpentine Muse* and *Canadian Holmes*; contributing as author to four BSI series books; co-editing the 2018 BSI Professions Series volume, *Canon Law: Lawyers, Law and the Sherlockian Canon*; co-editing *The Magic Door*; and the myriad of Sherlockian colleagues and friends I have made over many nations and three separate continents.

Professional accomplishments: practising law as trial counsel over four decades, in matrimonial cases (mainly on behalf of children and underdog litigants of both sexes), civil litigation, criminal law (including a murder trial); and income tax (including a Federal Court appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada).

I would like my epitaph to read: "Loyal, Principled / Donald Zaldin / Lawyer & Man of Letters…"

"Holmes gave me a brief review"

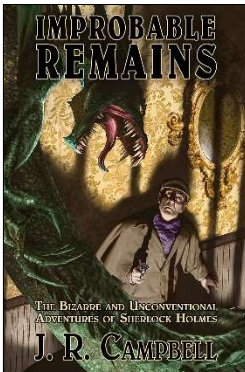


It's Not Always 1895 – A Sherlock Holmes Chronology by Bruce Harris (2022, $9.95 USD, paperback).

It has to be admitted that the field of Sherlockian chronology isn't for everyone. However, that very fact is what makes our enjoyment of the Holmes Canon the great hobby that it is. Different aspects of our Sherlockian world excite and entice different people.

The field of Sherlockian chronology has been going on almost as long as love of the stories themselves. Putting an exact date on, shall we say, fictional events cannot be an easy thing.

In this 125-page volume, Harris puts his little grey cells to the task of dating all the stories, in reverse printing order, while discussing the dates given to each story by many of the previous, alive and dead, chronologists. If you would like to know what story may have occurred on your birthday, anniversary or any other date, this latest chronology is for you. As Harris states in his writing about "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane:" "Settling on specific chronological dates often comes down to choosing between (at least) two conflicting statements." - Mark Alberstat



Improbable Remains: The Bizarre and Unconventional Adventures of Sherlock Holmes by J. R. Campbell (2022, $45 USD, Weird House).

In today's Sherlockian world, pastiches come across this editor's desk at a surprisingly high volume. This short story collection by Canadian J.R. Campbell, however, gave me pause. The cover alone was a step above most and with an introduction by Charles Prepolec, I had to take a look.

I was not disappointed. The stories in this 302-page collection are all on the other side of rational science, nightmares and superstition. They are also so well written that if this isn't your cup of tea you will still enjoy Holmes and Watson in these unconventional settings. If you are a fan of the Holmes and macabre/supernatural genre you may recognize six of these stories from other collections the author co-edited with Prepolec while the other five are all original. – Mark Alberstat

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

Saturday June 4, 2022 – "The Adventure of The Red Circle"

At 1:05 p.m. Meyers, Mike Ranieri, called the meeting to order and welcomed 69 Sherlockians to examine "The Red Circle."

Mike announced that due to circumstances Brenda Rossini, who was to have spoken, had been rescheduled to November 26.

Mike gave an update on the Bootmakers Golden Jubilee celebration to be held from Friday September 23 to Sunday 25 in combination with The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Society whose 25 year was 2021, delayed by COVID.

Meyers introduced James Lovegrove, who was coming to us from the UK and has written over 50 novels and children's books; in particular Sherlock Holmes and Cthulhu, a being created by horror author H. P. Lovecraft in the 1920s.

In conversation with Mike, Lovegrove told of his discovery of Holmes around the age of 12, and as an adult his interest in the works of Lovecraft, which led to his combining the two.

This conversation was followed by a short *Sopranos* video put together by Mike.

Karen Campbell followed this up with her story quiz. Winners were Barbara Rusch, who for the first time had a perfect score of 20 out of 20, followed by Julie McKuras and Sonia Yazamdjian, both with a score of 19. Mike will arrange for them to receive prizes courtesy of George Vanderburgh.

Karen Gold regaled the attendees with, "The Red Circle will be Broken," based on the music to the hymn "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," composed by the Rev. Charles H. Gabriel.

Meyers then introduced Australian Sherlockian David Lewis who did the story wrap-up and also told us about The Sydney Passengers.

Due to the time difference, it being the middle of the night there, his presentation was pre-recorded.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m. with the announcement that the next meeting would be on "The Bruce Partington Plans," on Saturday July 26.

– David Sanders M.Bt.

Saturday, July 23, 2022 – "The Adventure of The Bruce-Partington Plans"

The Bootmakers of Toronto met on Zoom on Saturday, July 23, 2022, to dive into "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans."

There were 60 people in attendance, including visitors from England, Egypt, Bavaria and France.

Mike Ranieri, as Meyers, called the meeting to order at 1:09 P.M.

Mike had a special surprise quiz on fictional submarines. There were 19 two-part questions. The winner was Dennis Keiser with 31 correct. He will receive a prize donated by George Vanderburgh.

Mike then introduced our first speaker, Mark Jones. He studied and taught the history of the 18th and 19th centuries and continues to work in higher education as a consultant. Along with Paul Chapman, he hosts the *Doings of Doyle* podcast.

His topic is ACDTV – Inside the Missing TV series *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (1967). The series had 13 episodes made from some of Conan Doyle's stories. All but one of the episodes were erased so the videotape could be reused. The producer was John Hawkesworth, who later worked on the Granada Jeremy Brett Sherlock Holmes series. At the end of his talk, he answered questions. He is working on a book about the series.

Karen Campbell presented the quiz on "The Bruce-Partington Plans." The winner was Jane Almquist with 19 out of 20 correct. She will receive a prize from George Vanderburgh.

Next up was Jim Ballinger, who played a video of his song "The Bruce-Partington Plans," which was first performed at the Bootmaker's meeting of 24 October 1981, at the HMCS York.

Mike Ranieri then introduced Julie McKuras, who did the Wrap-Up for the story. Julie, a BSI, is from Apple Valley, Minnesota, a former intensive care nurse and a devoted grandmother. Mike conducted an interview with Julie which covered the chapter on "The Bruce-Partington Plans," which she wrote for the book *About Sixty* edited by Chris Redmond.

Mike reminded everyone that our next meeting will be the Conference on September 23 - 25.

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

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