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Cover: Vojtěch Cinybulk (1915 – 1994) was a Czech graphic artist, illustrator, puppeteer, and a keen pipesmoker. He was a popular creator of numerous "ex libris" (bookplates), mainly wood engravings or lithographies. On the cover is one of two he created portraying Sherlock Holmes which were commissioned in the late 1970s by Aleš Kolodrubec.

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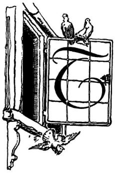
races of Bootprints

A Sherlockian bite out of the Big Apple

It's a thrill to see Sherlockians and Doyleans travelling far and wide again. Any opportunity to be among this circle of the faithful is a treat, as was the case during the 2023 BSI Weekend in January.

It was great to be with friends old and new, including many who had attended Jubilee@221B in the fall. In New York, some new friends were met in person for the first time after so many meetings, lectures and conferences held via Zoom over the past couple of years.

Regardless of how the time was spent during the busy, full Irregulars' weekend – at larger official festivities, smaller side gatherings or late night after-parties, the weekend was full of good company, lively discussion and many laughs.

Among the many highlights was the second annual ACD Society Doylean Honors event, with Jessie Amaolo of the Toronto Public Library/Arthur Conan Doyle Collection being among the award recipients. Jessie was recognized in the performing and visual arts category for the virtual tour of "A Study in Sherlock & His Creator." Friendly competition filled the race card for the inaugural running of the Wessex Cup, which included a few Canadian stables. The field of windup toy horses were decked out in colourful racing silks created by Bootmaker Peggy MacFarlane.

For members and invited guests, the annual BSI dinner along with the announcement of the year's investitures is always a highlight.

This issue has an international lineup of contributors that includes Daniel and Eugene Friedman, who examine the many deaths that surrounded Conan Doyle at the time he killed off Holmes, and Bruce Harris, with a twisted look at Porlock. Brian Clark, a new name to *Canadian Holmes*, spins a yarn about fishing and the Sherlockian Canon while Stefan Weishaupt makes his journal debut with a look at the link between Agatha Christie and ACD. A previously unpublished article by the late Don Redmond, a giant among Sherlockians, focuses on Holmes's preferred drug, cocaine. In her column, Barbara Rusch delves into the Victorian obsession with all things floral and Mark Jones takes a look at "The Beetle Hunter."

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.

Throughout recorded history, flowers, symbolizing the renewal and the cycle of life, have held a special place in culture, religion and literature. Evidence of their importance stretches back to the ancient world. Flora was the Roman goddess of flowers and the season of spring, after whom a festival, known as Florilia, was named, while Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, was often portrayed wearing a crown of roses. By the late 16th century, the rose had been immortalized by William Shakespeare in perhaps the finest tribute to that bloom in all of literature. In *Romeo and Juliet* he writes: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

But it was the Victorians who took their adoration of flowers to an entirely new level. Queen Victoria, known as England's Rose, accessorized her wedding gown with orange blossoms, and her bouquet with a cutting from a myrtle bush which Prince Albert brought from his native Germany. A sprig from that same shrub has since adorned the bouquet of every royal bride. By the late 19th century, millions of people had left the countryside for the factories of the "great cesspools." Amidst the filth, smokestacks and crowding of the city there came a wistfulness, a sense of nostalgia for the simple agrarian life and the serenity of nature. The natural world, and especially the garden, which stood for everything beautiful and wholesome, became elevated to an art form. Young ladies gathered ferns and wildflowers to paste into albums or painted still lifes in brilliant watercolours, while schoolgirls embroidered them into cushions and samplers. Boxes and fire screens were decorated with floral scraps.

This idealization of all things horticultural was reflected in images of Victorian life. New printing techniques made the manufacture and distribution of colourful greeting cards and promotional items a new medium, and blossoms appeared in profusion on Christmas cards, valentines and advertising embellished with roses, bluebells and forget-me-nots. An entire language of flowers, known as floriography, was created, a secret vocabulary formulated to transmit messages between

lovers circumscribed in the presence of disapproving parents or eagle-eyed chaperones. Flowers like the rose, the lily and the tulip expressed love and affection. Wisteria, which wound its way onto the title of a Sherlockian tale, in coded language translates as "I cling to you," as its trailing vines tend to become entangled in other vegetation, choking it off. Violet, the name ascribed to multiple canonical victims, evoked, aptly enough, modesty or innocence.

Sherlock Holmes is devoid of any such sentimentality. A flower bed holds no charms for him beyond evidence of footprints – that is, until the case of "The Naval Treaty." It seems Shakespeare is not the sole noteworthy to pen a heartfelt panegyric in praise of the rose. "What a lovely thing a rose is!" Holmes muses. "There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as in religion. It can be built up as an exact science by the reasoner. Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers." This impassioned soliloquy is all the more astonishing when one considers that practically the first thing Watson tells us with regard to his fellow lodger is that his knowledge of philosophy is "Nil," while his familiarity with botany is essentially confined to poisonous plants. Of practical gardening "he knows nothing," nor is there any meaningful discussion whatever of religion. How then to account for the astonishing fact that by his retirement, he is living on a farm on the Sussex Downs, "his time divided between philosophy and agri-culture"? It appears that in the interim, Holmes has become an ardent advocate of scientific pantheism, which equates G-d with nature. And it is entirely possible that the magic of the moss-rose is the catalyst, the inspiration for this dramatic transformation, his eloquent disquisition the pivotal moment, the inflection point that defines his new-found spirituality and alters the trajectory of his life. Flower power indeed!

3-dimensional Victorian valentine embellished with a proliferation of roses. The message reads, "The rose is pink/The violet blue./My heart is warm/With thoughts of you." From the author's collection

Gone fishin' with Sherlock Holmes

By Brian Clark

Brian Clark grew up in Colorado and fly fished obsessively throughout the Mountain West and Southeast Asia before moving to the Gulf Coast. He fishes regularly, ties flies, edits a fly-fishing magazine, and leads The John Openshaw Society, a Houston-based scion of the Baker Street Irregulars.

Editors' note: A shorter version of this article targeting the fly-fishing community was published online in On The Fly Magazine*, Issue 19, Spring-Summer 2020.*

Was our beloved Sherlock Holmes a fly fisher? Despite having moved in the right social circles during an era when the popularity of angling surged among the British aristocracy, and although he frequented the regions of England where fly fishing for trout was invented, it seems unlikely that Holmes would've indulged, outside the realm of a case, in such a "stupid occupation," as Tolstoy described it in *Anna Karenina*.

That's a pity. He'd have made a splendid fly fisherman.

Still, there's merit in viewing the Victorian era through the lens of fly fishing, and to also use Holmes's famous magnifying glass to reveal a few truths about the sport itself and Conan Doyle's thoughts on it.

Canonical Casting

The only story in the Canon where Holmes or Watson do any fishing in an aquatic rather than metaphorical sense is "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place." Prior to departing for Berkshire, Holmes asks after the fishing, then proclaims, "Watson and I are famous fishermen – are we not, Watson?" Although they do indeed haul "a formidable litter of rods, reels and baskets" to Shoscombe Old Place in their first-class carriage and lodge there with a local angling enthusiast, it appears that the intent is more artifice than angling. Indeed, they forgot a "spoon-bait for jack" (a reference to pike, a fish mentioned elsewhere in the story) (1) and spent their first day investigating a mysterious death rather than fishing. During a lull later in the case, they did fish the millstream "with the result that we had a dish of trout for our supper," which rejuvenated Holmes.

Otherwise, the Canon is almost silent on the subject of angling. There's mention of "remarkably good fishing" at Donnithorpe, "a little hamlet just to the north of Langmere, in the country of the Broads" near Norfolk where

some of the action in "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott" takes place, and where Holmes spent a month during university, but nothing more is said. "Two lengths of a fishing-rod, which came to just six feet" were used as a measuring stick during "The Musgrave Ritual," but there's no mention of any fishing done with that rod.

Fish and fishermen are mentioned a handful of times elsewhere, though only in passing and without much connection to angling. One intriguing such passage appears in "The Noble Bachelor," where Holmes includes this line while explaining his methods to Watson: "Circumstantial evidence is occasionally very convincing, as when you find a trout in the milk, to quote Thoreau's example." This is an almost verbatim quotation from Henry David Thoreau's journal dated November 11, 1850, where it appears almost as a non-sequitur. It's generally thought that Thoreau was talking more about unscrupulous milkmen than anglers, as finding a trout in a milk bottle would indicate that some watering-down had taken place.

Other Canonical remarks about fishing refer to catching criminals or evidence rather than fish. "The Musgrave Ritual" offers a good example: "Let me see the contents of the bag which you fished from the mere." In that case, they hauled up a royal crown; in four decades as a dedicated fisherman, I've yet to be so fortunate.

Contextual Casting

As this piece is intended more for Sherlockians than hardcore anglers, here's some historical context about fly fishing, with particular emphasis on developments during the Victorian era.

Broadly speaking, the term "fly fishing" can today be applied to a variety of angling techniques by which fish are fooled into eating an artificial lure (a "fly") attached to a weighted line manipulated by a flexible rod. Most flies imitate something a fish would eat, usually an insect on the water's surface (a "dry fly") or a sub-surface insect (a "nymph" or "wet fly"), but also non-*Insecta* vittles like baitfish or crustaceans (a "streamer"). Since many anglers create their own flies using thread to tie feathers, fur, and synthetic materials onto a hook, new variations are constantly being added to the countless designs that already exist, thousands of which are marketed commercially.

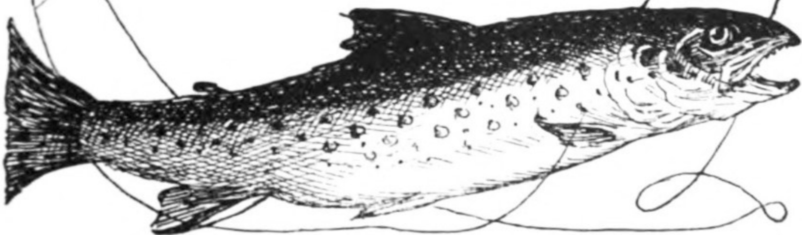
Fly fishing is often considered to be an aesthetically pleasing and exceptionally sporting way to catch fish, mostly because relatively few fish actually get caught compared to other methods, like use of nets or live bait. Many fish species aren't very interested in eating fake bugs, many fly fishers aren't very good at fly fishing, and many fish tricked into eating a fly still elude capture. Additionally, it's common among fly fishers to release the fish they do catch back into the water, theoretically unharmed.

Detractors argue that fly-fishing techniques are unnecessarily elaborate, that the traditions are arcane and dogmatic, that the equipment is ludicrously overpriced, that fly fishers are often elitist and condescending, and that catch-and-release practices are ultimately longer on pomposity and hypocrisy than conservation – particularly if you happen to enjoy eating fish. They're not wrong. Despite being hopelessly devoted to the sport, I'll freely admit that it's a hideously expensive and wildly inefficient way to catch relatively few fish. And I think it's absolutely lovely.

Like many other extravagant and hedonistic pastimes with a rich heritage, the sport tends to attract a fair number of obsessive enthusiasts. The mania took hold for me when I was still in single digits, around the same time I discovered Holmes – possibly not a coincidence. And while I have a respectable number of Sherlockian books on my shelves, the number of fly-fishing books has repeatedly been labelled "obscene" by certain parties, as have the piles of fishing gear littering my closets, office, garage, and various car trunks and boat hatches. Still, when I don't spend enough time on the water, this quotation from "The Man with the Twisted Lip" always comes to mind: "My mind is like a racing engine, tearing itself to pieces because it is not connected up with the work for which it was built."

Proper Places

Most of fly fishing's original Holy Waters lie in southern England, just west and south of London: the so-called "Chalk Streams" of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Dorset. The geology underlying this region features a layer of permeable chalk which absorbs, filters, and nourishes rainwater; after the water percolates back up to the surface from the aquifers via springs, the resulting network of mineral-rich, gin-clear, temperature-stable streams provide ideal habitat for a stunning abundance of aquatic plants, bugs, and, fish –



including trout. These fabled rivers – including the Test, Avon, and Lambourn – form the centrepieces of an intensively managed riparian and agrarian system of weirs, water meadows, gates, channels, tow paths, stone bridges, mills and the like, many of them quite ancient. It's a genuinely lovely landscape, lush and green, replete with picturesque farms, pastures, castles, and other listed houses with large parklands, plus many leftovers from prehistoric times. Stonehenge lies within easy walking distance of River Avon, which flows through Salisbury and is overlooked by Old Sarum. Avebury stands beside River Kennet, just a short drive to the north. The various "white horses" of the region, like the famous Uffington White Horse that appeared in the works of GK Chesterton (author of the Father Brown mysteries) and Thomas Hughes (who wrote Tom Brown's Schooldays, which directly inspired the Harry Potter series and also introduced the "Flashman" character later co-opted by George MacDonald Fraser), were created using the same chalk that enables the region's rivers to run clean and clear.

It's no surprise that London's elite enjoyed their retreats in the countryside, particularly given the squalor of the city in Victorian times, and it seems probable that Conan Doyle was among them. We know that he lived in Southsea for a spell, and the settings for various canonical stories range from the heart of the Chalk Stream region (The Copper Beeches was said to be a country house near Winchester in Hampshire, and Shoscombe Old Place was in Berkshire) across the Sussex Downs to where Holmes finally retired to a cottage near Eastbourne. Had Holmes favoured angling over apiary, he needn't have strayed far from his usual haunts.

In his 1924 autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, Conan Doyle writes that he was "in sympathy with fishing, and would gladly have a little if I knew where to get it . . . Besides, is it not the sweet solitude of Nature, the romantic quest, rather than the actual capture which appeals to the fisherman?" (2)

However, years earlier in 1894 in an *Indianapolis News* interview, Conan Doyle reminisced about his time whaling and said:

> To play a salmon is a royal game, but when your fish weighs more than a suburban villa, and is worth a clear £2,000; when, too, your line is a thumb's thickness of manilla rope, with fifty strands, every strand tested for thirty-six pounds, it dwarfs all other experiences. (3)

We also know that in late March 1885, while still a struggling doctor in Portsmouth, Conan Doyle attended the annual dinner of the Portsmouth Waltonian Angling Society. He was, presumably, a member of the society

and maybe even an avid angler in those days, although nothing more is known about his fly-fishing practice of those days.

Sherlock Holmes, Your Fly-Fishing Guide

Perhaps because it seems so unlikely that Conan Doyle was thinking of angling when he created Holmes, it's astounding to discover how beautifully some of his methods can be applied to fly fishing. Even so, I'd be embarrassed to admit how many times my attempts to use Sherlockian deductive techniques to outwit a creature with a brain the size of a ginger nut have failed.

It's hard to imagine that Holmes would be as patient as most of today's professional fly-fishing guides are obliged to be, but after untangling a hapless client's 56th wind knot of the morning, even the most tolerant among them must occasionally think something like what Holmes said in "The Adventure of the Dying Detective:" "I am somewhat exhausted; I wonder how a battery feels when it pours electricity into a non-conductor."

When an angler proves unable to see a fish even at close range, perhaps a few guides have even thrown out some variation of Holmes's pithy shot from "A Scandal in Bohemia:" "You see, but you do not observe." I'll freely grant that spotting fish – whether it's trout in a clear mountain river or redfish in a muddy marsh – is considerably more challenging than counting stairs, however, it's not difficult to imagine Holmes and Watson having a similar exchange in a fly-fishing context.

References

(1) In his 2005 *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes, Volume II* Leslie Klinger indicates in sidenote #38 for "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place" that "jack" refers to a tropical saltwater fish. However, while numerous species of the jack family (*Carangidae*) do indeed rank among the world's most spectacular saltwater gamefish, encountering any of them in landlocked Berkshire would be highly improbable. It's almost certain that Conan Doyle meant northern pike, as indications are given by one of the characters that pike can be caught in Hall Lake near Shoscombe Old Place, and both "jack" and "jackfish" remain common names for pike in multiple English dialects. Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) are commonly found in freshwater across the Northern Hemisphere; they're a toothy and aggressive carnivorous fish with a well-earned reputation for offering exceptionally good sport on light tackle, though less sought-after as table fare. Although the majority of pike average 50-75cm (20-30in) and weigh 1.5-3kg (3-6.5lbs), records exist of duck-eating monsters in the range of 150cm (60in) and 25kg (55lbs). Pike will take flies, and a small subcommunity of modern fly fishers regularly target them, usually with

exceptionally large flies offered on wire leaders, and occasionally with heavy-calibre handguns.

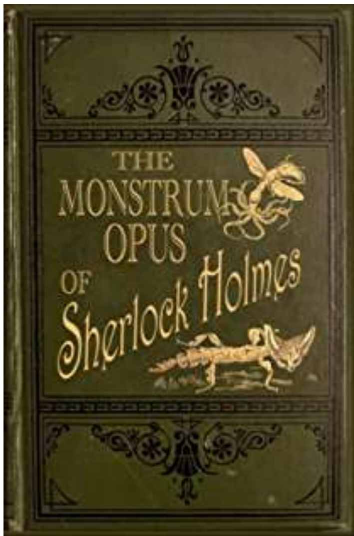
(2) Doyle, Arthur Conan, Edited by Douglas Kerr, *Memories and Adventures*, 2022, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, Chapter 24, "Some Recollections of Sport," p231.

(3) Boström, Mattias, Alberstat, Mark eds., *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle in the Newspapers, Vol. 6*, Gasogene Books, Indianapolis, p36.

Reviews continued from page 38

complex story. Hudson, Holmes and Watson are a formidable triumvirate whose strengths are well-suited to solve a mystery of a blood feud, a land dispute, star-crossed lovers and the story of a pitiable soul. Hudson also challenges the racism that pervaded 19th century society.

– Wendy Heyman-Marsaw



The Monstrum Opus of Sherlock Holmes, edited by Nathaniel Barker-Harris, Brad Keefauver and Rob Nunn (Independently published, C$12.33, trade paperback)

All manner of creatures lurk within the pages of the Canon, according to this collection of short essays by a legion of noted Sherlockians. The presence of sorcerers, goblins, zombies and much, much more provide a plausible yet strange explanation for trifles, ambiguities and unanswered questions found in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Some entries in this clever, entertaining volume – edited by Brad Keefauver, Rob Nunn and a shadowy figure from Moorville, Kansas – also search for answers through the likes of Dr. Moreau, Jekyll and Hyde, and the vainglorious Dorian Gray. Readers will laugh out loud at some of the depths they mine in the quest for truth. These dark chasms are also ripe for discoveries about folklore, myths and legends from around the globe. That is, if you dare to trust the minds that take you on such a ghastly journey. – JoAnn Alberstat

…continued on page 33

"A pathological and morbid process"

By Donald A. Redmond

This essay by Don Redmond, MBt, BSI, has not previously been published. It was written about 1988 to be number XXIII in his series "Sherlockian Plotnotes," which appeared over several years in the journal Baker Street Miscellanea. *The series came to an unexpected end when* BSM *ceased publication in 1994. Typescripts for several of the essays have now been found in the author's files.*

The cocaine scene in *The Sign of Four* has generated as much heat and verbiage as any Canonical topic, but full justice has not yet been done to it in the historical context: that of a new drug and new medical techniques. These include cocaine itself, local anesthesia, hypodermic injection, pharmacodynamics, and even the basic fields of physiology and neurology. Papers on the cocaine problem in the Canon which I have read, from medical people, have not been encompassing in their discussion, and have been less than satisfying in answering the possible questions.

Medical communication at the time is one problem to which Sherlockian attention has not been given; so I propose to ask briefly: Was Conan Doyle up-to-date? What means did he use to keep up to date? Specifically, upon what basis did Dr. John H. Watson (as the voice of Conan Doyle) argue with Sherlock Holmes as to the negative effects of the continued use of cocaine?

The pace of medical and scientific progress today, a century later, is such that it is said half of all a medical student learns by the time of graduation is out of date a decade later. Whether the pace had become so hectic late in the 19th century I cannot say, but Conan Doyle had been out of medical school for more than a decade by the time he wrote *The Sign of Four*.

True, he had meanwhile written a thesis on *tabes dorsalis* – mostly speculation – and gained his M.D., but to what extent had he kept up on medical innovations? And how had he kept up? Rodin and Key, in their 1984 *Medical Casebook of Doctor Arthur Conan Doyle*, suggest that Conan Doyle knew of the hypodermic injection of cocaine a year before Schleich's 1891 report of the practice, and evidently knew of possible cocaine addiction, though only the case of Halsted in America had been documented and that was in 1884. They conclude that "Conan Doyle's

knowledge of cocaine and its addictive powers was well in advance of that of most practitioners of his time."

Conclusions about this awareness of innovation and progress can be drawn from the discussion by Rodin and Key of the vaccination furor of 1887, and of Koch's claims of a cure for tuberculosis in 1890, close enough to the time of *The Sign of Four* that surely these incidents reflect Conan Doyle's attitudes and actions toward such other matters as cocaine as well. In 1887 he was involved in a heated defence of the effectiveness of vaccination through letters to the newspapers. In 1890 again, the first reports of Koch's claims appeared in the newspapers. Only on November 13 did Koch's own report appear in the *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* (*German Medical Weekly*), and on November 15 there was a report in *The British Medical Journal*. Rodin and Key quote Conan Doyle's autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, to the effect that "A great urge came upon me suddenly... at a few hours' notice I packed up a bag and started off," and he arrived in Berlin on November 16. Conan Doyle would (though he read German) hardly have perused the German medical weekly; he must have left England on November 14 or 15 and would scarcely have seen the *BMJ* either; ergo, he must have taken his sudden resolution on the strength of reports in the *Daily Telegraph* (and other newspapers?) of November 11-12, listed in Rodin and Key's bibliography.

I suggest that Conan Doyle, an assiduous reader of newspapers, gained his knowledge of developments in the use of cocaine similarly through newspapers. Even when medical journals carried the latest reports, and they did not have the excruciating delays in publication, nor the proliferation of specialized journals, which clog today's efforts at keeping up to date – the newspapers often carried immediate (and as always, sometimes popularized, sometimes unconfirmed, sometimes garbled) accounts of medical innovations.

So, on August 22, 1885, he would have read in the *Portsmouth Times*:

> The Swansea Tragedy. A Curious Experiment. - Walter Jenkins, the supposed murderer of Mr. Smith, grocer, at Swansea, and would-be suicide, underwent a novel operation on Wednesday, Drs. Hall, Sibbering, Davies, and Charles superintending. Instead of using chloroform, they experimented with a new compound, called "cocaine". Jenkins, at the time of the tragedy, shot himself, and the location of the bullet being discovered, the part around was painted with cocaine, the region becoming insensible to pain.

Four doctors superintending? Who did the incision? A "humble M.R.C.S." (Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons) no doubt, as

James Mortimer would say in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Then two years later, American reports of cocaine addiction appeared. Rodin and Key cite William A. Hammond, former Surgeon General of the United States, who in a presentation to the Medical Society of the State of Virginia in 1887 "denied its addictive nature." In the title of his paper he referred to "the so-called cocaine habit." But the *Portsmouth Evening News* of March 22 1887 had this item:

> The Use of Cocaine.- A Number of cases of confirmed cocaine habit recently reported in the United States gives the Scientific American occasion to remark upon the subject. While some of them lack confirmation, it is certain that several physical and mental wrecks have been caused by the excessive use of this alkaloid.... In civilized countries the alkaloid as a chloride is usually employed, and is administered by hypodermic injection. The practice of using it in excess is hitherto reported as almost confined to physicians. Its effects upon its victims are very sad. The brain becomes permanently, or for a period, affected, a species of lunacy being produced.

The weekly *Hampshire Telegraph* of Portsmouth for June 30, 1888, reports upon the annual meeting, in Southsea, of the Southern Counties Branch of the British Dental Association. The election of officers, and titles of learned papers, are listed. The last of these papers was by Arthur King, LDS, on "The administration of cocaine in dentistry" and the *Telegraph* says:

> The paper which proved of most general interest was that of Mr. King. The essayist first spoke of the minor cases in which the use of cocaine was most useful. Regarding its use for the extraction of teeth there was still great difference of opinion, and many condemned it altogether. Citing his own experience of its use during the past twelve months, Mr. King said that out of a total of 553 cases there were 269 in which no pain whatever was experienced, and 232 in which the pain was so slight that the patients never moved more than a muscle of the face or merely murmured "Oh!"... In 34 cases the pain, although considerable, was not so great as if no anesthetic had been used. In the remaining 18 instances there was no local anesthesia. The essayist then pointed out the cases in which cocaine should and should not be used, and described what he had found to be the most useful method of its application. In conclusion, he stated the reason for troublesome gases having been met with when cocaine was used, and showed how such cases might be avoided.

The *Telegraph* reports that a dinner took place in the evening, and the attendance included "several medical men of Portsmouth and the neighbourhood." Cdr. Geoffrey Stavert of Southsea, Hon. Secretary of the Sherlock Holmes Society and author of *A Study in Southsea* (1987), who kindly provided the cutting from the *Hampshire Telegraph*, reports further that, "ACD is not mentioned in this report; he was not at the meeting itself but I know from another paper that he was one of the guest doctors at the dinner ... Cornelius Wheeler, the chairman and host, of Kent Road, Southsea, was a friend and near neighbour of ACD's at Bush Villas. No doubt the conversation at the meal and afterwards would be full of reference to Arthur King's paper on cocaine." How tantalizingly regrettable it is that the newspaper did not describe "the most useful method of ... application" of cocaine. Evidently even for extractions there were alternatives to hypodermic injection, possibly topical application to the gingiva, a much less concentrated posology which would account for the cases of incomplete anesthesia.

By 1889 cocaine addiction was apparently well documented, and on June 7 the *Portsmouth Evening News* under the heading "New forms of narcotism," reprinted an item from *The British Medical Journal*. A year later, just as *The Sign of Four* was first published, the *Evening News* of 10 February 1890 had a paragraph:

> The Cocaine Habit – According to the British Journal of Dental Science, three cases of hallucination, due to "the cocaine habit," have been reported by Messrs. Magnan and Saury. It appears that two of the sufferers have been the slaves of morphine, and in the hope of breaking away from the habit, which they had found to be so pernicious, they resorted to cocaine, which they daily injected under the skin, in quantities varying from 1 to 2 grammes.

Indeed, the young Conan Doyle must have learned as a boy about what would in his manhood become an important drug. Rodin and Key note that cocaine was isolated from coca leaves by Nieman in 1859. The use of coca leaves by Peruvian Indians as a stimulant – for inurement to the effects of fatigue – is recounted by "Captain" Mayne Reid in Chapter 4 of *The Forest Exiles*, which Conan Doyle must have read as a boy, for Reid was one of his favourite authors.

No wonder then that Doctor Watson speaks "earnestly" to Holmes of "increased tissue-change ... permanent weakness ... black reaction" and calls the effect of cocaine "a pathological and morbid process." Yet for Holmes at the end of the chase "there still remains the cocaine-bottle."

The murder of Sherlock Holmes: Deaths in the life of Arthur Conan Doyle

By Daniel L. Friedman & Eugene B. Friedman

Daniel and Eugene, a son and father Sherlockian writing team, are practising pediatricians in New York and avid fans of the life and works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

In an 1894 interview when asked about the death of Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle said: "Yes, it was a case of cold-blooded murder, and when I killed Sherlock Holmes I killed my best friend … But I had to kill him. It was a case of self-defence. I had written 26 stories about him, and the mental strain consequent on the working up of the adventures was proving too much for me." (1)

December 1893 illustration by Harry C. Edwards in McClure's Magazine.

In addition to this particular strain, what life events could have led Conan Doyle to permanently separate himself from the character who had brought him fame and fortune? Conan Doyle, while appreciative of his commercial success, regarded the Holmes stories as a stumbling block that prevented him from receiving his due fame as a writer of erudite historical and biographical works. In a letter home to his mother, he declared, "I think of slaying Holmes...& winding him up for good & all. He takes my mind from better things" (2). Yet Conan Doyle may have had other reasons for wanting

Holmes dead. Certainly, if Holmes had been granted the opportunity to investigate the details of his own murder, he would have begun things by cataloguing the inordinate number of deaths that surrounded his creator's family, friends, business partners, and even lovers.

The Fellow doctor: George T. Budd, M.D.

On the last day of February in 1889, Conan Doyle's medical school classmate and former partner, George T. Budd died from an ascribed "cerebral abnormality" at age 34. With his premature death, his young widow and four children were plunged into a dire financial situation.

After receiving his medical degree in 1881, Conan Doyle partnered with Budd at his Bristol and Plymouth offices. But this wasn't to be a match made in heaven, and the two of them wound up terminating their professional relationship on bad terms.

Despite the unfortunate breakup, there can be no denying that Budd was someone Conan Doyle had looked up to during medical school and in the years that immediately followed. Certainly, he would have been saddened to learn of his friend's early death and of the financial difficulties Budd's young widow now had to face. Conan Doyle would pay tribute to George Budd in the form of Dr. Thomas Crabbe in "Crabbe's Practice" and Dr. James Cullingworth in *The Stark Munro Letters*.

The Governess: Annette Doyle

A year after Budd's death, on January 13, 1890, Conan Doyle's beloved older sister Annette succumbed to pneumonia at the age of 33, the result of "a virulent attack of influenza." Although this disease had first received worldwide notice in 1918, it had already been present in the Victorian era, where it had been called the "Russian epidemic." Annette, as the oldest of the family's female siblings, and Arthur, as the oldest male sibling, had seen their relationship grow tighter with the passage of time. When Annette made the difficult decision to accept the job as a governess in Portugal, Conan Doyle was saddened by the thought of a prolonged separation from the sister he loved. When she fell ill, Conan Doyle wanted to go to Portugal to direct her care, but his own mother rejected such thoughts saying it "could do no good, as two good doctors were in attendance." That Annette's death evidently continued to weigh heavily on Conan Doyle is evident in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches," where Watson tells us that Holmes constantly muttered "that no sister of his should ever have accepted such a situation" as a governess.

The Art Collector: Henry Edward Doyle

During a span of just 10 months, two of Conan Doyle's talented and accomplished uncles died in quick succession. The first of them to go to his grave was Conan Doyle's uncle Henry Edward Doyle, who died suddenly on February 17, 1892. This talented man had served as commissioner for the Papal States to the London International Exhibition and had been the recipient of the Order of Champion of the Bath for his services to Queen Victoria. Revered as a "great judge of old paintings," he had been named director at The National Gallery of Dublin in 1869. His keen eye helped the museum become the possessor of one of the world's finest and most meticulously curated art collections. Conan Doyle lent some of his Uncle Henry's abilities to the Holmes mystique by imparting his fictional detective with his uncle's uncanny abilities to appreciate and evaluate the market value of fine works of art. In *The Valley of Fear* (1915), Sherlock Holmes lectures Inspector MacDonald about the importance of a certain work of art that is mounted behind Moriarty's desk. Holmes tells him that there is no way a man making "seven hundred a year" could possibly afford a "forty thousand pounds" Jean Baptiste Greuze masterpiece.

The Historian: James William Edmund Doyle

The next to meet his end was James Doyle, a noted historian perhaps best remembered for having written and illustrated *The Chronicles of England: B.C. 55- A.D. 1485*, a massive historical tome that he began to compile in his youth. James revised it each year, and it wasn't long before his masterful work attracted the attention and approval of the most influential people in Britain, among them "His late Royal Highness, the lamented Prince Consort." James also spent 13 years researching and writing the book *The Official Baronage of England showing the Succession, Dignities, and Offices of Every Peer from 1066 to 1885*. He died on December 3, 1892. Notably absent from the funeral service was James's younger brother Charles, who was by this time committed to an insane asylum.

The Tropical Beauty: Elmore Weldon

Conan Doyle was struck with another great blow on September 16, 1893, when his first love, Elmore Weldon, succumbed to tuberculosis. He had first met Elmore (Elmo) in Lismore, Ireland, 12 years earlier while visiting the Foley side of his family. A few months later, he was already concerned that the two of them would be mired in a "long engagement" until he was stable enough financially to get married. When he set up his medical practice in Southsea a year later, he wrote his mother that if he could marry Elmo, "it would fetch the practice up with a rush" of patients,

and, of course, income. But that winter, Elmo ended their long-distance courtship. Although Conan Doyle begged her to reconsider, she rejected his proposal and informed him that she had more important things to think about as she had been diagnosed with consumption and was on her way to Davos, Switzerland, to seek medical therapy.

Apparently, Elmo's passing weighed heavily enough on him to write in the "Final Problem" about a woman "in the last stage of consumption" who has "wintered at Davos Platz." Watson and Holmes's conversation centres around the "sudden hemorrhage that had overtaken her" and continues with: "It was thought that she could hardly live a few hours, but it would be a great consolation to her to see an English doctor."

The Artist: Charles Altamont Doyle

And then the *coup de grace*. Less than three weeks later, on October 10, 1893, Conan Doyle's father was dead at the age of 61. Although he had resided in insane asylums for more than a dozen consecutive years, Conan Doyle admired him greatly. Charles had derived his income mainly from his position as a draftsman for the Scottish Office of Public Works but was able to supplement his salary via his pencil sketches and watercolour paintings for a slew of publishing houses. Conan Doyle confesses to his readers in his 1924 autobiography that he had "unfilled schemes" designed to collect as many of his father's original watercolours and then put them on exhibit in London, "for the critics would be surprised to find what a great and original artist he was—far the greatest, in my opinion, of the family." A few months later, Conan Doyle was able to make good on his resolution when a collection of his father's illustrations were put on display at Brook's Gallery in London, to considerable praise, including that of George Bernard Shaw, who stated that Charles's work was worthy of a special room in a national museum.

Conan Doyle regarded his father as a uniquely skilled, though unconventional, artist. When today's readers leaf through Charles Doyle's sketchbook, they will see watercolours that depict a skillful professionalism as well as glimpses into his insanity. Squirrels nursing lost children, fairies using umbrellas for shade, Cupid rescuing sprites – all part of Charles's *reality*. Although Conan Doyle knew all too well that his father's "thoughts were always in the clouds and he had no appreciation of the realities of life," he was still happy to commission him for six illustrations that appear in *A Study in Scarlet*, Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes tale.

Although Holmes vanished from the literary scene for almost a decade, fate intervened, and Conan Doyle decided to resurrect Holmes in "The Adventure of the Empty House." And so, Conan Doyle had another

opportunity to pay homage to his father in "His Last Bow," where Holmes goes about foiling an international spy ring using as his alias his father's middle name, Altamont. Conan Doyle's description of Altamont as a 60-year-old Irish-American with a "horrible goatee" who is also "a wonderful worker" with "a nice taste in wines" bears more than an accidental resemblance to the man he so admired.

Certainly, one of Conan Doyle's prime reasons for killing off Holmes was his love for his father, but there was one other special person in Doyle's life who was about to receive some bad news.

The Wife: Louisa Hawkins

After all of this dying, Conan Doyle could be forgiven for just wanting some peace and healing. But this was not forthcoming. Soon after Charles's funeral, he and his first wife, Louisa Hawkins Doyle, went on a well-needed vacation. As soon as they came home, Louisa began complaining "of pain in her side and cough." Although Conan Doyle wasn't very concerned about it, he still called in a physician to evaluate her. To his "surprise and alarm", he was told that his wife's "lungs were very gravely affected" and "there was every sign of rapid consumption." Conan Doyle didn't have to be told that his wife's case was a "most serious one with little hope, considering her record and family history." Louisa's diagnosis coincided with her 34-year-old husband's meteoric rise to fame. This, at a time when Conan Doyle was receiving invitations imploring him to join London's most exclusive literary and social clubs. Worse still, he had already scheduled a multi-city book tour around Great Britain from which he could not extricate himself. He knew that when it was over, he would have to forgo any other engagements and attend to his dying wife. In a woeful letter to his mother written from inside the Reform Club, he told her that, "on or about Dec. 10th when my lectures are finished Lottie Touie & I will start for Moritz – which is rather higher than Davos. If Touie does well there we might have a run to Egypt in the early spring and come back by sea to England when the weather is warm… That is, I think the best course we can adopt." His final sentence says it all, "What with Connie's wedding, Papa's death, and Touie's illness, it is a little overwhelming." Conan Doyle saw his world falling apart.

The Detective: Sherlock Holmes

And then, it happened! Two months later — precisely six years after Holmes's literary birth — Conan Doyle put forth "The Adventure of the Final Problem" whose opening paragraph has Watson saying, "I have endeavored to give some account of my strange experiences in his company from the chance which first brought us together at the period of the 'Study in Scarlet.'" Could these words have represented a cryptic

reference, not to Holmes and Watson as is assumed by most readers, but rather, to his father Charles, illustrator of the first Holmes book?

Watson continues with, “It was never my intention to have stopped there, and to have said nothing of that event which has created a void in my life which the lapse of two years has done little to fill.” Could these words have been a nuanced tribute to George Budd, Elmo Weldon, and the entire Doyle clan? And could the reappearance of Sherlock’s brother Mycroft reflect a longing for connection when so many in Conan Doyle’s life had gone?

Apparently, Conan Doyle understood from an early age that one day he may be obliged to turn against one of his own literary creations. As a 16-

SHERLOCK HOLMES DEAD.

Sherlock Holmes is dead. Mr Conan Doyle has killed him, and the otherwise festive *Strand Magazine* will carry a pang of regret to many thousand hearts. In his last days the intrepid Holmes was haunted by the idea that the man Moriarty, who alone had escaped from the gang whom the detective had handed over to the police, would cause his death, and the slightest fall of rock in the Rhone Valley, where he was holiday-making, caused him to rush to the summit to see if his enemy had dislodged the rock in the hope of crushing him. His belief proved justified. In a secluded nook they fought, and, locked in each other's arms, reeled from the height into the depths beneath. There, "deep down in that dreadful cauldron of swirling water and seething foam, will lie for all time the most dangerous criminal and the foremost champion of the law of their generation." In the mimic world of fiction there will be a blank for many a day—a loved figure missing from the inhabitants of that shadowy sphere.—*The Sun.*

A newspaper clipping from The Evening Telegraph*, of Dundee, December 15, 1893, announcing the death of Sherlock Holmes in* The Strand Magazine.

year-old Stonyhurst student, he wrote the following letter: “It is said that a mother ever loves best the most distorted and deformed in her children, but I trust the saying does not apply to the feelings of an author towards his literary child, otherwise it bodes ill for the poor foundling.”

Conan Doyle, reflecting upon a trip he had taken earlier in 1893 with the Reverend William James Dawson from Meiringen to Rosenlaui in Switzerland, decided to bring his master detective to the picturesque Reichenbach Falls. It was here that Holmes was destined to become the victim of his creator’s wrath. Paying tribute to his first Holmes tale, *A Study in Scarlet*, Doyle recycles May the Fourth (the date on which Jefferson Hope is rescued by the Mormons) as the date for Holmes’s premature departure from the Earth.

However, Holmes would not die. In 1902, while Conan Doyle was returning home from his voluntary military service in South Africa, Fletcher Robinson, a fellow author and war correspondent, first encouraged and then persuaded him to bring Holmes back from the dead. Although he did agree to write another Holmes tale, Conan Doyle was not fully willing to resurrect his consulting detective. The result of this was *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* an adventure set in 1888 – a full three years before Holmes’s purported death plunge off Switzerland’s Reichenbach Falls. Not only did the *The Hound of the Baskervilles* become a huge success, but soon Conan Doyle was informed that he would be receiving a knighthood based on his devotion to and campaigning efforts on behalf of England’s war effort against the Boers in South Africa. It was this elevated state of mind that convinced him it was the right time for “The Adventure of the Empty House,” a Thomas Hardy-like cliffhanger where Holmes is officially brought back from the dead. With that, another generation would be given the opportunity to read about the continuing adventures of Holmes and Watson.

Fortunately, Conan Doyle was able to cope successfully with the trials and tribulations that the early 1890s handed him. And in the Holmes tales that followed “The Empty House,” Holmes, too, seems a bit kinder and gentler in his dealings with women, the inspectors of the Yard, and his longtime partner in criminal investigation, Watson.

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The Porlock twist

By Bruce Harris

Bruce Harris is a member of the Sherlockian Chronologist Guild and a charter member of the John H. Watson Society. He is the author of It's Not Always 1895 – A Sherlock Holmes Chronology.

Beating a dead horse is taboo, but not so for one still breathing. The literature addressing the question of Fred Porlock's identity is reviewed by Leslie S. Klinger in *The Sherlock Holmes Reference Library* for the volume on *The Valley of Fear*. (1) Despite citing over a dozen scholars who attempt to unlock Porlock's secret, Klinger concludes, "Yet no identification is fully satisfactory, and the truth may remain undiscovered until further data comes to light." (2) The horse lives and breathes! Klinger's words were published in 2005. A year later, additional data came to light via Robert J. Bousquet's *Sherlock Holmes Journal* article, "Fred Porlock: His True Identity and Related Issues." (3) His theory, that Fred Morris, son of Scowrer Morris is Porlock, adds to the long list of potential suspects. However, this opinion is based mostly on conjecture, rather than facts. Bousquet posits a series of assumptions, for example, that Brother Morris *probably* [italics added] committed suicide. Second, the Morris family *probably* [italics added] moved away from the Valley. Again, without evidence, Bousquet states, "It is certainly *possible* [italics added] that...eleven years after the reign of terror had ended in Vermissa, one of the Morris children…became part of the Moriarty gang."

The Valley of Fear opens with Holmes and Watson in Baker Street. The detective has no appetite for breakfast. Instead, he is absorbed by the first of two notes he receives by post.

"It is Porlock's writing," Holmes says.

To which Watson responds, "Who, then, is Porlock?" Dr. Watson is the first, but by no means the last, to ask the question.

"Porlock, Watson, is a *nom de plume*, a mere identification mark, but behind it lies a shifty and evasive personality," Holmes responds.

A careful examination of Holmes's answer provides two critical clues that point to one heretofore unidentified man as the real Fred Porlock. Holmes's use of the French term, "*nom de plume*," instead of pseudonym or alias is significant. Nom-de-plume is a writer's assumed name. There are only two writers in the Canon if you don't include our faithful chronicler, Dr. Watson. Horace Harker from "The Six Napoleons," and a former newspaperman whose ancestry is French who can be considered

shifty with an evasive personality. "…I eventually married, without anyone having a suspicion as to my real occupation. My dear wife knew that I had business in the City. She little knew what." The words of Neville St. Clair (aka Hugh Boone), from "The Man with the Twisted Lip." This article will show that Neville St. Clair is Fred Porlock.

A comparison between the letters written by Porlock in *The Valley of Fear* and St. Clair in "The Twisted Lip" is revealing. The notes were written months apart, both notes were hurriedly written, yet the structure of each is identical. First, Porlock's letter to Holmes:

> Dear Mr. Holmes, I will go no further in this matter. It is too dangerous. He suspects me. I can see that he suspects me. He came to me quite unexpectedly after I had actually addressed this envelope with the intention of sending you the key to the cipher. I was able to cover it up. If he had seen it, it would have gone hard with me. But I read suspicion in his eyes. Please burn the cipher message, which can now be of no use to you. [signed] Fred Porlock.

Paul Zens in his 1975 *Baker Street Journal* article analyzes the letter. (4) He concludes its author was an educated man. "There are no mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Even though his hand was shaking with terror, Porlock perfectly preserved the balance and structure of the long fourth (sic) sentence which could have been done only by a person whose training held firm under the greatest stress. He wrote a Greek 'e' with a top flourish." (5) With the exception of the long (fifth) sentence, the language is nervous and terse. Klinger adds that scholars and those from academia often use a Greek "e" when writing. (6)

Compare Porlock's letter above with the one Neville St. Clair sent to his wife:

> Dearest, do not be frightened. All will come well. There is a huge error which it may take some little time to rectify. Wait in patience – [signed] Neville.

Admittedly, St. Clair's letter is shorter, but the same structure and characteristics apply. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are error-free. The note's wording is nervous and terse, and the lengthier third sentence is comparable to Porlock's fifth sentence. Concerning the Greek "e," St. Clair tells us, "My father was a schoolmaster in Chesterfield, where I received an excellent education." After an acting stint, St. Clair became a reporter for an evening paper in London. He wrote and published a series of firsthand articles about his experiences as a mendicant. Zens claims that Porlock is a person who handles stress well. Similarly, Holmes describes

St. Clair as, "…ever ready with a reply to any piece of chaff which may be thrown at him..."

Despite the fact that the two letters were written under duress, both contain the same (Dear / Dearest) salutation, and both are signed. Is there any question both letters could have been written by the same hand?

Professor Moriarty

The Valley of Fear leaves no doubt that Porlock is linked to Moriarty. So, what is the Napoleon of Crime's connection to Neville St. Clair in "The Man with the Twisted Lip?" Yuro Nakagawa's article found in *Japan and Sherlock Holmes* makes a tangential connection between the two. "Professor Moriarty who wrote 'a book which ascends to such rarefied heights of pure mathematics'…had an income of seven hundred pounds, about the same level as Hugh Boone [Neville St. Clair]. This is unbelievable." Nakagawa believes that St. Clair was the owner of the Bar of Gold opium den. How else was St. Clair able to save "considerable sums of money," afford a large villa in Lee, and live "generally in good style?" Add all that to his cavalier attitude about money. "…what was a fine to me?" Nakagawa's theory has merit, but a deeper, more sinister explanation may be at work.

Based on Holmes's observation in "The Man with the Twisted Lip," "We should be rich men if we had a thousand pounds for every poor devil who has been done to death in that den," it is easy to conclude the Bar of Gold was a thriving, prosperous operation. As such, and by the very nature of its nasty business, it is no great leap of faith to assume Professor Moriarty was involved in the den's operation. We know from "The Final Problem," "He [Moriarty] is the organizer of half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in this great city...He sits motionless, like a spider in the center of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them…his agents are numerous and splendidly organized." Neville St. Clair did not only own the opium den as Nakagawa suggests, but he was also one of Moriarty's paid agents. Who better than St. Clair (as Hugh Boone) hiding daily in plain sight in London's centre listening, observing, and absorbing everything and everyone around him? In 1896 (seven years after *The Valley of Fear* and "The Man with the Twisted Lip"), (9) "The space…enclosed by the Mansion House, the Bank [of England, in front of which sat Hugh Boone], and the [Stock] Exchange, is the center from which radiate the most important streets of 'the City.' It is also the chief point of convergence of the London omnibus traffic, which during business hours is enormous." (10)

If St. Clair wasn't in cahoots with Moriarty, how would he have been able to launder the money he collected as the beggar Hugh Boone? John Radford in a 2011 *Sherlock Holmes Journal* article raises the question. (11) His hypothesis is that St. Clair must have made arrangements with the lascar. It is more likely Boone's daily copper intake was cleaned more effectively and efficiently through Moriarty's minions. What, then, of the lascar, and why was he so protective of St. Clair's (Hugh Boone identity) secret? The lascar no doubt knew of St. Clair's association with Moriarty, and fearing for his own life, dare not betray him. It is not far-fetched to think St. Clair (aka Porlock) handed the lascar the 10-pound payments Holmes had sent in exchange for information.

Interestingly, P.H. Wood (unknowingly) also makes the case for St. Clair as Porlock in his 1994 *Baker Street Journal* article. (12) He lays out seven distinct facts about Porlock. He deduces, "[In order] to have access to information about forthcoming crimes, he [Porlock] must hold a fairly senior position in the gang. Moriarty would operate on a 'need to know' basis about such matters, death penalty or not, or the first careless word of an opium-addicted gang member in the 'Bar of Gold' in Upper Swandam Lane could easily have reached Holmes' ears." (13) By the time the events of "The Man with the Twisted Lip" took place, approximately five months after *The Valley of Fear*, (14) Holmes knew three vital things: Porlock's identity, Moriarty's Bar of Gold connection, and the dangers the location posed. Early in "The Man with the Twisted Lip," Holmes tells Watson, "Had I been recognized in that den my life would not have been worth an hour's purchase…"

Wood asks why Porlock betrayed Moriarty. It must be remembered that St. Clair, despite his indiscretions, was a family man. We know he was a good husband (she deeply cared about him) and he was a good father to his two children (he bought his son toy bricks). St. Clair may have been involved in illegal behavior, but he drew the line at murder. When he discovered John Douglas's life was in jeopardy, he risked his own life by reaching out to Holmes under Porlock's guise.

There is no question Porlock feared for his life. Holmes tells us in *The Valley of Fear*, "…Friend Porlock is evidently scared out of his senses." The situation is no different with St. Clair in "The Man with the Twisted Lip." He fears Moriarty will discover his treasonous behavior. St. Clair states, "My God! What an exposure! What can I do?" Holmes attempts to mollify St. Clair. The detective pats St. Clair on the shoulder. "…I do not know that there is any reason that the details should find their way into the papers."

One statement by Holmes in "The Man with the Twisted Lip" should assuage any doubters. "But I think I have the key of the affair now…we shall see whether it will not fit the [Por]lock."

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Arthur Conan Doyle and the mysterious case of the Queen of Crime

By Stefan Weishaupt

Stefan Weishaupt has been interested in Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and detective stories by Agatha Christie and Edgar Wallace for almost 40 years. He works for the Federal Finance Administration in Germany.

In the 133rd anniversary year of the Queen of Crime (Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie was born on September 15, 1890, in Torquay, Devon, England), the question arises as to whether she ever came into contact with the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle, and the circumstances around that contact.

In fact, Christie's work was influenced by Conan Doyle's writing. It is of note that Conan Doyle became involved in the search for Christie when she went missing, seeing the case as an opportunity to present to the world his views on Spiritualism.

Christie's introduction to Conan Doyle was through the Sherlock Holmes stories, which she first read in 1903. The young Agatha was inspired by them to later create one of the most famous detectives in literary history. Christie wrote her first detective novel in 1916, at the age of 26; from the start she asked herself who she could use as a model for her detective:

> I reviewed all the detectives I had met and admired in books. There was Sherlock Holmes, the one and only – never would I be able to match him. (1)

The young Agatha created a detective figure that was certainly not inferior to that of the master detective from Baker Street:

> He would be very neat, very exact, a man who put things in order, arranged them in pairs, who preferred square shapes to noughts. He was going to be very intelligent – was going to have a lot of little grey cells in his head. He would have a great name. Hercule Poirot. That sounded good. I was very pleased with my idea! (2)

But it was not only with her main character, Hercule Poirot, that she was to emulate Conan Doyle; with Poirot's friend and companion, Captain Hastings, she also created a literary figure not unlike Dr. Watson.

Thus, the Belgian detective and his confidant lived together for a time at 14 Farraday Street, much like Holmes and Watson at 221b Baker Street. And Captain Hastings also took on the role of chronicler, much like his counterpart in the Holmes stories.

When she got bogged down with her detective story in 1916, Christie went to Dartmoor on her mother's advice. She took lodgings at the Moorland Hotel in Hay Tor and in a fortnight finished her first Poirot novel, which she titled *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* and dedicated it to her mother.

Here one can find further parallels to Conan Doyle. In 1901, Conan Doyle was also inspired by Dartmoor for his most famous novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and stayed at the Row's Duchy Hotel, now the High Moorland Visitor Centre.

And much like Conan Doyle with his *A Study in Scarlet*, Christie struggled to offer her novel to a publisher. After several rejections, she sent her first work to publisher John Lane, only to learn, four years later, that he wanted to publish the manuscript. In 1920 *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* was published by Bodley Head. It was the beginning of an unprecedented career.

Fast forward to December 3, 1926, when the Christies's maid overheard Agatha and her husband Archibald arguing at breakfast and Colonel Christie packing a bag and leaving the Styles residence in Sunningdale (named after the setting of her first novel). He had told the writer, to whom he had been married since December 24, 1914, that he wanted to leave her. In the spring of 1926, he had already confessed to her, shortly after the death of Agatha's mother Clara, that he had fallen in love with Nancy Neele, and that he wanted a divorce. The writer, however, was unwilling to agree to this, ostensibly for the sake of their daughter Rosalind. Later that day, Archibald Christie wanted to meet friends in nearby Godalming to spend the weekend with them and his new love.

For Agatha Christie, her world collapsed. She was stunned. She had still hoped to save the marriage (in autumn 1926, a joint attempt to patch up marital happiness failed), but now realized that her husband's decision was firm. This triggered a state of deepest despair in the author. When her friend and secretary returned from London to Styles on the evening of December 3, 1926, Agatha Christie had disappeared.

Around 6 a.m. the following day, Charlotte Fisher was informed by the police that Christie's car had been found in a ditch near Newlands Corner, 8 km from Godalming in Surrey, under mysterious circumstances. The car

had apparently been driven off the road and left with its lights on. Inside the vehicle was a suitcase containing clothes and shoes, as well as a fur coat and Agatha Christie's expired driver's licence.

The writer herself had disappeared without a trace!

Because of her notoriety, the press was very soon informed of the incident and the discovery of the car. The police organized a large-scale search in which almost 1,000 police officers and nearly 15,000 volunteers, divided into 53 groups, led by Deputy Chief Constable William Kenward, set out to find the famous writer.

Even airplanes were used for the first time to support a search operation from the air. It was particularly striking that Christie's two-seat, green Morris Cowley was found in the immediate vicinity of a lime pit and the nearby Silent Pool lake. This was the place where one of Christie's female characters had drowned.

This fact raised the worst fears.

After no clues to the writer's whereabouts were found, the *Daily News* offered a £100 reward for information leading to the discovery of the missing woman. Although the area around Newlands Corner had been thoroughly searched, the *Evening News* staged the "great Sunday hunt for Mrs Christie." The paper advised anyone with a bloodhound to "bring it along." Fellow author Dorothy L. Sayers took part in the spectacle, but the hunt was fruitless.

At least the mystery writer's last hours could be reconstructed. On December 3, Christie and her daughter went to Dorking to have tea with her mother-in-law Rosamund Hemsley. She appeared restless and confused, but probably tried to hide this from her daughter. When asked by her mother-in-law why she no longer wore her wedding ring, she did not answer and instead burst into hysterical laughter, which did not bode well and was a source of conversation later during the police investigation. After leaving Hemsley and returning to Styles, Christie left a handful of letters to be posted. She then disappeared except for her car.

After sniffer dogs and search planes were used, a diving team searched the Silent Pool. It was suspected that the writer had committed suicide. Not least because of the statements of Hemsley, who stated that her daughter-in-law had wanted to end her life and had deliberately driven to this area (where the car was found). However, she contradicted herself in the same breath, as she also stated that Agatha would never have voluntarily left her husband and child.

Further investigations and numerous speculations also revolved around this point. Was it a spontaneous act or had the Queen of Crime become the victim of a crime?

THE DAILY MIRROR, Tuesday, December 7, 1926.

£100 FREE CROSS-WORD COMPETITION: SEE PAGE 4

Daily Mirror

THE DAILY PICTURE NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST NET SALE

CAMPAIGN TO MAKE LONDON STREETS SAFER

No. 7,199 — Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. — TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1926 — [24 PAGES] — One Penny

MYSTERY OF WOMAN NOVELIST'S DISAPPEARANCE

Mrs. Agatha Christie, the missing woman novelist, with her daughter.

A thorough search in the woods near the spot where Mrs. Christie's car was found.

Jack Best at the place where he found the car abandoned.

Following an important clue received yesterday a special search will be made to-day for Mrs. Agatha Christie, the novelist wife of Colonel Archibald Christie, D.S.O., who disappeared after leaving her home at Sunningdale, Berks, in her motor-car. The car was found abandoned near Newlands Corner, Surrey.—(*Daily Mirror* photographs.)

EARL'S DAUGHTER TAKES THE AIR IN A CAGE

The infant daughter of Earl and Countess De la Warr asleep in her perambulator inside a galvanised iron cage which her parents (inset) have had fixed outside the front of their home near Victoria. This enables her to take the air without risk.—(*Daily Mirror*.)

Front page of the Daily Mirror*, December 7, 1926*

As the search for his wife continued, Archibald Christie became increasingly more suspected of having something to do with the writer's disappearance. The letters left behind in Styles are said to have incriminated Colonel Christie although their contents were never revealed.

With a temperature of only two degrees that night, the question of why she would have willingly left her fur coat in the car raised the spectre of a kidnapping.

As rumours of Colonel Christie's romance with young Nancy Neele did the media rounds, the former became in-creasingly the focus of police and public attention. The dispute the Christies had over breakfast on December 3 was another reason Archibald Christie was viewed as a suspect in the eyes of many.

After even Scotland Yard was called in, the Home Secretary William Johnson-Hicks pushed for search operations, and thousands of tips were received; Agatha Christie remained missing.

Now it was time for Conan Doyle to make his appearance in this mystery.

While his efforts in the cases of Oscar Slater and George Edalji were already legendary, the Surrey Police hoped that the creator of Sherlock Holmes would be able to use rigorous logic and perseverance to solve the disappearance or at least provide valuable clues as to the writer's whereabouts. But anyone who thought that Conan Doyle would get to the bottom of this mysterious case was disappointed.

Conan Doyle, the creator of the most famous detective in literary history, had made it clear in the article "A New Light on Old Crimes" in the

January 1920 edition of *The Strand Magazine* that he considered spiritualism a suitable means of solving mysteries. The case of Agatha Christie provided an opportunity to demonstrate its practical application in tricky cases.

Christie had been missing for days and there were no solid clues as to her whereabouts. The only hope that the famous writer was still alive came from a letter sent from London on the morning of December 4, (after her car had been found), claiming that she was going on a short holiday to a spa in Yorkshire to clear her head. However, the guest lists of hotels there were checked by the police to no avail. She had not checked in anywhere.

Conan Doyle wasted no time in calling in Horace Leaf, who, in his opinion, was the best medium of the time. Leaf's specialty was psychometry, the ability to derive psychic information from physical objects. Leaf explained in an article titled "The Psychology and Development of Mediumship" that objects carried or used by an individual, in the psychometrician's hand or pressed against the forehead, enabled him to evoke and read the thoughts, feelings and visions of the person in question in his mind. For this reason, Conan Doyle asked Colonel Christie for a personal object that belonged to his wife, and was provided with a glove.

Conan Doyle presented the glove to Leaf without informing him of the owner or giving him any further clues. Leaf immediately recognized that the object belonged to someone named Agatha: "There is trouble connected with this object. The person to whom it belongs is half dazed and half determined," Leaf speculated. However, she was not dead – "You will hear from her." (3)

However, since the mysterious disappearance of Christie had already been reported in various newspapers for over a week, it would not have been difficult for Leaf to have guessed who the glove belonged to. Conan Doyle was apparently very impressed with this spiritual achievement of his friend.

In the meantime, an advertisement appeared in *The Times* on December 11, 1926, that read:

> Friends and relatives of Teresa Neele, late of South Africa, please communicate. Write Box R 702, The Times, E.C.4.

So, what did this Mrs Neele have to do with the Agatha Christie case?

On December 4, 1926, this Teresa Neele took a taxi to the Swan Hydropathic Hotel in Harrogate, Yorkshire. Carrying only a small bag and no other luggage, she checked into the hotel, stating that she was going to the spa to recover from the death of her baby. Over the next few days, she bought herself a new wardrobe and seemed to gradually recover from the

trials and tribulations of the past. She danced a lot, played the piano, sang in the lounge from time to time and also tried her hand at the billiard table. The only curiosity was that Mrs. Neele claimed to be from South Africa but did not seem to have any accent.

On December 13, 1926, the bombshell hit. The missing author was discovered by members of the hotel band of the Swan Hydro Hotel. She was none other than Mrs. Teresa Neele and had taken up residence in Harrogate under this name (the surname of her rival Nancy Neele). Although the press had offered £100, the musicians (after being sure of their case) informed the police. Because of the delay in giving the police the lead, the reckless musicians never received the reward. However, they later received silver pencils from Christie's husband for their help and discretion.

On the following evening, December 14, Colonel Christie, after being ordered to Harrogate by the police, stood in front of his wife. Even now she did not break her charade and greeted her "brother" effusively! They retreated to her room and now that the press had also learned of the Queen of Crime's place of recovery, Archibald Christie was forced to make a short statement: "She suffers from an almost complete loss of memory."

The next morning, the press was distracted with the help of a pair of lookalikes while the real Christies made their way to Agatha's sister Madge near Manchester. There, on the advice of Madge's family doctor, she was advised to seek treatment from specialists in London, which the crime writer did in early 1927.

In the aftermath, there was mockery of the police investigation and the nationwide search which had cost a considerable sum.

Chief Investigator Kenward had to answer personally to the Home Secretary. But what really happened during those mysterious 11 days of Agatha Christie's disappearance? How, for example, did she get the three miles from where her car was found (Newlands Corner) to Guildford railway station, where she first took the train to London and then continued on to Harrogate? What was her purpose in placing the advertisement in *The Times*? And why did she pretend to be Mrs. Neele, her husband's lover, at the Swan Hydropathic Hotel? Colonel Christie's explanations that his wife had suffered amnesia due to the car accident were not very convincing. Some assumed that it was a publicity ploy to increase the circulation of her books. Others speculated that her disappearance was intended to put pressure on her husband so that he would not divorce her. If Agatha Christie speculated on the latter, she was disappointed. The marriage was dissolved in April 1928.

For Conan Doyle, on the other hand, the Christie case was a prime example of the success of psychometry. In a letter to the *Morning Post*, he wrote:

> It is admittedly a fugitive, uncertain method, but occasionally it is remarkably reliable. The French and German police use it frequently. If, however, it should find application in our country, it will be merely sub rosa, for it is difficult for them to rely on those forces which the law requires them to prosecute.

Conan Doyle relied mainly on the fact that Leaf had predicted that the writer was still alive and would be found near water the following Wednesday. The fact that she had been found on Tuesday, but the newspapers did not report it until Wednesday, naturally played into the hands of the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, as did the fact that Harrogate was known as a health resort for its healing springs and no one doubted the connection with “water.”

What actually happened during the 11 days of her disappearance will probably remain a mystery forever. Agatha Christie never said anything about it, nor did she mention it in her memoirs. The letters she wrote to her husband before her disappearance remain missing, so that we can only speculate about their contents. The amnesia thesis presented to the press was probably chosen by Agatha and Archibald Christie to save their reputation, as the media had begun to dissect the couple’s private life and published all sorts of gossip. For the crime fiction career of the still young Agatha Christie, however, her mysterious disappearance proved to make her even more famous. What she thought of the investigations and efforts of Conan Doyle and his medium is unfortunately not known.

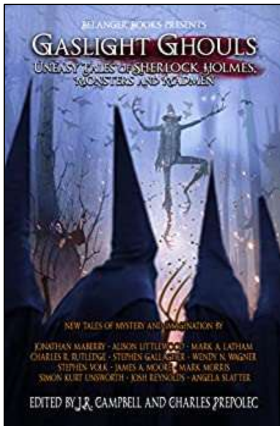
References

(1) Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot – Sein Leben und Sein Abenteur (According to original documents; recorded by Anne Hart; Scherz Publishing House 1991, p8)

(2) Gripenberg, Monika, *Agatha Christie*, Rowohlt Publishing House 1994, pg 35, 36.

(3) Kringel, Danny, *Wie Agatha Christie spurlos verschwand*, Spiegel, online article, 12 January 2016.

Reviews continued from page 9



Gaslight Ghouls: Uneasy Tales of Sherlock Holmes, Monsters and Madmen, edited by J.R. Campbell and Charles Prepolec (Belanger Books, C$37.86, trade paperback)

From fog-shrouded city streets to ivy-covered manor houses, setting is an integral part of the Sherlock Holmes stories. This fifth installment in the "Gaslight Sherlock Holmes" series has a singular focus: to shine a light on the importance of place in the detective duo's world. The collection is edited by Canadians J.R. Campbell and Charles Prepolec, a contributor to *Canadian Holmes*.

The 12 stories, each an original contribution by a stellar cast of horror and fantasy authors, is set in a different part of London or the English countryside. Every locale fuels the plot and atmosphere and, in some clever cases, also helps determine the ending. All of the cases are action packed, some are horrifying, and one, in particular, is downright shocking.

No matter how strange the circumstances, or where they occur, it's little wonder the doctor always carries his Gladstone bag and service revolver. Although Sherlock Holmes prefers his investigations to take place with both feet on the ground, he endeavours to keep an open mind even when confronted by the bizarre and supernatural.

Whether the settings are on land, in the sea or underground, local lore and superstition are usually at play and create many challenges for Holmes and Watson. For their fans, the result is a story collection that thrills and entertains.

– JoAnn Alberstat

Diary Notes continued from page 40

Gilbert Madsen received honourable mention for "Sherlock Holmes and the Victorian Code."

The new 2023 Master Bootmakers were Masamichi (Mitch) Higurashi, Ross Davies, and Jessie Amaolo.

The final toast of the meeting was given by Donny Zaldin, "Ode to Two Gracious Ladies" (Victoria and Elizabeth II).

With congratulations to all the winners, Mike closed the meeting with a reminder that the next meeting, 'The Devil's Foot,' would take place on Saturday, February 25th.

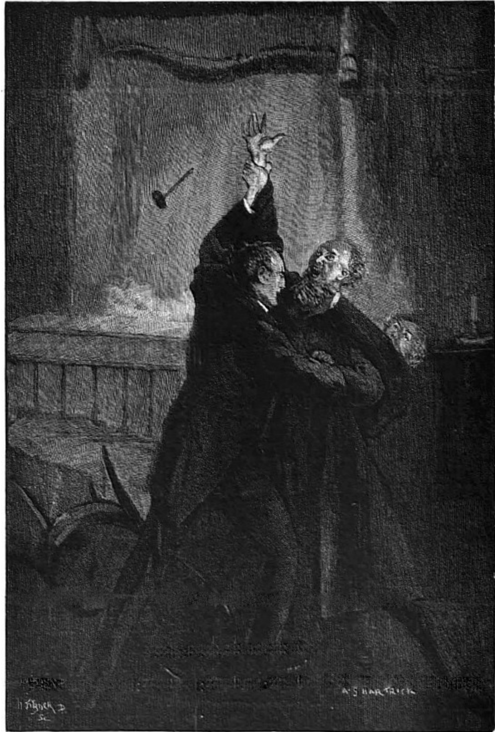
"a few lines upon a sheet of paper" – Conan Doyle's other work for The Strand Magazine

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.

The Story of the Beetle Hunter (June 1898)

Readers of the Sherlock Holmes and Brigadier Gerard stories – well-acquainted with Conan Doyle's taste for the gothic – were not to be disappointed by the next series to bless the pages of *The Strand Magazine*. The celebrated *Round the Fire Stories* are a collection of tales concerned explicitly with "the grotesque and with the terrible — such tales as might well be read 'round the fire' upon a winter's night." (1) The first of the series, "The Story of the Beetle Hunter," published in June 1898, concerns the plight of Philip Hardacre, a penniless young doctor, who, in his desperation, answers a strange job advertisement asking for someone with medical knowledge, steady nerves … and a deep knowledge of beetles. Hardacre finds the task before him is



"I sprang to the rescue." One of 8 images by Archibald S. Hartrick in The Strand Magazine.

suspiciously simple: all he must do is accompany the sinister Lord Linchmere to a rendezvous with his brother-in-law, the famous entomologist Sir Thomas Rossiter.. And to bring a stick – "the thicker and heavier the better..."

Stepping forth from this tantalizing Gothic backdrop is the sturdy figure of Dr. Hardacre, another Conan Doyle proxy, this time drawn from the author's experience as a poorly paid doctor's apprentice. Indeed, the whole story has a deeply personal significance, exploring themes entertained in "The Surgeon of Gaster Fell" and elsewhere. It transpires that Sir Thomas is prone to fits of violent madness and Linchmere, who trained as a doctor, merely needs Hardacre for a second opinion before he can commit his unfortunate brother-in-law to an asylum. One wonders who it was who signed the papers that had Charles Altamont Doyle committed to an asylum. Dr. Bryan Charles Waller is one candidate; Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle is another. Might this story hint at a family secret, hidden in plain sight?

Despite (or perhaps because of) this personal connection, Conan Doyle's original is a shining example of the storytelling for which he is rightly famous, combining horror, comedy and pathos in one. When the master dramatist John Hawkesworth came to adapt the story for his BBC anthology series *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (1967), he had only to amplify the source material, showing the friendship grow between Hardacre and Sir Thomas and increasing the suspicions on Linchmere, which together make the tragic ending so effective. But all the raw material was here in the Conan Doyle original which kicked off the *Round the Fire Stories* in style and amply succeeds the test of time.

Philip Hardacre (Michael Latimer) is disgusted with the decision he was forced to make.

References

(1) Conan Doyle's preface to the collected edition (1908).

Letters to the editor

Dear Editors,

I write to express appreciation of the excellent article by Mark Jones and Robert S Katz on "Canonical Cholecystitis – Watson, Budd and Typhoid," *Canadian Holmes* 45, 4, Fall 2022, 15-20.

I note that Conan Doyle's letter to the *BMJ* (*BMJ*, Jul 7, 1900, No.2062, 49-50), titled "The Epidemic of Enteric Fever at Bloemfoentein," is immediately followed in that journal by further information about health care management in South Africa by Lieutenant-Colonel R.T. Beamish, "The Administration of a General Hospital," then an article called "The Medical Aspects of the War" by a then un-named "campaigner," and on page 52, "The Mortality of Typhoid Fever." These amplify Conan Doyle's astute letter.

The speculations about Watson's own long-term effects of his own typhoid are highly plausible and add to our knowledge of the good doctor.

Canonical Regards,

Dr. Michael Duke

To the Editors,

In your summer 2022 issue, "A Study in Speech" by Anna Brindisi-Behrens, suggesting that to Arthur Conan Doyle a "lisp" was any unconventional accent, is an excellent and thought-provoking piece of research.

To me in particular, it provoked thoughts of the many ways ACD's own accent was identified by the American reporters who heard him speak during his lecture tour in late 1894. I quoted a number of their comments in my book *Welcome to America, Mr. Sherlock Holmes*. In general they seem to have identified his speech as Scottish, with a "burr" and "generous" vowels — though one writer in Detroit covered all bases by reporting that "His words sound a mixture of Scotch, English, Irish and cold."

Brindisi-Behrens refers briefly to the one good piece of evidence we have about ACD's accent, the 1927 newsreel interview; it's now easily available on YouTube. To my ear it shows little evidence of what today's convention calls a "lisp," but there are certainly some eccentricities, including the whistle that Brindisi-Behrens mentions. This audio evidence as a whole would, I suggest, repay close analysis.

Chris Redmond

“Holmes gave me a brief review”

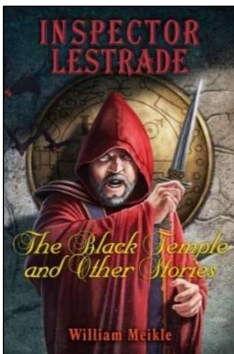
What Child Is This by Bonnie MacBird (2022, Collins Crime Club, C$34.99, hardcover)

Christmas is approaching, although Sherlock Holmes is hardly in the holiday spirit. In fact, he’s downright Scrooge-like as he complains about the festivities and drops the occasional “Bah, humbug.” Watson, who is back at Baker Street for a few days, tries to nudge his friend to embrace some seasonal cheer.

Holmes’s mood improves with a pair of fresh cases, including one that begins after he and Watson witness the attempted abduction of a four-year-old boy. The kidnapping attempt is the latest in a string of crimes targeting Lord Endicott and his family, who have also attracted the attention of a vexatious rival detective. Meanwhile, another blue-blooded father enlists Holmes and Watson to search for his 21-year-old son, who has disappeared from his mansion flat in Mayfair.

The plight of children is a theme in MacBird’s fifth novel in the series. There is atmosphere aplenty in this story with a decidedly Dickensian air. There’s carolling in the streets of affluent neighbourhoods and hansom cab rides along snow-lined streets. In contrast are the dirt and despair of the prisons and workhouses where the duo also seek out clues. Illustrations by Frank Cho add drama and poignancy to a seasonal-theme story with year-round appeal.

– JoAnn Alberstat



Inspector Lestrade: The Black Temple and Other Stories by William Meikle (2022, Weird House Press $45.00 USD, signed limited hardcover)

Prolific Newfoundland-based Scottish author William Meikle has written over 300 short stories and 30 published novels, often of a supernatural, fantastic or pulpy bent, with either Sherlock Holmes or Professor Challenger having featured in a number of them. Meikle’s latest collection turns the spotlight on the much-maligned Inspector Lestrade, who stars in a collection of 12 tightly written new tales dropping the dogged Scotland Yard man, along with his unflappable sidekick, Sgt. Clarke, into various investigations involving ghosts, cursed

objects, seances, mystery ships and the walking dead. In one instance he even protects Queen Victoria from an anarchist attack with the assistance of John Brown's ghost. Constantly under pressure from his Commissioner, Lestrade tackles these supernatural cases with a quietly effective workmanlike calm and a highly practical nature, compartmentalizing the weirdness and downplaying it in his reports, but in the course of things we also get a picture of a lonely widower who clearly exists only for his work. These are thoughtful stories, with a low-key old school ghost story vibe, some with cameo appearances by the likes of Mycroft, Langdale Pike, Shinwell Johnson, Mrs. Hudson, Watson and even a fleeting appearance from Sherlock Holmes himself. It's an utterly charming collection, with very well-written stories that work in every way. Who knew Lestrade could be this good? – Charles Prepolec

Mrs. Hudson and the Wild West by Barry S. Brown (2022, MX Publishing, $14.75 CAD, paperback)

This is Brown's seventh in the Mrs. Hudson of Baker Street series. The most famous landlady in literature continues to impress with her ability to solve mysteries using methods learned from her late husband, Tobias – a former constable. Although she must direct her investigations via her "front men," Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson, Mrs. Hudson nevertheless proves her abilities as a master sleuth. The men continue to develop their skills under her tutelage.

Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show first toured in London in 1887 and was hugely popular. He gave a special performance for Queen Victoria that involved all 200 members of his company. It is against the show's backdrop that the action occurs. Colonel Cody's prized horse is stolen and he visits 221B to consult Holmes and Watson. Mrs. Hudson uses her delectable scones and tea as an excuse to eavesdrop on their conversation. The scones are her signature entry into many situations and interrogations.

It is discovered that two precocious youngsters made off with the animal. The horse is returned to Cody, but Mrs. Hudson plies the children with scones and cocoa as they reveal the make-up of their household and the mysterious death of their father.

It is at this point that Brown's ability to create an ingenious plot shines. He develops an intriguing cast of characters and weaves an engrossing and

…continued on page 9

BOOTMAKERS' DIARY

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

Saturday, October 29, 2022

At 1:00 pm Meyers welcomed 56 attendees by Zoom to enquire into "The Dying Detective."

In his opening remarks Mike Ranieri asked for volunteers for the various awards committees. He also asked for nominations for the rank of Master Bootmaker, which can only be made by Master Bootmakers.

He then introduced Mike McClure coming to us from Chester, Illinois.

Mike told us of Elzie Segar, the creator of Thimble Theater comic strip, which followed the adventures of the Oyl family and introduced Popeye to the world. Segar was a great fan of Conan Doyle and the Sherlock Holmes stories and from time to time had Popeye playing detective, sometimes in deerstalker and inverness.

For this meeting the two Karens traded deerstalkers, Karen Campbell entertaining us with "All Made Up," to the tune of "All Shook Up," by Otis Blackwell. Karen Gold's intriguing quiz was won by Rich Krisciunas, the prize courtesy of George Vanderburgh.

The wrap up was by Nancy Stott Jones from her chapter in *About Sixty.*

Meyers then called the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

- David Sanders MBt.

Saturday, November 26, 2022

The Bootmakers of Toronto met via Zoom to investigate the convoluted case of "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax."

Mike Ranieri, as Mr. Meyers, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. There were 47 people in attendance.

Mike introduced our first speaker, Donny Zaldin. Zaldin's topic was "The Sherlockian Durbar Room of Arthur Conan Doyle." This article was first published in the *Sherlock Holmes Journal* in January 2021 and posted on the website of the Sherlock Holmes Society of India in April 2021. Donny spoke about the history of British rule in India. Britain took trillions of dollars of resources out of the country. After his presentation, Donny answered questions.

Karen Campbell presented the quiz on "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax." The winners were: Brenda Rossini (19/20), Bruce Aikin (18/20), and Julia Solyom Newman (18/20). They will receive a prize from George Vanderburgh.

Karen Gold gave us the song about the story, "Barely Alive," sung to the tune of the Bee Gee's "Staying Alive."

Mike Ranieri then introduced Thierry Saint-Joanis, who came to us from France. Saint-Joanis provided the wrap-up for today's story and showed a video of a number of filmed versions of the story.

At the conclusion of the story meeting, the Annual General Meeting of the Bootmakers was called to order at 2:22 p.m. After the meeting the proceedings were adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

– Bruce D. Aikin, M. Bt., Sh.D.

Saturday January 28, 2023 –Sherlock Holmes Birthday Celebration and the Blue Carbuncle Awards

At 1:05 pm Mike Ranieri welcomed 56 to the third virtual Blue Carbuncle Awards Meeting (aka Sherlock Holmes Birthday Celebration). This was followed by several announcements, including a call for possible speakers for 2023 and hopes for combined in-person Zoom meetings.

Former and occasional Lassus Jim Ballinger performed two songs, the first, "To the Man who Has Everything," was performed at Holmes's birthday celebration in 1982. The second, "Happy Birthday Sherlock Holmes," was written as a toast for this occasion.

Donny Zaldin presented "The Bootmakers of Toronto, a Half Century Retrospective."

Roger Johnson in Chelmsford, England, related the history of how the Sherlock Holmes Pub, a must for all Sherlockians, came into being.

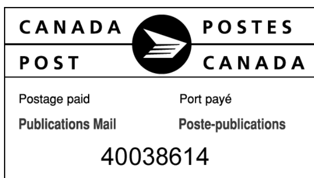
Barbara Rusch and Kathy Burns announced three recipients of The Emerald Tie Pin: Peggy MacFarlane, JoAnn Alberstat, and Mike Ranieri.

The True Davidson Award, for the best formal presentation, went to Barbara Rusch for "The Enduring Legacy of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle," with honourable mention to Mitch Higurashi for "A Brief History of Arthur Conan Doyle's Works in Japan."

The Warren Carlton Award for best informal presentation was given to the members of the Jubilee Conference committee.

The Derek Murdoch Award, for the best article in *Canadian Holmes*, went to Doug Wrigglesworth for "A Doctor and his Dresser at War: Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Blasson in South Africa." Diane

…Continued on page 33



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