

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 04, No. 01 – January, 2016
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



From the Editors: This is the start of our 4th year of publication of the Bilge Pump... Thanks for all your support. Steve & Walt

February 7th Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 7th, at LA MADELEINE COUNTRY FRENCH CAFE, in Addison.

The restaurant is at 5290 Belt Line Rd #112, just east of the Tollway.

We will be reading "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box."

The quiz will cover this tale.

Each monthly meeting will also include toasts as well as general business, introductions, and general fellowship.

January 3rd Meeting

There were 20 in attendance at the monthly meeting, including 5 visitors (2 from the East Coast.) Jim Brown provided an excellent toast in celebration of Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as the upcoming birthday of Sherlock Holmes.

Each of the attendees were provided a copy of the 1st edition of the *Baker Street Elementary* Comic Strips. The quiz on "The Adventure of the Naval Treaty" was won by Sharon Lowry, with Walter Pieper receiving second place.

Steve Mason then did a presentation on "A Rose by Any Other Name", from the passage in the "Naval Treaty" describing the mysterious personality of Sherlock Holmes and how he was perceived by many. The relationship between Doyle and Harry Houdini, and how spiritualism affected each of them was also brought up.

There was a discussion of the history of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star; the Crew is lucky to still have some of the very early members participating, e.g. Sharon Lowry, and Herb Linder. Bill Pervin was invested as a Deck Mate, noting his wonderful presentation on mathematics and the Sherlock Holmes canon.

Steve discussed Sherlockians Searching for Sherlockians, which involved the search by Don Hobbs and Steve to locate Bill Beason, one of the founding members of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star, alone with Sharon Lowry's late husband Bullet, and Francine Morris.

Steve then gave a State of the Society, which included the Crew's accomplishments and adventures in 2015.

The Piepers have asked that we set a specific weekend night each month to have Sherlock Holmes movie watching night. The group agreed on the second Saturday of each month starting in February. In January we will have the 4th Saturday be our movie watching night, so on January 30, we will be watching "A Study in Time".

A discussion of the newest "Sherlock" story, The Abominable Bride, which was viewed by the majority of the club on New Year's Day. Steve mentioned that in the show there was a picture on Holmes wall called "All is Vanity" which is the same picture his Sherlock loving Father had passed down to him.

Steve Mason gave the Closing Toast from the Baker Street Journal on July 1960, entitled "Holmes the Epicure".

Thanks to Cindy for taking the minutes of the cruise. The full minutes are posted on our webpage at: <http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/log-of-the-crew.html>

For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://dfw-sherlock.org/>

You can follow us on Twitter at: [@barquelonestar](#)

You can friend us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar>



Who dunnit:



Third Mate
Helmsman
Spiritual Advisors

Secretaries
Historian
Webmaster

Steve Mason
Walter Pieper
Don Hobbs, BSI
Jim Webb
Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison
Pam Mason
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TOAST TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

Jim Brown

Ladies and Gentlemen, I propose a toast!

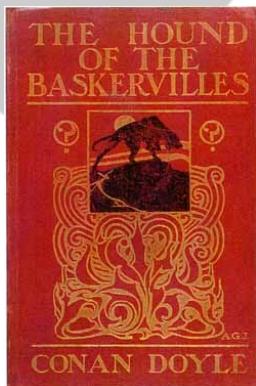
We are gathered here today, only three days before his 162nd birthday on January 6, to celebrate the wonderful legacy of Sherlock Holmes.

My dad loved reading Sherlock Holmes and he has passed this love on to me.

This truly is a tradition that has stood the test of time.

And indirectly, we are also celebrating Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who created the character that, in today's vernacular, is a superpower that uses exclusively his superior intellect.

Even more indirectly, we are celebrating the medium through which our beloved Sherlock was created – the book.



From the first stone tablets, humankind has continually improved the book, until in modern day a Maestro like Sir Arthur – by putting symbols on a sheet of paper - can paint the vivid images and complex characters of the Sherlockian world into the minds of others.

So here is to the book, which like the canvas for painters, is the most exquisite medium of expression.

And here is to Sir Arthur, the genius that created the Sherlockian world.



And here is to Sherlock – who does it all with his brain! Happy Birthday, Sherlock!

Hear hear!

HOLMES THE EPICURE

Excerpt from The Baker Street Journal, July, 1960

We know much of Sherlock Holmes' tastes in food and drink, but there is more, much more, that we do not know.

It is, of course, from his fine palate for such delicacies as grouse and oysters that Holmes's reputation as an epicure derives; but his proclivities were broader than that: he was not above extolling Mrs. Hudson for her plain breakfasts or combining business with pleasure in the enjoyment of a glass of beer in a public house — and we must remember the occasion when he tore a piece of bread from the loaf on the sideboard and washed it down with a long draught of water, thereby moving Dr. Watson to remark, astutely, "You are hungry."



Holmes patronized such first-rate restaurants as Marcini's and Goldini's and Simpson's, and, along with his Montrachet, he savored an occasional whiskey from the tantalus he kept always handy.

And we may be sure that he took a nip now and again of the brandy Watson carried so persistently in his hip-pocket as a sovereign remedy for every ailment known to man.

All this speaks loudly and well of a trencherman both fastidious and robust, and of a man who knew his liquor.

But there are vast gaps in the testimony we have of the Master's diet, spare as we are told that diet was.



Surely he did not live on oysters and bread-crusts alone: no gourmet of his day or any other could have failed to relish occasionally a plain-grilled Dover sole.

It is strange we hear nothing at all in the Canon of the Master's taste for cheese — he must have eaten it straight at many a meal, and what more tempting, on such an occasion, than a short — or better yet, a stringy — Welsh rabbit?

Or it may be that he relished better one of those other flesh—substitute dishes made of cheese or eggs, such as a Scotch woodcock or a Yorkshire buck.

There must have been sweets, too, in the Holmesian diet, served with one of those afternoon teas, high or low, of which the Canon strangely makes no mention.

It is suggestive, that in his retirement the Master turned to the keeping of bees, and we may think he did this simply because he wanted to engorge his honey fresh from the comb.



The world is so full of a number of gastronomic delights, and Sherlock Holmes was such an eager, inquisitive, questing soul, that we cannot conceive of his failing to sample every nectar and ambrosia the gods could offer.

We are told that he went for long periods without food or drink, and we may believe he did this not only to concentrate his energies on the case he had in hand, but also, and more to the point, in order to restore the sharpness and efficacy of his taste-buds when a multi-pipe problem had furred them over.

It is good to know that this "reasoning-machine" was also a man with a hearty appetite and a discriminating choice in appeasing it.

17 STEPS TO "THE ADVENTURE OF THE CARDBOARD BOX"

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

"Ring for our boots and tell them to order a cab. I'll be back in a moment when I have changed my dressing-gown and filled my cigar-case." Now, we know Holmes's boots aren't going to order a cab. We know that Holmes isn't just changing into a different dressing gown to go out. And we also know that Holmes's grammatical shorthand doesn't extend to his cigar and cigarette cases. As a tobacco connoisseur, Holmes seemed very deliberate with his smoking, matching pipes to moods.

So what can we make of his taking cigars along for this particular outing? Were cigars his odor-cover of choice in cases involving severed body parts?

A SALTING OF THE EARS

"Again, carbolic or rectified spirits would be the preservatives which would suggest themselves to the medical mind, certainly not rough salt."

Okay, so you're a mad-dog killer sending severed ears to the woman you blame for your murderous ways. Why are you even attempting to preserve the ears?

Do you think she'll want to save them as keepsakes? Wouldn't unpreserved ears have much more shock value to the recipient?

WELL, IT WASN'T THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Of Browner, we hear: "That was before he broke the pledge..." Temperance pledges of Victorian England seem to have come in many levels and varieties. What sort of pledge might we expect a seaman like Browner to have taken? Would he have taken it as a part of his church life? Or a promise to his wife?

JIM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SUSAN

Susan says, "First he dropped me, then he quarrelled with Sarah, and now that Mary has stopped writing we don't know how things are going with them." How does she mean that Jim "dropped" her? Just a few lines before she says he only came to visit her once before he started drinking. It doesn't seem like there

was much of a relationship there to drop, does it?

BRAIN FEVER STRIKES AGAIN!

Sarah Cushing's doctor says, "She has been suffering since yesterday from brain symptoms of great severity. As her medical adviser, I cannot possibly take the responsibility of allowing anyone to see her. I should recommend you to call again in ten days."

We've seen and discussed brain fever on many occasions, but in "Cardboard Box" we get some interesting statements from a doctor who's treating it. He mentions "brain symptoms" as though they're commonly recognized, and cites a ten day recovery period. Do we know what brain symptoms are, having seen this ailment so many times in the Canon? And why ten days? Did he pull that number out of his shiny black hat?

THAT MOMENT THE ENTHUSIAST LIVES FOR

"We had a pleasant little meal together, during which Holmes would talk about nothing but violins, narrating with great exultation how he had purchased his own Stradivarius, which was worth at least five hundred guineas, at a Jew broker's in Tottenham Court Road for fifty-five shillings."

Doesn't this sound like something from a dinner with a fellow Sherlockian? The enthusiast whose special knowledge enables him to purchase a rarity for a bargain price is something many a Sherlockian can relate to, and an experience that makes this dinner seem like one we'd enjoy sitting in on.

With that in mind, do any Hounds have "rare Sherlockian find" tales they'd care to share with fellow Hounds who are dining as they read their e-mail?

SHERLOCK HOLMES, PAGANINI FAN

"This led him to Paganini, and we sat for an hour over a bottle of claret while he told me anecdote after anecdote of that extraordinary man."

Where would a fan of Nicolo Paganini have picked up tales of that remarkable violinist? From fellow fans, violin

instructors, or books? As Paganini and his devil-related reputation are a bit reminiscent of some modern rock star, would the violinist have been favored by young music lovers more than old?

REASONING BACKWARDS, YES, BUT ARRESTING BACKWARDS?

Holmes says, "I have written to Lestrade asking him to supply us with the details which are now wanting, and which he will only get after he has secured his man."

Even Holmes doesn't know the whole story, but on the basis of the consulting detective writing a name on a card, Inspector Lestrade makes an arrest. Was this a case where Holmes was using Scotland Yard's tendency to "arrest first, ask questions later" to his advantage? Why didn't Holmes conjure up some climactic staged capture, as he did in so many other cases?

LESTRADE, THE MAD DOG OF THE YARD

"That he may be safely trusted to do, for although he is absolutely devoid of reason, he is as tenacious as a bulldog when he once understands what he has to do." Devoid of reason? Boy, we talk about Holmes insulting Watson, but this has to be the ultimate Holmes slam of one of his familiars. Is Lestrade, indeed, incapable of basic reasoning of the detective sort? Or is this an affectionate little jibe, spoken to a friend about a friend?

THE MYSTERY OF THE MYSTERY ITSELF

This entire mystery revolves around the fact that the package of ears was addressed to "Miss S. Cushing."

Had Browner addressed the package with the full name of his intended recipient, she may not have been as quick to announce it to the police as she fell into brain fever. So why did our culprit address it so confusingly when he "knew" that there were two "S. Cushing's? Did addressing etiquette demand a maiden ladies first name not be spelled out?

USING THE FORCE TO FIND FRIENDS

"I therefore sent off a telegram to my friend Algar, of the Liverpool force, and

asked him to find out if Mrs. Browner were at home, and if Browner had departed in the May Day."

From Holmes's reference to Algar as a friend, can we assume that he once was involved in a case that Algar was handling? Would there have been any other way Holmes wound up friends with a Liverpool law enforcement officer?

Might Holmes have purposefully cultivated relationships with members of key English police forces?

THE DESTINATION OF THE THIRD COPY

Lestrade's note says about Browner's confession: "We had three copies typewritten, one of which I enclose."

While one has to wonder about what sort of life a Scotland Yard typist had, one also has to wonder if carbon paper had been invented yet (or the typist had to retype the confession), and who that third copy was for. One copy for Holmes, one for Lestrade or his department's records, and the third for whom? The prosecuting attorneys?

S. CUSHING, G. LESTRADE -- DON'T THESE PEOPLE EVER LEARN?

The Scotland Yard inspector signs her note: "With kind regards, Yours very truly, G. Lestrade."

Is that the double closing what one would expect of a professional exchange, or is Lestrade kissing up? And why is Lestrade withholding his first name?

DIDN'T ANYONE WANT CREDIT ON THIS CASE?

"This is his statement as made before Inspector Montgomery at the Shadwell Police Station, and it has the advantage of being verbatim."

First Holmes passes the case and its credit to Lestrade, then Lestrade passes the murderer on to Montgomery for his confession. What was Montgomery's part? Surely Scotland Yard didn't make inspectors of their "shorthand man," did they?

FOOT FETISHES OF VICTORIAN SEAMEN

"I thought more of my wife's footprint in the mud than I did of her whole body and soul," confesses Jim Browner. After Captain Crocker's kissing the deck where Mary Fraser had walked in "Abbey Grange," Browner's statement almost looks like there's a pattern forming here. Does this fixation with footsteps show up in any other writings by Watson or his Literary Agent?

THE CUSHING INCOME SOURCES

"Sarah found that she could not make a living in Liverpool," Browner reports, after saying Sarah took a house to let lodgings to sailors. We are also told earlier that Susan Cushing had taken on medical student boarders before. So how did Susan and Sarah make their livings?

Wouldn't they have had to have capital to invest in a boarding house to earn a living that way? Or did they rent and sublet?

THE SARAH CUSHING FIXATION

"If Sarah had been there, by the Lord, she should have joined them. I pulled out my knife, and--well, there! I've said enough. It gave me a kind of savage joy when I thought how Sarah would feel when she had such signs as these of what her meddling had brought about."

Jim Browner's wife seems to be cheating on him, which naturally throws him into a rage. He's angry enough at her and her lover to kill them both, yet somehow in that rage, he still has room to be irritated by his sister-in-law. If he's that enraged and that fixated on Sarah, why didn't he deliver the ears personally and take his anger out on Sarah as well?

The Bryan Woolley Memorial Scholarship: Remembering good books and an old friend

Michael Merschel, Dallas Morning News

Sometimes, books are like friends. And sometimes, books remind us of old friends. That's the case for me right now, as I think of some of the titles that have crossed my desk lately — books on Roman history, a Sherlock Holmes collection, a Lincoln novel coming from Stephen Harrigan.

All are subjects that would have drawn the interest of my keen-minded former colleague Bryan Woolley, who died in January at age 77.

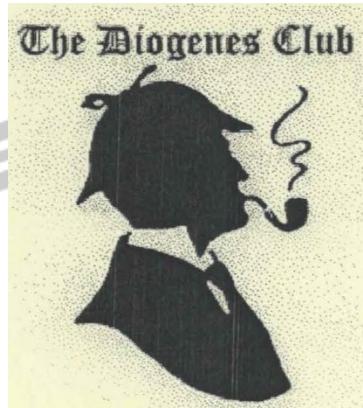
Bryan was well-known to Dallas Morning News readers as a longtime feature writer and regular contributor of book reviews. He led a remarkable life.

Bryan was fiercely proud of his West Texas roots, and not long ago, his family contacted me to say that the Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library set up a scholarship in his honor. The annual award of \$1,000 will be given to a graduating senior from Fort Davis High School or Valentine High School for a winning essay, judged by the scholarship committee of the library board. Bryan would love this; a contest played a significant role in his beginnings as a writer.

Donations, for anyone inclined, may be made at <http://friendsjdcl.org/support/>

THE 7TH ANNUAL PICNIC FOR OUR SOCIETY

AUGUST 31, 2002



THE NORTH TEXAS REGIONAL SHERLOCK HOLMES GROUP
(No TRASH)
Present
The 7th Annual Picnic

Menu featuring:

Those semi-famous Mrs. Hudson Burgers: This is a Missing Three Quarter pound of 90% lean, beef that will be cooked to perfection over a Silver Blaze of charcoal. Little Red Circles of Texas tomatoes and a 7% solution of mustard. Ketchup may be added for that Second Stain. Served with or without those little Yellow Faces of cheese.

Mrs. Warren's Devil's Foot Deviled Eggs: These things are good enough to straighten up any Crooked Man and give the Mona Lisa a Twisted Lip. Be an illustrious Client and eat several. Originally served at The Priory School to their original Three Students who wore Golden Pince-Nez.

Colonel Sebastian Moran's Side Dish Surprises: These truly come from The Valley of Fear. Who knows what Moriarty's minions have in store. You may need a Greek Interpreter to help with these dishes. If they aren't a Scandal in Bohemia, nothing is. Don't end up in a Red-Headed League of your own, try them all!! Beware of the Black Peter and Blanched Soldier but try the Gloria Scott.

The Blue Carbuncle Margarita: Joyce's own concoction. Drinking these little Hound of the Baskervilles is a virtual Musgrave Ritual, just ask the last Six Napoleons who drank them. That was their Final Problem. Guaranteed to turn Dancing Men into a Reigate Puzzle. Just ask Charles Augustus Milverton.

All food remaining will be placed inside a Cardboard Box according to the Bruce Partington Plan and given to that Solitary Cyclist, Lady Frances Carfax and the Retired Colourman from the Abbey Grange.

In Cases of Identity, there will be Study in Scarlet to determine The Sign of Four. Entertainment will be provided by Gladys Knight and The Five Orange Pips. The Norwood Builder provided the Empty House

SHERLOCKIAN SCHOLARSHIP: John Clayton: Cabdriver in Town, Archaeologist in the North

BY JAMES LUDWIG, Holmes and Watson Report, Sherlock Peoria

Editor Brad Keefauver offers as note 17 to his perspicacious *The Annotated John Clayton*, distributed to those lucky enough to be in attendance at a Hansoms of John Clayton Annual Banquet, sources of speculation regarding the real identity of John Clayton, with possible connections to the fifth Duke of Greymminster and grandfather of Tarzan. Keefauver refers to H. W. Starr's "A Case of Identity" (originally printed in *The Baker Street Journal*, New Series Volume 10) and Philip Jose Farmer's *Tarzan Alive*.

While these postulations may pique the casual reader, the real source person for the hansom cabdriver of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* fame, and the namesake of the Peoria, Illinois, scion society, has been discovered to be a notable landowner, scholar, archaeologist, and only occasional visitor to London in search of the lurid pleasures of the urban environment, where, in disguise, he played an unwitting part in the Baskerville saga. Following two weeks in London during which the actual path of that famous cab ride was traced - it now is bracketed by Madam Tussaud's near Baker Street and the Royal National Theatre near Waterloo Station – an additional week took my companion and me on a completely unrelated cultural investigation along the boundary marked in Roman times as the northernmost edge of civilization, Hadrian's Wall. Erected in the second century to exclude the Scots, the Wall was 80 miles long, 12 feet wide, and 20 feet high. Credited to the Emperor Hadrian, the wall - punctuated by milecastles, forts, bridges, and turrets -- stretched from



the east at Sunderland, through Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Birdoswald, and Halwhistle, to the ocean on the west. Over centuries, the Wall decayed. Its forts abandoned, the barracks and baths, once lively with Roman soldiers enlisted for 25-year terms during which they were not permitted to marry other Romans at home, fell into ruin from neglect and disinterest.

The soldiers had established families amongst the locals, but deserted them, as well as the Wall, when tours of duty were fulfilled and they returned to Rome. So, there remain the remnants of the Wall and the progeny of the soldiers for the visitor to meet in the nineties. Notable among the fragments of Hadrian's Wall visible to modern curiosity seekers are the occasional stretches of Wall at Heddon-on-Wall, Once Brewed, and Sewingshields.

Three restorations are the most complete and instructive: Birdoswald with its fort and turf wall, housesteads high upon a hill with views of the Wall course atop ridges in the distance, and Chesters Fort -- the most magnificent for its clearly detailed building sites and its nearly-complete bathhouse which seems to lead moderns from its lobby and through hot and cold water treatments so treasured by the Roman soldiers. Hadrian's Wall was rediscovered during the Victorian era when gentlemen aristocrats, who were wealthy landowners and aspiring scholars and savants, turned their attention to the relics of Britain's past to be found literally just below the surface of their farms and pastures. It was a great surprise to us as current American travelers to learn



that the person most responsible for the spectacular work done in the nineteenth century to revitalize Chesters Fort was none other than its landowner, John Clayton.

John Clayton took possession of his estate in 1832. He developed a passionate interest in Chesters Fort as well as Roman remains in the area. He acquired five of the most important locations along Hadrian's Wall and instigated serious excavations resulting in publications and diagrams which detailed his spectacular discoveries. He also sought to protect these findings for the future. His energies and wealth were applied to the acquisition of antiquities displayed in a museum he had constructed for the purpose.

He is credited by the English Heritage organization with providing the greatest impetus for the investigation and preservation of Hadrian's Wall. Virtually all that can be seen of the fort at Chesters today was inspired and accomplished by John Clayton. It was his goal to discover new knowledge and also to make it available to the newly inquisitive and curious pleasure-seekers of his times. Up to his death in 1890, John Clayton was a formidable leader in archaeological revitalization as well as education and preservation. One more interesting factor applies to the connection between John Clayton the archaeologist and Doyle's John Clayton, the cabdriver.



The English Heritage booklet Chesters Roman Fort indicates John Clayton devoted only Mondays to his practical archaeological activities.



What were his activities during the rest of the week? Trips to London to visit contemporary luminaries, such as

Arthur Conan Doyle? If so, surely a man so important to nineteenth century learning, so accomplished in his results, and so available for trips down to London would have been a familiar figure to Doyle who chose to recognize this important Victorian figure by using his name in a cameo performance as the cabdriver in *The Hound*. Or perhaps more

romantically, maintaining his own name, but living a second life in London, for the fun of it or to be near a lover, the northern gentleman opted for a squalid alternative as a cab driver who was casually included in the adventure. Just so he was back north for the digs on Mondays!

56 Stories in 56 Days - The Cardboard Box

Posted on October 27, 2011 by barefootonbakerstreet

The beginning of this story is giving me a strange sense of déjà vu, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Let me explain, or try to at least. There is a passage at the start of *The Cardboard Box* which is exactly the same in *The Resident Patient*. Confused? Well this is the reason – as far as I understand it anyway.

The Cardboard Box was originally supposed to be included in *The Memoirs*, but Conan Doyle decided to leave it out due to some sexual content. It was presumed that the story would therefore never be published. It seemed to be very unfortunate that the brilliant piece of deduction which Holmes does at the start involving knowing Watson's innermost thoughts just by reading his body language, would never be seen. So it was decided to insert this into *The Resident Patient* instead. Eventually though, *The Cardboard Box*, minus the sexual bit, was published as part of *His Last Bow* and the duplication occurred. Clear? I know, all a bit strange and I probably haven't explained it very well.

If you are more informed, then please do enlighten me using the comments box below. Also, I'd be interested to know what the original sexual content was as it has now been removed (or at least I presume it has as there is nothing remotely sexual in the story). If anyone knows, do write below as it would be very interesting to see what Doyle deemed as 'inappropriate'.

The story itself is a rather gruesome one about an enraged husband who murders his wife and her lover, cuts off an ear from each of them, and sends them to his sister-in-law who he holds responsible for turning his wife against him. They are accidentally received by the third sister who calls in the police. As usual, Lestrade gets it completely wrong and it is left to Holmes to find out the truth behind the unpleasant parcel.

An analysis of the string which binds it and the knot suggests a sailor is to blame. Discovering that the male ear had a hole for a piercing also compounded the sailor theory. The female ear was remarkably similar to that of the lady who received it suggesting that she must be related to the victim, and quite closely. Holmes professed to have made a study into ears – 'Each ear is as a rule quite distinctive and differs from all other ones. In last year's Anthropological Journal you will find two short monographs from my pen on the subject'. There really is no limit to the strange bits of knowledge which Holmes would store in his great brain!

A photograph in the lady's house of herself with two sisters prompts Holmes to inquire whether either of them is married to a sailor and indeed one of them is – a nasty drunkard. Hey presto, mystery solved.

That usual happy blend of observation, clever logic and sound reasoning gives Holmes all the answers.

An enjoyable story, but with a sad ending and macabre undertones – 7 out of 10.

THE SECOND ANGLO-AFGHAN WAR

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

When Dr. Watson is first introduced in *A Study in Scarlet*, he notes his recent return from Afghanistan, where he was wounded in the battle at Maiwand in July, 1880. (1)

This clash represented the worst disaster for the British during what was later referred to as the Second Anglo-Afghan War. It played, however, no small part in the empire's final victory following Lord Roberts' march to Kandahar, creating a hero of this commander of the Kabul and Kandahar field forces. (2)

During the Victorian period, India played a pivotal role in Britain's foreign policy. It was considered the most valuable possession in the British Empire, and major

military efforts were employed to ensure its borders and prevent intrusion, particularly from the Russians. Afghanistan served as a buffer between the two powers, and as a result, the country's emir faced economic and political pressures from both sides in what was often

referred to as "The Great Game." (3)

In 1877, Russia invaded Turkey and planned to attack the British in India by marching through Afghanistan. To use the country as a staging ground, the Tsar sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul to pressure the emir Sher Ali into allowing the establishment of an embassy there.

Because the British provided the emir with an annual pension to reject the advances of other countries, they were outraged by the betrayal and prepared to invade the country, but only after they sent their own diplomatic mission to the emir to establish a British embassy in Kabul. Being caught in the middle between these two powerhouses, the emir ordered Afghan troops to rebuff the British mission at the border.

In response, the British government warned the emir to accept their ambassador or suffer invasion. When the



emir didn't respond, British and Indian troops entered the country.

By May, 1879, Sher Ali's son Yakub Khan had replaced his father and now sued the British for peace, accepting their permanent embassy in Kabul. Unfortunately, when the ambassador and the rest of his men arrived, they were slaughtered, and Lord Roberts was ordered to advance on the city in response to the ambassador's assignation. Upon retaking Kabul in October, he forced Yakub Khan to abdicate and Roberts became the city's governor. (4)

While the British negotiated with Abdur Rahman, a nephew of Sher Ali's and the soon-to-be emir in Kabul, Yakub Khan's brother Ayub Khan declared himself emir and advanced on Kandahar with 7500 men.

Lt. Gen. J.M. Primrose, then in charge of Kandahar, sent 2,734 soldiers to stop their advance near Maiwand. After more than four hours of intense fighting in severe heat, the British fell. Only 1,595 made it back to the Kandahar.

When word of the massacre and subsequent siege of Kandahar reached Kabul, Roberts was given command of 9900 men, whom he raced through the country, reaching Kandahar, a distance of 313 miles, in 21 days.

The soldiers battled heat during the day, freezing temperatures at night, and thirst for the entire march, but still arrived ready for a fight, and quickly defeated Ayub Khan and his army. For his efforts, Roberts was advanced to Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.



The Afghan people accepted Abdur Rahman as their ruler and the British withdrew from Kabul and Kandahar. The new emir retained his control of foreign policy and continued to reject Russian influence as he had promised during negotiations with the British.

While it might be argued that in the end, the war created a more stable country to the north, little territorial shift occurred as a result and the final political situation remained as it had under Sher Ali, making this one of the most controversial conflicts in the region. (5)

The press coverage of the war, including the defeat at Maiwand and Lord Roberts' subsequent victories, made both well-known back in Britain.

Watson's reference to his own involvement in the battle at Maiwand would have recalled the dire circumstances of the conflict and marked him as a man with the courage and resilience to serve as Holmes' associate.

1) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert (2012-12-13). *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (Kindle Location 372). . Kindle Edition.

2) <http://www.garenewing.co.uk/angloafghanwar/sitestuff/faq.php>

3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Game

4) <http://www.historynet.com/second-afghan-war.htm>

5) <http://www.garenewing.co.uk/angloafghanwar/sitestuff/faq.php>

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD. You can read more about this award-winning author's writing (as well as her previous articles in the Bilge Pump) and sign up for her newsletter at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com. A non-Sherlockian adventure can be downloaded at: <http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com/extras.html>

Sherlock: The Abominable Bride, nine things we learned

Ed Power, *The Telegraph*

Could Sherlock keep the Holmes fire burning? That was the real mystery as Benedict Cumberbatch once more donned the detective's flapping overcoat for a giddily-anticipated feature length return to Baker Street.

It was by no means elementary that The Abominable Bride would live up to a drum-roll of hype that, even amid the clamour and chaos of Christmas, has been deafening. Two years off our screens, had the sleuthing sociopath retained pole position as our favourite crime-solving weirdo?

We needn't have fretted. From the first dramatic shot of Holmes, whipping a corpse with his back to camera ("to establish

how long after death bruising is possible"), it was obvious the magic had endured. Sherlock was back – and as compellingly eccentric as we remembered. There was a new (old) setting, with Victorian London seemingly replacing the 21st century backdrop of the original series, and a spooky storyline owing more to classic gothic literature than to Arthur Conan Doyle's stories.

Yet the chemistry between Holmes and Freeman's Watson fizzled as thrillingly as ever, the script by Moffat and Mark brimming with wry exchanges and comedic misunderstandings.

Plus, with the one-off nature of the endeavour requiring an

entire story arc to be crammed into just 90 minutes, the action clipped by at whip-smart pace.

As ever, the chief pleasure lay in interplay between the emotionally tin-eared Holmes and a perpetually perplexed Watson as they tried (and generally failed) to understand the world from the other's perspective.

But after the smug, self-celebratory tenor of the most recent season of Sherlock (from 2014), it was a joy, too, to watch the perfectly mismatched duo get stuck into a properly knotty whodunit – even if a flurry of time-hopping convolutions at the death muddied matters somewhat. Here is what we learned.

1. Cumberbatch Remains The Definitive Modern Holmes

Cumberbatch was Cumberbatch, in the role that set him on the trajectory to stardom. Frankly, he had been too long away. While he has gone on to dizzying over-achievement in the movies, many viewers will feel this is where he belonged – trading wisecracks with Freeman's Watson while enmeshed in one of Moffat's gloriously overcooked brain-twisters.

He was visibly relishing reconnecting with Holmes too – his eyes twinkling with delight as he reprised that uncanny portrayal of Sherlock as a calculating machine disguised as a human.

2. The Nineteenth Century Backdrop Worked A Charm

It's often forgotten now, but when Sherlock debuted in 2010, the modern setting was perceived as crucial to its appeal.

Few characters have been resuscitated with such tiresome frequency as Conan Doyle's iconic crime fighter and the choice of contemporary London as a backdrop was regarded as a vital innovation on the part of show-runner Moffatt.

Of course, we soon discovered that the real magic was the dynamic between Cumberbatch and Freeman and this element was preserved wonderfully as the New Year special whooshed back to 1895. Amid the picturesque gloom of gothic London, their banter retained its sparkle while the absence of the internet and smartphones permitted Holmes's genius to shine more brightly.

He seemed twice as smart now that none of the other characters could second-guess him by sneakily consulting Wikipedia.

3. The Storyline Was Riper Than A Banana Cart On A Hot Day – But Who Cared?

A blood-spattered bride blew her brains out, then apparently returned as a gun-wielding ghoul and dispatched her husband ("it's a shot gun wedding," she cackled).

Against all logic, Emelia Ricoletti had defied death and mastered the secret of bilocation (her corpse was mouldering in the mortuary at the time of her spouse's killing).

Holmes refused to countenance a supernatural explanation - even as Ricoletti was linked to a spree of subsequent husband-slayings.

4. It Was All A Dream

The shaggy tale was revealed to be a cold case that had been on ice for over 100 years and which present day Sherlock had attempted to solve by journeying deep into his "mind palace".

This was divulged after in an imaginary confrontation with his nemesis Moriarty (Andrew Scott), who shot himself through the mouth yet lived. The sequence took on a nightmarish aspect as the super villain turned to display a vast gaping hole in the rear of his head and cackled ("would a comb over work?").

Snapping back to reality, Holmes found himself on the jet into which he'd been unceremoniously bundled at the end of Sherlock series three.

He had a real life mystery to solve – the apparent return of Moriarty – but could not let go of his obsession with the Ricoletti killings.

We had expected some dramatic twists en route to a resolution (Moffat and Gatiss had not allowed preview screenings in order to keep a lid on spoilers). But was this a thrilling kink in the tale – or desperate recourse to the oldest parlour trick in the dramatist's repertoire?

Opinions will doubtless divide down the middle. In fact, we expect Twitter is imploding right now.

5. It Was Really A Horror Story Masquerading as A Mystery

"Horror is a very big part of Sherlock Holmes," co-writer Gatiss told USA Today recently. This proved a significant tip-off, as Dream Sherlock and Imaginary Watson were sucked into a spooky whodunit in the richest tradition of M.R. James and Sheridan Le Fanu.

Nobody will have gone to bed braced for a sleepless night – but more than a few may have experienced a tingle of disquiet.

A scene in which the "undead" bride stalked her latest intended victim through a mist-shrouded maze was, in particular, a triumph of gilded creepiness. Who'd have thought a wedding-veil looming in the gloom could chill so deeply?

6. There Was No Mucking About

Five minutes in, Holmes and Watson were having their momentous first meeting – cut short because Sherlock had to dash to a hanging in Wandsworth

("I take a professional interest") and the duo were soon off solving mysteries together.

Straight away we understood there was to be no "origin story" shilly-shallying. The game was afoot from the outset.

7. Moffat and Gatiss Still Write Some of the Smartest Dialogue in British Drama

The zingers came thick and fast. "There is a woman in my sitting room – is this intentional?", "Suicide street theatre, murder by corpse – Lestrade you're spoiling us", "It is NEVER twins Watson!"

Indeed, the dialogue was eclipsed only by the fat suit Gatiss donned as Sherlock's corpulent brother Mycroft (he and Holmes had wagered how long it would take him to eat himself into the

grave – or at least they had in Sherlock's fevered dreamscape).

8. It Came Together in the End (Sort Of)

"Excellent – superb theatre. I applaud the spectacle," said Holmes as he interrupted a gathering of the cultists behind the Ricoletti killings.

The "corpse bride", we learned, had been conjured via lookalikes, creative make-up, and drawing room sleight of hand. Viewers will have echoed Sherlock's sentiment – even if the big reveal that the killers were a vengeful cabal of suffragettes felt random and tacked on.

But there was another twist as Sherlock delved too deep into his mind palace and found himself locked in stand-off with Moriarty, at the fateful Reichenbach Falls.

"When it comes to unarmed combat at the edge of a precipice you're going into the water," promised Sherlock.

Actually, it was pretend-Watson who saved the day while Holmes yanked himself out of his retro reverie by following Moriarty over the edge.

9. The Stage Was Set For The Next Series Proper

Sherlock is to return in 18 months or so and, as he snapped awake, the detective had a premonition of the challenges awaiting.

"Of course Moriarty is dead," he said. "And I know exactly what he's going to do next."

That familiar musical refrain swooped in and you wished it was 2017 already.

AND IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ON THE ABOMINABLE BRIDE...

I HEAR OF SHERLOCK EVERYWHERE, an amazing podcast and website, has more reviews on the BBC Sherlock special. You can access them at...

Everything You Need to Know — A Roundup of Abominable Bride Reviews

<http://www.ihearofsherlock.com/>

A TWIST ON CANONICAL TITLES

The Three Garridebs of Westchester County, New York

We took 11 story titles, replaced a word or phrase in each with one from a different story. See if you can identify the new titles from the clues provided. The answers will be provided next month.

1. I guess hitchhiking was out of the question for him.	
2. Not who you'd want when negotiating an international deal.	
3. The low-end version for the visually and financially impaired.	
4. The titular individual in this case must have had amazing coordination.	
5. Might have chipped some teeth on Nathan's fossils.	
6. An ironic description, when you think about it.	
7. Holmes to Hudson.	
8. The smiley one.	
9. Scowlers in Herefordshire.	
10. A dark lantern's light source?	
11. Aka a visit to the Container Store.	

Baker Street Elementary

Created by Joe Fay,
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MA'AM... YESTERDAY, YOU SAID
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF... WHY
CAN'T WE JUST LEARN ABOUT THE
FIRST HUNDRED YEARS OR SO?

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