

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 04, No. 03 - March, 2016
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



From the Editors: Thanks for all your support. Steve & Walt

April 3rd Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, April 3rd, 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 Crooked Man."

The quiz will cover this tale.

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

March 6th Meeting

There were 19 in attendance at the monthly meeting, including 5 visitors (2 from the East Coast.) Cindy Brown offered up a whimsical toast (page 2).

The quiz on "The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb" was won by Sandra Little. Walter Pieper finished in second.

Steve Mason presented plaques to each member that helped out with the November Symposium, "Sherlock Holmes Deep in the Heart of Texas" at the Allen Library.

Tim Klein shared his new finds of Sherlockian books and magazines.

We welcomed back Joe Fey, who has been living outside of the Dallas area for the last 18 months. It's nice to have him back.

Walter Pieper announced the next movie night will be March 12, and we will be seeing the movie "Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars".

Greg Ruby from The 4th Garrideb in Baltimore, Maryland, was our guest speaker today, presenting a PowerPoint on Basil Rathbone, and all of his endorsements. It was called "A Day in the Life of Basil Rathbone".

Steve discussed the possibility of changing the name of the Crew of the Barque's newsletter, which is currently called "The Bilge Pump". Some people find this a distasteful name. He explained that the bilge pump was not really the toilet, but a mechanism used to eliminate water that the wooden boat took on while sailing. We will be having a more in-depth presentation on this topic at a later meeting.

Steve closed the meeting with a reading from the BSI journal from June 1966, a writing called "A Legend" by Chris Redmond (page 2).

Thanks to Pam and 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](https://twitter.com/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
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ODE TO COINS

Cindy Brown

New coins, Old coins, Copper
coins, Gold coins.

John Watson, London Fog,
Sherlock Holmes, there is that
dog.

Jack Ruby, Tutti Fruitti, Scooby
Dooby, Greg Ruby.

Please raise your glasses as we
toast our guest from

The 4th Garrideb, Greg Ruby.

A LEGEND - JUNE, 1966 BAKER STREET JOURNAL

CHRIS REDMOND

Remember the famous profile.
See the pipe—

Traditionally curved, though really
straight—

On which he puffs, as men of every type
Narrate their strange experience or fate.

That famous phrase of “Elementary,
My dear Watson,” was one he never spoke;
But he is known for it in every
Discussion of him, each pastiche, each joke.

Popularly, he crawled across the rug,
In deerstalker and cape, viewing with care
Through magnifying glass each thread or
bug,
Each ash orbit of mud, which he found
there.

It’s fiction, or else legend—but forsooth!
Since we believe it, isn’t it the truth?

17 Steps to the Crooked Man

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

Seventeen thoughts for further ponderance of the case at hand...

HOLMES STOPS BY FOR AN OVERNIGHT



Holmes's overnight stay is an item that it is almost too easy to breeze over in "The Crooked Man."

The detective shows up on Watson's doorstep at 11:45 at night, asks if he can sleep in the spare room, then invites Watson along on an investigation the next morning. All this would seem to make sense, except for the fact that they don't have to catch the morning train until 11:10 the next day . . . plenty of time for Holmes to return from Baker Street and pick Watson up. Why the need for a sleepover?

Was something wrong with 221B? Was Holmes afraid that if he left Watson alone with Mrs. Watson she'd forbid him from accompanying Holmes, yet would be too polite to do it in person?

THE MACHINE OR THE MAN?

"For an instant the veil had lifted upon his keen, intense nature, but for an instant only.

When I glanced again his face had resumed that red-Indian composure which had made so many regard him as a machine rather than a man."

Here we find as good a statement of the duality of Holmes's image as any in the Canon (ignoring the antiquated Native American stereotype, of course.). There is the "keen, intense" Holmes, as passionate about his art as any painter or poet.

There is also the "Mr. Spock" side of Holmes, cold, logical, and scientific. Seeing Holmes through Watson's eyes, we are privvy to both sides of Holmes, and those little emotional outbursts that probably only came out when he was alone or with Watson.

But he can't have been a machine to everybody else, can he? Certainly Lestrade has seen the human side of Holmes, as has Mrs. Hudson.

Who were these people who thought of Holmes as a machine?

Anyone we know?

WATSON'S UNMENTIONED ACT

Watson is usually quick to condense his own explanations or leave out his responses as he writes up the tales, but in this case he seems to drop something important: food. He quotes Holmes as saying:

"Ah! He has left two nail-marks from his boot upon your linoleum just where the light strikes it. No, thank you, I had some supper at Waterloo, but I'll

smoke a pipe with you with pleasure."

Watson doesn't say anything in between the linoleum remark and the supper remark, so we are left wondering.

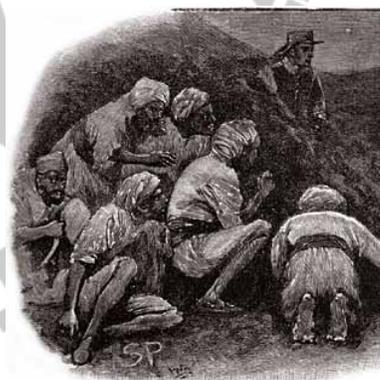
Was he waving a plate of pot roast or a leg of lamb in Holmes's face? Did he actually ask Holmes if he needed something to eat, then left out his own question, but not Holmes's response?

(And why, writing the story at a later date, would he put in one but not the other?) Was the food available at Chez Watson so bad that it didn't bear mentioning?

THE DAY RENTAL OF A HANSONM

Holmes tells Watson, "When your round is a short one you walk, and when it is a long one you use a hansom.

As I perceive that your boots, although used, are by no means dirty, I cannot doubt that you are



at present busy enough to justify the hansom."

Was renting a hansom cab (and driver) for an entire day cost-effective for a doctor making his rounds? From the singular reference, it would seem there



was just one, and not a series of cabs . . . or was it?

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

"The first battalion of the Royal Munsters (which is the old One Hundred and Seventeenth) has been stationed at Aldershot for some years," Holmes explains.

Okay, military buffs, why would the old One Hundred and Seventeenth now be called the Royal Munsters? (And don't tell me it has anything to do with the old TV show.)

ISN'T SHE STILL A MEMBER?

"Mrs. Barclay was, it appears, a member of the Roman Catholic Church and had interested herself very much in the establishment of the Guild of St. George, which was formed in connection with the Watt Street Chapel for the purpose of supplying the poor with cast-off clothing."

Holmes doesn't usually identify the religion of those involved in a crime, though the follow-up details might seem to give him some reason for doing so.

Is his subconscious trying to tell him that her active church status might show him the answer to that "David" clue?

And why does he refer to her in the past tense, when she just has brain fever?

THAT DARNED SOCIAL FRICTION!

Holmes reports: "There was, therefore, as can be imagined, some little social friction when the young couple (for they were still young) found themselves in their new surroundings."

I'm guessing that "new surroundings" refers to the new social status that James and Nancy Barclay gained when he went from being a sergeant to being an officer. What kind of friction might they have encountered?

Was it between the Barclays



and the officers and their wives, or between the Barclays themselves?

THE TELL-TALE CUP OF TEA

After learning of her husband's treachery and her lover's fate, Nancy Barclay enters her house, avoids her husband, and goes into the morning-room.

She then rings for the maid and asks for tea, which was "was quite contrary to her usual habits."

Was she attempting to calm her nerves with the tea? Would one even want to speak to anyone at a time like that, to even do so much as order tea?

THE SECURITY OF LACHINE

We are told that the morning room at Lachine "faces the road and opens by a large glass folding-door on to the lawn."

A folding door? Perhaps the Smash has a too-limited experience of folding doors, but I have yet to see one that would serve as an outside entrance to a house. Too easily taken off their tracks and not very conducive to getting a good seal against the elements. Are there good solid folding doors for use against the outdoors?

Was this the predecessor to the modern sliding patio door?

THE DIVINE MISS "M."

Holmes does something in this case that he does in no other . . . he calls a woman by a nickname of sorts.

"I took the obvious course, therefore, of calling upon Miss M."

Would it be too much to assume that Holmes's turn of phrase indicates a certain happiness of thought when Miss Morrison comes to mind?

The detective describes her as "a little ethereal slip of a girl, with timid eyes and blond hair, but I found her by no means wanting in shrewdness and common sense," which sounds a lot like Mary Morstan, another little blonde that Holmes thought was "one of the most charming young ladies I ever met, and might have been most useful in such work as we have been doing."

Of course, Watson stole Miss Morstan away before Holmes had a chance with her. Might things have gone differently this time?

Might Holmes have brought Watson into this case simply for a

little off-the-record advice on wooing? (That would explain the sudden need for a late-night slumber party at Watson's.)

SIMPSON IS ON THE JOB

"I have one of my Baker Street boys mounting guard over him who would stick to him like a burr, go where he might," Holmes says, and we soon find he has assigned the task to a lad named Simpson.

But the job to which Simpson is assigned is far from Baker Street.

Did Holmes take Simpson up to Aldershot with him to begin with, come back and get him, or send him up on a Tuesday night train and expect him to find Wood on his own?

CALLING ALL CORONERS

"The inquest is just over.

The medical evidence showed conclusively that death was due to apoplexy."

Okay, medically-minded Hounds, what's the conclusive evidence of death due to apoplexy?

THE WORST LIFE IN THE CANON

While we've seen a lot of hard-luck cases in the Canon, there is no one who compares with Henry Wood.

Anyone for whom the job description of "slave" was a step up in life is really hurting, and for poor Wood "hurting" is an understatement.

The mind boggles at what sort of tortures result in a twisting of the spine, and there are other aspects of his imprisonment that one doesn't even want to bring up on a family list.

Add to this the almost incidental fact that his one true love was stolen from him by the man who condemned him to Hell on Earth, and you get the one man who deserved revenge above any other that Sherlock Holmes encountered.

So what if Colonel Barclay had not been struck dead upon seeing him? Would Henry Wood have attempted to kill him?

Or was Wood such a broken man at this point that he was incapable of taking his revenge?

HOW TWISTED WAS BARCLAY?

His regiment is trapped by ten thousand rebels. The water has run out.

He needs to send word to General Neill.

Barclay then sets up his one volunteer to die by having his servant run out and tell the rebels of the volunteer's path.

Trying to destroy a rival is one thing, but risking the lives of men, women and children just to get a clear path toward a member of the opposite sex? Either Barclay was psychotically obsessed with Nancy Devoy or he knew something that no one else did about Neill getting there.

Did he know, or was he just that crazy about Nancy?

NANCY BARCLAY'S OPTIONS

We've already supposed what would have happened had Colonel Barclay not had his attack from Henry Wood's point of view.

But what if the attack never came, and Henry Wood had not come either?

What could Nancy Barclay have done in that day and age to

free herself from the lie her entire life had become?

WATSON AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

"It's a mongoose," Watson cries out, upon seeing Teddy.

Had he seen such creatures before while in India?

Would the London Zoo have sufficed? Or one of J.G. Wood's picture books?

Why didn't he think of the mongoose sooner, as in "If this were India, I'd think it was a mongoose."

THE HEDGES HENRY LOVED

"For years I've been dreaming of the bright green fields and the hedges of England. At last I determined to see them before I died," Henry Wood says.

How important a part of the English countryside are hedges?

Enough so that Wood would be nostalgic for them, it would seem.

Does this give us some indication of the part of the country he's from?



Clubbing, Victorian Style

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

In “The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter,” Doyle introduces readers to the Diogenes Club, “the queerest club in London.” (1)

While gentlemen’s clubs were first established in the 1700s, they reached their hey-day in the 1800s when more than four hundred such establishments existed, as gentlemen sought out the company of like-minded men to relieve the stress and routine of daily life in surroundings they would not have been able to afford on their own. (2)



The first members-only private clubs (notably, White’s, Brooks’ and Boodle’s) offered aristocrats a place for legal gaming, but gained in popularity as more and more men were allowed the vote under the Reform Acts and could then call themselves “gentlemen.” (3)

With the first clubs having a wait list of sometimes twenty years or more, those unable to join the established organizations often created their own based on similar interests. Some of the most well-known included the Athenaeum, “for men of science, literature, and art;” one for supporters of the Reform Act and another for its detractors (Carlton); clubs for

travelers (Travellers Club), the military (United Service Club), and performers (Eccentric and Savage). (4)

Most of these were found in “clubland,” an area around St. James and Pall Mall streets, which began as a suburban promenade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (5)

These organizations provided members with an opulent, but home-like, atmosphere, having often been designed by the same architects who built large country estates. In addition to the “comfortable chairs and the latest periodicals,” (6) offered by the Diogenes Club, other clubs offered amenities such as dining halls, libraries, game rooms, studies, bathrooms and washrooms. Some even provided rooms for overnight guests.



The domestic ambience recreated in the clubs offered the privacy and comradery not available elsewhere. The upper class Victorian home was on display as social conventions required them to entertain guests at formal dinners, teas, and parties, which often then appeared in newspaper reports.

For members, these clubs became sources of “men-talk” and other behavior (gambling and excessive drinking, among others) not considered appropriate in mixed society. (7) Discretion governed the clubs, with rules about gossip and reporting of behavior or events occurring within their walls.

Until the 1950s, non-members were restricted from entering the club except for one or two rooms, such as the “Stranger’s Room” in the Diogenes Club, to ensure members from prying eyes. (8)

The Diogenes Club reflects the common characteristics of Victorian clubs taken to the extreme—a “home away from home” that caters to the tastes and

preferences of its members—in this case, the absence of all distractions for the shy or misanthropic who “have no wish for the company of their fellows.” (9)

- 1) Doyle, Arthur Conan (2012-12-13). *The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan* (Kindle Locations 18089-18092). Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.
- 2) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentlemen%27s_club
- 3) Ibid
- 4) <http://www.victorianweb.org/misc/usp.html>
- 5) Ibid
- 6) Doyle, Arthur Conan (2012-12-13). *The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan* (Kindle Locations 18089-18092). Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.
- 7) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentlemen%27s_club
- 8) Ibid
- 9) Doyle, Arthur Conan (2012-12-13). *The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan* (Kindle Locations 18089-18092). Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.

A World-Famous Address

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

Within a day of meeting, John Watson and Sherlock Holmes moved into 221B Baker Street. (1) When Arthur Conan Doyle penned *A Study in Scarlet*, Baker Street existed, but the address did not. William Baker originally laid out the street bearing his name in the 18th century, and the numbers extended only into the 100s at the time of the story’s publication. (2)



With such a street actually existing in London, reality finally caught up with fiction in the 1930s when Baker Street, York Place, and Upper Baker Street were renamed together as Baker Street and the buildings renumbered.

At that point, a building housing the Abbey National Building Society, a financial firm, became 221 Baker Street, and almost immediately the Royal Mail began delivering letters addressed to the great detective to the organization.

The correspondence was great enough for their public relations office to employ a full-time secretary to respond to it all, most often noting Mr. Holmes had retired to raise bees in Sussex. (3)



In 1990, the Sherlock Holmes Museum opened farther down at 239 Baker Street in a Georgian townhouse that resembled Doyle’s description of Holmes and Watson’s residence. John Aidiniantz purchased the house with funds his mother Grace raised by selling her own home. (4)

The museum and Abbey National fought for the next twelve years over who should receive the mail still arriving for Mr. Holmes. The firm argued they were more equipped to handle the letters. Only after the company moved to new quarters in 2002 and the City of Westminster approved the museum's use of the address 221B did the Royal Mail agree to deliver correspondence there. (5)

Unfortunately, the museum owner did not only have a contentious relationship with outside interests. Family members have accused each other of various wrong-doings and sued each other for a portion of the £20 million business. (6) The in-fighting took a toll on Grace Aidianantz, who died, the family reported, of a broken heart in December, 2015. (7)

The museum provides its 700 annual visitors a recreation of the full flat, including Dr. Watson's bedroom and a Victorian water closet on an upper floor. Other replicas exist, but do not necessarily offer as complete a vision of the men's living quarters. While certain aspects of the apartment are described by Doyle, such as the number of rooms, the fireplace in the sitting room, Holmes' chemical table, Watson's desk, and the basket, or wicker, chair for guests, (8) other features were less defined, such as wallpaper or other furnishings.

As a result, the various replicas reflect the tastes and interests of the designer. For example, the Sherlock Holmes Pub displays the first collection of Holmes memorabilia collected for the Festival of Britain

in 1951, including Doyle's desk and chair. Other depictions can be found at the Sherlock Holmes Museum in Meiringen, Switzerland near the Reichenbach Falls; another museum inside a hotel at Lucens, Switzerland; and the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota.



In all, the rooms are arranged to appear as if its occupants just left and will return shortly. Fires burn in the fireplace, a jack-knife holds recent correspondence in place on the mantel, and papers are scattered about the room. (9)

The visitor is left the impression that at any moment, the two will enter, offer the basket chair to the guest, and settle back as a new mystery is presented to them.

1) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert (2012-12-13). *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (Kindle Locations 477-478). . Kindle Edition.

2) <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-mystery-of-221b-baker-street-3608784/?no-ist>

3) <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-mystery-of-221b-baker-street-3608784/?no-ist>

4) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3270857/A-case-Sherlock-Holmes-Founder-Baker-Street-museum-accused-embezzling-mother-s-money-bitter-court-battle-half-sisters-brother-lucrative-tourist-trap.html>

5) <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-mystery-of-221b-baker-street-3608784/?no-ist>

6) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3270857/A-case-Sherlock-Holmes-Founder-Baker-Street-museum-accused-embezzling-mother-s-money-bitter-court-battle-half-sisters-brother-lucrative-tourist-trap.html>

7) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3341419/Founder-Sherlock-Holmes-Museum-dies-broken-heart-amid-long-running-poisonous-feud-2m-ticket-sales-divided-family.html>

8) Steven Doyle and David Crowder, *Sherlock Holmes for Dummies* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2010), p. 160.

9) <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-mystery-of-221b-baker-street-3608784/?no-ist>

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>

Houdini and Doyle: A strange friendship

By Virginia Blackburn, The London Express



As a TV drama based on the duo begins this weekend we look at how the Sherlock Holmes author and master escapologist clashed over spiritualism. As odd couples go they took some beating. One was a Scottish novelist, the product of the Victorian era and the creator of one of the world's most famous detectives. The other was an escapologist who was the son of a Hungarian rabbi.

But Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Harry Houdini were friends and are about to feature in a TV drama. But they did share a strong interest in spiritualism, albeit from opposite sides of the spectrum. When Harry met Arthur in 1920 both were already well established in their fields. Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle had been born in Edinburgh in 1859 and published the first Holmes story *A Study In Scarlet* in 1886. By 1920 he was a world-famous author who had been married twice and fathered five children, one of whom, Kingsley, died just before the end of the First World War.

Doyle had always had an interest in spiritualism, which was a great fad at the time, and after this bereavement, combined with a slew of other deaths

including his brother Innes, two brothers-in-law and two nephews, became a fervent supporter, looking to it for proof that there was life beyond the grave.

Houdini's attitude and background could not have been more different.

Born Erik Weisz in 1874 in Budapest and taken to the US at the age of four, Ehrich, as he was by now styling himself, launched himself as a trapeze artist at the age of nine followed by a stint as an athlete before turning to magic.

Following his 1894 marriage to Bess who became his stage assistant Harry caught the eye of the vaudeville manager Martin Beck in 1899 who had been impressed with some business that involved breaking out of handcuffs.

And so a career as an escapologist was born. Soon he was performing all over the world, which is how the unlikely pair met. That they should ever have become friends in the first place is surprising because both were obsessed with spiritualism in totally opposite ways. Spiritualism became hugely popular in the late 19th and early 20th century with public séances held at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall.

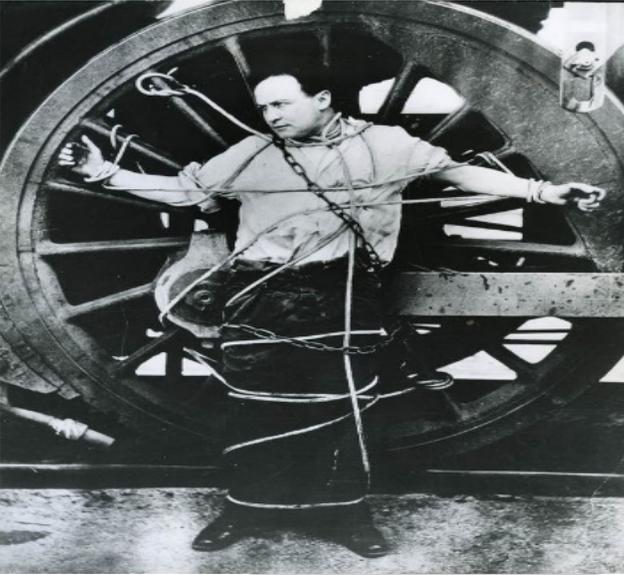
In the aftermath of the slaughter of the First World War they became more sought after still with grieving families desperate to contact the fallen.

The fascination cut across the social divide: Rudyard Kipling's sister was a medium as was Conan Doyle's wife. Sir Arthur was increasingly convinced it was based on reality and was in later decades to be the subject of some ridicule because he thought the Cottingley Fairies photographs taken in 1917, later exposed as a hoax, to be true. He wrote a novella about it, *The Land Of The Mist*, and became a regular at séances and spiritualist meetings.

When he heard about and later met the great Houdini – who not only could escape from almost any perilous situation but who also performed feats such as walking through brick walls – Conan Doyle actually believed Houdini himself expressed supernatural powers – something he wrote about in *The Edge Of The Unknown*. He was not alone in this belief either. The actress Sarah Bernhardt asked Harry to conjure up a new leg for her after hers was amputated following an accident on stage. That Conan Doyle harboured these beliefs was ironic because Houdini was passionately

opposed to spiritualism and was spending quite a bit of his time debunking it.

For a start there was no one better in the world than Houdini to understand trickery (in the early years he and his wife had run the odd séance and he would



recognise people running séances as past showbusiness acquaintances) but it took on a more personal note after the death of his mother, whom he had absolutely adored. Houdini did go to a few séances in the hope that there might be contact but became increasingly hostile towards mediums whom he saw as exploiting other people's grief and vulnerability.

It was a stance that was going to have an odd effect on his life. When Conan Doyle and Houdini first met they were happy to debate the subject with Houdini confining himself to comments such as "apple sauce" and "hogwash".

He even staged a trick at Conan Doyle's home to prove that it could be faked but Conan Doyle proved himself a lot more gullible than his most famous literary creation and refused to accept that the trick was false.

But as Conan Doyle was drawn deeper into the philosophy Houdini became increasingly hostile and began to publish his exposes. It was inevitable that a rift would eventually occur. When it finally happened it was because of an episode involving Conan Doyle's medium wife Jean. Unwisely, perhaps, she decided to hold a séance at a hotel in Atlantic City in 1922 and claimed to have made contact with Houdini's mother, producing 15 pages which she said had come from Harry's mum.

Houdini was livid, not least because the pages consisted of perfect grammatical writing while his mother's English was terrible and she also put a cross on the pages despite the fact she was Jewish.

A froideur began to form. Even so the two men were still on speaking terms (just) when Houdini himself, as Conan Doyle saw it, went too far.

By now denouncing mediums as "human leeches" he launched a vitriolic attack on Margery Crandon, a Boston medium who would conduct séances in the nude and emit ectoplasm from her most private of areas. Conan Doyle took the attack personally and the rift between the two men was complete. Conan Doyle was "a menace to mankind" said Houdini. But it had an odd epitaph.

It was said (and also disputed) that in a séance in 1924 Margery channelled a spirit named Walter who told Houdini: "I put a curse on you that will follow you every day for the rest of your short life."

Two years later Houdini died at the age of 52. The cause was peritonitis from a ruptured appendix but lurid rumours circulated to the effect that he had been poisoned, possibly by spiritualists, or done away with in some other ominous manner.

His wife Bess meanwhile held a séance every year for a decade after his death as they had arranged to see if she could contact him to discover their prearranged message "Rosabelle believe".

Houdini never turned up. Conan Doyle meanwhile died in 1930 at the age of 71. To the last he believed that Houdini had supernatural powers.



WHAT'S IN "SHERLOCK"?... answers

How clever are you? Test yourself. See if you can find twenty or more words of four or more letters in the name "SHERLOCK."

To make it a little more challenging, if you use the singular form a word, such as HOLE, do not then also count the plural form HOLES. ... and no proper nouns need apply. Here is what Rusty and I came up with.

CEORL
CERO
CHOKE
CHOKER
CHOLER
CHORE
CHOSE
CLERK
CLOSE
CLOSER
COKE
COLE
CORE
CORK

CORSE
COSH
CRESOL
ECHO
ELKS
EROS
HECK
HERO
HERS
HOCK
HOCKER
HOER
HOES
HOLE

HOLER
HORSE
HOSE
HOSEL
HOSER
KOHL
KOSHER
LEHR
LOCH
LOCK
LOCKER
LORE
LOSE
LOSER

OCHER
OCHRE
ORES
ORLE
RECK
RELOCK
RESH
ROCK
ROCS
ROES
ROLE
ROSE
SCHORL
SCORE

SHOCK
SHOCKER
SHOE
SHOER
SHORE
SLOE
SOCK
SOCLE
SOKE
SOLE
SORE

WHAT'S IN "WATSON"?...

How clever are you? Test yourself. See if you can find twenty or more words of four or more letters in the name "WATSON."

To make it a little more challenging, if you use the singular form a word, such as HOLE, do not then also count the plural form HOLES. ... and no proper nouns need apply.

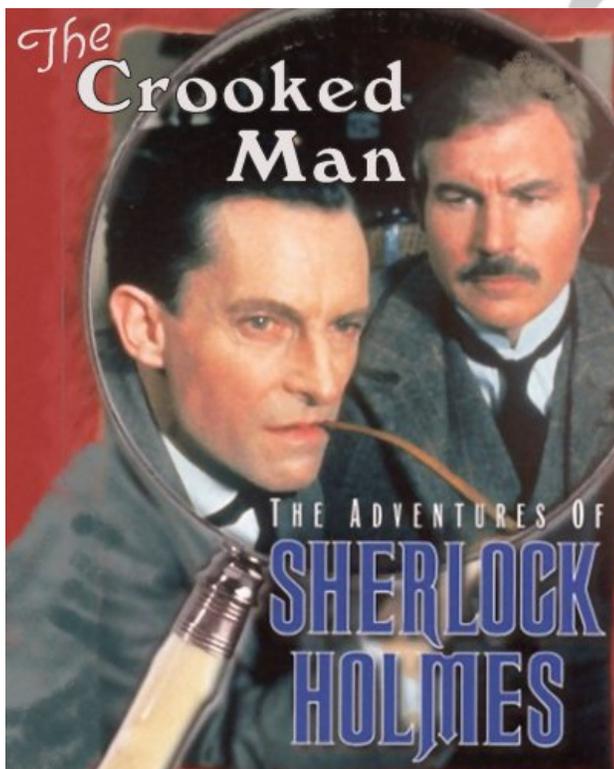
We will supply the answers next month.

56 Stories in 56 Days - The Crooked Man

Posted on October 8, 2011 by barefootbakerstreet

This is another story in which Watson drops everything to go to assist his friend, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Holmes turns up at Watson's house late one summer's evening and asks to stay. He expresses his desire that Watson travel with him to Aldershot the following day to assist in the case he is working on. Watson enthusiastically agrees to both requests, despite it being clear from Holmes' deduction that the doctor has a heavy workload at that time. Once again he passes off his poor patients onto a fellow doctor so that he can go on the adventure. And what a strange little adventure it proves to be.



I have recently re-read my novel (how on earth I found the time with things being so manic at work and all this blogging is impossible to say) and I was concerned about a latter few chapters which are

arguably rather 'romantic' in theme. Though none-Holmes readers will probably think nothing of this, I have been concerned that the more traditional Holmes fan base will not take to it and prefer instead action, crime etc. But then, having just read the Crooked Man it has occurred to me that most of the original Holmes stories involve love in one form or another. Here again we have a story about a woman who believes the person she really loves to be dead so marries another, only to discover years later that he is alive and her husband had a hand in her lover's fate. A bit like the American, Hatty Doran, in the Noble Bachelor, who thought her first lover had died and is shocked to see him in the front pew on her wedding day to Lord St Simon.

Clearly love played a massive part in the short stories which we all know and love so well. As love is the foundation of our lives in one form or another, I really shouldn't worry about the fact that it plays its part in the life of the character I have created in my novel. And besides, it's only a few chapters out of twenty-two which are pacey and full of action so surely that will be ok? Won't it?

Back to the crooked man who suddenly sees the woman he loved and wanted to marry in his youth in India, before another suitor set him up and led him into a rebel ambush. After revealing the truth to her out in the street, he follows her home and walks in on her arguing with her husband about the matter. Upon seeing the man he thought was long dead, the husband suffers a seizure and dies instantly, banging his head on the fender on the way down. The man flees and everything points to murder by the wife, but Holmes cleverly unravels the truth. However, he does not reveal all to the police and exercises his own judgement on the matter. It becomes clear to the police anyway that the man died of natural causes.

The story is another example of Holmes solving a problem for its own sake, not for glory, money or reputation. And poor Watson's patients pay the price yet again. 8 out of 10.

MAID OF HONOR

By Hughes, Holmes and Watson Report, Sherlock Peoria

The most annoying questions in the Canon, to me, are the ones posed by "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton." In this brief story we encounter more of Sherlock Holmes's character (or lack thereof) than in any other ten tales combined. Here are a few of the questions that pound my brain like a hammer.

- Why was a blackmailer more repulsive than a murderer, kidnapper, etc.?
- Why did Holmes willingly allow, even encourage, Watson's participation in the robbery they attempted when Milverton called on Baker Street, and yet actively discourage Watson's participation in the burglary of Appledore Towers? . . .
- Why did Holmes treat Agatha so shabbily, and how did he justify his behavior to his own mind? After all, with his indifference to rank and title, wasn't a housemaid's happiness just as important as the happiness of a debutante?
- Why did Watson include the anticlimactic visit to the portrait of the lady who'd "dunit"?

In my last bit of - ahem - scholarship, I hinted that Holmes may have been a victim of blackmail himself, by the notorious Hudson, who seemed to be the most likely reason for Holmes's hasty departure from the Trevor residence. Obviously, if

Holmes had some personal experience with blackmail, it would be all the more disgusting to him than another crime with which he had no direct experience. But that only answers the first question. After careful thought, though, I have come up with some answers to the other questions too, and I drew a startling conclusion.

I make no claim that my hypothesis is correct, but the day I first tried to type it, my computer blew up, and the first day I printed it out, my printer crashed. While researching the story, I had three copies of the Canon stolen from me. So, true or not, this is a story that SOMEONE doesn't want told. I can only wonder who.

Why didn't Holmes want Watson to accompany him in the burglary attempt? Surely it was no ethical consideration. He took Watson along in several other "extra-curricular" activities, including the caper at Irene Adler's house and the visit to Hugo Oberstein's apartment.

It was not fear of being caught or fear of endangering his friend – this consideration weighed not at all in the jaunt at Baron Gruner's. It wasn't even a fear that Watson would get in the way -- although he certainly did that. So what was it? The conclusion I reached: Watson's presence was an inconvenience along the lines of "two's company, three's a crowd."

What's more, Watson's description of the dialogue between the "lady" and Milverton was just as fictitious as his account

of Holmes's demise at Reichenbach Falls. All Milverton said was "Good God is it you?" The conversation ended there, and for good reason.

Now, why was Watson's presence inconvenient? I'll tell you. Holmes had other plans, and they didn't include Watson. What kind of plans, and who did they include? I'll give you a clue. The visit to the photo shop window was a fiction, dreamed up to divert suspicion from Milverton's real murderer. There never was a "regal and stately lady" in Milverton's room that night.

What there was, was Agatha. Watson had stumbled into the biggest get-rich-quick scheme of the 19th century, and with his mere presence he botched it for both Agatha and Sherlock. Agatha was more than just an information source to Sherlock.

She was also his fiancée - and accomplice. No, I don't mean an unwitting accomplice who innocently fed information to her fine plumber in the hopes that he would use the knowledge to visit her. She was a full-fledged, willing partner in this crime, and if things had gone right she and Escott would've hooked it to the Riviera with a safe full of cash.

"Women have seldom been an attraction to me," said Holmes at one point. Fortunately he didn't say, "Women have NEVER been an attraction." We know he admired Irene Adler. We know he was quite taken by Maude Bellamy. And for all his bumbling around with a really trite and lame

explanation to Watson, I think he was ("taken" with Agatha as well, and he saw in her a chance to do several things. He could put a stop to the worst blackmailer in London.

He could get rid of a bunch of blackmail materials. He could make a fortune – because you know there was a pile of cash in that safe, too. Milverton had to have a place to keep the cash paid by his "late-night callers." Agatha, being his housemaid - and definitely a girl who had aspirations to a better life -- knew about her master's business, and about the "loose change" locked in his study. She only needed someone to help her get at it. And even with the fake beard, Sherlock Holmes had been well-described on several occasions by Watson, and Agatha was no dummy.

She read those Strand magazines. She couldn't have been so silly as to not notice that the mysterious appearance of a plumber occurred when there were no problems with the drains -- but there were lots of problems with Milverton's "clientele."

(Remember that Milverton was determined to bring the

rebels into line by making an example of the rebellious Lady Eva. He was dealing with an insurrection already; Holmes was merely the one who acted OVERTLY.)

The plan was simple: Agatha would contrive to bring Milverton into the study while Holmes opened the safe. At the crucial moment, Holmes would pop out from his hiding place behind the curtains and execute the bad guy with a poker from the fireplace. Agatha and Holmes would get rid of all the blackmailing materials and confiscate the cash. Their escape plan would then take them safely out of the country.

But it didn't work - Watson insisted on coming along. Some contingencies had been planned for. If Holmes couldn't open the safe within a specified amount of time, Agatha would bring Milverton in and have him open the safe before Holmes made his appearance. In the event that Milverton proved hard to kill, Agatha would assist.

But Watson's arrival wasn't a planned-for contingency, and it threw both Holmes and Agatha into a panic. He wasn't able to get

the safe open in time to get rid of the incriminating documents and pocket the cash; she panicked at the turn of events and shot Milverton herself.

Poor Charles Augustus had only time enough to gasp, "Good God, is it YOU?" at the gun in his face before the trigger was pulled. Poor Agatha also bumbled again -- rather than bolting the door and helping with the papers, she lost her head and took off running. Holmes and Watson were left with the mess -- and it was probably at that point that Holmes realized Agatha was not quite as wonderful as he'd originally thought either.

She didn't have the natural turn for this sort of thing that he had. So the engagement was off, and Holmes, left with the choice of explaining the truth or creating a plausible lie, dragged Watson down to a portrait gallery and pointed out a famous face.

Watson, hidden behind Holmes and a heavy curtain, hadn't seen anything anyway, and he'd believe whatever he was told. There are indeed advantages to the press, if you know how to use it.

Baker Street Elementary

Created by Joe Fay,
Rusty & Steve Mason



*The First Adventures of Sherlock
Holmes and John Watson*

Baker Street Elementary
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Fay, Mason, & Mason

GREAT
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