

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 05, No. 01 - December, 2017
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



February 5th Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 5th, 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 Three Students."

The quiz will cover this tale.

Allen Osborne will provide a presentation on "Sherlock Holmes and Firearms."

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

January 1st Meeting

Cindy Brown was kind enough to host a BBC Sherlock watch party at her residence on the evening of January 1st. 12 members of the society enjoyed snacks, drinks, and the watching of the first episode of the 4th season.



Thanks to Cindy for opening her house to the society.



For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://www.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
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Spiritual Advisors

Secretaries
Historian
Webmaster

Steve Mason
Walter Pieper
Don Hobbs, BSI
Jim Webb

Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison
Pam Mason
Rusty Mason

mason.steve@epa.gov
waltpieper@att.net
221b@verizon.net
jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com

myrkrid08@yahoo.com

PUT UP YOUR DUKES

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

When Dr. Watson first lists Holmes' traits in **A Study in Scarlet**, he notes he is an expert boxer, among other athletic aptitudes. (1)

The first reference to an actual demonstration of this skill appears in *The Sign of the Four* when he mentions his three rounds with the prizefighter McMurdo at a charity event. (2)

His expertise was not to be taken lightly. In "The Solitary Cyclist," he sends Mr. Woodley, an opponent in a bar-room brawl, home in a cart. (3)

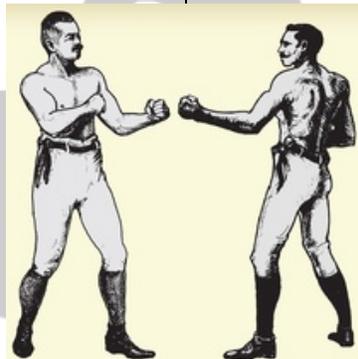
By the time the great detective was solving cases, however, boxing's popularity in Britain was already waning.

The first recorded boxing match in England occurred in 1681, and by 1698, bouts were regularly scheduled at the Royal Theater of London. These early matches involved no gloves and few, if any, rules.



Opponents were allowed to wrestle the other to the ground and hit him when he was down. In 1719, the prizefighter James Figg captured the nation's interest and was named the world champion—a title he held for fifteen years.

One of his pupils, Jack Broughton, introduced the sport's first regulations, and for his contributions, is considered the father of boxing. In addition to prohibiting most wrestling throws, he also introduced "mufflers," the forerunner of boxing gloves.



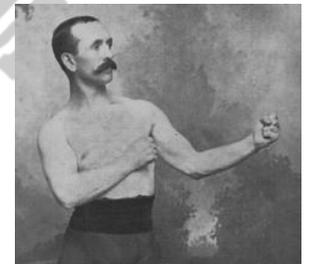
The sport attracted the aristocracy in the late 1700s when Gentleman John Jackson became the most renowned prizefighter after defeating Daniel Mendoza. (4) Once involved, those in the upper classes financed various fighters and arranged and ran the matches—preferring the bare-knuckle style to the "muffled" one. (5)

New rules were introduced in 1838, designating the size and shape of the ring, setting out the length of the rounds, and outlawing practices like eye-gouging.

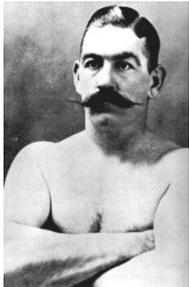
Betting on the outcome had been and continued to be a major draw for fans, with the fighters' prize money hung from one of the stakes forming the ring (hence, the term "stake" to designate one's winnings.) (6) Some matches attracted as many as twenty-thousand spectators. (7)

Despite the prohibition of some practices, many still considered the sport too brutal, and in 1867, new rules were introduced, supported by John Sholto Douglas, the ninth Marquess of Queensberry.

These regulations specified a new length for the rounds with resting periods in between, the use of gloves, prohibited all wrestling, and required a fighter knocked down to stand up again within ten seconds or else the match went to his opponent.



Shifts in mainstream culture, particularly the evangelical movement and the rise of the middle class, as well as a shift to American boxers dominating the sport, led to a decline in British



interest. John L. Sullivan, an Irish-American, claimed the world championship in heavyweight bare-knuckle boxing in 1882 and 1889, and a third time under the Marquess of Queensbury rules in 1892.

Following these victories, many states in the US reconsidered the sport's legality. Over the years, various states had outlawed the practice because of its perceived violence. The economic appeal as well as national pride, however, led the former

colonies to relax such restrictions. In England, boxing had been illegal since the 1700s, but the laws had simply not been enforced due to the sport's popularity.

Despite opinions concerning boxing's unrefined elements, Victorians still considered it, under appropriate circumstances, a good means of building skill, courage, and character. (8) Thus, Holmes' own ability in this arena reflects an upper-class temperament toward the gentlemanly display of fisticuffs whether in a ring with a professional fighter or a bar with a suspected criminal.

(1) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Kindle Location 556).

(2) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Kindle Location 2835).

(3) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes (Kindle Location 20831).

(4) <https://www.britannica.com/sports/boxing/The-bare-knuckle-era>

(5) Kristine Hughes, The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England. (Cincinnati, OH: Writers Digest Books, 1998) 141.

(6) <https://www.britannica.com/sports/boxing/The-bare-knuckle-era>

(7) Hughes, op. cit., 141.

(8) <https://www.britannica.com/sports/boxing/The-bare-knuckle-era>

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 HOLMES DISPLAY AT THE ALLEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Allen Library asked us to set up a display for the month of January (as they have done in the past) in their conference center area.

The display this month focused on the creator who started this all, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and will be on display throughout the month.

And yes, it does have information on our society and our meetings....



THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES ON THE BIG SCREEN

The Alamo Draft House in Dallas will be showing "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes", starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce

Date: Sunday, January 14 Time: 11:00 am

Address: 1005 S Lamar St, Dallas, TX 75215 Phone: (214) 914-4443

To buy tickets online, go to: <https://drafthouse.com/dfw/show/brunch-on-broadway-the-adventures-of-sherlock-holmes>



Thanks to Stefanie Urban for bringing this to our attention !!

SEASON 4 "SHERLOCK - THE FINAL PROBLEM" ON THE BIG SCREEN

BBC Worldwide North America and Fathom Events present the Sherlock Season 4 finale, "Sherlock: The Final Problem" in movie theaters nationwide for two nights only starting on Monday, January 16, 2017 and on Wednesday, January 18, 2017. The finale will include 15 minutes of additional information

There are several theaters--Stonebriar 24; Grapevine Mills 30, and Legacy are three – in the Metroplex showing the episode.

Tickets appear to be about \$11 each.

Here's the Website:

<http://www.fathomevents.com/event/sherlock-season-4-finale>



Thanks to Liese Sherwood-Fabre for bringing this to our attention !!

Sherlock Holmes and the West End Horror

by Anthony Dodge & Marcia Milgrom Dodge, directed by Paul McKenzie

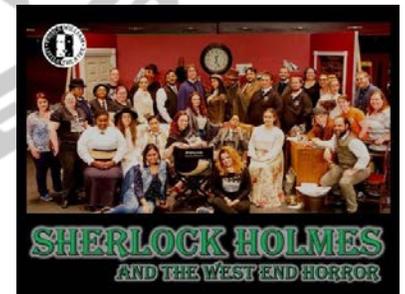
October 26 - November 18

A theatre critic has been murdered! Holmes and Watson are soon visited by aspiring Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, who entices Holmes to take the case. Featuring some of the most famous literary luminaries of the day, this is a rollicking whodunit!

Rover Dramawerks

221 W. Parker, Suite 580

Plano, Texas, 75023 972.849.0358



Thanks to Stu Nelan for bringing this to our attention !!

17 STEPS TO "THE THREE STUDENTS"

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

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

THE MODERN APPLICATION OF ANCIENT CHARTERS

Watson writes of this case-within-a-case: "We were residing at the time in furnished lodgings close to a library where Sherlock Holmes was pursuing some laborious researches in early English charters -- researches which led to results so striking that they may be the subject of one of my future narratives."

As Watson's chronicles tend to concern current crimes, or at least a problem currently perplexing someone, one has to wonder what effect early English charters could be having on one of Holmes's fellow citizens, especially if it was so obscure as to require laborious researches. Any ideas?

THE EASIEST JOB IN AT ST. LUKE'S COLLEGE

"The only duplicate which existed, so far as I knew, was that which belonged to my servant, Bannister--a man who has looked after my room for ten years, and whose honesty is absolutely above suspicion."



Hilton Soames has a servant, which doesn't seem all that odd. His servant looks after his "room." Just the one room? What might the extent of Bannister's full duties have been?

FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF GREEK INTERPRETERS

Of the Fortescue examination, Soames says: "A large sum of money

is at stake, for the scholarship is a very valuable one, and an unscrupulous man might very well run a risk in order to gain an advantage over his fellows."

All that cash over translations of half a chapter of Thucydides? Wouldn't

picking a winner involve some serious judgement calls in comparing one good translation with another? And why so much money based on Greek interpreter skills?

GIVE THAT MAN A SPEED-COPYING PRIZE ANYWAY!

Holmes tells of the culprits actions: "Well, he carried over this one first, and he copied it. How long would it take him to do that, using every possible contraction? A quarter of an hour, not less."

How long would it take someone to copy a sixth of a chapter of Thucydides in Greek by hand? Fifteen minutes sounds pretty quick (especially when you have to sharpen your pencil with a dull knife) ... anyone tried this little experiment?

THE WELL-DRESSED LECTURER'S WARDROBE

"As a matter of fact, the drawn curtain disclosed nothing but three or four suits of clothes hanging from a line of pegs."



What would we expect the make-up of a man like Hilton Soames's

wardrobe to be? Is "three or four suits" about right, or was he a clothes horse? Would he have worn a suit to

lecture, or something more specifically academic?

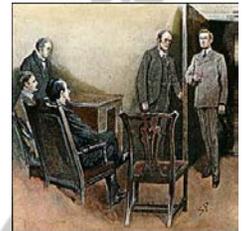
"WARNING: TO CLEAN WINDOWS, DO NOT LICK."

"Lattice-paned, lead framework, three separate windows, one swinging on hinge, and large enough to admit a man."

Here's something we don't see much of in the modern day. Would lead have made up the entire window frame, or just act a sort of caulking agent to seal the glass to the metal that actually made up the core of the frame?

THE STATUS OF UPPER STORIES

Can we make any judgements as to the status of the tale's three students by the story they were placed on in their building? Gilchrist is poor, but otherwise of good character, and on the first floor.



Ras is the average fellow in the middle. And McLaren is the almost-expelled fellow on the top floor. Was a higher or lower floor valued by students, or did it really matter? Does the fact that they were in the oldest rooms at the college tell us anything about these three?

HILTON SOAMES, RESPECTED #%@*>#@!! LECTURER

When Soames knocks on McClaren's door, the young man swears up a blue streak and doesn't let him in. Soames says, "Of course, he did not realize that it was I who was knocking, but none the less his conduct was very uncourteous, and,

indeed, under the circumstances rather suspicious."

Was Soames just trying to save face, and this was McClaren's usual way of greeting him? Would disciplinary action be taken for such an offense?

WATSON SEALS GILCHRIST'S DOOM

Holmes tells Watson this case is "Quite a little parlour game--sort of three-card trick, is it not? There are your three men. It must be one of them. You take your choice. Which is yours?"

Hedging his bets, the good doctor Watson chooses *both* McLaren and Ras. At this point in the tale, do we have any doubt that the culprit is Gilchrist, the fair-haired innocent?

THE EDDIE HASKELL OF ST. LUKE'S COLLEGE

Shocked by the time, Holmes exclaims: "By Jove! my dear fellow, it is nearly nine, and the landlady babbled of green peas at seven-thirty. What with your eternal tobacco, Watson, and your irregularity at meals, I expect that you will get notice to quit, and that I shall share your downfall ..."

Holmes's charm with the ladies



has been mentioned by Watson before, but how often did Holmes use Watson to make himself look better? One can

just see him smoking a pipe all night long, then faking a cough as he tells the landlady how that tobacco addict Watson just can't leave the pipe alone.

NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE MORNING EXERCISE

Holmes reports: "It is not for nothing that I have turned myself out

of bed at the untimely hour of six. I have put in two hours' hard work and covered at least five miles, with something to show for it."

A five mile walk takes well over an hour, and is an excellent way to start the morning. Might Holmes have been a regular walker, which was not regarded by Watson as true "exercise" in his chronicles? How good could a man's physical condition be from a walking regimen alone?

THOSE SHOES ARE JUST ASKING FOR TROUBLE

"He returned carrying his jumping-shoes, which are provided, as you are aware, with several sharp spikes."



Most of us have see spiked shoes, be they golf spikes, track spikes, or even aerating garden shoes ... but how many of these shoes actually have *sharp* spikes? Would sharpened spikes be of any advantage in turf or sawdust?

THE ST. LUKE'S RPF RECRUITER WANTS YOU!

Gilchrist says: "I have been offered a commission in the Rhodesian Police, and I am going out to South Africa at once."

Who's hanging around the university offering commissions in the Rhodesian Police? Did Gilchrist actually have to seek out the person responsible for such things, write a letter to Rhodesia, or what?

PROBABLY NOT THE BEST CAREER MOVE

Bannister says: "Time was, sir, when I was butler to old Sir Jabez Gilchrist, this young gentleman's father. When he was ruined I came to the college as servant ..."

Was the butler business that bad, that Bannister had to come care for

Soames "room"? Were the positions similar, or was Bannister taking a step down?

HIS FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT ... OR IS IT?

"As to you, sir," Holmes tells Gilchrist. "I trust that a bright future awaits you in Rhodesia."

How well could Gilchrist have hoped to do in Rhodesia at that time? Did he actually have a shot at a bright future, or was it pretty much over for him?

I SUPPOSE HE WAS LUCKY HE WASN'T EXECUTED ...

Now let's stop and think about this for a minute ... Gilchrist cheats on a test. No one is told he cheated, but he's quietly going to leave school for his crime. Isn't that enough? Was cheating on a test such a horrific thing at a British university that you had to leave the country for fear someone would find out about your shameful secret?

Gilchrist isn't even taking a job that requires a college education. Why couldn't he go into law enforcement in Sussex or somewhere else in his own country? Did they pay more in Rhodesia?

MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE SUBJECT OF RHODESIA

This Rhodesia business ... was it a hoax Gilchrist wrote up in his note just to slip away quietly?

If he actually did put in for a commission, wouldn't he have done so before he decided to cheat on the test?



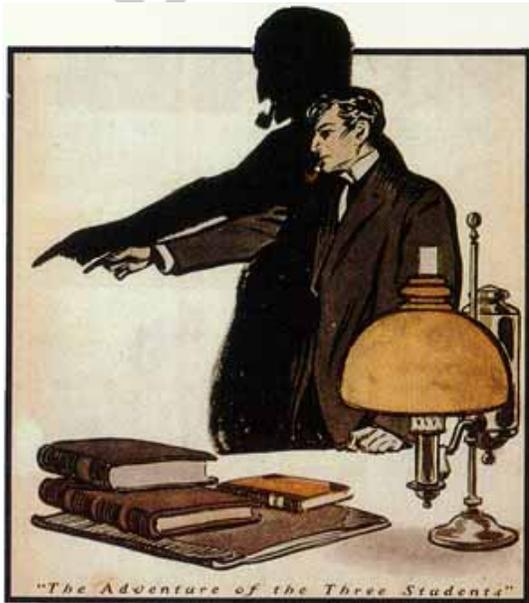
And fraud or no fraud, why Rhodesia? Had it been in the papers of late?

56 STORIES IN 56 DAYS - THE ADVENTURE OF "THE THREE STUDENTS"

Posted on October 21, 2011 by barefootonbakerstreet

All I could remember about this one was that it had something to do with pencils, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Mr Hilton Soames, a tutor and lecturer at an unspecified university, comes to see Holmes in the hope that he can find out which of three students could have gained access to his room and copied a Greek passage which was to be translated as part of an exam.



Holmes and Watson happened to be staying at the university town due to other business and this is just the sort of strange little problem Holmes loves to solve – no actual crime, no reward, no celebrity client, just a situation which is beyond everyone else and seemingly impossible.

This provides the perfect opportunity for him to show off and apply his unique skills.

Once in the lecturer's room, Holmes finds pencil sharpenings and from this can determine the maker and the size.

There is also a curious lump of clay with sawdust shavings mixed in. He finds a second one in the bedroom and it becomes clear that the person hid in there when the lecturer came back unexpectedly.

To cut a rather long story short the culprit is the sport student and the clay was from the long jump pit.

The spikes on his shoes and his natural height allowed him to see into the room and noticed the exam papers on the table.

This is one of my husband's favourite stories but I'm not so keen and I don't really know why. There is plenty of that clever deduction we all love but it just doesn't capture me for some reason.

Perhaps it is because Holmes is grumpy again – Watson tells us that he is agitated being away from Baker Street and his messy rooms with all his paraphernalia inside. He doesn't really include Watson in the investigation at all going off alone to pursue his ideas instead and even says: "Not one of your cases, Watson – mental, not physical".

This seems rather unfair and disappointing considering how close they have become lately – 6 out of 10.

AN INQUIRY INTO "THE THREE STUDENTS"

Murray, the Courageous Orderly (a.k.a. Alexander Braun), Hounds of the Internet

"The Adventure of the Three Students" was first published in "Collier's Weekly Magazine" on June 1904, and in "The Strand Magazine" on the same date.

According to Baring-Gould's chronology, as set down in *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes,* Second Edition, 1974, the case takes place on Friday, April 5, to Saturday, April 6, 1895. At the time Holmes is 41 years old and Watson 43.

== Holmes the Researcher ==

As the case opens, according to Watson Holmes "was pursuing some laborious researches in Early English Charters--researches which led to results so striking that they may be the subject of one of my future narratives."

I've always been intrigued by this because, one, it is an indicator of the extent of the Great Detective's education and the wide range of his interests.

To me, this most definitely shows that our sleuth was having fun at Watson's expense during the early days, when he claimed ignorance of the Copernican version of the solar system.

Secondly, obviously, is the nature of Holmes' research on these charters. What was he searching for that would have resulted in those striking results meriting one of Watson's literary efforts?

It seems to me that the research must have had a connection to one of Sherlock Holmes' lost cases; otherwise, why would Watson have



been with him while he lost himself in the depths of the (probably) Bodleian Library?

When we review this case, I always recall the Rathbone/Bruce film version of "The Musgrave Ritual." In it, as most of the Hounds will recall, the prize was a lost ancient charter signed by the then King of England, ceding the Musgraves an enormous, incalculably valuable acreage of land on which, in modern times, were situated a number of towns and farms.

Were the charters being researched by Holmes to be similar in nature giving to a family, for instance, large parts of London, this would certainly have merited Watson writing about it.

== The Cheater ==

I always wonder at the true level of Gilchrist's scholarship. Considering that Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War back then was as common an item on a scholar's bookshelf as Caesar's "De Bello Gallico" would have been, I wonder why he had to copy anything from Soames' desk.



If Gilchrist had been the scholar he was supposed to have been, all he would have required was a brief glance at the papers (without even touching them!) to learn which portion of the work the examination was focused upon.

Then he could have locked himself up in his rooms to consult at his leisure his own copy of Thucydides, without risk or arising suspicion.

== Gilchrist's Plans ==

Why would a young man described to us as "fine scholar," who considers himself--and is considered by his teachers--as fit to take a difficult exam that should open academic portals towards higher accomplishments in classic studies, have solicited a commission in the Rhodesian Police?

He had to have done this well in advance of the exam, because such commissions were not offered at random. Did he expect to fail?

What else happened in 1895:

EMPIRE

- Freetown, Sierra Leone, granted municipal status and privileges.
- Anglo-French interests begin to conflict in Nile Valley.
- U.S. intervenes in Anglo-Venezuelan border dispute, arbitration in Britain's favor.
- Construction of Uganda railway commenced.
- British East Africa Company surrenders Kenya as British protectorate.



- Jameson Raid in South Africa in 1895--failed attempt to overthrow the Afrikaans government.

BRITAIN

- Liberals defeated at general election, Salisbury forms his third Unionist ministry.

- Compulsory retirement of aged Duke of Cambridge as C-in-C of British Army.
- London School of Economics and Political Science founded.
- First automobile exhibition in London.
- Electrification of first mainline railway.

WORLD

- Japan takes Formosa (now Taiwan).
- Germany, France, and Russia unite to compel Japan to return Liaotung peninsula to China.
- Treaty of Simonoseki, end of Sino-Japanese war.



- Cuban rebellions begin, U.S.A. protests brutal suppression.
- Dreyfus refused new trial by French President Faure.
- National League founded in Poland; aimed at autonomy under Russian suzerainty.
- Nyssens Law extended to Belgian provinces and communes.

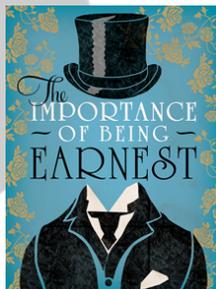
- Armenian demonstration in Constantinople leads to massacre of 50,000 Armenians.
- Frontiers of Pamirs fixed by commission of Russians, Afghans, and British.
- Introduction of diphtheria antitoxin.
- Completion of Kiel Canal (61 miles) makes Germany North Sea power.
- Volleyball invented.
- French troops capture Antananarivo in Madagascar.
- Abyssinia defeats Italy in the First



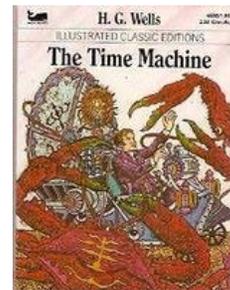
Italo-Ethiopian War (1885-1896).

ART

- Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* debuts. Later that year, Wilde is imprisoned.
- Corelli publishes *The Sorrows of Satan*.



- H.G. Wells publishes *The Time Machine*.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Wilhelm Konrad Röntgen, German physicist, experiments with Crooke's tubes and discovers X-rays.
- Ramsey obtains helium, first identified by its spectrum in the sun, in 1868.
- On December 28th, in the Hotel Scribe, in Paris, the first public cinema show takes place.
- Thomas Armat, of Washington, develops modern cinema projection.
- King Gillette (U.S.) invents safety razor.
- Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian electrical engineer, transmits the first wireless signal.



STORY INFO PAGES FOR "THE THREE STUDENTS"

McMurdo's Camp, <https://mcmurdoscamp.wordpress.com/>

- **First published in:** The Strand Magazine, June 1904; Collier's, September 24, 1904
- **Time frame of story (known/surmised):** Spring of 1895, date not given.
- **HOLMES & WATSON living arrangements:**

Holmes & Watson were spending some weeks in one of the great university towns, residing at the time in furnished lodgings close to a library where Holmes was pursuing some laborious researches in early English charters – researches which led to striking results.

No mention of living arrangements back in London.
- **Opening scene:** Holmes & Watson were in the lodgings, and were visited by the about-to-be client. Holmes' temper had not improved since he had been deprived of the congenial surroundings of Baker Street. Without his scrapbooks, chemicals, and homely untidiness, he was an uncomfortable man. He attempted to "brush off" the potential client, but then became interested in the tale.
- **Client:** Mr. Hilton Soames, an acquaintance of Watson. He was a tutor and lecturer at the College of St. Luke's, a tall, spare man, of a nervous and excitable temperament. He had always been restless in his manner, but on this occasion he was in a state of uncontrollable agitation. It was clear something very unusual had occurred.
- **Crime or concern:** Disarrangement of the proofs of an exam for the Fortesque Scholarship. It was obvious that one of the three students residing in the building had been in Soames' office whilst he was at tea and had most likely copied the Thucydides chapter they were to translate in the exam, gaining an unfair advantage (serious cheating). Soames' butler, Bannister, had left his key in the door, an act of carelessness.
- **Villain:** One of the three students, Gilchrist. The other suspects were Daulat Ras, a silent, little, hook-nosed Indian, and Miles McLaren, brilliant, but wayward, dissipated, and unprincipled.
- **Motive:** See the exam question in advance, prepare, score well on the test and get the scholarship. The Fortesque scholarship was a very valuable one, and an unscrupulous man might very well run a risk in order to gain an advantage over his fellows.
- **Logic used to solve:** Holmes observed height of window, compared it to statures of the resident students. After carefully questioning the client, Holmes determined the man who tampered with the papers came upon them accidentally without prior knowledge they were there.

Examination of small pyramids of black, doughy clay found on the scene, determined to be small track clods from the jumping-shoes of Gilchrist, the athlete.
- **Policemen:** None
- **Holmes' fees:** No mention.
- **Food:** The landlady babbled of green peas at seven-thirty, but Holmes & Watson were 1-1/2 hours late.

In the morning, HOLMES declared, "It is time we went down to St. Luke's. Can you do without breakfast?"

“Our breakfast awaits us at home. Come, Watson!” – Holmes, after solving the case at St. Luke’s.

- **Drink:** Soames gave Bannister a little of the universal palliative (brandy) to revive him after news of the incident.
- **Vices:** None mentioned.
- **Other cases mentioned:** None
- **Notable Quotables:** “The case is not entirely devoid of interest.” – Holmes
“The first page on the floor, the second in the window, the third where you left it,” said Holmes. “Exactly, Mr. Holmes. You amaze me. How could you possibly know that?” “Pray continue your very interesting statement.” – Holmes and Soames

“Not one of your cases. Watson – mental, not physical. All right; come if you want to.” – Holmes

“Let us hear the suspicions. I will look after the proofs.” – Holmes

- **Other interestings:** Type of pencil and its remaining length were determined by an examination of the shavings peeled off in sharpening it. “nn” were part of “Johann Faber,” printed up near the butt end. This seemed like a clue, but was immaterial.
- **When all was said and done:** After his exposure, Gilchrist departed to accept a position with the Rhodesian Police, where he had been offered a position. The servant, Bannister, had previously been with the Gilchrist family, and helped cover for Gilchrist before Holmes exposed him.

PATERNAL BLESSINGS

Joe Moran, BSI, The Holmes & Watson Report, May, 1998

About two years ago, a talented and fascinating young man whom I had known for several years dropped into my office one day and asked for my approval of his plan to marry my stepdaughter Lia.

My first response was to let him know quickly that I fully approved of the idea - and then he surprised me by stating that the prospective bride hadn't yet told her mother of the couple's plans!

My next reaction was that this conversation seemed to have a Victorian flavor to it - a reminder of earlier days, when it was common practice for a young man who wanted to get married to ask the would-be bride's father for his approval. Without such a paternal blessing - preferably backed by a generous dowry - the desired wedding might never take place.

In my situation, the only question of a "dowry" was verifying that I would finance a full-blown reception at our Club, and the highlight of my non-Sherlockian life for 1996 occurred when my wife and I led my charming stepdaughter down the aisle for the ceremony.

As a conscientious Sherlockian, I had to wonder how my own personal situation compared to those of the various fathers (and stepfathers) in the Canon who had faced the same question.

Where might I find a Canonical model in the response and behavior of a typical middle-class Victorian gentleman who also supported his daughter's (or stepdaughter's) marriage plans?

My research effort got off to a rather discouraging start. Each of the first three cases I examined showed a similar pattern: any chance of supportive paternal behavior was sabotaged by parental greed.

"A Case of Identity" was one such example of cupidity overcoming Cupid. Mary Sutherland's late Uncle Ned had left her some stock but, as long as Mary remained unmarried, it was her mother and her stepfather James Windibank who would receive the income on that stock.

They did all they could to interfere with Mary's natural efforts to have a normal social life leading to marriage.

Finally, they resorted to a devilishly ingenious conspiracy: they induced the affection-starved Mary to pledge that she would never marry anyone other than the evanescent "Hosmer Angel" - who had really been Windibank in disguise.

What makes "A Case of Identity" unique - in a Victorian context - is that Mary Sutherland agreed to her suitor's plea that they get married before he ever had a chance to seek her stepfather's approval.

Mary apparently never realized that Hosmer had not even met Windibank face to face. Cupidity's ally was stupidity.

"The Copper Beeches" is another case in point. We don't know if Jephro Rucastle stated any opposition to his daughter Alice's plans to marry Mr. Fowler - but we do know how his greed influenced his behavior.

First, he browbeat Alice into mental illness with his unsuccessful demands that she sign away her rights to her income.

Then he and his wife (Alice's stepmother) emulated the Windibanks by resorting to trickery. They used Violet Hunter as a pawn in their failed conspiracy to mislead Fowler into thinking that Alice did not want to see him.

Clearly, Rucastle deserves a place next to Windibank in our pantheon of rejected paternal behavior models.

In "The Speckled Band," Dr. Grimesby Roylott had two chances to display a stepfather's reaction to a stepdaughter's marriage - 1 plans.

Here again, greed gave him a powerful incentive to prevent both Julia Stoner and her twin sister Helen from ever marrying: he would enjoy their incomes only until they married.

Roylott gave no indication, on the surface, that he opposed Julia's engagement to her half-pay Major of Marines or Helen's engagement to Percy Armitage, but his unique form of paternal blessing led to extreme results each time.

He went to great pains - involving building alterations, a clamped-down bed, a dummy bellpull, a useless ventilator, a whistle, and a swamp adder - all to make sure that Julia would not live to see her wedding day.

When he pressed his luck once too often, hoping to achieve the same result again, the outcome

was fatal to him, rather than to Helen.

Royslott not only fails to qualify as our model Victorian father, but he clearly outpaces Windibank and Rucastle to win the award for the most despicable paternal behavior in the Canon.

As our search continues, we find that greed is not the only deterrent to paternal enthusiasm for a daughter's proposed marriage or other romantic ideas. In several cases, a Canonical father's objections focus on the identity of a suitor or a proposed husband.

In *A Study in Scarlet*, John Ferrier is vigorously supportive of his adoptive daughter Lucy's resistance to the Mormon bullying that would force her to marry Drebber's son - to the extent that they flee their home in Utah together until they are hunted down by the Avenging Angels of the Danite Band.

In "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," John Turner has opposed the blackmailing Charles McCarthy's idea that Turner's daughter Alice should marry McCarthy's son James - because he can't stand the thought of his assets flowing into the McCarthy family's hands.

In "The Noble Bachelor," Aloysius Doran had opposed his daughter Hatty's desire to marry the then-impecunious Francis Hay Moulton, which forced them to get married secretly before Moulton set out to make his own fortune as a prospector.

In "The Beryl Coronet," Alexander Holder has opposed his adored adoptive daughter Mary Holder's association with the rascal Sir George Burnwell - but she runs off with Burn well

anyway after he steals the valuable crown from her father's inept safekeeping.

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, old Mr. Frankland has disowned his daughter Laura after she married the artist Lyons.

In "The Red Circle," Augusto Barelli had forbidden his daughter Emilia's marriage to Gennaro Lucca, who "had neither money nor position - nothing but his beauty and strength and energy" - but they got married at Bari anyway and fled to America together.

In *The Valley of Fear*, Jacob Shafter opposes his daughter Ettie's association with Ted Baldwin because Ted is a Scowrer - and is reluctant to have her associate with John McMurdo for the same reason - but he dares not voice that opposition in Vermissa.

In "The Illustrious Client," General de Merville objects to his daughter Violet's plans to marry Baron Adelbert Gruner, but cannot prevail until Sherlock Holmes has produced overwhelming dramatic proof of Gruner's evil background.

In "The Lion's Mane," Tom Bellamy says of his daughter Maud's association with the ill-fated Fitzroy McPherson: "I object to my girl picking up with men outside her own station." - so their engagement has remained a secret until after McPherson's death.

So far, we have observed an even dozen cases in which a would-be husband has failed to obtain a true paternal blessing - and we still haven't found our model Victorian father.

At this point, it's only fair to note that, in three of these twelve

cases, a different suitor for the same hand in marriage does gain the support of the lady's father.

In *A Study in Scarlet*, John Ferrier gives his wholehearted blessing to Jefferson Hope's desire to marry his treasured Lucy - if she can escape the evil threat of a forced Mormon marriage.

In *The Valley of Fear*, Jacob Shafter endorses his daughter Ettie's marriage to John McMurdo -- but only after McMurdo's true identity as the Scowrers' nemesis Birdy Edwards has been revealed. (Jacob even travels from Vermissa to Chicago to attend their wedding.

In "The Noble Bachelor," Aloysius Doran approves his daughter Hatty's plan to marry Lord Robert St. Simon - when she believes that she is the widow of a deceased Francis Hay Moulton.

We also may safely infer that Doran must have accepted the resurrected Moulton as a suitable husband for his daughter Hatty - once he has discovered that Moulton is now wealthy.

Doran and Shafter thus are the only fathers who withdraw their prior objections to a daughter's choice of a husband once the reason for that objection has vanished.

Neither can qualify as our model Victorian father, however, since they are both Americans.

The only Canonical father we have yet turned up who has given his full blessing to both the idea of his daughter getting married and her choice of a proposed husband is also an American - John Ferrier in *A Study in Scarlet*, who strongly approves of Jefferson Hope as a preferred potential husband for his daughter Lucy.

We still haven't found that elusive model Victorian English ' father who does the same.

Mr. Harrison, the "ironmaster somewhere up Northumberland way" in "The Naval Treaty," might qualify as (apparently) favoring the engagement of his daughter Annie to the unfortunate Percy Phelps - but the only evidence of that support given us by Watson is that he has allowed Annie to pay an extended visit to the Phelps family in Woking.

Annie is independent enough that she may have undertaken that visit without her father's endorsement, so we must be tentative on whether Harrison might qualify as our model father.

(Moreover, we can decide to reject Harrison as a Canonical model simply because he never appears on the scene.)

As we near the end of the Canon, we finally discover a middleclass Victorian English father who has met our paternal blessing criteria.

In "The Creeping Man," Professor Morphy seemingly has accepted his rejuvenescent academic colleague Professor Presbury as a potential husband for his daughter Alice - at least until the time of the events reported in the case. Is he our model father?

Watson doesn't tell us so, but we must infer that Morphy changes his mind after Presbury goes ape from his overuse of monkey gland serum.

If so, Morphy becomes the only Canonical father to recant his own prior approval of his daughter's choice of a marriage partner during the period covered by Watson's narrative - which also means that he can't be our model father.

Just as we are about to give up our search as being in vain, we are chagrined to realize that there is a second father in "The Creeping Man", Professor Presbury himself has endorsed his daughter Edith's forthcoming marriage to his assistant, Trevor Bennett -- and

nothing that happens in the case changes that situation.

As painful as it may be, we must admit:

Presbury seems to qualify as our model Victorian father!

Thus we have searched the 60 cases of the Canon in hopes of finding a typical English gentleman who may stand as a dignified exemplar of the conservative values, lifestyle, habits, and customs of the Victorian-era family - but all we have come up with is a dirty old man.

(This paper, prepared for presentation at a meeting of The Men on the Tor on 25 October 1997, is adapted from papers on the same subject presented at meetings of The Three Garridebs on 15 November 1996 and The Bull Terriers on 20 April 1997.)



SO 'IHOSE' IS WORKING WITH 'ASH' AND THE 'BSI' ON THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL CONVENTION IN NYC...

IHOSE ? ASH ? BSI ?



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SORRY... 'I HEAR OF SHAKESPEARE EVERYWHERE'; 'ADVENTURESSES OF SHAKESPEARE'; AND OF COURSE, THE 'BARD SHAKESPEARE OF INVERNESS'... TO MAKE IT WORTHWHILE, THEY HAVE JOINED WITH THE EDGAR ALLEN POE SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE...



SO WHAT WILL THEY DO AT THIS SHIN-DIG?

THEY HAVE A DINNER, OTHER FESTIVITIES, A DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER FEATURE, AND VENUES TO BUY POE AND SHAKESPEARE COLLECTIBLES...



I WONDER WHAT IS THE MOST DESIRABLE COLLECTIBLE ?

SCOTT AND BURT INDICATE SKULLS SELL WELL, SINCE THEY ARE COMMON TO BOTH AUTHORS...

REAL OR FAKE SKULLS ?



DO ANY PARTICIPANTS DRESS UP IN PERIOD COSTUMES ?

I BELIEVE SO...

SO... THERE ARE PEOPLE DRESSED AS BOTH SHAKESPEARE AND POE CHARACTERS ?



WHATEVER YOU'RE IMAGINING, JUST FORGET IT...

