

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 05, No. 11 - November, 2017
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



December 3rd Meeting NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, December 3rd, at 1:00 pm. 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 Dancing Men."

The quiz will cover this tale.

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

November 5th Meeting

There were 15 attendees at the Sherlock Holmes meeting. Karen Olsen gave a wonderful toast to Sigerson the Norwegian explorer, and Holmes' travels during the great hiatus.

The quiz was won by Sandra Little, with Karen Olsen second place, on the story "The Devil's Foot".

Steve Mason talked about Chris Redmond's book, "About 60". Dean Clark commented the essays in the book are wonderful, and everyone should get a copy.

The Crew's book, "A Grimm Holmes" is completed, and has been ordered from the publisher. Each one of the members who had written one of the stories will receive a hard-back copy of the book, and there will be paperback copies of the book that Lisa will order for others.

Steve gave a summary of the Beacon Society and its goal of educating young people on Holmes and the love of reading. The Beacon Society also has the Jr. Sherlock Society, which was developed by a teacher, Shannon Carlisle, from Franklin, TN. This program is to introduce children and youth to Sherlock Holmes and encourage/support an in-depth study of his character traits, etc..

All proceeds from Chris Redmond's book "About 60" goes to the Beacon Scholarship Fund.

We also talked about the Fortsecure Scholarship, which was developed and allows Sherlockians to take an exam, for three different levels of knowledge on Sherlock Holmes.

Lawrence Fischman was inducted as the newest Deck Mate of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

It was also noted that this is the 20th anniversary of the publication of The Beekeeper's Apprentice by Laurie King.

A few members went to Tulsa to listen to a presentation by Ashley Polisek, on her dissertation on Sherlock Holmes. Liese Sherwood-Fabre mentioned she has been asked to speak at the next Dayton, Ohio, conference in March 2018, called Holmes, Doyle, and Friends.

The end of meeting drawing was won by Bill Burlson, and was a print with a Sherlockian theme.

The meeting was closed by a reading from the Baker Street Journal, Autumn 2000, "To a Sherlock Holmes Enthusiast, All Things are Sherlockian."

Thanks to Cindy Brown for keeping the minutes.

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
Helmsman
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

Our Website: www.dfw-sherlock.org

Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar/>

The image is a collage of Sherlock Holmes-themed content. On the left, there are several quotes from the stories, such as "That will await him when he enters port," said he, chuckling. "It may give him a sleepless night. He will find it as sure a precursor of his fate as Openshaw did before him." and "And who is this Captain Calhoun?" Below these are more quotes: "The leader of the gang. I shall have the other", "How did you trace it, then?", "He took a large sheet of paper from his pocket", "I have spent the whole day," said he, "over in January and February in '83. There were attracted my attention, since, although it was", "Texas, I think.", "I was not and am not", and "What then?".

In the center, there is a screenshot of a website. The website has a logo for "THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR" featuring a star with a silhouette of a man. Below the logo is a search bar and a navigation menu with items like "Home Page", "About", "Crew Investitures and Awards", "Newsletters, Crew Meeting Logs, & Society Pastiches", "Papers", "Many Faces of Sherlock Holmes", and "Ephemera -- General". The main content area shows an illustration of a building labeled "Baker Street Elementary" with a spiderweb in the foreground. Below the illustration is the text "THE MAY MEETING".

On the right side of the collage, there is a quote: "vessel which touched at Pondichery of these, one, the Lone Star, instantly of the states of the Union."

At the bottom, there is a screenshot of a Facebook page for "The Crew of the Barque Lone Star @BarqueLoneStar". The page features a profile picture with the same star logo, a cover photo with the text "A SHERLOCK HOLMES LITERARY SOCIETY Monthly meetings every 1st Sunday @ 1pm La Madeleine Country French Café", and a navigation menu with options like "Home", "About", "Photos", "Events", "Likes", "Videos", "Posts", and "Reviews". There is also a "Create Ad" button and a "Write something..." text box.

TOAST TO SIGERSON

By Karen Olson

My fellow Sherlockians, in 1891, as our forefathers mourned the demise of our hero, Sherlock Holmes, the world's first Consulting Detective, at Reichenbach Falls at the hands of his arch nemesis, Professor Moriarty, millions of Englishmen and Europeans read of the exploits of Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat, and humanitarian, who organized an expedition across the Greenland icecap to the Arctic circle.

Now we know that Nansen's expedition included the Norwegian explorer Sigerson, and in his own admission to Dr. Watson in "The Adventure of the Empty House" in 1894, we know that Sigerson was, in fact, our previously lost champion, Sherlock Holmes.

After two years in Tibet, and before going to Persia, Holmes, as Sigerson, joined the Nansen expedition.

The expedition left Norway in late fall of 1882 in a specially made ship, named "Fram" or "Forward," which was different from any vessel known at that time.

It was 39 meters (128 feet) in length and 11 meters (36 feet) across the beam. It had a rounded hull designed to slip upward out of packing ice. It held a party of twelve including Nansen and Sigerson.

The Fram sailed eastward from Vardo, Norway along the Siberian coast, turning north at the New Siberian Islands to enter the ice flos and from there, the ship was allowed to drift from the New

Siberian Islands, north and west to Spitsbergen where Nansen and Sigerson left the ship, using custom made kayaks and dog sleds of their own design.

The expedition thus reached a position higher than the previous Farthest North mark set by American explorer Adolphus Greely's expedition in 1882. Having been informed that the returning Nansen expedition was to be met by not only large crowds but also by King Oscar, king of Norway in union with Sweden at that time, Sigerson slipped away from publicity and caught the mail boat back to Europe and on to Persia.

Nansen later wrote, "We all have a Land of Beyond to seek in our life--- what more can we ask?"

Our part is to find the trail that leads to it.

A long trail, a hard trail, maybe; but the call comes to us, and we have to go. Rooted deep in the nature of every one of us is the spirit of adventure, the call of the wild--- vibrating under all our actions, making life deeper and higher and nobler."

Although we may never know exactly the influence of Sigerson on Nansen, Holmes' world travel during the great hiatus certainly reflects this philosophy.

As the Norwegians would say, "Jeg foreslår en skål til Sigerson, den norske oppdagelsesreisende."

I propose a toast: To Sigerson, the Norwegian Explorer, AKA Sherlock Holmes...

Conan Doyle- literary Agent!

"THE EDITOR'S GAS-LAMP"

BAKER STREET JOURNAL – AUTUMN, 2000

We are all guilty of saying (perhaps far too often) that we hear of Sherlock everywhere.

I have begun to wonder if we aren't looking at it the wrong way.

It's not so much that we hear of Sherlock everywhere as that, to a Sherlockian, all things are Sherlockian.

Having made the Canon part of our very being, we should not be surprised

that, for us, every little breeze seems to whisper "Holmes."

Every little loch sings of Sherlock.

We pretend to marvel at the way the popular culture has consumed Holmes and made him an avatar for all things rational.

But in our canonized souls we know that such tribute is only right.

We must accept, as his creator never could, that Holmes has an existence that is quite literally right out of our minds.

We have all thought about him so long, and so deeply, that it is as if he truly walks among us.

The world has become a place that always resonates, for us, of Sherlock Holmes.

NINE STORIES TO SINK YOUR TEETH INTO

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

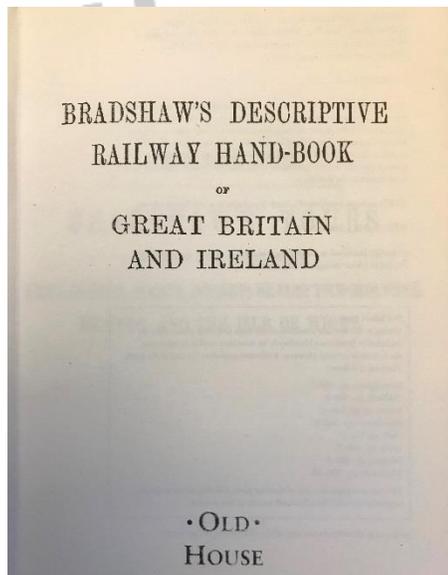
A Traveler's Guide to Victorian England

Two of the cases in the canon make a reference to Bradshaw's: "The Valley of Fear" and "The Adventure of the Copper Breeches."

While Victorians would have been intimately familiar with this railway timetable and guidebook, its usefulness and full complement of features is lost on most modern readers.

The first hint of the book's ubiquitous nature was Holmes's observation in "The Valley of Fear" that a clue to a ciphered message would be within a set of "standardized books which anyone may be supposed to possess."

Far from a dry listing of departure and arrival times, the book includes a myriad of information on each destination listed, making it a "must have" for travelers of the era and a possible source of the



words needed to crack the code.

George Bradshaw first published his railway timetable in 1839, following the

introduction of railways in Britain.

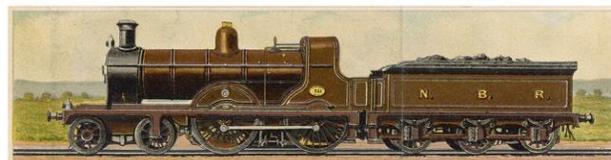
As described by Michael Portillo (more about him later), the system was "higgledy-piggledy; free-

enterprise rampant, lines everywhere, no planning or co-ordination."

The timetable, then, was a must for Victorians to get around in a time before cars, or in some cases, even roads."

Originally titled Bradshaw's Railway Time Tables, the second edition, Bradshaw's Railway Companion, in 1840 was renamed and re-priced, but was changed back to the original title and price in 1841.

Beginning with the second year, supplemental material was sold to keep the timetables up to date.



In 1847, Bradshaw published a companion volume for European railways, Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide.

The original timetables were expanded to include maps, illustrations, and other descriptions of towns serviced by the railways and became Bradshaw's Descriptive Railway Handbook, and by 1898, the original eight-page edition had grown to 946 pages.

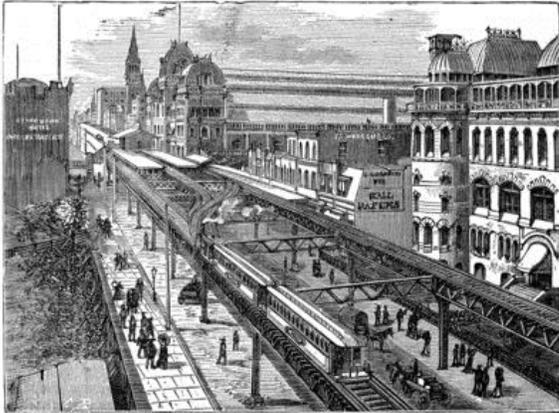
The guide's creator, George Bradshaw (1801-1853) was an engraver and publisher in Manchester and had already established his reputation with his publication Bradshaw's Maps of Inland Navigation.

Although he contracted cholera while on a trip to Norway and died before leaving the county, his guides continued to be published until 1961 when the nationalization of the railways, the rise in

automobiles, and the creation of a modern highway system all led to a decline in rail travel.

In 2010, a BBC series by Michael Portillo re-ignited interest in Bradshaw's guides.

Using the 1863 guide, Portillo travelled across Britain, visiting points of interest and hotels mentioned in that edition, making the book an unexpected bestseller in 2012.



Portillo would most likely disagree with Holmes' assessment of the guide's vocabulary being "nervous and terse."

He notes that "some of the descriptions of industrial towns have imagery that almost recalls Dante's Inferno, with the red glow of all the furnaces in the ironworks."

Given the details the book provided, few Victorians were not likely "to leave home without it."[®]

- (1) Doyle, Arthur Conan. The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan (Kindle Locations 7273-7274). Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.
- (2) <https://bradshawsguide.org/about>
- (3) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/rail-journeys/Great-Continental-Railway-Journeys-Michael-Portillo-gets-back-on-track/>
- (4) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradshaw%27s_Guide
- (5) <https://bradshawsguide.org/about>
- (6) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Bradshaw
- (7) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradshaw%27s_Guide
- (8) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Bradshaw.

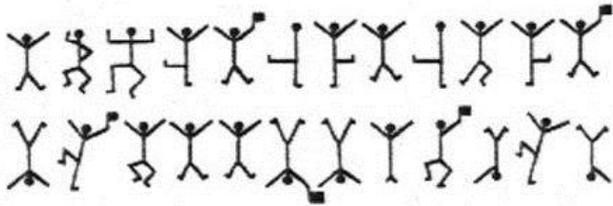
You can check out more of Liese Sherwood-Fabre's writings at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com.

The first 24 of Liese Sherwood-Fabre's essays are now available in The Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes, both paperback and ebook. Retailers are listed on her Webpage (www.liesesherwoodfabre.com).

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>

56 Stories in 56 days - Adventure of the Dancing Men

Posted on October 11, 2011 by barefootonbakerstreet



The Dancing Men is one of my favourite stories, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

The story begins with Holmes demonstrating how well he knows his old friend by once again seeming to read his mind and remarking that it is clear Watson has decided not to invest in South African securities.

He explains his simple deductions to an astonished Watson and shows us once again the intimate knowledge he has of his housemate down to knowing who he plays billiards with and the fact that Holmes keeps Watson's 'check' book (note the curious spelling Doyle used) safely locked in his drawer because the good doctor can't be trusted to be sensible with it. What a lovely friendship they have come to share by this point.

Holmes has shown his hand by asking Watson to move back in with him and Watson has acknowledged the void in his life which he experienced after Holmes' 'death' in Switzerland.

There is inter-dependency between them which I think both have come to recognise and accept.

Holmes passes over to Watson a piece of paper with what appears to be a child's drawing on it comprising a set of matchstick figures who appear to be dancing.

It is actually a cipher sent to the wife of a Norfolk squire by an old love from Chicago who has tracked her down to England in order to win her back.

He was a member of a ruthless criminal gang and she was the boss' daughter who fled to escape his wrong-doings.

The lover ends up shooting the new husband and the wife tries to shoot herself.

What starts out as quite light-hearted becomes rather dark.

And yet again love and romance plays a major part in the drama as does the tried and tested formula of someone having a past from overseas (usually the colonies somewhere) which comes back to haunt them, often in the form of a past love.

This is why I find it so easy to get the stories confused with one another as there is such a thread of commonality which runs through them.

Anyway, Holmes is brought the mysterious drawings by his client, the lady's husband, but he delays in travelling to Norfolk and ultimately feels guilty that he may have been able to prevent the tragedy which followed if he had acted sooner.

This is the only fault he makes in an otherwise brilliant investigation – particularly the deciphering of the dancing men which is simply genius, though made to look so simple once he explains it.

I have read this story many times but here again I couldn't put it down – 9 out of 10.

An Inquiry Into The Dancing Men

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

- "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" was first published in The Strand Magazine in December 1903. It is part of The Return of Sherlock Holmes.
- The chronology for this case varies, depending on which Canon expert one consults. Estimates are as follows:
Canon: 1888 or 1899; Baring-Gould: Wednesday, July 27, 1898; Bell: July 1898; Blakeney: August 1898; Brend: July 1898; Christ: Wednesday, July 27, 1898; Dakin: July 1898; Folsom: Thursday, July 28, 1898; Hall: End of July 1898; Keefauver, Monday, July 25, 1898; Klinger: 1898; Zeisler: Wednesday, July 27, 1898.
- If the case took place in 1898, as the majority of Canon chronologists state, at the time Holmes was 44 years old and Watson 46.

Notable Quotes:

- "Every problem becomes very childish when once it is explained to you."

== Watson's Investment ==

- One must admire Holmes' solid chain of deductions which led him to the correct conclusion that Watson was not going to go in with Thurston and invest in South African securities. Surely, the Great Detective cannot be blamed for suggesting to his friend that he should first get a written affidavit testifying to

his original complete astonishment over the Great Detective's conclusion, with his promise that he will not shrug it off as simple once it is explained to him. I suspect that Watson may have enjoyed slyly sticking his scalpel into Holmes and slightly twisting it with his exclamation of "How absurdly simple!" The devil of the thing is that, at least in my case, this is always my reaction as well! Holmes' deductions are so straightforward and simple when he explains them, that we all think we should be able to deduce facts as simple (apparently) as Holmes does. We all strive, like Watson does, to work things out the way our sleuth does, and generally fail miserably. We are, all of us, Watson. Come to think of it, I'll gladly settle for that...

== The Impenetrable Past ==

- From the perspective of that time, it is peculiar that Hilton Cubitt would have been so willing to marry Elsie. She unmistakably tells him that she has "had some very disagreeable associations" in her life, and that she wishes to forget them. As a counterpoint to this, she then states that although she has never done anything to be personally ashamed of, if they marry he must promise never to ask her about her past. Even in our own considerably

more informal age this would fall somewhat beyond the pale. However, for a Victorian gentleman who traces his family tree as having resided in the same county for five centuries this sounds like an intolerable arrangement. Hilton himself admits to the union's peculiarity: "You'll think it very mad, Mr. Holmes, that a man of a good old family should marry a wife in this fashion, knowing nothing of her past or of her people." Perhaps this is why Hilton emphasizes the matter: "I am only a simple Norfolk squire, but there is not a man in England who ranks his family honour more highly than I do. She knows it well, and she knew it well before she married me. She would never bring any stain upon it—that I am sure." Some Canon scholars interpret Hilton's statement, "of that I am sure," as a way of revealing that the lady was a virgo intacta, at the time of the marriage.

== The Master Cryptographer? ==

- "I am fairly familiar with all forms of secret writings," boasts our detective, "and am myself the author of a trifling monograph upon the subject, in which I analyze one hundred and sixty separate ciphers, but I confess that this is entirely new to me." I find this statement shocking! While I confess that my knowledge of cryptography is

at best marginal, being limited to having deciphered a few diplomatic communiqués—using the chancellery’s code book—supplemented by a mathematics buff’s interest in the workings of the World War II German Enigma coding machine, Holmes’ seeming difficulties in breaking the dancing men cipher deeply perplexes me. How could the man who demonstrated such abilities in GLOR and MUSG, for example, have been thrown into a tailspin by such a simple, childish substitution code? According to Watson, it took him some two hours, which were spent “in intricate and elaborate calculations.” Intricate and elaborate? All Holmes had to do was to invoke the mystical mantra, ETAOIN SHRDLU, which eons ago crowned me as the undisputed champion of every “Hangman” contest in school. ETAOIN SHRDLU provides the 12 most common letters in English, in order of most-to-least frequently used. It originated during the days of linotype typesetting machines. If one ran a finger down the first and then second left-hand vertical banks of six keys on a linotype machine’s keyboard, it produced the words etaoin shrdlu. Linotype machines were often tested in this manner. Sometimes a careless operator would fail to discard his test lines, and ETAOIN SHRDLU would mysteriously show up in published material. (For those interested in this sort of thing, the full sequence is ETAOIN SHRDLU CMFGYP WBVKXJ QZ.) I can only

conclude that Watson may not have wanted to burden his reader with the cipher’s true nature and a long (and possibly dull) description of how our sleuth broke it. This lends substance to Holmes’ perennial complaint in COPP: “You have degraded what should have been a course of lectures into a series of tales.” It is paradoxical that the dancing men cipher not only seems too simple for any practical use—with each figure always representing one (and always the same) letter—but also appears too complex for a simple substitution cipher, offering as it does so many apparently unused permutations. For example, if one combines the various arm and leg position possibilities, and add additional meanings by the simple expedient of turning figures upside down, the cipher could provide some 1600 variations. This makes the dancing men cipher far too complex for a simple substitution cipher, and would explain why it took Holmes so long to decode it.

== Beyond Honor? ==

- Hilton's attitude after Elsie receives the first letter is peculiar. Consider that according to what he says the lady turns white, and never again knows an easy hour. His behavior may seem an honorable one for a gentleman, but it is extremely atypical for a caring husband. Who among us, under these same circumstances, would not have tried to determine what the source of the horror

was, before opting to bring in a complete stranger to meddle in familial affairs? Especially after she fainted and lived in terror because of the sundial letter?

== The Ejected Cartridge ==

- Are members of the Pack as much in the dark as I am regarding how Holmes deduced that Slaney's gun was a semiautomatic pistol that would eject a spent cartridge? I can find nothing that would seem to indicate this. Our detective did not even have one of Slaney's bullets to study, because the one fired was still in Hilton Cubitt's body. Yet Holmes not only looked for it, but found it!

== The Mitigating Circumstances ==

- What "mitigating" circumstances could have come up during Slaney's trial, to cause his death conviction to be changed to penal servitude? Back then, English law was not very forgiving of trespassers, which Slaney certainly was when he shot Cubitt. On the other hand, Cubitt was well within his rights to shoot Slaney. Consider that the man not only had been threatening his wife, but he trespassed upon the Cubbits' property in what would reasonably appear as an attempt to harm her or worse. Is there something else that the Good Doctor is not telling us?

What else happened in 1898:

EMPIRE

- Battle of Omdurman in Sudan. Kitchner defeats Mahdi and Dervishes, avenges General Gordon's death, fully establishes British rule over Sudan.
- Curzon becomes Viceroy of India.
- Britain secures lease of the Wei-hei-wei territory from China.
- Franco-British tension following Fashoda Incident, the climax of imperial territorial disputes between Britain and France in Eastern Africa. A French expedition to Fashoda on the White Nile river sought to gain control of the Upper Nile river basin and thereby exclude Britain from the Sudan.
- Introduction of Imperial Penny Postage.
- British Goods given preferential tariff in Canada.
- Congo railway completed to Stanley Pools.

BRITAIN

- Electrification of underground railway from Mansion House to Waterloo.
- First escalator at Harrods.
- University of London Act reorganizes it as a teaching university.
- Agitation against growth of ritualistic practices in the Church of England.

WORLD

- USS Maine blows up in Havana Harbor, Spanish-American

War begins, Spain defeated at Santiago and Manila. Treaty of Paris ends war, Cuba independent, U.S.A. acquires Philippines. A year later, Rudyard Kipling dedicates his poem, "Take Up the White Man's Burden" to the United States.

- Powers appoint Prince George of Greece as High Commissioner in Crete, under Turkish suzerainty.
- Workmen's Social Democratic Party formed in Russia.
- "Hundred Days of Reform" in China. Deposition of Kuang-Hsu and reinstatement of Dowager Empress, suppression of reform.
- U.S.A. annexes Hawaii.
- End of state of debtor nation for U.S.A., existing since 1783, \$500 million foreign investments.
- Work begins on Aswan Dam.
- Germany's Tirpitz plan.
- Military draft introduced in Holland.
- German fleet seizes Kiachow, secures 99-year lease from China.
- Foundation of Flottverein (Navy League) in Germany, Reichstag passes first Navy Act.
- Swiss railways nationalized.
- Severe food riots in Italy.
- Russia secures 25-year lease of Port Arthur from China.

ART

- Émile Zola's J'Accuse--an open letter addressed to President Félix Faure of France, published in the newspaper

L'Aurore by the influential writer, in which he accused the government of anti-Semitism in the unlawful jailing of Alfred Dreyfus, an Army General Staff officer sentenced to lifelong penal servitude for espionage. Zola was prosecuted for, and found guilty of, libel and fled to England, returning home the following year.

- Wells' War of the Worlds.
- Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol.

SCIENCE

- Curies discover radium and polonium.
- Pickering, using photography, discovers nine of Saturn's moons.
- First record of myxomatosis--a rabbit disease.
- Ramsay discovers xenon, krypton, and neon, inert atmospheric gases.
- Rudolf Diesel demonstrates his engine, which requires no sparkplugs.
- French quick-firing "75" gun produced.
- M.J. Owens, U.S.A., designs automatic bottle-making machine.
- Marconi establishes wireless communication between Bournemouth and the Isle of Wight.
- K. Shiga, Japan, discovers bacillus of dysentery.
- Konstantin Tsiolkovski states principles of rocket propulsion.

SHERLOCKIAN SCHOLARSHIP - THE CURIOUS COINCIDENCE OF THE BOGUS LAUNDRY AFFAIRS

Holmes / Watson Report – Sherlock Peoria, November, 1998 by Jeff Bradway

I have followed with great interest all the stir lately regarding the proper place of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in any discussions of Sherlock Holmes and his world. Myself, I love to "play the game"; to me, the world of Sherlock Holmes is as real as any.

However, I understand that Sir Arthur was intimately "involved" in the publication of the tales.

So it is that I try to keep my eyes peeled for instances where his existence impinges on that of the Great Detective.

The other day I found just such an instance - a curious, if not to say singular, intersection of the Doylean and Sherlockian worlds.

While reading Charles Higham's *The Adventures of Conan Doyle* ("completely fascinating" - Nicholas Meyer, according to a blurb on the front cover), I came across the story of the transference of the coffins of Conan Doyle and his wife Jean.

When he died in 1930, Conan Doyle was buried in the grounds of his home, Windlesham; ten years later, his wife Jean was buried alongside him.

When the estate was sold in 1955, the coffins had to be moved.

The family decided to relocate them to the churchyard Minstead, Hampshire, near Conan Doyle's retreat, Bignell House.

To decoy the press and so avoid unwanted publicity, the family transferred the coffins to the new burial site in a laundry van and conducted the burial at night.

What strange goings-on! A false scent and a bogus laundry van!

Wait, there's a familiar ring there, a bogus laundry ... affair!

That's in the Canon somewhere, I thought to myself with, I must say, a chill running down my spine.

Off the shelves I pulled Jack Tracy's trusty *Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana*.

Flipping of pages . . . "Bogus Laundry Affair: see ALDRIDGE." Hmm ... OK, I didn't really remember Aldridge.

Further flipping of pages ... "*Aldridge*, a man who helped Holmes and Lestrade in the 'bogus laundry affair' (CARD)."

Aha! Eureka! "The Cardboard Box"! How did Aldridge and the "bogus laundry affair" fit into the story?

Out came Baring-Gould . . . Flip, flip, flip . . . Hmm, Jim Browner (the villain/victim of the story) was of the same type as Aldridge.

Well, was this significant? Could there be a connection between this report by Watson of one of Holmes's cases from 1889 (published in 1893) and the exhumation and reburial of Conan Doyle, Watson's literary agent, in 1955?

A deep, dark business, indeed ...

I decided to look at the tale itself to see if it held any clues.

- The eponymous cardboard box provides an astonishing parallel: it is a box that contains human remains. It is misaddressed, so that it arrives where it shouldn't. In a generic sense, this is just what happened to the Conan Doyle's coffins in 1955: the laundry van conveyed the human remains to a destination where they normally would not go.
- The unhappy background of the tale is also significant: it is a love triangle. A young woman is torn between her husband, who is debilitated by drink, and a new love, Alec Fairbairn. Conan Doyle's own home life was a love triangle of sorts. His first wife, Touie, was debilitated by tuberculosis, and Conan Doyle was torn between his loyalty to her and his new love, Jean Leckie. It is intriguing, however, that Conan Doyle did not meet Jean until some years after this tale was published.
- The opening scene of this tale, with Holmes appearing to read Watson's mind, is curious. Was it just an exceptional case of observation and deduction, or was it perhaps evidence of extrasensory perception?
- There is, of course, the cryptic reference to "the bogus laundry affair" that appears in the text of Lestrade's letter to Holmes at the end of the case.
- There is also one of those few outbursts from Holmes that are so seemingly at odds with his cold, rational character:
 - "What is the meaning of it, Watson?" said Holmes solemnly, as he laid down the paper. 'What object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an answer as ever.' [Emphasis mine]
- Finally, I would point out Watson's disclaimer at the very beginning of the tale:
 - In choosing a few typical cases which illustrate the remarkable mental qualities of my friend, Sherlock Holmes,

I have endeavored, so far as possible, to select those which presented the minimum of sensationalism, while offering a fair field for his talents. It is, however, unfortunately, impossible entirely to separate the sensational from the criminal... a chronicler ... must use matter which chance, and not choice, has provided him with.

Yet, if the universe is not ruled by chance, then what has provided Watson with this material?

I recalled, too, that, on another occasion (ABBE), Holmes told his Boswell: "I must admit, Watson, that you have some power of selection which atones for much which I deplore in your narratives."

Here, then, in "The Cardboard Box," is a tale chosen by Watson for publication, containing matter provided by "chance, and not choice" which contains curious parallels with future events in the life of his friend and literary agent, Conan Doyle.

Can we say that these parallels are all sheer coincidence? Or was there some form of precognition on Watson's part?

Was his hand perhaps guided in the writing of this tale?

Were the later events in Conan Doyle's life possibly a strange reenactment of incidents that took place in the course of this case?

In any official comment on these "coincidences," Watson would have denied any such superstitious explanation; while we can safely say that Holmes would have remarked, as he did on another occasion (SUSS): "This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

Yet what are we to make of the fact that, of all the Sherlock Holmes cases - four novels and fifty-six short stories - only this one, "The Cardboard Box," had its publication in book form oddly delayed.

The tale originally appeared in *The Strand Magazine* in January 1893; while it was indeed collected with eleven others in the first British edition of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, which appeared in 1894, it was dropped from every subsequent edition of Memoirs.

It did not appear again in book form until *His Last Bow* was published in 1917.

Clearly, someone had the wind up. Was it Conan Doyle?

Already, in the early 1890s, he had dabbled in spiritualism.

Was he already sensitive to impressions from the other side?

Could he sense that from this odd tale from the pen of his friend Watson there were to be echoes in his future life?

If so, he might have been troubled by these sensations, early as this was in his examination of spiritualist matters.

That the story was republished in 1917, at which time Conan Doyle was fully convinced of the spiritualist cause, would seem to be clear indication that he now rejoiced in this tale's evidence of extra-rational or spiritual influence upon the acts of man.

That he did not utilize this evidence in the course of his innumerable lectures in his missionary work for the new belief is probably explained by entreaties from Watson, on behalf of Holmes, that their privacy be respected...

Now, I am not a person particularly given to admitting of supernatural explanations to occurrences.

I give the above speculation for what it is worth.

Whether or not it proves to be the truth, I shall always retain an eerie and unsettled interest in the curious coincidence of the bogus laundry affairs.

STORY INFO PAGES FOR "THE DANCING MEN"

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

First published in: The Strand Magazine, Dec '03;
Collier's Weekly, Dec. 5, 1903

Time frame of story (known/surmised): Late July 1898
known, very likely on July 27.

Holmes and Watson living arrangements: Sharing
quarters at 221B.

Opening scene: One evening, Holmes was performing a
malodorous chemical analysis.

He then deduced that Watson did not plan to
invest in South African securities, by having, the night
before, observed chalk on Watson's left thumb and
forefinger.

Holmes then showed Watson some childish-
looking drawings of dancing stick-men he had received
by post, along with an inquiry.

Client: Mr. Hilton Cubitt, of Riding Thorpe Manor,
Norfolk.

He was a ruddy, clean-shaven gentleman, whose
clear eyes and florid cheeks told of a life led far from
the fogs of Baker Street.

He seemed to bring a whiff of strong, fresh,
bracing, east-coast air with him.

He was a man of the old English soil, with earnest
blue eyes and a broad, comely face.

Not only that, but he had great, strong hands,
too.

Crime or concern: Client sent Holmes the dancing stick-
men drawings.

They meant nothing to Cubitt, but when his wife
Elsie saw them she was highly disturbed, but would not
share her concerns with her husband.

She had been a visiting American he had married
precipitously.

She made him promise not to probe her
background, although she said she had nothing to be
ashamed of.

Elsie did say there had been disagreeable
associations in her past she hoped to remain there.

Cubitt agreed and kept his word. He loved her
deeply.

Villain: Abe Slaney, a Chicago crook.

He was a tall, handsome, swarthy fellow, clad in a
suit of gray flannel, with a Panama hat, a bristling black
beard, and a great, aggressive hooked nose, and
flourished a cane as he walked.

He worked for old Patrick, Elsie's father, who was
the leader of a gang. Old Patrick had devised the code.

Slaney had planned to marry Elsie.

Motive: Perverse love and jealousy.

Elsie had rejected Slaney and the criminal gang
and came to England.

Slaney heard where she was and came across,
planning to win her back.

After rejections, he turned to threats, which in
turn lead to a deadly incident in which Cubitt shot at
him but missed.

Slaney then shot and killed Cubitt, and then Elsie
shot herself in the head, but recovered.

Logic used to solve: Holmes recognized the dancing
men as coded messages.

It was a simple substitution code and after
collecting a few short messages he cracked the code.

But he was too late returning to Norfolk. Holmes
summoned Slaney back to the scene of the crime using
the code, as Slaney thought Elsie was the only person
who could read it.

He came and was arrested.

Policemen: Inspector Martin, a dapper little man, with a
quick, alert manner and a waxed moustache, of the
Norfolk Constabulary.

Martin was impressed by Holmes' presence and
deferred to him.

Holmes' fees: No mention, but since his client was killed
he may have been skunked on this case.

Transport: On his initial visit to Holmes, the Norfolk
squire came straight from the station as fast as a
hansom could bring him.

He returned that evening. The next morning,
Holmes and Watson went out to North Walsham on the
first train.

It was a seven-mile carriage ride from the station to Riding Thorpe Manor.

After wrapping up the case, Holmes and Watson took the three-forty train back to London, to be back in Baker Street for dinner.

Food: Holmes and Watson broke fast early before their trip to North Walsham.

Drink, Vices, and other cases: no mention

Notable Quotables: If one simply knocks out all central inferences and presents one's audience with the starting-point and the conclusion, one may produce a startling, though possibly a meretricious, effect. – SH

Other interestings: Holmes' knowledge of the crooks of Chicago made him realize Slaney might very rapidly put his words into action.

So Holmes hurried back to Riding Thorpe Manor, but did not telegraph the police, a grave oversight.

SH tells Watson he is fairly familiar with all forms of secret writings, and is the author of a trifling monograph upon the subject, in which he analyzes one hundred and sixty separate ciphers.

He notes that the object of the Dancing Men code was to conceal that these characters convey a message, and to give the idea that they were the mere random sketches of children.

When all was said and done: Slaney was condemned to death at the winter assizes at Norwich, but his penalty was changed to penal servitude in consideration of mitigating circumstances, and the certainty that Hilton Cubitt had fired the first shot. Elsie recovered entirely and remained a widow, devoting her whole life to the care of the poor and the administration of her husband's estate.

Who's On First, It's Not So Elementary

By Howard Ostrom

(You can see Howard's work with the file attached to this newsletter)

While making up some questions for a Sherlock Holmes quiz, I included some questions like, "Who was the first actor to play Sherlock Holmes on TV?", and "Who was the first Sherlock Holmes performer on stage?".

These questions got me interested in researching who was the first Sherlock Holmes performer in different countries, a subject I discovered was very difficult to research.

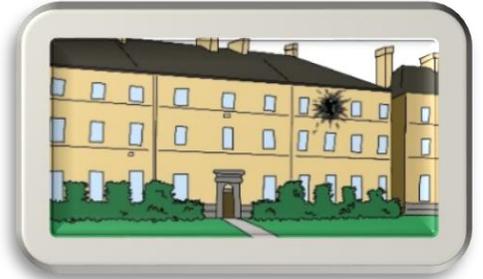
The more I discussed it with Sherlockian friends from around the world, the more I discovered how very little I knew, and still yet how very little research has been done on the subject.

Therefore, the purpose of this essay is not to lay claim to the fact that these are the very first Sherlock Holmes performers for a particular country, but they are simply the earliest performers my minor research has uncovered.

I present this essay with the hope that the readers of it can supply me with much more information on the subject. (*And so many have already this is a new revision!)

Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason
The First Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson



Baker Street Elementary
Number 136 - 11/12/2017

Fog, Moon, & Moore

**YES MA'AM... I FINISHED MY ESSAY ON
CHEMIST HUMPHRY DAVY... DOCTORS COULDN'T
HELIUM, SO THEY HAD TO BARIUM AFTER HE
HAD SULFURED ENOUGH.**



**SHE LOOKS "PUNNY"... LOOKS LIKE WE'RE
GETTING ANOTHER SUBSTITUTE TOMORROW...**

