

# The Bilge Pump

Vol. 05, No. 12 - December, 2017  
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the  
Barque Lone Star*



## PLEASE NOTE:

### February 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting

#### NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 4th, 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 Retired Colourman." The quiz will cover this tale.

**Cindy Brown will present "He needed killin'"**

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

### December 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

There were 18 attendees on hand. Cindy Brown reported Linda Pieper is still dealing with her injuries from the car accident and rebuilding her strength. Unfortunately, Walter Pieper, her husband, our Helmsman, is now in the hospital. Liese Sherwood-Fabre provided all the attendees a nice bookmark with our book design. We discussed the December 19th auction (10:00 a.m. PST) of The Collection of Daniel Posnansky. To explore or order a catalogue (\$35.00 plus Shipping), visit <http://www.profilesinhistory.com>.

Steve presented a copy of both The Faces of the BSI and The Faces of ASH, profile compilations of artwork from the respective journals, as gifts to those assembled.

The opening toast was delivered by Steve Mason in honor of Rusty Mason for his excellent work on "Baker Street Elementary" and the society's website.

Lawrence Fischman won the quiz, based on "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" and won *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes, Volumes I and II*, by Les Klinger. Allen Osborne achieved second place, winning beautiful cookie tin, donated by Brenda Hutchison.

Colleen O'Connor provided a wonderful and interesting presentation on "What the Fashionable Man Will Wear," which explored the history of purple dye, proposing that Holmes's robe was ultimately purple. Steve Mason presented each of us a gift copy of "A Study in Limericks" by Bill Beeson, deceased, former Third Mate of this esteemed society, distributing with permission from Bill's friend and Agent, John Henson. Steve Mason distributed copies of A Grimm Holmes, two hard copies to each of the writers and one paperback to other members of the society. The society's website has electronic versions available for free.

The Allen Library has given us a display case for January 2-31. It will present the Junior Sherlockian Society, sponsored by the Beacon Society. Also, the display will include the Top Ten Sherlock Holmes Movies as chosen by a group of Sherlockians.

With the coming holidays, and a sustained feeling of largesse, two books and one of Pam Mason's artworks were given away. The closing reading by Steve Mason was "All Sherlockians are Friends," from the *Baker Street Journal*, Spring, 2001

Thanks as always for minutes recorded by Brenda S. Hutchison

For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://www.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  
Pam Mason  
Rusty Mason

[mason.steve@epa.gov](mailto:mason.steve@epa.gov)  
[waltpieper@att.net](mailto:waltpieper@att.net)  
[221b@verizon.net](mailto:221b@verizon.net)  
[jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com](mailto:jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com)  
[myrkrid08@yahoo.com](mailto:myrkrid08@yahoo.com)

Our Website: [www.dfw-sherlock.org](http://www.dfw-sherlock.org)

Our Facebook Page:

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

The image is a collage of three distinct elements related to the Sherlock Holmes literary society. On the left, a parchment-like background features several quotes from the character: "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 who is this Captain Calhoun?" "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..." "What then?"

The central element is a screenshot of a website titled "THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR". It features a circular logo with a star and a silhouette of a man. The website has a search bar and a navigation menu with items like "Home Page", "About", "Crew Investigations and Awards", "Newsletters, Crew Meeting Logs, & Society Pastiches", "Papers", "Many Faces of Sherlock Holmes", and "Ephemera -- General". A featured image shows a building labeled "Baker Street Elementary" with a spiderweb graphic. Below the image is the text "THE MAY MEETING".

The bottom element is a screenshot of a Facebook page for "The Crew of the Barque Lone Star @BarqueLoneStar". The page includes a profile picture of the society's 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 are also buttons for "Like", "Follow", "Share", and "Add a Button".

# "THE EDITOR'S GAS-LAMP"

BAKER STREET JOURNAL – AUTUMN, 2000

Christopher Morley subtitled his ground-breaking annotation of the Canon "A Textbook in Friendship."

Certainly Morley was an adept at friendship if ever there was one.

It is, perhaps, the one thing that all who knew him agree about.

The man was a genius at making and keeping friends.

He certainly would have had no trouble in spotting that the friendship between Holmes and Watson is perhaps the most important current that runs through their adventures together.

The two men knew each other intimately and admired each other greatly.

They appreciated the other's strengths and weaknesses in the way that only the greatest of friends can.

We are struck by the truth that friendship is the very bedrock of the Sherlockian world.

Every Sherlockian has struggled for the proper metaphor to describe our sub-culture: religion, masonry, the MLA.

None of them emphasize the degree to which mutual respect and admiration play a part.

Even those who quibble constantly do it from a stance of affection.

All Sherlockians are friends.

Our world has grown larger, but so has our ability for friendship.

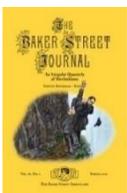
One can never have too many friends, but it requires some speaking out.

Join the fray: do remember that, as in any large gathering, it can get a bit noisy at times.

So sharpen your wits and raise your voice. Make yourself heard.

The Baker Street Journal continues to be the leading Sherlockian publication since its founding in 1946 by Edgar W. Smith. With both serious scholarship and articles that "play the game," the Journal is essential reading for anyone interested in Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and a world where it is always 1895.

Got to: <http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com/itemsforsale/subscriptions.html> for subscription information.



# THE SEVENTEEN STEPS TO "THE RETIRED COLOURMAN..."

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

\*\*\*\*\*

## AND NOW, THE END IS NEAR...

Sherlock Holmes begins this last tale with a sad soliloquy: "But is not all life



pathetic and futile? Is not his story a microcosm of the whole? We reach. We

grasp. And what is left in our hands at the end? A shadow. Or worse than a shadow -- misery."

Why is Holmes so down? Isn't this the same guy who said his career would be complete if he just freed London of Moriarty's influence? Was it Amberley's story that depressed Holmes so? If so, why?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE CARD HAD SEEN A LOT OF CALLING

We are told Amberley left Holmes "a rather soiled card." Which was worse etiquette in Victorian London: arriving with no calling card or presenting someone with an old, dirty card? Would a card see that much reuse? What amounts did Victorians get them printed in? We are told Amberley is a "pathetic, futile, broken creature," but how pathetic is handing out dirty cards?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THAT MYSTERIOUS AMBERLY CHARM

"Early in 1897 he married a woman twenty years younger than himself--a good-looking woman, too, if the photograph does not flatter."

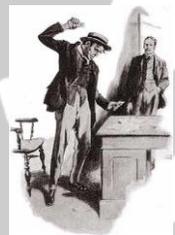
Josiah Amberly is a nasty-looking old miser with a shabby home and a bad temper. So how did he ensnare a young and attractive wife? Certainly the future Mrs. Amberly would have had other prospects, wouldn't she? (It's interesting to note that Holmes himself is calling her good-looking -- quite a change from his early days.)

\*\*\*\*\*

## HE'S A POET AND HE SURE KNOWS IT ...

Watson, who seems almost to be wearing a puffy shirt and wielding an ostrich feather quill pen, says: "You know that particular quarter, the monotonous brick streets, the weary suburban highways. Right in the middle of them, a little island of ancient culture and comfort, lies this old home, surrounded by a high sun-baked wall with lichens and topped with moss, the sort of wall--"

While we've seen Watson write like this before, in this case he's actually speaking this way, which is an entirely different thing. (Just try speaking those lines aloud, as if you were telling Holmes about it.) Does this seem in character for the old army doctor? Might he have been reading from a



write-up he did on the way back? Or was it within his character to wax airily aloud about the scenery like that?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE AMBERLY BODYBUILDING PLAN

"Yet he was not the weakling that I had at first imagined, for his shoulders and chest have the framework of a giant, though his figure tapers away into a pair of spindled legs." How did Amberly get such a body? Something in the work of a colourman? Disease? Something that connected with his lost leg?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE WATSON/ERNEST TRANSITION

"What of Dr. Ernest?" Holmes asks the good doctor. "Was he the gay Lothario one would expect? With your natural advantages, Watson, every lady is your helper and accomplice. What about the girl at the post-office, or the wife of

the greengrocer? I can picture you whispering soft nothings with the young lady at the Blue Anchor, and receiving hard somethings in exchange." The switch from Dr.



Ernest's womanizing to Dr. Watson's way with the ladies seems a little too natural. Did Watson become more of a womanizer in the 1890's? What were his "natural advantages"?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE CONSULTING DETECTIVE COMES FULL CIRCLE

"Thanks to the telephone and the help of the Yard, I can usually get my essentials without leaving this room." Early in his career, Holmes saw his profession with a somewhat Mycroftian view. Clients would bring him their problems, and using his great knowledge of crime, Holmes hoped to advise them without ever leaving his consulting room. As technology advanced, his original thought of simply consulting seems to become more real. Could Holmes have worked in the modern day without ever leaving his sitting room? Might his retirement to Sussex been simply a ruse to cover long-distance work by telephone?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE MADONNA OF THE VICTORIAN WORLD

"Carina sings to-night at the Albert Hall, and we still have time to dress, dine, and enjoy." What do we know about this single-named "Carina"? What sort of thing would she have sung at Albert Hall? Any chance she was not a person, but the 1888 comic opera "Carina" written by one Julia Woolf?

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE SOURCE OF THE TELEGRAM

"Dispatched at 2:10 from Little Purlington," Holmes says of the

telegram we later find to be bogus. Did Sherlock have to go all the way to Little Purlington to send his phoney telegram? Or could he have arranged the matter locally?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### AMBERLY'S ATTACK OF THE AIR

At the case's climax, Holmes confronts Amberly with the question, "What did you do with the bodies?" Amberley then acts most peculiarly: "The man sprang to his feet with a hoarse scream. He clawed into the air with his bony hands." Why that reaction? Was he outraged by the accusation and clawing at Holmes? Was he having a sitcom-style, Fred Sanford, over-dramatized fake heart attack?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### THE OMINOUS WHITE PELLET

When confronted with his crime, Josiah Amberly also pops a white pill, which Holmes immediately jostles lose by twisting Amberly's head to face the ground (by placing his hands on Amberly's throat, no less). Was that anything close to a real method for getting a pill out of someone? Could the pill have been something other than poison, like some stress remedy? And if it was poison, what would Amberly have been most likely to be using to escape justice?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### AND WHY DO WE HAVE THESE LAWS...?

Holmes tells the Scotland Yard inspector, "You, for example, with your compulsory warning about whatever he said being used against him, could never have bluffed this rascal into what is virtually a confession." If the police couldn't bluff Amberly into a



confession, what validity would Holmes's use of that tactic have in a court of law? And what was Holmes's "virtual confession"? Amberly taking a pill?

And if that wasn't enough, next Holmes himself confesses to burglary in front of Inspector MacKinnon -- and a full, true confession at that. This case surely wouldn't have stood up in court today. Would it have worked at the turn of that earlier century?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### THE IRREGULARITIES OF MR. BARKER

"He has several good cases to his credit, has he not, Inspector?" Holmes says of Barker. "He has certainly interfered several times," the inspector replies... "His methods are irregular, no doubt, like my own," Holmes suggests, seeming not to be too sure of what Barker's methods are. What might Barker's irregular methods have been, and how might he have been interfering with police investigations? All we see of him in this tale is that he watches Amberly's house until he sees someone sneaking out of it, which doesn't seem much of a method at all. Why did he suspect Amberly to begin with, instead of trying to track the runaway couple?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### COVERING THE SMELL OF GAS

Okay, for starters, natural gas has no smell except for the scent added to alert people to its presence in the air, correct? Was the same scent added in Victorian Lewisham as today? How hard was it to get out of a small room that took only two minutes to asphyxiate someone in? Was Amberly's supposed painting ruse even necessary, especially as he didn't paint over the one place he might have wanted to -- the "We we --" in indelible pencil?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### THE CLUE NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE NOTICED

The paper says, "the subsequent inquiry which led to the discovery of the bodies in a disused well, cleverly concealed by a dog-kennel." If merely painting a room was suspicious, why was it that no one fussed over the new dog kennel? Did Amberly, a miser who didn't even care for his yard, have a dog? Or was the kennel there from previous owners, in which case one must wonder how Amberly even knew of the well.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### THE QUESTION OF MOTIVE

While the motive for Amberly's supposed crime seems obvious enough, what I have to wonder is what Holmes and Barker's motives might have been for a possible framing of the retired colourman. Given all the questionable tactics, railroading, and general



tomfoolery involved in this case, can one not help but wonder if Amberly had been set up. Is there any scenario wherein the former colourman might have been innocent? Could this have been what made the case "the debate of all England" a week later?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### THE KEEPER OF THE ARCHIVES

"You can file it in our archives, Watson," Holmes tells the doctor. "Some day the true story may be told." Is Watson acting more like Holmes's secretary in the later tales than he did early on? Have the individual records and mementos of the two men merged by this time?

# THE NEW WOMAN CYCLIST

Liese Sherwood-Fabre



Violet Smith, the solitary cyclist who seeks Holmes's assistance, represents the new type of single, working woman who emerged at the end of the nineteenth century.

Sarah Grand coined the term "the new woman" in

1894 to describe the increasing number of well-educated and self-supporting woman who emerged as the social climate and demographics shifted. (1)

At the end of the 1800s, approximately half of the women aged 20-40 were unmarried and outnumbered eligible men.

With little prospect of ever becoming a wife, William Rathbone Greg estimates that about 300,000 of them are doomed to life devoid of marriage and consisting instead of "celibacy, struggle, and privation." (2)

Despite Greg's insistence that without fulfilling their role as wife and mother, many of those in this age group found new prospects opening to them, and the bicycle was both a symbol and a major contributor to their new-found freedom.

Toward the end of the century, two major improvements to the bicycle made them both safer, more comfortable, and, over time, more affordable: the "safety bicycle" with two equal-sized wheels and a chain-driven rear wheel, and the pneumatic tire, transportation. (3)

While both women and men found these innovations to their liking, this new form of mobility had a much greater impact on women.

Victorian etiquette proscribed women, particularly those of the middle class, to a very limited set of "respectable" activities: visiting, attending certain cultural events, supporting certain charitable activities, and some recreational outings.



Bicycling extended women's geographic and social boundaries. They were able to travel farther and into areas not previously visited, and possibly unaccompanied. (4)

This design, however, required different clothing, and led to additional freedom in that arena as well. (5)

At a time when showing her ankle was enough to mark a woman as a prostitute and ladies only rode sidesaddle, many donned pantaloons or bloomers, permitting the whole lower leg to be visible (although covered by woolen stockings or boots).

The volume of fabric used in this fashion, however, proved as great, or greater, hindrance than some skirts.

Some forward-thinking cycling and women's rights advocates went so far as to disparage the corset and discouraged its use as well. (6)

In the end, the majority of women continued to wear skirts and corsets when cycling.

Bicycle manufacturers developed a number of devices to help maintain the women's modesty, but none were truly effective.

Despite Greg's concerns about women's marital prospects, the situation was not as dire as the one he

painted. The rise in educated women led to a rise in their involvement within the workforce.

Many single women moved into professional positions such as secretaries, teachers, governesses, etc. and were able to live independently, without the support of a father or husband.

In addition, women had a larger pool of prospects from which to choose.

Couples no longer had to live in the same village or neighborhood.

They were able to travel outside such areas to meet, often unchaperoned.

Such an arrangement was common enough to be immortalized in the Harry Darce song "Daisy Bell" and her bicycle "built for two." (7)

Miss Smith displayed the aspects physical fitness, freedom of movement, and self-supporting income that might have labeled her as "a new woman," with the exception of her marital prospects.

While some new women might never receive an offer of marriage, she had the choice of three (albeit were two undesired).

All the same, she had to freedom to refuse the two unwanted ones, and thanks to Sherlock Holmes, retained her independence to make that choice.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre will be presenting on "Law and Order: Victorian Style" at The Agra Treasurers' Holmes, Doyle, and Friends March 9-10 gathering in Dayton, OH.

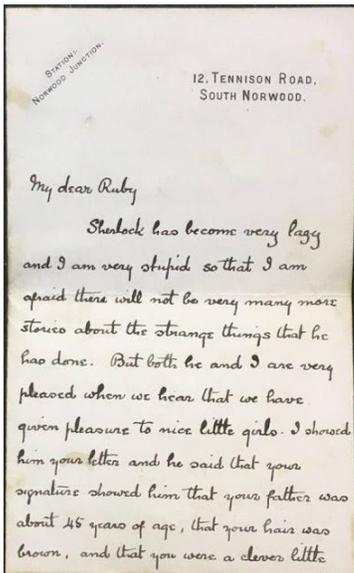
- 
- (1) Sarah Grand, "The New Aspect of the Woman Question," *The North American Review*, 1894.
  - (2) (2) William Rathbone Greg, *Why are Women Redundant?* London: N. Trubner and Co., 1869, page 17.
  - (3) (3) <https://victorianist.wordpress.com/2015/04/13/chains-of-freedom-the-bicycles-impact-on-1890s-britain/>
  - (4) (4) Clare S. Simpson, "A Social History of Women and Cycling in Late-Nineteenth Century New Zealand."
  - (5) (5) Ibid
  - (6) (6) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/lifestyle/wellbeing/diet/8419028/Bicycles-The-chains-that-set-women-free.html>
  - (7) (7) <https://victorianist.wordpress.com/2015/04/13/chains-of-freedom-the-bicycles-impact-on-1890s-britain/>

You can check out more of Liese Sherwood-Fabre's writings at [www.liesesherwoodfabre.com](http://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](http://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](http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com). A non-Sherlockian adventure can be downloaded at: <http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com/extras.html>

# AN INSIGHT INTO SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE



Recently, a letter from Arthur Conan Doyle sold at auction for \$ 12,500.

The letter, addressed to Miss Ruby Paulson, was in answer to her letter in which she states her love for Sherlock Holmes.

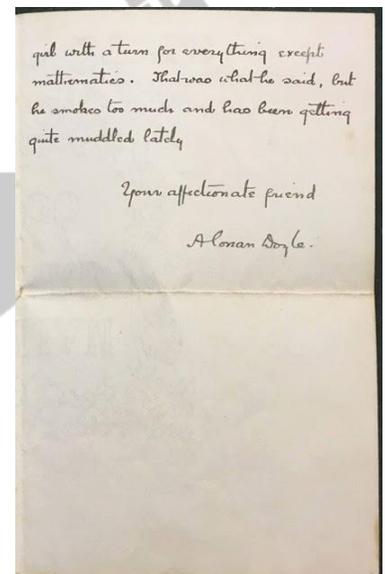
Conan Doyle responded to her letter in 1893, with a fun and whimsical note.

My Dear Ruby

Sherlock has become very lazy and I am very stupid so that I am afraid there will not be very many more stories about

the strange things that he has done. But both he and I are very pleased when we hear that we have given pleasure to nice little girls. I showed him your letter and he said that your signature showed him that your father was about 45 years of age, that your hair was brown, and that you were a clever little girl with a turn for everything except mathematics. That was what he said, but he smokes too much and has been getting quite muddled lately.

Your affectionate friend  
A. Conan Doyle



You can read more about the letter, and insights into Doyle's feelings toward his creation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century at "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere," <http://www.ihearofsherlock.com/>.

# 56 Stories in 56 days - Adventure of the Retired Colourman

Posted on November 14, 2011 by barefootonbakerstreet

This fun little story focuses on a miserly old man who murders his attractive young wife and her lover then tries to make it look like they have robbed him and run away.

He traps them in an air-tight room and gasses them to death, then starts painting the house to disguise the smell and ditches the bodies down a well.

Okay, doesn't exactly sound like a 'fun' story I admit, but Doyle has a way of telling things like this which make them seem more like a dark comedy than a disturbing thriller.

Things are played to extremes and this stops the story from being too real, too serious.

As I have said before, there is much humour in the short stories for which I don't think Doyle gets enough credit.

Am I the only one who thought a colourman was someone military?

For those of you who might have made the same mistake, a colourman is someone who manufactures artistic materials such as paint-boxes.

The story begins with Holmes in a melancholy mood; "But is not all life pathetic and futile? Is not his story a microcosm of the whole? We reach, we grasp. And what is left in our hands at the end? A shadow. Or worse than a shadow-misery."

Blimey, someone got out of bed the wrong side.

The colourman is so confident that he will get away with his crimes that he enlists Holmes to track down his wife and lover, even though he took their lives himself.

Holmes is too busy to investigate at first and sends Watson in his place.

As with Watson's efforts in the search for Lady Carfax, Holmes is very dismissive of his findings - "It is true that in your mission you have missed everything of importance," but this time he does throw in lots of positive comments too.

However, Watson's rather poetic and detailed description of the wall around the colourman's house is cut short with a bad tempered remark - "Cut out the poetry Watson," followed by, "I note that it was a high brick wall."

Poor Watson, he really is the most patient of men.

My modern-day mind couldn't help but laugh (out loud on the train - rather embarrassing) when Holmes suggests that Watson could have used his natural charms to entice information from local women and adds - "I can picture you whispering soft nothings with the young lady at the Blue Anchor, and receiving hard somethings in exchange."

Brilliant, priceless dialogue - possibly even funnier than the classic, "I'll just go and put my slippers on", line in the Blue Carbuncle.

The police inspector working on the case, Mackinnon, does make the point to Holmes that he is able to get results in part because he can

get away with doing things which the officials can't.

The point has been made before and is very true, even though Holmes is undeniably brilliant and his fantastic mind is what ultimately brings about the resolutions, being able to break into people's houses, wearing disguises, duping people into leaving their homes unattended, getting engaged to the villain's maid etc are certainly a massive part of his armoury.

In this story, Holmes yet again breaks into a house in order to solve the case.

We forgive him, of course, because the ends always justify the means but these tactics are beyond the reach of the official police.

But then, they cannot complain as Holmes is always happy to step aside and let them take all

the credit which is confirmed at the end of this story when Watson reads out a newspaper article praising MacKinnon for his 'Bold deduction' and lists points which Holmes actually hit on, not the inspector.

Mackinnon takes the praise and glory but Holmes has the satisfaction of knowing that, as always, he has succeeded where others failed, bringing light into the darkness.

What a fine example, a story that contains all I love about Holmes.

The brilliant observation and deduction, the interplay with Watson, the humour and darkness skilfully blended together by a writer who I have always felt has not achieved the credit deserved in the history of English literature.

I give the Retired Colourman 9 out of 10.

# Here Come The Brides

By Brad Keefauver, Sherlockian Scholarship, The Holmes & Watson Report, January, 1999

A few years ago, a new series of Sherlock Holmes novels began coming out, written by Laurie King. King's novels featured a young American girl named Mary Russell, who took Watson's place as Holmes's companion and chronicler after the detective's retirement. Miss Russell started as Holmes's neighbor, became his friend, and then took on the role of apprentice detective. Eventually Miss Russell would marry Sherlock Holmes, and as much as Sherlockians like to gripe about pastiches, this turn of events brought a bit more complaining than usual.

Sherlock Holmes was never what you would call a "marrying man," and the thought of him being dragged to the alter bothers a lot of Sherlockians. But there are still those who would like to see him married. No man is complete without a better half, right? And why shouldn't Holmes get to be as joy-filled and happy as the rest of us married guys?

But I still have a problem with this Mary Russell character, and I'll tell you what it is. She's not one of the home team. Like the unnamed newspaper writer in "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor" writes: "There will soon be a call for protection in the marriage market, for the present free-trade principle appears to tell heavily against our home product. One by one the management of the noble houses of Great Britain is passing into the hands of our fair cousins from across the Atlantic."

Now, I'm not going to say Sherlock Holmes shouldn't be allowed to marry an American. I would suggest, however, that if we're going to pick out a wife for him, she should at least be someone else who appeared in the cases of

Dr. Watson. That's the home team. Those are the good, honest girls who deserve the first shot at Holmes. So why don't we give them one?

At "The Game Is Afloat '98", held Halloween weekend in St. Louis, a select group of Sherlockian participants got to play marriage brokers for the great detective, to try to make up for this great Mary Russell mistake. I distributed scorecards and ballots among them, then we ran through a list of likely candidates. I gave a panel of three venerable and experienced marriage experts (Joel Senter, Roy Pilot, and Joe Eckrich) veto power in this proceeding. If they thought I was going on too long about a worthless candidate, or was just being ridiculous, they could blow the whistle and disqualify whomever I was speaking about (and they took advantage of that ability quite often, starting with the very first candidate). I would then move on to the next candidate. When we had gone through all the candidates, the participants were asked to use their ballots and vote for the best choice for the new Mrs. Holmes.

You may notice a few women in this list of candidates who are already married. Well, widows often make better wives than young maidens without any experience, especially when dealing with a serious bachelor like Holmes. The participants were assured should any married woman be selected in this process, we would make sure she was a widow before she married Holmes.

And now, the candidates, in Canonical order:

**Candidate #1.** - Mrs. Sawyer from A Study in Scarlet. She's a wrinkled old crone, but as soon as Holmes meets her, he's following her home. She has a harsh voice and bleary eyes, but this is a woman who

really knows how a man feels about about things. She's already the only woman Holmes ever gives a wedding ring to, so why don't we see that he goes the rest of the way with her?

**Candidate #2.** - Mary Morstan from The Sign of the Four. She's blonde, dainty, refined, and Holmes calls her, "one of the most charming young ladies I ever met." He also says, "She might have been useful in such work as we have been doing." Charming and useful in the detective business? Could we get a better combination for Holmes than this, with business and pleasure rolled into one pleasing package? My theory has been Holmes's disappointment at Watson's engagement to her was because he really wanted her for himself, and now we can rectify that little matter for him, if we vote for Mary Morstan.

**Candidate #3.** - Irene Adler from "A Scandal in Bohemia." So beautiful she makes Dr. Watson ashamed of himself just looking at her. Been around the track with kings and lawyers, so you know she wouldn't be surprised by anything Sherlock would come up with on the honeymoon. But should we marry Holmes to someone he already calls "THE woman"? I leave that to your decision.

**Candidate #4.** - The fourteen-year-old that cooks and cleans for Jabez Wilson in "Red-headed League." Domestic skills are important, and some say that younger wives are much easier to train.

**Candidate #5.** - Miss Mary Sutherland from "A Case of Identity." She's large, near-sighted, and she can type. She may seem a bit dim-witted for pairing with Holmes, but Watson points out early on how, and I quote, "her body oscillated backward and forward." Is

an oscillating body prized by males other than Professor Moriarty, with his oscillating head? You be the judge.

**Candidate #6.** - Alice Turner from "Boscombe Valley Mystery." She's wealthy, eighteen, has violet eyes, pink cheeks, and is one of the most lovely young women that Watson has ever seen in his life. She's quick to sass Inspector Lestrade, which is a good qualification for a wife of Holmes, and has "a woman's quick intuition." Holmes could do a lot worse than this one.

**Candidate #7.** - Kate Whitney from "Man With The Twisted Lip." Not only is Kate already friends with Watson's wife; making those inevitable "couples night outs" much more enjoyable for all involved, she also has experience at being married to a serious drug user. Could there be a more practical choice?

**Candidate #8.** - Maggie Oakshott from "Blue Carbuncle." Raises geese for a living and her house is in a neighborhood, where, as her brother says, "every man I met seemed to me to be a policeman or a detective." Moving from Baker Street to Brixton Road could be very good for Holmes's business, and if it wasn't, well, Maggie's got the geese thing going.

**Candidate #9.** - Helen Stoner from "Speckled Band." Thirty years old with prematurely graying hair, Helen is the first woman who can actually claim Sherlock Holmes spent the night in her bedroom. Holmes, however, is rumored to have spent that night in the company of Dr. Watson and is said to have been "beating the snake." Holmes's marriage to Miss Stoner might put an end to those rumors, once and for all.

**Candidate #10.** - Elise the coiner's accomplice from "Engineer's Thumb." Though described as beautiful, she speaks broken English with a German accent and has "eyes

like a frightened horse." Her main talent in life seems to be helping young men escape out the bedroom window, so I don't know how heartily I can recommend her as a possible wife for Holmes.

**Candidate #11.** - Hatty Doran from "Noble Bachelor." She's a California girl and a millionaire's daughter. A quick thinker and fearless besides, she'd make an excellent wife for a man in Holmes's business, as years in the mining camps taught her how to deal with rough sorts.

**Candidate #12.** - Mary Holder from "Beryl Coronet." Her uncle says she's "sweet, loving, beautiful, a wonderful manager and housekeeper, yet as tender and quiet and gentle as a woman could be." She falls for the first criminal she meets, of course, and runs off, so perhaps this isn't the woman for Holmes, who met a lot of criminals.

**Candidate # 13.** - Violet Hunter from "Copper Beeches." While chestnut-colored hair and freckles may not have had any effect on Sherlock Holmes, her neatness of dress, so much like his own, and her brisk manner, also equally Holmes-like, visibly impressed the detective. He actually starts to think of her as a sister, which is about as close to relating to a woman as Holmes comes in the Canon.

**Candidate #14.** - Edith Baxter from "Silver Blaze." This curry-serving maid from King's Pyland is something of a mystery woman, especially when it comes to her contact with Sherlock Holmes. Holmes says, "I have a question which I should like to put to the maid," then disappears for a short period of time. Even Watson, who usually accompanied Holmes everywhere, didn't get to accompany Holmes when he left the room to see her. Did the question Holmes put to her have anything to do with the case, or was she someone Holmes

was interested in seeing outside of his investigation?

**Candidate #15.** - Effie Munro from "Yellow Face." Everyone always remembers Irene Adler for her besting of Holmes, but what of Effie Munro? Her simple deception and yellow mask gave him a lot more trouble than Irene did. Sure, we know little of her appearance besides the fact her bosom was big enough to store a large silver locket, but what was appearance to Holmes? She also comes with a daughter, but Holmes had a definite way with children: give them a shilling and send them out on the streets to look for something. He'd do just fine with Effie and her daughter.

**Candidate #16.** - Miss Trevor from "Gloria Scott." Even though Victor Trevor's sister "died of diphtheria while on a visit to Birmingham," that's no reason to exclude her from our list of possible brides for Holmes. A youthful, short-lived marriage might be just the thing for him, allowing him the joys of matrimony yet at the same time leaving him free to pursue his career after her death.

**Candidate #17.** - Rachel Howells from "Musgrave Ritual." If there's one thing you can say about this maid from Hurlstone Manor, it's she's literally crazy about smart guys. A good girl with an excitable Welsh temper, Rachel would be as devoted to Holmes as any woman possibly could be. He might have to put away the big butcher knives if he knew he was going to be away long on a case, but as far as the honeymoon goes, psychos are supposed to make great lovers.

**Candidate #18.** - Annie Morrison from "Reigate Squires." Another mystery woman, but she seems to be able to deal with multiple men at once -- a trait very handy in handling the Holmes and Watson partnership on an ongoing basis.

**Candidate #19.** - Miss Morrison from "Crooked Man." This timid-eyed blonde had some smarts and the same briskness that Holmes seemed to like so much in Violet Hunter. She's as loyal a friend as Watson, and her physical aspect seems almost like a sister to Mary Morstan (Morstan = Morrison? Could this young lady be Holmes's way of making up for the woman he lost to Watson?).

**Candidate #20.** - Sophy Kratides from "Greek Interpreter." This tall and graceful black-haired beauty would make the perfect pairing for the detective Holmes. He could find who the criminal was on a case, she could track them down and serve justice at the end of a sharp knife, just like she did at the end of "Greek Interpreter." No need to wonder if the storm got Captain Calhoun in "Five Orange Pips," just send Mrs. Holmes after him. No need for Holmes to wait for Colonel Moran to expose himself after Moriarty's death so he could return to London again, just send Sophy in to clean things up. And if she wound up in prison, at least Holmes would know where she was nights.

**Candidate #21.** - Annie Harrison of "Naval Treaty." This striking-looking woman was a little too short and thick for Watson's symmetrical taste, but her beautiful olive complexion, large, dark, Italian eyes, and wealth of deep black hair seemed to make up for that. Her best quality as a bride for Sherlock Holmes would appear to be her skill at nursing sick fiancés. Since Holmes was always working himself to the point of collapse, a wife who could help him on the road to recovery would be a terrific benefit. And Annie Harrison could definitely have been that wife.

**Candidates #22 & #23.** - Edith Woodley and Hilda Adair of "Empty House." Both these girls are of the best London society, the latter the daughter of the Earl of Maynooth,

former governor of one of the Australian colonies. I don't mean to imply society girls are interchangeable, but I'm sure a marriage to either of these ladies would do no harm to Holmes's social standing.

**Candidate #24.** - Mother McFarlane of "Norwood Builder." So far it seems like we've been concentrating on younger ladies for Holmes, but what about a more mature, experienced woman. This little, blue-eyed woman has the distinction of being the only woman Holmes ever called "fluffy" - a sure sign of affection if ever I heard it. She's a good woman, who won't stand for loosing cats in aviaries, and is steadfastly loyal to jailed family members. Holmes could certainly do a lot worse.

**Candidate #25.** - Elsie Patrick Cubitt of "Dancing Men." Sure, she wasn't good enough with a pistol to shoot herself effectively in the head. But Elsie's knowledge of Chicago gangs could be an invaluable resource to Holmes, especially during his "Last Bow" undercover work. As his wife, Elsie could even accompany him back to Chicago and ensure his successful entry into the Irish gangs. A special guy like Holmes might also help her finally get over the horrible death of her husband, the late Hilton.

**Candidate #26.** - Violet Smith of "Solitary Cyclist." Tall, graceful, queenly, and beautiful, this wealthy heiress is also musical, athletic, and cares for children. If you were picking out a spouse for your own child, could you pick a better wife than this Violet? She's our Canonical Consumer Reports best buy for this presentation.

**Candidate #27.** - Mrs. Hayes of "Priory School." Kindly and a good baby-sitter, this woman had such a brutal first husband that she'd think Sherlock Holmes, with all his eccentricities, was a real peach. She also knows something about running

an inn, in case Holmes really did want to start up an inn called "The Dangling Prussian" in his retirement years. His comment to Von Bork about said inn in "His Last Bow" may have been more than clever banter, and Mrs. Hayes would be perfect at helping him fulfill his dream.

**Candidate #28.** - Agatha the maid from "Charles Augustus Milverton." This lusty little man-chaser can claim one thing no other woman in the Canon can: first dibs. Holmes did actually propose to her under the guise of Escott the plumber, and should be made to take full responsibility for his actions. Marriage is often a learning experience, and marrying Holmes to Agatha would certainly teach him a lesson.

**Candidate #29.** - The Courtly Lady Assassin from "Charles Augustus Milverton." This regal and stately lady had a delicately curved nose, a strong little chin, and a witness that saw her kill Charles Augustus Milverton. That witness was Sherlock Holmes, and by marrying him they could secure each other's secrecy about their mutual crimes the night of Milverton's death. Besides all this, the lady assassin is a classier version of Sophy Kratides, really, a wife who could finish off criminals for Holmes once he had found them out.

**Candidate #30.** - Anna Coram from "Golden Pince-nez." While not the prettiest gal on the list, Anna Coram does have one distinct feature you may want to consider: she was the kind of wife a man could shut in the closet when he didn't need her. Of course, one still has to let her out now and then, lest she jump out at the worst possible time and blurt out your worst secret.

**Candidate #31.** - Lady Eva Brackenstall from "Abbey Grange." Golden-haired, blue-eyed, with a graceful figure, Lady Eva had already tolerated a husband with eccentricities that made Holmes

look fairly normal. Setting fire to dogs and throwing decanters at the help were at least two things that never happened at 221B Baker Street. She's good at hiding things from Scotland Yard and knows enough about crime to implicate an active gang of burglars - both these qualities are things Sherlock Holmes would really like in a woman, I'm sure.

**Candidate #32.** - Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope from "Second Stain." Any wife of Holmes needs a good head on her shoulders and the youngest daughter of the Duke of Belminster has what Watson calls an "exquisite head." She can charm a constable into leaving a crime scene, but has the humility to drop to her knees before Sherlock Holmes, hold out her arms, and beg for his mercy. Men ... has your wife ever dropped to her knees, held out her arms, and begged for anything? I think this lady is an ideal candidate for Mrs. Holmes.

**Candidate #33.** - Beryl Garcia Stapleton of The Hound of the Baskervilles. Slim, elegant, and tall, this dark-haired, dark-eyed beauty would have surely been Miss Costa Rica if they held beauty pageants in those days. Obviously not too good with children, as a whole school full of them got sick while under her care, she probably has some aptitude at pet care.

**Candidate #34.** - Ivy Douglas from The Valley of Fear. Tall, dark, and slender, like half the women in the Canon, Ivy Douglas was popular with those who met her, yet did not really seek out social encounters. A charming recluse like Ivy would seem the perfect match for Sherlock Holmes's social proclivities, and after her husband died at Moriarty's order, she is sure to have a special fondness for the man who took revenge on the professor for her.

**Candidate #35.** - Signora Victor Durando from "Wisteria Lodge." This

gray-eyed lady fell into Holmes's life drugged and emaciated (reminding one of a modern fashion model), but she is one of the Canon's many undercover agents. A wife with skill at undercover work and a fierce devotion to justice might be just what the detective ordered ... and if anyone could help her deal with skinniness and drug addiction, Holmes definitely could.

**Candidate #36.** - The Cushing Sisters from "Cardboard Box." Here we have a nice selection of candidates all in one family; something for everyone, so to speak. Susan, the oldest of the sisters, is a good woman. Mary, the youngest, is an angel. And Sarah, the middle sister, is the devil of the three. The Cushings are the only two-for-one bargain in the Canon -- marrying Mary, Holmes could also get Sarah as an over-affectionate live-in. -Sure, it didn't work out for Jim Browner, but Sherlock Holmes is an exceptional fellow.

**Candidate #37.** - Emilia Lucca from "Red Circle." While we're on the subject of Canonical bargain wives, here's one you can't easily pass up. This tall beauty has few demands. Other than food, soap, matches, and the Daily Gazette are all she seems to need for her continued existence. She's also happier to be at a murder scene than any other woman in the Canon, which could be a big plus for Holmes.

**Candidate #38.** - Violet Westbury from "Bruce-Partington Plans." Her name is Violet, which is about the most interesting thing you can say about this girl. Of course, a nice, bland wife might also suit Holmes.

**Candidate #39.** - Mrs. Hudson from "Dying Detective" and everywhere else. In looking for a woman to put up with Holmes's quirks, let's not overlook the woman who had already put up with Holmes's quirks. Of course, why would Holmes need to marry a woman

who was already cooking and cleaning for him without the bonds of matrimony?

**Candidate #40.** - Lady Frances Carfax from "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax." Holmes said, "One of the most dangerous classes in the world is the drifting and friendless woman," and apparently this one was so dangerous she needed to be kept in a box. A marriage to Holmes would keep Lady Frances off the streets and out of trouble. What it would do for Holmes, however, is hard to say.

**Candidate #41.** - Brenda Tregenis of "Devil's Foot." She likes to play cards. She likes to date her cousin. Sure, she's attractive, but so's almost every other woman in the Canon. The best thing I think we can say about a match between Brenda and Holmes is that it would help the gene pool of Cornwall tremendously just by keeping her away from her cousin.

**Candidate #42.** - Martha from "His Last Bow." She personifies Britannia. She's good at undercover work. She likes cats. And when we last see her, she's planning to meet Holmes at a hotel. Personally, I think this lady has a lot going for her.

**Candidate #43.** - Kitty Winter from "Illustrious Client." This hellcat is the only woman in the Canon Holmes takes on anything close to a date. Of course, you have to realize that Holmes's idea of a date is hiding in the bushes waiting to sneak into a house. They get along pretty well, and we know that after her time with Gruner there's nothing Holmes could come up with on their honeymoon to surprise Kitty. Blood tests would be a definite must, however, prior to this particular match-up.

**Candidate #44.** - Violet De Merville from "Illustrious Client." As Miss De Merville was "a wonder woman in every way," we have to wonder what the British version of a Wonder Woman costume looked like.

And since Holmes was the Victorian Superman, this match-up would have to be a comic book reader's dream date.

**Candidate #45.** - Susan Stockdale from "Three Gables." Sure, this big, awkward chicken of a woman is lousy at sneaking around and listening to people. But Holmes shows some concern for her when he prescribes "paregoric" for her wheeziness. And caring is what a good relationship is all about, isn't it?

**Candidate #46.** - Mrs. Ferguson from "Sussex Vampire." I hate to say it, but I must: this candidate sucks. She can't handle teenagers, she needs the constant care of a her own personal servant, and she's very uncommunicative. But maybe I'm missing something...

**Candidate #47.** - Grace Dunbar from "Thor Bridge." This tall, noble brunette gets color in her cheeks and lights in her eyes when she sees Holmes. She seems to radiate goodness like some saintly visage, so much so that most men seem apt to let her off of a murder charge just by looking at her. Would Saint Grace be the woman to light up Holmes's life? You be the judge.

**Candidate #48.** - Alice Morphy from "Creeping Man." A perfect girl in mind and body, I'm sure this girl would benefit from someone as far opposite her lower primate ex-boyfriend as she could get. And as Sherlock Holmes is perhaps one of the most advanced primates on the planet, she surely couldn't do any better.

**Candidate #49.** - Maud Bellamy from "Lion's Mane." I could go on for hours about this young lady, and in the past, I have. If Holmes were going to marry anyone from the downs of Sussex, this would be the lady. Holmes himself admits that Maud's charm cuts right through his

usual lack of interest in women. She has a strong character, and is one of the only women ever to offer to help Holmes bring criminals to justice. Holmes called her a most complete and remarkable woman - and almost seems to regret their difference in ages. In my view, Maud is the best candidate on this whole list ... but then, that's just me.

**Candidate #50.** - Eugenia Ronder of "Veiled Lodger." Okay, "Phantom of the Opera" fans, here's your candidate. A member of the entertainment industry, scarred by a horrible accident and forced to go into hiding, yet still possessing some charm and beauty, even wearing a mask. All she needs is an Andrew Lloyd Weber soundtrack and she's the perfect romantic figure.

**Candidate #51.** - Lady Beatrice Falder of "Shoscombe Old Place." Here's a bride that comes with a guarantee - should anything happen to her, her brother will put on a dress and take her place. Another bargain bride if ever there was one.

**Candidate #52.** - Mrs. Amberley of "Retired Colourman." Here's a woman who falls short from the start. She has a marked weakness for illicit affairs with charming doctors, and with Watson so close at hand, she probably would not make a good wife for Holmes. But here she is.

Those were the choices.

Once the list of candidates was complete, the participants were asked to write the name and number of their choice on the post-it note ballot. The judges collected the ballots then tallied the votes. As they did, the participants were filled in on the wedding that would be arranged for Sherlock and his bride in this arranged marriage.

If the votes indicated a bride of some social standing, a quiet ceremony at St. George's in Hanover

Square would be in order. As St. George's was good enough for Lord Robert St. Simon and his rich American bride, I don't think any society lady would have qualms about being married there. There's plenty of space, and always a seat in the front pew for any current husbands of the bride.

If a more considerate bride was to be chosen, I'm sure Holmes would favor a very basic ceremony at the Church of St. Monica in the Edgeware Road. The clergyman there is very strict about details, but happy to perform even a ceremony so small it involves just the couple and one witness. Holmes will probably invite his brother Mycroft, Dr. and Mrs. Watson, and if he's feeling very social, Mrs. Hudson and G. Lestrade. As for the bride's family, well, that matter was in the voters' hands.

The votes were finally tallied, and the results were as follows:

First choice: Violet Smith of "The Solitary Cyclist."

Second choice: Maud Bellamy of "The Lion's Mane."

And trailing a somewhat distant third: Irene Adler from "A Scandal in Bohemia."

Is this a demonstration of public dissatisfaction with Sherlockiana's traditional mate for Holmes? Or is it the display of that old double standard: there are girls you run around with, and girls you marry? Plainly, Violet Smith scores a lot higher in the latter category than Irene, who was something of a lady with a past. In any case, the bride of Sherlock experiment confirms one thing. When you start digging into the life and times of Sherlock Holmes, you never know what answers you'll come up with.

# STORY INFO PAGES FOR "THE RETIRED COLOURMAN"

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

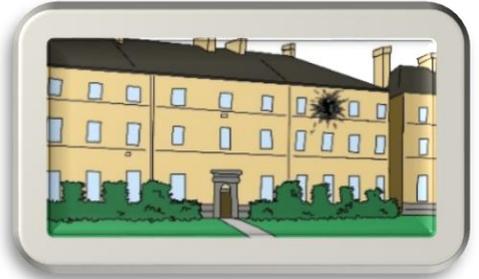
- First published in: Liberty, December 18, 1926
- Time frame of story (known/surmised): July/August 1898. (It was an affair in which would be the eager debate of all England.)
- Holmes & Watson living arrangements: Not stated. At the beginning of the story Holmes and Watson are together at 221B but is unclear if Watson is residing there or just calling.
- Opening scene: Watson observes client departing from 221B. Discusses case with Holmes, and Holmes sends Watson to investigate at client's house, called The Haven.
- Client: Josiah Amberley, a pathetic, futile, broken creature, who had few outward graces. He was like some penurious patrician who has sunk into the company of his inferiors.
- Crime or concern: Disappearance of wife (20 years younger) and chess-playing friend of client, with some seven thousand pounds' worth of cash and securities.
- Villain: The client turned out to have murdered his wife and her friend/lover.
- Motive: Jealousy
- Logic used to solve: Use of paint indicated covering up smell of gas. Holmes-green-paint-can sent client and Watson on a trip to get them out of town so he could burgle premises.
- Policemen: McKinnon, a smart young police Inspector and good fellow.
- Holmes' fees: No mention, but since the client was shown to be the criminal, it is unlikely Holmes got paid. Possibly he had an arrangement with the police, which could account for his allowing them credit for solving the case.
- Transport: Watson set forth for Lewisham and returned to Baker St. late that evening. Mode of transport unspecified.

Watson and client took the 5:20 from Liverpool Street to Little Purlington (on a branch line), and then a two mile drive to the vicarage. It was not a pleasant trip for the weather was hot. Then they took the train back to London the next morning.
- Food: The morning following some toast crumbs and two empty eggshells provided evidence that Holmes had risen and left early.
- Drink/vices: None mentioned
- Other cases mentioned: The case of the two Coptic patriarchs, which was coming to a head.
- Notable Quotables: "Cut out the poetry, Watson," - SH  
"You have missed everything of importance, yet even those things which have obtruded themselves upon your notice give rise to serious thought." - SH  
"With your natural advantages, Watson, every lady is your helper and accomplice." - SH  
"What did you do with the bodies?" - SH  
"Pooh! What an awful smell of paint!" - Insp. McKinnon
- Other interestings: We at McMurdo's Camp note there are similarities between this case and that of Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen, who murdered his troublesome wife in 1910, fled with his lover, and was captured by the use of wireless telegraphy and a trans-Atlantic chase by ocean liner, a case which was the eager debate of all England.

When all is said and done: Holmes backed away and allowed the police, who discovered of the bodies in a disused well, cleverly concealed by a dog-kennel, to take credit for the solution.

# Baker Street Elementary

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



Baker Street Elementary  
Number 140 - 12/10/2017

Fig. Mason & Mason

## POINTS TO PONDER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*IF YOU DON'T WANT CLOTHES FROM CHRISTMAS, REMIND YOUR PARENTS YOU STILL BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS...*



## POINTS TO PONDER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*SO, IF SNOWMEN ARE MAKE OF WATER, AND WATER HAS NO CALORIES, WHY DO WE BUILD FAT SNOWMEN ?*

Copyright 2017, Fig. Mason, Mason



## POINTS TO PONDER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*AND, IF SNOWMEN HAVE CARROTS FOR NOSES, DOES CARROT CAKE TASTE LIKE BOOGERS ?*

