

# The Bilge Pump

Vol. 07, No. 03 - March, 2019

*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star - founded April, 1970*



## PLEASE NOTE:

### April 07 Meeting NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, April 07, at 1:00 pm. At TWO GUYS FROM ITALY, in Dallas.

The restaurant is at 11637 Webb Chapel Road, Dallas, just south of LBJ Freeway

We will be reading "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane."

The quiz will cover this tale.

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

## March 03 Summary

There were 12 in attendance at the meeting. Steve Mason opened the meeting with a toast to the Victorian times, authored by Paula Cohen (page 3).

The Crew then took a quiz on "The Creeping Man," which was won by Ann Caddell.

We then had a discussion on the story, including the use of dogs in detective fiction, including the similarities between dogs and their owners, both emotional and physical.

Angela Rusk then provided us a presentation on 3-D printing and the uses for it in the current Sherlockian world. She has been able to produce some Sherlockian items, including key rings, that she provided to all attendees.

Steve closed the meeting with a reading from the Winter 2007 Baker Street Journal, "May You Live to 120 More" (page 4).

Thanks to Brenda Hutchison, who took the minutes (full minutes can be found on our website).



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

Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison

Steve Mason  
Walter Pieper  
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[myrkrid08@yahoo.com](mailto:myrkrid08@yahoo.com)

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

Our Facebook Page:

The image is a composite of two digital interfaces. The top portion shows a website for 'THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR'. It features a circular logo with a star and a silhouette of a person. A navigation menu on the left includes: Home Page, About, Crew Investitures and Awards, Newsletters, Crew Meeting Logs, & Society Pastiches, Papers, Many Faces of Sherlock Holmes, and Ephemera -- General. A search bar is located in the top right. The main content area displays an illustration of a building labeled 'Baker Street Elementary' with a spiderweb graphic. Below the illustration is the text 'THE MAY MEETING'. The background of the website is a textured, parchment-like surface with various quotes in a cursive font, such as 'That will await him when he enters port...' and 'And who is this Captain Calhoun?'. The bottom portion of the image shows a Facebook page for 'The Crew of the Barque Lone Star' (@BarqueLoneStar). The page has a cover photo with the text 'A SHERLOCK HOLMES LITERARY SOCIETY Monthly meetings every 1st Sunday @ 1pm La Madeleine Country French Café' and a silhouette of a man's profile. The page includes a navigation menu on the left, a 'Write something...' text box, and a 'Page Tips' section on the right. A notification banner at the top of the Facebook page reads 'You Have Unread Messages'.

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

# A PERENNIAL TOAST

Paula Cohen, *The Serpentine Muse*, Volume 6, Number 2 - Spring, 1982



Here's to high lace collars and cameo pins,

satin gowns and upswept hair, hansom carriages and gas-lit rooms.



Here's to etched glass door panes and a fire in the grate, a calling-card on the table and brandy in a snifter, slippers on the

fender and a pipe in the ashtray.



And, above all, here's to downcast eyes, a well-turned ankle... and a maid to pick up your clothes the morning

after. Ladies and gentlemen...

the Victorian Age!

# "MAY YOU LIVE TO 120 MORE" (EXTRACT)

Steven Rothman, Editor, BSJ, Winter, 2007, Vol 57, No. 4

This season marks another milestone in the career of Sherlock Holmes. It was 120 years ago that he made his first appearance in Beeton's Christmas Annual.

Such a stretch is the biblical shorthand for a very, very great age; Moses reached 120 before being told that his time leading the Israelites was at an end.

There is now not a single person on the planet who lived in a time when the world knew not Sherlock Holmes.

And we, those who have accepted the true Sherlockian truths, have been carefully muddying the reality of the situation for most of that time.

Because of our zeal in playing the Game, thousands, maybe millions are unsure of the truth of Holmes's existence.

Considering our small budgets and staffing, Sherlockians must be considered to be

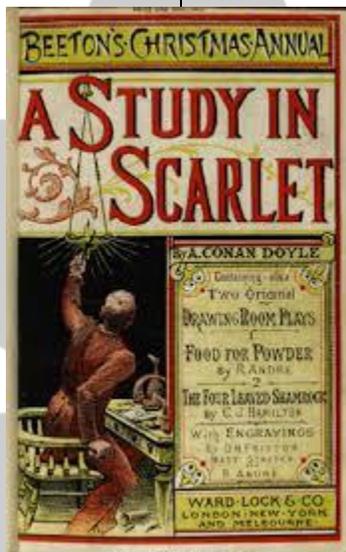
responsible for one of the most successful propaganda machines of all time.

We have remade the way the world thinks about a (shh!) literary character. No one, not the struggling Portsmouth physician nor his publishers, could have foreseen that in their grandchildren's grandchildren's time (easy enough in itself to imagine) this, let's be honest, fairly derivative detective would have managed to clamber off of

the page and into the minds and souls of the whole world.

He benefited from the luck of becoming an established character just as the movies began, with their endless hunger for characters and plots. Holmes quickly leapt from page to stage to screen to every other medium that has come along.

And we are the ultimate beneficiary of all of that..

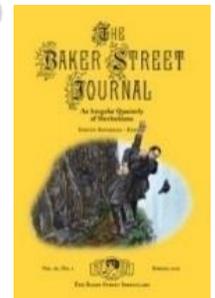


Courtesy of Sotheby's (R20)

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.



# SEVENTEEN STEPS TO "Lion's Mane"

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

Seventeen thoughts for further ponderance of "The Creeping Man" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.



## WATCH ME PULL A LION'S MANE OUT OF MY HAT!

"It is a most singular thing that a problem which was certainly as abstruse and unusual as any which I have faced in my long professional career should have come to me after my retirement," Holmes writes at the beginning of the case, then bemoaning Watson's absence with, "Ah! had he but been with me, how much he might have made of so wonderful a happening and of my eventual triumph against every difficulty!"

Once again we find Holmes reporting a case of something outside the criminal realm being viewed as a criminal occurrence, and once again Holmes is giving it much hooplah at the story's start.

Was the detective knowingly exaggerating his excitement, just to

try to make up for Watson's missing enthusiasm?

Might he be mocking Watson a bit in that last part of his statment?

Or had Holmes simply become so jaded with the criminal that only non-criminal cases that seemed at first to be crime-based were the only ones that surprised him?

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## TROUBLE IN PARTNERSHIP PARADISE?

Holmes writes, "I had given myself up entirely to that soothing life of Nature for which I had so often yearned during the long years spent amid the gloom of London. At this period of my life the good Watson had passed almost beyond my ken."

Does the "gloom of London" refer to the infamous atmosphere of the city itself, or a state of mind that pervaded Holmes's time there?

Followed so quickly by a mention of Watson's "passing" from his life, is there a slight implication that the partnership was partly responsible for that gloom toward the end?

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## THE GOOD DOCTOR'S EXCUSE FOR NOT VISITING

Holmes then says of Watson, "An occasional week-end visit was the most that I ever saw of him."

Given the fact that Watson always seems to be the one who

controlled how much or how little he saw of Holmes, what was keeping Watson away from Holmes at this point?

A wife who was less sympathetic toward Holmes than Mary Morstan?

Did children enter the picture?

Or was Watson just a Londoner who didn't care to spend that much time in the country?

\*\*\*\*\*

## A MAN'S HOME IS HIS FORTRESS

"My villa is situated upon the southern slope of the downs, commanding a great view of the Channel. At this point the coast-line is entirely of chalk cliffs, which can only be descended by a single, long, tortuous path, which is steep and slippery."

Would Holmes have selected such a location for its defensive qualities as much as its scenic view, with so many criminals who would love to have their revenge upon him?

How relatively expensive would such seaside real estate have been?

\*\*\*\*\*

## HOLMES'S FRIEND IN SUSSEX

"Stackhurst himself was a well-known rowing Blue in his day, and an excellent all-round scholar. He and I were always friendly from the day I came to the coast, and he was the one man who was on such terms with me that we could

drop in on each other in the evenings without an invitation.”

What sorts of things might have caused the two men to hit it off so well from day one?

What has caused Holmes to change from the man who didn't encourage visitors or care for socializing to the sort of fellow who didn't mind a neighbor dropping in unannounced?

\*\*\*\*\*



### **SOMETHING NOT ON WATSON'S FAMOUS LIST**

“Summer and winter he went for his swim, and, as I am a swimmer myself, I have often joined him.”

Holmes calls himself a swimmer, but one would think his years in London gave him little opportunity to exercise that skill for decades.

Was there any place a urbanite in the heart of London could go for a pleasant swim in the 1880s and 1890s without leaving town?

Or was this just a childhood recreation that Holmes reacquainted himself with after retirement?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **ANOTHER SUSPICIOUS MATHEMATICS COACH**

Ian Murdoch “seemed to live in some high, abstract region of surds and conic sections, with little to connect him with ordinary life.”

What might Murdoch have been doing in that high, abstract region?

What sort of adventures and explorations might one have among the surds and conic sections of higher mathematical planes?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **THE MATHEMATICS OF DOG VERSUS WINDOW**

“On one occasion, being plagued by a little dog belonging to McPherson, he had caught the creature up and hurled it through the plate-glass window.”

“Plate glass,” as used in large picture windows, tends to be a thicker glass, does it not?

Birds often thump into such windows, thinking it open air, without breaking them.

How big would a dog have to be to go all the way through a plate glass window?

Could a chihuahua be thrown by the average scholar at a force that would break through plate glass?

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### **THE LAW IN FULWORTH . . . AT LEAST UNTIL THE BOSS SHOWS UP**

Anderson, the village constable, admits “This is a big thing for me to handle, and I'll hear of it from Lewes if I go wrong.”

Holmes then tells him to send for his superior, whom one would assume was from the

forementioned Lewes. What sort of hierarchy did the village constable serve under at that time?

Did he take orders from a central headquarters in the next larger town, such as a county seat?

How much authority did he have on his own?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY**

When Holmes asks why none of the students were swimming with MacPherson, Stackhurst says, “Ian Murdoch held them back,” said he. He would insist upon some algebraic demonstration before breakfast.”

Before breakfast? Was this a school or a boot camp?

What was the structure of a coaching establishment that a teacher could just show up at any given moment and demand a performance?

\*\*\*\*\*

### **HOLMES LIVES NEXT TO A TOURIST TRAP?**

We are told Fulworth is an “old-fashioned hamlet” with “several modern houses” on the outskirts, all curving around a bay.

Yet we also learn that Tom Bellamy “owns all the boats and bathing-cots at Fulworth,” which sounds like the little village does a business in swimming and boating tourists.

How lonely is Holmes's place if it's only a pleasant (and thyme-scented) walk from a tourist beach?

\*\*\*\*\*

**AND THEN THERE'S MAUD . . .**

"There was no gainsaying that she would have graced any assembly in the world. Who could have imagined that so rare a flower would grow from such a root and in such an atmosphere? Women have seldom been an attraction to me, for my brain has always governed my heart, but I could not look upon her perfect clear-cut face, with all the soft freshness of the downlands in her delicate colouring, without realizing that no young man would cross her path unscathed. Such was the girl who had pushed open the door . . ."

We've heard Watson describe a lot of women in his time.

He's great at describing their fashions, their figures, their carriage, and every little detail he can delicately divulge.

But when it's Holmes's turn, how does the great detective do it?

He describes the pretty lady in terms of his reaction to her, and by extension, other men's reactions to her.

Why this difference between the doctor and the detective?

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**A WEEK IN JULY WITHOUT A SWIM?**

A week passes after Fitzroy MacPherson's death, and yet no one goes to the bathing pool with the dangerous visitor in it?

Usually, it seems both the students and Holmes swam in the pool.

As they all thought MacPherson had been whipped by an unknown person with a grudge against him, why wouldn't anyone have encountered MacPherson's killer while swimming in the interim?

\*\*\*\*\*



**THE LAW IN SUSSEX, PART TWO**

Inspector Bardle of the Sussex Constabulary shows up a week after the murder is done, convinced he must arrest somebody just to arrest somebody, it seems.

Would Bardle have been occupied in some other part of Sussex, and just getting down to Fulworth at last?

Would he have come from Lewes, the seat of the village constable's higher-up, or elsewhere?

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**HOLMES'S DRUG-FREE DWELLING**

"For God's sake, oil, opium, morphia!"

Ian Murdoch cries out in agony after the attack of the tale's villain.

Holmes meets this request with cotton soaked in salad oil, along with Watson's standard cure-all, brandy.

Would we expect Holmes to stock anything more potent at this point in his life, or has he gone so drug-free he doesn't even have any leftovers currently in his home?

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**MURDOCH'S RECOVERY FROM THE POISON**

The venom of Cyanea Capillata is enough to kill a weaker man, and, indeed, causes Ian Murdoch to pass out from the pain.

Yet he is up and walking out arm-in-arm with Harold Stackhurst in a period of time that seems nearly under an hour.

Was this to be expected?

How long should a victim of Cyanea be down for?

\*\*\*\*\*

**NOT THE HANDIEST PLACE FOR A REFERENCE BOOK**

"There is a great garret in my little house which is stuffed with books," Holmes writes, going on to say that is where he retrieves his copy of J. G. Wood's Out of Doors from.

As Holmes retired to enjoy the "soothing life of Nature," why wouldn't he keep his nature books in a little handier place?

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# THE MANY AGRA TREASURES

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

The origins of *The Sign of the Four* are rooted in the ancient Indian city of Agra. For Jonathan Small, however, the time he spent in Agra's fort marked the beginning of a thirty-one-year quest for the treasure he first laid hands on during the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

Agra the city, originally called Agrevana, was mentioned in the epic Sanskrit poem

The Mahabharata, written about 400 BC. The fort itself, however, was originally built by Raja Badal Singh, a Rajput king.

In 1504, Sikandar Khan Lodi, an Afghan ruler, rebuilt both the fort and the city and moved his capital there.

After his son, Ibrahim Khan Lodi, was defeated by the Mughals (the Indian spelling of Mongol) in 1526, Babur, the first Mughal emperor, reconstructed the fort.

Four thousand workers completed the red sandstone structure in eight years.

After the Mughal ruler Shah Jahan moved his capital to Delhi in 1648, Agra remained a thriving city and passed to Marathas (an Indian power that ended Mughal domination) control in 1785.

They renamed the city "Agra" and ruled there until defeated in 1803 by the British.

Under the English, the city became the capital for the Northwest Provinces. (1)

The fort's 70-foot high walls encompass 94 acres and follow the Yamuna River on one side.

Within its walls, various rulers added to the buildings housed there.

One of the earliest palaces, Akbai Mahal, is now in ruins, but others still stand, including the Jahangiri

Mahal (built between 1565 and 1569); the Sheesh Mahal (built in 1631) named the "glass palace" for its mirrors on the walls and ceilings; and the white marble Khas Mahal (built between 1631 and 1640).

The fort also holds three mosques.

The Moti and Nagina Masjid are both of white marble.

The third, the Mina mosque, also has marble tiles but has a simpler design because it was built for the royal ladies' private worship.

Two halls, one for public and another for private audiences, were also constructed inside the fort. (2)

As Jonathan Small noted, the city and fort became one of the centers of the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

In *The Sign of the Four*, Small recounted how the fort had a modern area, which housed those seeking shelter from the rebels, as well as an older, abandoned section, taken over by "scorpions and centipedes."

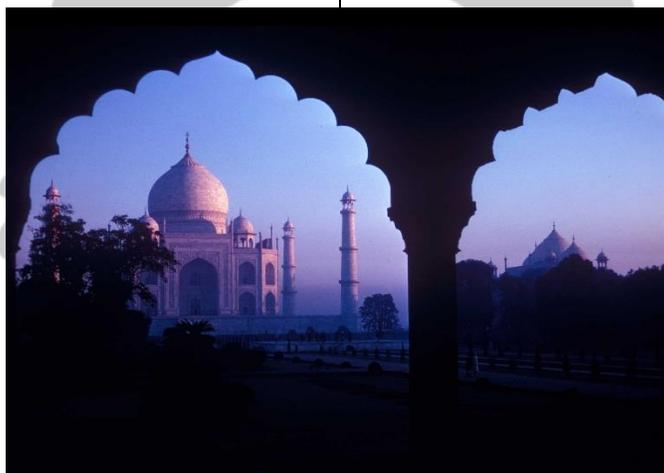
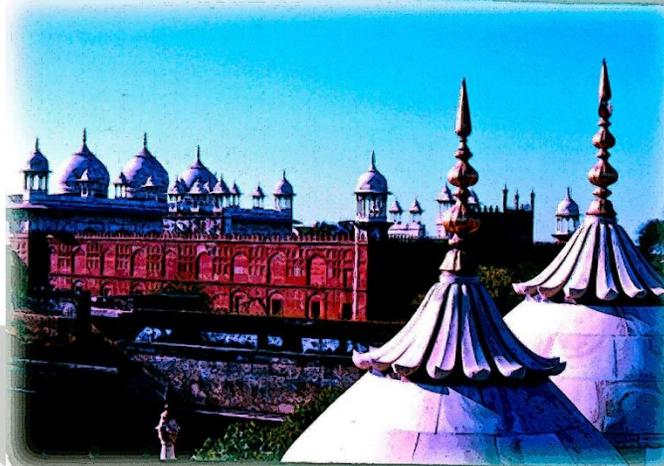
He also shared how the fort's numerous gates had to be guarded and defended, and he had been assigned one of those in the old section.

An account of the battles around Agra written in 1892 described how 6000 Europeans took shelter in the fort during the Mutiny after British military and civil officers determined that all "Christians" should be housed there.

These refugees included French nuns, Italian priests, missionaries from Ohio,

Parisian acrobats and American salesmen. (3)

The rebels made various attempts throughout the summer to attack the fort until the fall when seasoned



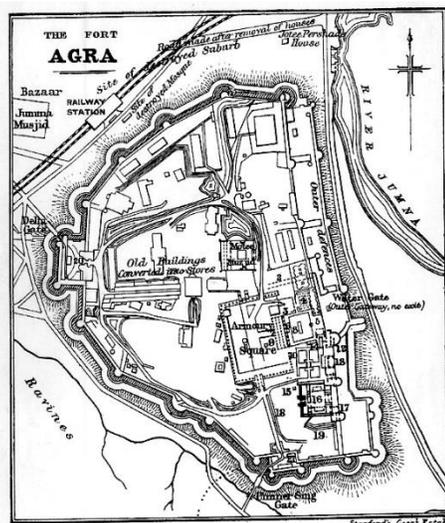
British, Sikh and Punjabi troops arrived and routed the rebels in a final attack on October 10. (4)

After the Mutiny, the capital of the Northwest Provinces was moved to Allahabad, and Agra declined. (5)

While Jonathan Small's account of his time in Agra focused on the fort, the city actually held many famous structures.

Perhaps the most well-known was the Taj Mahal, a tomb built by Shah Jahan for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

He also built the pearl-marble mosque, the Moti Masjid mentioned above, as a final



1. Northern Tower.
2. Descent to Water Gate.
3. Nagina Masjid and ladies' private Bazaar.
4. Small Courts and ruins of Baths.
5. Open Terrace with Diwan-i-Khas on S. side.
6. Recess where the Emperor's Throne stood.
7. Diwan-i-Am (Hall of Public Audience).
8. Machhi Bhawan.
9. Mr. Colvin's Grave.
10. The Marble Baths of the Princesses.
11. The Anguri Bagh (Grape Garden).
12. Saman Buj (Jasmine Tower) (at N. angle is an outlet by secret passage).
13. Khas Mahal.
14. Shah Mahal (Mirror Palace).
15. Well.
16. Palace of Jehangir (or Akbar).
17. Tower. At the base is an entrance to a secret passage.
18. Incline from Ummar Singh's Gate.
19. Ruins of Palace of Akbar.
20. Elephant Gate.
21. Court of Ummar Singh's Gate.

project before he moved the capital from Agra to Delhi. (6)

Currently, between 7 and 8 million tourists travel to Agra (7) each year, but even in Jonathan Small's day, the city attracted visitors.

Several guides and diaries written by and for those traveling to India were published in the late 19th century.

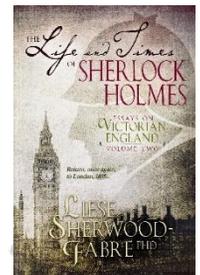
Of particular note was the John Murray series of Handbooks for Travellers.

The earliest one about India was published in 1859 and a second, published in 1911, contains a map of the Agra fort. (8)

While for Small the only Agra treasure was an iron box full of diamonds, rubies, and pearls, the city held and still holds a number of riches available for all to enjoy..

*The images of the Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal are courtesy of my friend Richard Schmidt taken during his time in India. If you'd like to see more of his photos, you can check them out at <https://observedart.blogspot.com>.*

- (1) Louis Nicholson, Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Hong Kong: The Guidebook Company, Ltd., 1996, page 17.
- (2) [https://www.tutorialspoint.com/agra\\_fort/agra\\_fort\\_quick\\_guide.htm](https://www.tutorialspoint.com/agra_fort/agra_fort_quick_guide.htm)
- (3) Satya Chandra Mukerji, The Traveller's Guide to Agra, Delhi: Sen & Co., 1892, page 48.
- (4) Op cit, page 49.
- (5) Op cit, page 50.
- (6) Nicholson, page 18.
- (7) [https://www.tajmahal.gov.in/taj\\_visitors.html](https://www.tajmahal.gov.in/taj_visitors.html)
- (8) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray%27s\\_Handbooks\\_for\\_Travellers#1830s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray%27s_Handbooks_for_Travellers#1830s)



You can check out more of Liese Sherwood-Fabre's writings at [www.liesesherwoodfabre.com](http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com).

*Dr. Sherwood-Fabre's book "The Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes - Volume 2" includes this and other essays on Victorian England and is now available on Amazon.*

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>

# CANON QUEERIES - THE LION'S MANE

RALPH EDWARDS, BSI 2s

Ralph Edwards was secretary of The Six Napoleons of Baltimore, responsible for sending meeting notices.

In 1972, he began attaching a set of questions to serve as stimulus for discussion at the meetings. This practice was continued by the other Baltimore scion society, The Carlton Club, which Ralph formed in 1976.

Thanks to Les Moskowitz [Les221b@comcast.net](mailto:Les221b@comcast.net), for making these available.

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1. What adjectives are used in the Canon, like singular, abstruse and unusual?
  2. Was it a little home or an estate villa?
  3. Did the yearning come from a country boyhood?
  4. Did Watson insinuate that London was gloomy?
  5. Did Watson share the yearning for a country life?
  6. Did Holmes ever visit Watson?
  7. In what ways would Watson have been a better chronicler?
  8. Would the pools be good for swimming at high tide?
  9. Is this location suitable for bee-keeping?
  10. Are coaching establishments peculiar to England?
  11. Would the students have been college educated?
  12. Did country living change Holmes's personality?
  13. Was Holmes, in his career, usually a late or early riser?
  14. Why "Mr. Holmes", and not "Holmes"?
  15. What could be more taxing than outdoor winter swimming?
  16. Is it significant that McPherson was a science master?
  17. What swimming stroke did the men use?
  18. Do physical attributes reflect temperament?
  19. Are surds and conic sections highly abstract?
  20. What was McPherson's "station"?
  21. Why did Holmes "discourage such conversations"?
  22. Was the dog's breed important?
  23. Would pads of cotton wool be a normal household item?
  24. When did Holmes have an opportunity to take photographs?

# 56 STORIES IN 56 DAYS - "THE CREEPING MAN"

Posted on November 11, 2011 by barefootonbakerstreet (Charlotte Anne Walters)

In my memory, this was one of my favourites but reading it again today I can't entirely understand why, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

I approached this story full of excitement because, though I haven't read it for some years I remember really enjoying it first time around.

I think it was the descriptions of the location which I particularly enjoyed – the little cottage on the South Downs with a view across the channel, the coastline of chalk cliffs, the little path down to the beach, and the beach itself with its hollows and curves making perfect swimming pools.

Doesn't it sound idyllic? Perfect, beautiful, coastal England sunlit and shimmering in your mind's eye.

But the location is not enough to fill the gap left behind by Watson who is completely absent from this story.

Holmes makes another attempt at being his own chronicler and tells us that, 'At this period of my life the good Watson had passed almost beyond my ken.

summoned by the great man to help out with bee-keeping and the odd disappearing local.

But somehow, things just aren't the same without him and it does seem sad to think of

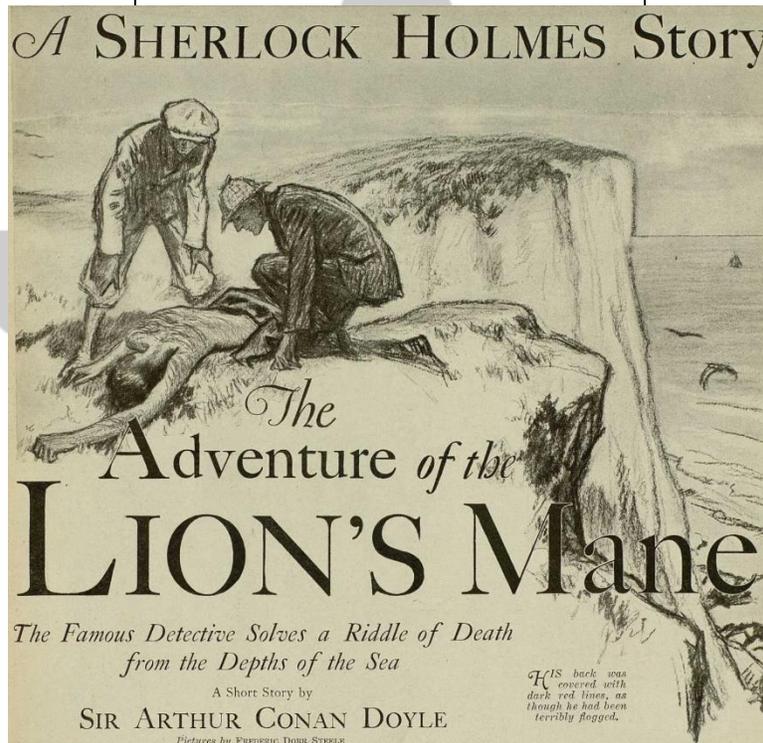
Holmes all alone without any real friends except Mr Stackhurst who was, 'The only man who was on such terms with me that we could drop in on each other in the evenings without an invitation.'

Hardly the same as the intimacy he shared with Watson for all those years.

I do still like this story and did enjoy re-reading it. I remember that it was the only Holmes story where I

actually worked out whodunit before Holmes did when I read it for the first time.

No wonder I enjoyed it so much. I didn't get quite as far as knowing it was a jelly-fish who had caused the poor man his agonizing death but did work out that it must have been a sea creature of some-sort.



An occasional weekend visit was the most that I ever saw of him.' This seems so sad really, though rather inevitable.

Watson is, after all, a normal man who has friends, a job, possibly a family by now. Naturally he would not give all this up to spend his time pottering around the Downs alone bothering Holmes in his retirement and waiting to be

Even reading it again today I still think that Holmes was very slow to come to his conclusions, which he does admit himself.

Perhaps it's old-age getting the better of him.

We learn that Holmes lives near to a coaching establishment where young men go to study and prepare for various professions.

One of the professors, McPherson, enjoys taking a morning swim in the perfect natural pools, as does Holmes himself who often joins him.

This does seem like a surprisingly social thing for him to do and perhaps he is not quite as friendless as he first makes out.

However, poor McPherson goes out for a swim as usual but gets stung all over his back and shoulders by the tentacles of a deadly jelly-fish called the Lion's Mane.

Holmes and Stackhurst find him on lying on the cliff path, obviously dying and covered in horrible bleeding lacerations.

He manages to whisper the words "Lion's mane," before finally giving up his struggle.

It looks to Holmes and his companion that the man has been flogged to death and murder is suspected.

Various false avenues of investigation are then pursued until Holmes finally hits upon the truth.

The investigation doesn't involve a huge amount of detective work really and the story doesn't contain many examples of Holmes' incredible powers of observation and analysis, even though he does ultimately solve the case.

The victim was wearing a Burberry overcoat when he died and I couldn't help but smile at this.

Burberry are one of my clients and I had one of their national trainers come in to train my temping team earlier this year all about the brand.

I sat in on the session and learned that originally that's what Burberry was famous for – it's trench coat.

It was lovely to be reminded of the brand's heritage here in a Sherlock Holmes story.

Holmes tells us an interesting piece of information in this story about his attitude towards woman – 'Women have seldom been an attraction to me, for my brain has always governed my heart.'

Seldom is certainly not never, and I do take this to mean that Holmes has been attracted to women and has on rare occasions indulged in his feelings but that ultimately his brain has quashed the longings of his heart.

This is a much more realistic interpretation in my opinion than to say Holmes has never had any experiences with women at all.

All in all, it's a good story with a beautiful setting and a little food-for-thought about Holmes and Watson, their changing relationship in later years and this startling use of the word 'seldom' which I take to be a confession of occasional attraction to the opposite sex.

It has to score 8 out of 10.

# STORY INFO PAGES FOR "THE LION'S MANE"

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

- **First published in:** Liberty, November 27, 1926; The Strand Magazine, December 1926.
- **Time frame of story (known/surmised):** Towards the end of July, 1907, stated.
- **H&W living arrangements:** Watson not present. At this period of Holmes' life the good Watson had passed almost beyond his ken. An occasional week-end visit was the most that Holmes ever saw of him. Holmes was retired and living in his little Sussex home, and it was he that wrote the story.
- **Opening scene:** Holmes and his neighbor Harold Stackhurst, the master of the well-known coaching establishment, The Gables, encountered each other strolling out before breakfast to enjoy the exquisite air the morning after a gale cleared. They walked along the cliff path which led to the steep descent to the Admirable Beach.
- **Client:** None. Holmes stumbled into this mystery involving his neighbors and friends while in his retirement.
- **Crime or concern:** While walking, Holmes and Stackhurst encountered the academy's science tutor, Fitzroy McPherson, who had staggered up the steep hill from the beach and collapsed in obvious agony almost at their feet. The appearance was he had been mortally injured by an unknown assailant, and his back was marked with weals resembling those left by a scourge or cat-o'-nine-tails. He uttered the words "the Lion's Mane." The words were slurred and indistinct, and had burst in a shriek from his lips. He threw his arms into the air, then fell forward on his side, dead. He had  
bitten through his lower lip in the paroxysm of his agony.
- Holmes investigated the scene but found no evidence of a second person's presence on the beach where McPherson had been swimming in a tidal pool.
- A few days later, McPherson's dog was found dead by the same tidal pool, its little body contorted in agony. Then later came a sudden, similar assault on the academy's mathematics tutor, Ian Murdoch, who was a prime suspect in McPherson's death since they had been rivals for the hand of the beautiful Maude Bellamy.
- **Villain:** A jellyfish, *Cyanea capillata*. It was trapped in deep end of a tidal pool, so any bather there would encounter it.
- **Motive:** None. That's just what happens with jellyfish.
- **Logic used to solve:** Holmes was an omnivorous reader with a strangely retentive memory for trifles. The phrase 'the Lion's Mane' haunted his mind. He knew that he had seen it somewhere in an unexpected context. Turned out it was in the little chocolate and silver volume, *Out of Doors*, by the famous observer, J. G. Wood. Wood himself very nearly perished from contact with the same vile creature, so he wrote with a very full knowledge. The creature radiated almost invisible filaments to the distance of fifty feet, and that anyone within that circumference from the deadly centre was in danger of death.
- **Policemen:** Anderson, the village constable of Fulworth, a big, ginger-moustached man of the slow, solid Sussex breed.

- Inspector Bardle of the Sussex Constabulary — a steady and solid bovine, burly, and phlegmatic man with thoughtful ox-like eyes.
- **Holmes' fees:** None
- **Transport:** None. A purely local case.
- **Food:** No mention.
- **Drink:** Half a tumbler of brandy (the universal palliative) was given to Ian Murcoch after he was attacked. The raw spirit brought about a wondrous change. Then more and more brandy was poured down his throat, each fresh dose bringing him back to life.
- The author who wrote of a jellyfish attack, J.G. Wood, gulped down brandy, a whole bottleful, and it seemed to have saved his life after the attack.
- **Vices:** No mention
- **Other cases mentioned:** none
- **Notable Quotables:** "I hold a vast store of out-of-the-way knowledge without scientific

system, but very available for the needs of my work. My mind is like a crowded box-room with packets of all sorts stowed away therein — so many that I may well have but a vague perception of what was there." – SH

- "That the dog should die was after the beautiful, faithful nature of dogs." – SH
- **When all was said and done:** Holmes and Stackhurst killed the jellyfish by smashing it with a boulder. A flapping edge of yellow membrane showed that the creature was beneath it. A thick oily scum oozed out from below the stone and stained the water round, rising slowly to the surface.
- Well, you've done it! I had read of you, but I never believed it. It's wonderful!" Inspector Bardle to Holmes, following the explanation of the case.
- **Other Interestings:** This was Holmes' last recorded case before he became a spy for Britain against the Germans in the events leading up to WWI, as recorded in His Last Bow

# AN INQUIRY INTO "THE ADVENTURE OF THE LION'S MANE"

Murray, the Courageous Orderly (a.k.a., Alexander E. Braun)

"The Adventure of the Lion's Mane" was first published in Liberty Magazine on November 27, 1926. The Strand Magazine in published it in December of that same year.

It is part of *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*.

The chronology for this case varies, depending on which Canon expert one consults. However, in this case, the majority of our experts indicate that this adventure took place in 1907.

If the case took place in 1907, as the majority of these Canon chronologists state, then at the time Holmes was 53 years old and Watson 55.

## Main Characters:

Harold Stackhurst, Fitzroy McPherson, Ian Murdoch, Maud Bellamy, Inspector Bardle.

## Notable Quotes:

"At this period of my life the good Watson had passed almost beyond my ken. An occasional week-end visit was the most that I ever saw of him. Thus I must act as my own chronicler. Ah! had he but been with me, how much he might have made of so wonderful a happening and of my eventual triumph against every difficulty!"

## "Beyond My Ken"

Holmes opens this story by lamenting Watson's absence.

While he admits, somewhat self-absorbedly that Watson's authorship of this case would have made him seem far more brilliant in his deductions and findings than he had been able to accomplish, it appears to go beyond that.

Canon scholars have long (and endlessly) wondered whether this separation of the two friends wasn't due to more than just the Great Detective's retirement. I don't believe that there was a falling-out if for no other reason that Holmes mentions that Watson would visit him on "an occasional week-end."

This seems to fit in well with the fact that, according to my Atlas, the South Downs is roughly 40 or so miles away from London. While this is a relatively short and not uncomfortable trip by train, it is not something one would undertake regularly; especially if Watson, unlike Holmes, was still in harness, attending to patients.

It is somewhat reminiscent of friends who have gone through combat together vowing to stay in touch and then slowly drifting apart propelled by different interests and circumstances.

## The Changed Holmes

Evidently, retirement considerably changed Holmes—a not too uncommon occurrence. We all remember how much he detested useless exertion; yet now

he goes out swimming with friends and acquaintances.

And his social habits now make him accepting of evening visitations without invitation!

The expectation might logically have been that he would have shut himself off from all human contact and monastically devote himself to profound chemical studies, writings about crime, and the life of bees.

However, this does not seem to have been the case. Reasoning from personal experience, although retirement does not entirely take you away from the Wheel of Life, not having to daily arise to don armor and face the hideous, many-headed Making a Living dragon, one does find oneself with more time to pursue different interests. This gift does indeed have a life-changing effect.

## The Unkempt Attic

According to Holmes, he holds "a vast store of out-of-the-way knowledge, without scientific system, but very available for the needs of my work. My mind is like a crowded box-room with packets of all sorts stowed away within—so many that I may well have but a vague perception of what was there."

Now surely this is truly atypical! What became of the Sherlock Holmes who was so

careful in limiting his knowledge intake of knowledge exclusively to those matters he could use in his work? Only information he could immediately lay a hand on.

### **The Paroxysm of Agony**

Having had as a child the most unpleasant experience of a close encounter with a close cousin of *Cyanea capillata*, I can state that the “paroxysm of agony” description is no exaggeration. The sensation is akin to that of an acid burn.

Holmes’ stark description of McPherson agonizing death rings true in every detail. The pain and agony immediately starts after the victim is attacked by the creature (although in reality it is not an “attack” as such, but an unplanned underwater collision).

I am particularly fond this illustration of Holmes, mostly because it was used as the front cover for my book, *The Adventure of the Maiden Voyage*.

All of the above being said, there are some aspects of this that I wish Holmes had either left out or gone into with a little more detail. The Old Queen being hardly cold in her grave yet, one may safely assume that the proprieties of the time were still in force. This would mean that McPherson was not skinny-dipping.

That being the case, if he was properly attired—i.e., wearing a bathing suit—why would he trouble in his agony to put on pants, shoes, and an overcoat? Let us recall that he was in agony, not insane.

Holmes observed that as he was trying to climb back, McPherson fell more than once; however, although it had been simply thrown around his shoulders, he managed to keep his overcoat on.

One might also conclude that in his pain and urgent attempt to seek help, McPherson did not pause to dry himself. This would mean that he had to be wet or at least his coat and pants should have been wet, so how could Holmes conclude from the dry towel that he hadn’t been in the water?

Surely, he did not expect that poor bloke to stop to dry himself on the towel going through the torments of the damned.

### **The Marks**

The history of Nelson’s navy being one of my pursuits, I find it seems difficult to accept that the marks made on McPherson’s back by what essentially was a chemical burn, could have been mistaken for the welts raised by any whip, much less specifically “a very stiff cat-o’-nine-tails with small hard knots upon it.”

Flogging was a punishment very much still in living memory back then. The effect of just one stroke of a cat-o’-nine tails should have been sufficient to dismiss such a cause. Properly wielded, a knotted cat-o’-nine-tails could tear pieces of flesh at the first stroke. In the Royal Navy it was used only for one offense: robbery.

It was considered worse that drunkenness or mutiny because it

could destroy an entire ship’s morale.

### **What else happened in 1907:**

#### **• Empire**

- New Zealand receives Dominion status.
- Channel Tunnel Scheme rejected by Parliament.
- Responsible government granted to Orange River Colony.
- Imperial College of Science and Technology, part of London University, create by amalgamating the Royal College of Science, City and Guilds Technical College, and the Royal School of Mines.
- King Edward VII visits Tsar Nicholas II; Anglo-Russian differences settled; the Dual Entente becomes the Triple Entente with Russia joining Britain and France.
- Opening of Northern Line of London Underground Railway.
- Brooklands Motor Racing Circuit opened.
- Formation of Joint Committee of Oxford and Workers’ Educational Association.

#### **• Britain**

- Women allowed to serve on Local Government Councils.
- Territorial Army introduced into Britain by War Minister Haldane.
- Railway Conciliation Boards established.
- Taxicabs are first legally recognized.
- United Methodist Church established.
- Guaranteeing Treaty between Britain, Russia, Germany, and France.

- Companies Act: limited-liability principle applied to private companies.

- **World**

- Anarchy in Morocco; murder of French workmen at Casablanca.
- General League of German Trade Unions formed.
- Oklahoma admitted as state in the U.S.A.
- Revolt of Heroes crushed by German troops.
- Meeting of Second Russian Duma; Stolypin becomes chief minister; Duma is dissolved, Third Duma is elected.
- Parliamentary rule suppressed in Portugal by Carlos I.
- The Hague Peace Conference to limit armaments fails; ban



on aerial bombing in war rejected.

- Germany refuses armament limitations proposed by Hague Peace Conference.
- Pope Pius X orders Benedictine Order to revise the Vulgate. Italian bishops are urged to suppress Modernist teachings in schools and the press.

- **Art**

- Rousseau paints The Snake Charmer.
- Singe writes Playboy of the Western World, a drama that provokes riots in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

- **Science and Technology**

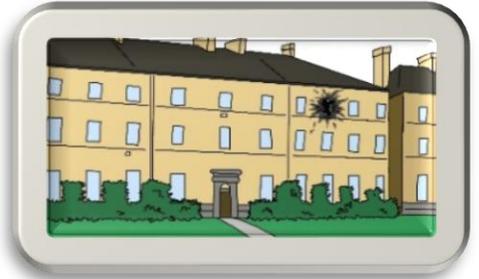
- Henri Farman makes a successful biplane.

- G. Urbain separates rare metals ytterbium and lutecium.
- RMS Mauretania launched; 30,700 tons, 26 knots.
- Jannsky discovers the four principal blood groups (O, A, B, AB) in humans; it leads to successful blood transfusions. August von Wassermann develops his test for syphilis, determining the seriousness of the infection.
- Electric washing machine invented by Hurley Machine Co., of the U.S.A.
- First airship flies over London.
- First attempts at preservation of fruit by freezing.
- William Willett proposes "daylight saving"; adopted in 1916.
- Introduction of medical inspection of schoolchildren.



# Baker Street Elementary

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



Baker Street Elementary  
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Fog, News, & More

GOOD DAY BERTIE... I ENJOYED YOUR IDEA LAST WEEK OF TIME TRAVELING



THANKS... I HAD ANOTHER INTERESTING DREAM LAST NIGHT THAT COULD ALSO TURN INTO A GREAT YARN.

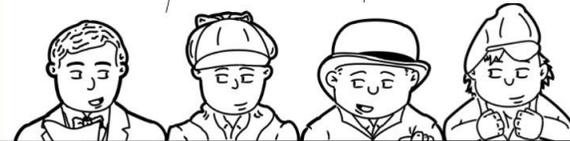


I DREAMED CREATURES FROM ANOTHER WORLD, SAY MARS, CAME TO EARTH IN SOME SORT OF SHIP...



DID THEY LOOK LIKE US?

NO, THEY WERE MONSTROUS LOOKING... SIMPLY HIDEOUS...



I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK THE PUBLIC WOULD BELIEVE THIS TYPE OF FICTION...



OH, I DON'T KNOW... YOU GET THE RIGHT AUDIENCE, WITH THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THEM IT WAS ACTUALLY OCCURRING... PEOPLE CAN BE VERY GULLIBLE...

