

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 07, No. 08 - August, 2019

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



PLEASE NOTE:

September 01 Meeting

NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 01**, 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 Sign of Four (Chapters 1-4)**"
The quiz will cover this tale.

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

August 04 Summary

There were 15 in attendance at the meeting. Steve Mason gave a whimsical toast written by Ben Vizoskie (see page 3).

August 31st is the deadline for submitting limericks from members of our society to include in our book this year. We encourage everyone to write at least one or two.

The Crew then took a quiz on "A Study in Scarlet - Quiz 3," which was won by Kip Gatchell, with Jim Webb taking second place.

Notice of various dates of Sherlockian plays (and possible voyages for the Crew of the Barque Lone Star): August 24th - San Antonio, September 28th - Austin, September 28-29th - San Angelo, October 6th at Keller High School.

We conducted a project where members were split into teams of 3, and then had to develop a Sherlockian story around a personal ad from Victorian times, such as

FOUND SOMETHING on Stowe St. in Waterbury. Valuable. Tell me what it is and it's yours.

We closed the meeting with a reading from the Winter, 2009 Baker Street Journal, "Seas Between Us Braid Hae Roar'd" (page 4).

The door prize drawing was won by Allen Osborn.

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

Steve Mason
Walter Pieper
Don Hobbs, BSI
Jim Webb
Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison
Pam Mason
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mason.steve@epa.gov
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Our Facebook Page:

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

"A TOAST TO A PRESIDENT, A PITCHER, AND A CARTOON CHARACTER"

Ben Vizoskie

EDITOR'S NOTE: Peter Crupe asked Ben to toast the above three individuals. While at first perplexed, Ben, being an astute Sherlockian, deduced Peter's rationale.

The president was the man who became President of the United States shortly after Holmes and Watson met and was president during the first few years of their partnership.

Most pitchers have two or three good pitches, and the catcher signals the type of pitch he wants -- one finger for a fastball, two for a curve, three for a slider.

This pitcher started with the Mets, was traded to Kansas City, and, after a three-year hiatus, returned to New York to pitch for the Yankees.

He is one of those rare pitchers with four good pitches, so the catcher had to have a "sign for the four."

The cartoon character is "the woman" to a strong hero.

The hero fights evil, smokes a pipe, and has one good friend whose name begins with the letter W.

This man, who often dresses as a sailor, is, of course, Popeye.

So please join me in raising a glass to President Chester A. Arthur, baseball pitcher David Cone, and cartoon character Olive Oyl, or as Peter expressed it to me:

A toast to Arthur, Cone, and Oyl.



"SEAS BETWEEN US BRAID HAE ROAR'D" (EXTRACT)

Steven Rothman, Editor, BSJ, Winter, 2009, Vol 59, No. 4

One of the most unexpected aspects of Sherlockiana is the friendship.

The unexpectedness clearly derives from the bibliogenesis of our peculiar pastime.

Reading is a solitary activity, as is writing. And yet Sherlockians take great pleasure in gathering at the drop of a clue for food, drink, and conversation.

Even members of the Hounds of the Internet—a group that by definition does not depend on face-to-face meetings—frequently post online announcements that they will be in a particular area at a certain time and would love to meet any and all who can be there.

Today, more than at any time in the many years we have considered ourselves Sherlockian in nature, such friendships extend easily across states, countries, and oceans.

Though nothing really substitutes for face-to-face conversation, e-mails, Skype, and a dozen other methods that were unimaginable just a short while ago make it easy to make (and keep) friends. Familiarity breeds recognition.

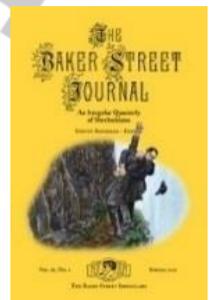
Of all these international friendships, the greatest must be that between The Baker Street Irregulars and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

We wish you all a friend-filled year.

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.

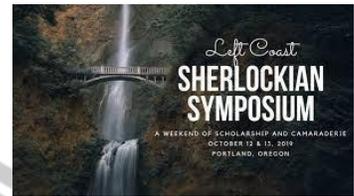


UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium

October 12-13, 2019 – Portland, OR

<https://www.leftcoastsherlock.com/>



Building an Archive – The Arrival of the BSI Archive to the Lily Library

November 8-10, 2019 -- Bloomington, IN

<http://bsiarchivelilly.org/>



The BSI Weekend

January 15-19, 2020 – New York City, NY

<https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/bsi-weekend/>



A GOAL AND TWO TRIES

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

The game of rugby is referenced in three different cases in the Canon: “The Adventure of the Three Students,” “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire,” and “The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter.”

While all three involved the game played during college or university, by the mid-1800s, men who had played in school formed clubs to continue it as a regular sport. (1)

It has been argued that while Holmes might not have recognized or understood the importance of the disappearance of Godfrey Staunton (Cambridge’s three-quarter), Watson must have surely been aware of Cyril Overton’s reputation, belying his own assertions of his exploits on the pitch. (2)

The rise of rugby from a school-yard game to a national and then international sport in only a few years indicates the country’s enthusiasm for this competitive event.

Games involving some sort of “ball” trace back as far as 5000 BC in China and were played in England from at least 700 AD.

Early English versions of “football” were considered so violent (often resulting in death or injury) they were outlawed first by Edward III in 1331, again by King James I of Scotland in 1424, and a third time by Queen Elizabeth I in 1572.

Such games, however, survived and Eton College developed a set of rules for a game involving kicking a ball with the feet in 1815. (3)

Not all schools, however, accepted the rule that players could not run with the ball in their hands,

and by 1830, Rugby School (a preparatory school similar to Eton) allowed their teams to do just that. As students moved on to college and work, they took their game with them. Cambridge’s rugby club was formed in 1839 and by 1848, Cambridge Rules governed the game.

In 1863, rugby football officially split from football/soccer when the Football Association was formed, eliminating any handling of the ball.



The Rugby Football Union (RFU), created in 1871, codified the rules to produce a more organized sport with players specializing in different positions. (4) The RFU consisted of 21

clubs, including Watson’s former club of Blackheath. (5)

In 1875, the number of players was reduced to fifteen and has remained constant since. Currently, the International Rugby Board (IRB) defines the names, positions, and numbers worn by the players with eight forwards and seven backs. (6)

The forwards’ objective is to gain possession of the ball. (7) Forward passes are not allowed in the game.

Rather, the ball is passed backwards among the backs until a space opens and the player with the ball is able to get into the other team’s zone. (8)

In the 1880s, Cambridge and Oxford were instrumental in developing the game’s strategy and plays.

These efforts resulted in the need to create a position among the backs that was between the

half (front line of the backs) and the full back (rear of the backs)—the three quarter. (9)

When Cyril Overton described Godfrey Staunton's ability for "passing, tackling, ... [and] dribbling," he was identifying some of the very skills Cambridge had developed in their players and for that position.



Following a penalty, the offended team can "kick for points" for 3 points. Three points can also be scored by dropping the ball during live play and kicking it through the goal's uprights when the ball bounces.

Given the difficulty, these are rarely attempted. (10) When Oxford beat Cambridge after Staunton's disappearance, they won by "a goal and two tries," or thirteen points.

Teams can score in one of four ways. A "try," worth 5 points, is similar to American football's touchdown and involves touching the ball down in the opponent's "try zone" (end zone).

Following a try, the team will attempt a "conversion" (2 points) with a kick.

When Holmes sought to ferret out Staunton's location by following a carriage, he was defeated in his first try but attained his goal (with the help of a dog) in the second. In other words, Holmes made his goal in two tries.

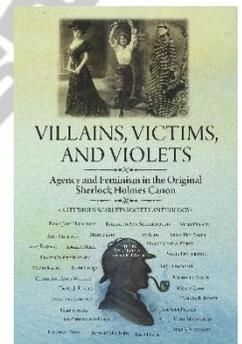
- 1) <http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com>
- 2) Baring-Gould, *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1976), 475.
- 3) <https://www.topendsports.com/sport/soccer/history.htm>
- 4) <http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/originsofrugby.htm>
- 5) <https://www.englandrugby.com/about-the-rfu/history-of-the-rfu/>
- 6) Ibid
- 7) <https://www.dummies.com/sports/rugby/rugby-positions-and-scoring/>
- 8) <https://chicorugby.org/rugby-101/>
- 9) <http://www.rugbyfootballhistory.com/originsofrugby.htm>
- 10) <https://chicorugby.org/rugby-101/>

Liese Sherwood-Fabre is proud to announce the upcoming publication of "Villains, Victims, and Violets: Agency and Feminism in the Original Sherlock Holmes Canon" by BrownWalker Press in August.

Twenty-nine members of the Studious Scarlets Society examine the Canon's female characters. More details to follow.

You can read more about this award-winning author's writing (as well as her previous articles in the Bilge Pump) and sign up for her newsletter at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com.

A non-Sherlockian adventure can be downloaded at: <http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com/extras.html>



"17 STEPS TO THE SIGN OF FOUR"

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Holmes of Peoria

WATSON'S FLAW

The Sign of the Four begins by showing us a major flaw in our hero's character, his cocaine usage.

Watson, it would seem, does not make it through the tale without showing a flaw of his own: "I could have struck the man across the face, so hot was I at this callous and offhand reference to so delicate a matter."

Why is violence Watson's immediate reaction?

True, he does not act upon the impulse this time, but were there other times he was not so restrained?

Had he previously struck anyone across the face for a remark that offended him?

This could give credence for the "bad temper" school of thought on his "bull pup."

THE DOC FROM DOWN UNDER

If Watson did have bad habits like smacking mouthy fellows across the face, it might indicate a childhood in some less civilized land, and SIGN gives us some handy evidence of that in his words: "I have seen something of the sort on the side of a hill near Ballarat, where the prospectors had been at work."

Watson's Australian past is often overlooked by Sherlockians, and it is especially fascinating that he encounters some fellow citizens of good old Ballarat in "Reigate Squires."

Did Watson's family wind up coming to England in much the same way that Turner and McCarthy did?

Might there even be a connection?

GOSSIP TIME:

Mrs. Bernstone, the housekeeper at Pondicherry Lodge, says: I have seen Mr. Bartholomew Sholto in joy and in sorrow for ten long years, but I never saw him with such a face on him as that."

Was the housekeeper having a romantic relationship with Bartholomew Sholto?

Somehow it seems like she's seen a lot of emotion out of her employer.

ONE MORE PAYING CUSTOMER

"Don't trouble yourself about it, Mr. Sholto," said Holmes; "I think that I can engage to clear you of the charge."

Was Holmes going to charge Sholto? Was his full meaning "I can be engaged for a reasonable fee"?

Long before the ambulance-chasing lawyer, was Sherlock the Scotland Yard-chasing detective?

It would seem that Athelney Jones alone could have made him quite a bit of money.

JUST WONDERING . . .

"I shall bring him then," said I. "It is one now. I ought to be back before three if I can get a fresh horse."

This is the only time in the Canon that I can remember Holmes or Watson showing concern for the common cab-horse.

In "Baskervilles" we find a faux Sherlock Holmes renting a cab for the day, and never using a fresh horse.

How far could the common cab horse go in a trip?

TONGA'S DEATH WARRANT

"I have my stick."

"It is just possible that we may need something of the sort if we get to their lair. Jonathan I shall leave to you, but if the other turns nasty I shall shoot him dead."

Holmes is very definite about his plans for Tonga. Would he have felt the same about a normal British criminal, or was the fact that he was dealing with a "wild" pygmy frightening him into thinking of Tonga as a mad dog, less than human?

Is Holmes intending self-defense or an excuse for premeditated capital punishment?

UP, UP, AND AWAY!

"What the deuce is the matter with the dog?" growled Holmes.

"They surely would not take a cab or go off in a balloon."

Balloon travel at time of SIGN . . . just how common was it?

Holmes almost makes it sound as common as cabbage in that line . . . or is he just "eliminating the impossible."

BRIBE THE RASCALS

"I'd like two shillin' better," the prodigy answered after some thought.

"Here you are, then! Catch!--A fine child, Mrs. Smith!"

"Lor' bless you, sir, he is that, and forward."

At this point in his life, we've only seen Sherlock Holmes deal with children one way: throw money at them.

Were shillings hard to come by around the Holmes household when he was a child?

Or was money just the best calling card for anyone in the lower classes at the time?

ROWBOAT FOR HIRE

"There is a boatman here with a wherry, Watson. We shall take it and cross the river."

While we all remember the steamboat chase in *SIGN*, this little rowboat trip across the Thames often gets missed.

Were boat ferrymen as common as cabs on the river?
Would you yourself cross the Thames in a rowboat?

SLEEP, GIVE ME SLEEP!

At "between eight and nine o'clock" in the morning after running around all night, Watson describes himself as "limp and weary, befogged in mind and fatigued in body."

He has already protested earlier in the story that he still hasn't recovered from Afghanistan.

But he takes a bath, changes clothes, comes down for breakfast and seems ready to go some more.

Now, be honest. At this point wouldn't you be saying, "You're the detective, I'm going to bed!"? What did Watson hope to contribute/accomplish?

And when Holmes does lull him into napping, Watson doesn't even go to his nearby bed . . . just sacking out on the couch.

Oh, my aching back/war wound!

RUN FOR IT, WATSON!

"I think that we have had a close shave ourselves of being arrested for the crime."

"So do I. I wouldn't answer for our safety now if he should happen to have another of his attacks of energy."

At this moment there was a loud ring at the bell, and I could hear Mrs. Hudson, our landlady, raising her voice in a wail of expostulation and dismay.

"By heavens, Holmes," I said, half rising, "I believe that they are really after us."

What was Watson about to do? Make a break for it?

WITHOUT A MICROWAVE!

"Only that I insist upon your dining with us. It will be ready in half an hour.

I have oysters and a brace of grouse, with something a little choice in white wines.--Watson, you have never yet recognized my merits as a housekeeper."

Perhaps one of our more grouse and oyster savvy Hounds can help me on this one: I have problems whipping hot dogs and steamed veggies together in a half an hour, how can Holmes can cook oysters and grouse in that time?

IT'S IN THE OTHER SOUTH AMERICA

"We told him nothing; but we paid him well, and he was to get something handsome if we reached our vessel, the *Esmeralda*, at Gravesend, outward bound for the Brazils."

Someone aid my confusion on this one: was there more than one Brazil in the 1880s??

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

"Pray sit down and tell me all about it, Dr. Watson," said she.

Um, excuse me, Mary, but the man just brought a treasure chest in for you. Polite, I can understand, but I have to ask my fellow Hounds: Isn't she taking polite a bit far here?

Wouldn't you want to see what's in the box and THEN hear the story? Ah, but they were better folk then, weren't they?

AND I HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED MINE

"I must borrow Mrs. Forrester's poker."

Fireplace pokers get a lot of use in the Canon. Watson opens a strongbox with one here, and later prepares to bash Steve Dixie with one.

As a murder weapon or a contest of strength, the simple poker gets a lot of mileage in the Canon. Any thoughts on why?

YOU CAN'T BRIBE THESE GUYS

"There goes the reward!" the nameless inspector says. "Where there is no money there is no pay. This night's work would have been worth a tanner each to Sam Brown and me if the treasure had been there."

Scotland Yard working on commission? Along with Lestrade being "retained" in "*Boscombe Valley Mystery*," this is one of the more puzzling aspects of the London police force.

How easily hired were they?

UNBELIEVABLE SMALL

Jonathan Small scatters the Agra treasure over "five miles or so" of Thames riverbed. He says he was "half mad" when he did it, but five miles is a long time for temporary insanity.

At 20 m.p.h., it would have taken him a whole fifteen minutes to empty the chest -- plenty of time for second thoughts.

Can you picture any criminal giving up that kind of money, when there was the slightest chance he might have been able to get it back somehow?

An added note: with Holmes's eye for detail and memory for location, might he not have been out the next day with a boatload of Irregulars for a little urban pearl-diving?

"HOW I LEARNED TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE SHERLOCK HOLMES PASTICHE"

By Lindsay Faye, "Literary Hub", March 13, 2017

Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes wasn't the first of his kind—Edgar Allan Poe's C. Auguste Dupin arguably owns that distinction—but *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* was revolutionary nevertheless.

Placing beautifully drawn characters in a series of self-contained episodic conundrums was groundbreaking, anticipating the blockbuster movie franchises and TV series to come.

Add in Sherlock Holmes' knowledge of the literary killing John Watson was making off his crime-solving career—and well, there you have a living, breathing, self-aware horse of an entirely different color.

Arguably no pop culture heroes have been more beloved than the Great Detective and the Good Doctor; their influence spans so many cultures and forms of media that a UFO-shaped hat and magnifying glass have become a symbolic replacement for the very word "detective."

They were better than merely original—they've also been proven to be timeless.

This timelessness is certainly one of the reasons why interlopers like myself keep inflicting further Sherlockian adventures on the world.

When one finds such marvelous, giddy, adoring, ridiculous imitations on the shelf of a bookstore, he calls them pastiche; when one finds equally splendid, worshipful, outrageous tributes on free websites, he calls them fanfiction.

A rose by any other name, I'd argue, and what's the point in distinguishing? None of these new exploits are Sherlock's first rodeo. There are 60 "canonical" rodeos, and you'd have to be a fool to argue that any of ours compare to them.

I've read some stories that brought me to joyful tears and others that made me want to bleach my corneas.

But when a pastiche does succeed, it's like viewing a previously "undiscovered" forgery of an Old Master's work. It might not be exactly what it purports to be, but that doesn't make it any less thrilling to look at.

The thriving cottage industry of banging out Sherlock Holmes-inspired yarns filled with romance, intrigue, red leeches, vampires, space aliens, and Transylvanian Satanists began during Sir Arthur's time, before he even finished penning the originals, and continues today.

I'm honored to have published ten Sherlock Holmes stories in the *American Strand Magazine* (the UK version is where Holmes gained an international reputation), and 15 of my pastiches are appearing in a collection titled *The Whole Art of Detection: Lost Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes*.

It's thrilling, jubilant work—but how can a writer channel a deceased fellow author in a way that satisfies an audience only longing for more of the real thing?

The absolute requirement involved in crafting an effective pastiche is a passionate love of the original work.

I've been reading the 60 Sherlock Holmes mysteries without cease since age ten and am considered skilled at aping them, but I'd never be able to write a *Professor Challenger* novel, despite their also being Doyle's creations.

Why? Because I read them once and went instantly back to contemplating just what made Watson's war wound vanish and reappear on different parts of his body.

I do have one additional trick up my sleeve, however: I was trained as an actor.

I'm a mimic, somebody coached to don another human being the way one might shrug on a coat. In the canon, Sherlock Holmes is complimented that "he would have made an actor, and a rare one," and "what the law had gained, the stage had lost."

The reader knows this to be true, having seen him gleefully disguise himself as an old woman, a nonconformist clergyman, a groom, a sea captain, an opium addict, and doubtless still more ridiculous personae Watson never recorded.



I'd make a wretched detective, but I vividly recall lessons in shamelessly borrowing the quirks of strangers without their permission. "

Go to coffee shops and parks and shopping malls," our acting coaches would tell us. "Write everything down about the people you see. Is he habitual to the point of neurotic about blowing on his coffee? When does she subconsciously pull her hair over one shoulder?

Why does he press his thumb into his opposite wrist?" Details like this don't apply to my acting career any longer, but they are exactly the type of minutiae through which Sherlock Holmes might glean a clue—and the type through which I was better able to embody him.

Pastiche writers often insist on spinning Holmes's lines of dialogue into elaborate Victorian word tapestries that continue on for decades, simply because to our ears, 19th-century syntax is complicated.

I see this as jarringly inauthentic; in Doyle's work, Holmes is perfectly capable of calling out, "I'll be back some time, Watson," and vanishing out the door dressed as a rakish young workman with a goatee. "Hum," he'll grunt laconically.

Or best of all, his sly, twinkling, "Dear me!" I've been trained in replicating accents, which makes it much easier for me to write a Cockney character speaking with a Northern Irish one, despite having been born among the taquerias of sunny San Jose.

As any actor (or detective) knows, one should never simply listen to what a character says about himself; what the other characters say about him is much more revelatory.

Many writers, when crafting their versions of Holmes, take him at face value. But Sherlock Holmes (and Dr. Watson too, for that matter) is extremely unreliable when it comes to the subject of himself.

"I never guess," declares Sherlock Holmes. (He does—frequently.)

"I am a brain, Watson. The rest of me is a mere appendix." (Yes, of course, Holmes, which is why

Watson records you driving yourself so hard you've fainted no less than four times.) "Cut out the poetry, Watson." (Holmes waxes rhapsodically poetic about everything from roses to weather.)

He claims to be drawn only to abstruse intellectual puzzles but burgles the house of a blackmailer to save a lady's honor.

He claims to be unsociable but others are magnetically drawn to him. And through it all, he claims to be immune to the softer emotions, which many—in light of his courage and kindness—find the most outrageous prevarication of all.

Crafting a pastiche, for me, is ultimately much less about imitating a style than it is about embodying a person I know as well as any character I've ever played.

It's about putting myself in the shoes of literary heroes I've come to love and, for a little while, living as them in my imagination.

While style is one component of theatre—especially in the case of the distinctive language employed by Beckett or Ionesco, for example—every theatrical production of merit is about exploring the relationships between human beings, and my tales follow this principle absolutely, primarily regarding the staunch friendship Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson share.

The most unstudied Sherlockian could tell you that these men are intensely loyal to one another and share an unbreakable bond.

By inhabiting both of them on so many occasions, I've been able explore grayer areas of their psyches, where all is not precisely as it seems. John Watson, seemingly unquestioning of Holmes's commands, steers his friend far more than one might suppose.

Sherlock Holmes, for all his seeming arrogance, is occasionally deeply melancholy and self-critical.

It is these sort of contradictory grace notes that make any adaptation—from Basil Rathbone's smooth operator to Robert Downey Jr's frenetic prankster—successful, and the means of exploring them are as limitless as the pastiche author's imagination.

A SMOKY FIRE

By Karen Murdock

Published in *The Petrel Flyer* (Vancouver, British Columbia) Volume 15, number 1 (January/February 2003)

The Honourable Ronald Adair is murdered, in "The Adventure of the Empty House," by one shot from an airgun fired by expert marksman Colonel Sebastian Moran.

It was a nifty shot, even for an "old shikari" like Moran, for Adair's sitting room at 427 Park Lane was on the second (American third) floor.

The difficulty of making such a shot while standing on the ground below has led some Sherlockians to speculate that Moran was up a tree when he fired the shot, like a deer hunter in a stand, or even in a helicopter (1) or on the top level of a double-decker bus moving down Park Lane (2).

The difficult shot, however, was made somewhat easier by the fact that the window of the sitting room was open at the time, therefore giving Moran a clean shot without the distorting effect of glass and curtains to deal with.

A household servant deposed at the inquest that she had lit a fire in the sitting room before Adair entered the room (at 10 p.m. on the night of March 30, 1894), "and as it smoked she had opened the window."

Why did the fire in Ronald Adair's sitting room smoke so unpleasantly on that night, of all

nights, thus forcing the servant to open the window and giving Moran a clean shot at her master?

Of course any fire smokes a little bit, especially when it is first lit, until the flue becomes warm enough to create an updraft and draw the smoke up the chimney.

But the problem of smoky fires was not a habitual one at 427 Park Lane, else the servant would have mentioned

this at the inquest ("The fire smoked—as usual! We've been plagued with blocked flues all winter, but that young scamp of a chimney sweep still has not come by to clean them, as he promised he would do months ago.")

If the problem was not in the chimney and the fireplace itself was not too shallow and the maid had remembered to open the flue before she lit the fire, then the cause of the smokiness was in the material being burned in the fireplace. This was probably either wood or coal. Most likely, the Adair house was heated with coal.

Coal gives much more heat per ton than does wood, making the transport of this bulky product into the city more likely than a larger amount of wood, which would give the same number of BTUs of heat.



Coal is also easier to transport to the city, as "sea coal" from the north of England could have been brought to London by water from the coal fields in northern England.

Although England was once largely covered with forest, centuries of cutting for construction and burning, as well as clearing land for agriculture, had substantially reduced local sources of firewood by the Victorian period.

It seems likely that the Adair household was heated with coal, as were most London houses.

If the fuel being burned in the sitting room was coal, however, then the scuttle-ful being burned that day would probably smoke no more than the coal burned on all other days.

Coal is more uniform in its properties than is wood. Wood, on the other hand, varies enormously in the number of BTUs per cord and in how fast, and how smokily, it burns.

Let us assume, then, that the fire in Adair's sitting room was a wood fire.

Why would the wood smoke so when burned? Perhaps it had gotten wet somehow.

Perhaps it had not been properly seasoned. Perhaps it had been a much-colder-than-average winter and by this day, the end of March, the Adair household had run through its entire winter's

supply of well-seasoned wood and was reduced to burning the green stuff.

Or perhaps someone in the household had bought a cord of poor firewood—alder or willow, perhaps, instead of the good ash or oak.

Or perhaps the maid, having never attended Girl Scout summer camp as a child, did not know good firewood from bad and she was burning some of the “punk” logs from the back of the pile.

All of these perfectly natural causes would account for the smoky fire.

Or could there have been a more ominous explanation for it? Could the maid who set the fire have been in cahoots with Colonel Moran?

Could she have made sure the fire was laid on with wood which was sure to smoke when set alight?

Or what is the smoke from the logs was caused by some action on the part of Moran himself?

It is certainly plausible that, on the night before he shot Adair, Moran went skulking around 427 Park Lane to scope out the joint for his intended murder.

While there, he noticed that the wood supply for the household was kept in an unlocked woodshed in the back of the house.

He went away, therefore, and returned very late that night with several bottles of water or,

perhaps, a flask of oil or some other chemical substance that he knew would cause the fire to smoke.

This he poured on the logs at the top of the woodpile.

From previous visits to the house, Moran knew that, although most fireplaces at 427 Park Lane burned good clean-burning Lancashire coal, the Honourable Ronald always burned wood in his sitting room.

He liked the look and the sound and the smell of a wood fire.

Therefore, Moran could be assured that any logs he doctored up would be burned in Adair’s room.

The reason that the servant who set the fire did not notice that the logs had been doctored was that Moran was clever enough to apply the chemical to the butt ends of the logs, rather than simply pouring it over the pile.

Applying a chemical to the ends of the logs would assure better penetration than applying it lengthwise, in any case, since the phloem and xylem tissues (the circulatory system of trees) are arranged that way, up and down, like straws packed into a water glass.

Any chemical left on the ends of the logs when he had finished soaking them in his secret smokiness solution Moran

carefully wiped off with a damp rag.

The next day, one of the servants brought up a new load of wood to the sitting room.

When it was set alight, that fateful night, sure enough, the wood smoked and the servant was forced to open the window, thereby giving Moran an unobstructed shot at Adair.

ENDNOTES:

1. S. Tupper Bigelow, “Two Canonical Problems Solved,” *The Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual 1959*.

2. Edgar W. Smith speculated that “Moran had climbed a strategically placed tree in the park to put himself on a level with the second-storey window.” See “The Old Shikari,” in *The Best of the Pips (New York: The Five Orange Pips of Westchester County, 1955)*. For a refutation of the tree theory, see Nicholas Utechin, “The Tree That Wasn’t,” *The Baker Street Journal*, Volume 22, number 4 (December 1972).

THANKS

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WAS HOLMES AN APOSTLE ?

By David Richardson, *The Holmes / Watson Report*, May, 2002

To those who are acquainted with Holmes and his opinion of himself - he did not, by his own admission, rank modesty among the virtues - the short answer to this question is apt to be "quite likely."

He was certainly quite desirous of promoting his own "gospel," which he intended to embody in *The Whole Art of Detection*.

As accurate as this judgment might be (and I do think it fairly accurate), I have rather a different question in mind, to wit: was Holmes a member of the secret student society called "The Apostles" during his short attendance at Cambridge University (cf. BaringGould), and did he perhaps become an "Angel" when he left for Bart's in London? (Angels are members who have "taken wings" and left.)

The Apostles is (I believe it still exists) a student society founded in 1820 as the Cambridge Conversazione Society. Initially it seems to have been an ordinary debating society, not at all secret, and with rather undistinguished members.

The membership seems to have been limited to twelve, and this may have given rise to its being referred to as "the Apostles," quite possibly with derogatory intent.

The secrecy seems to have evolved from an early insistence that new members be elected in secret proceedings, and the membership itself seems to have evolved from "undistinguished" to one which came to encompass the brightest minds among the undergraduate members of the University.

It also progressed from a simple debating society to one which encouraged - nay, expected - its members to express freely their views. Meetings were on Saturdays, when "whales" (sardines on toast) were the usual fare.

One member would be invited to give a short - presumably provocative - talk in which he held forth his view on some subject, after which the other members would question him with equal honesty as to their own views on that subject.

That this seems a society almost tailor-made for a young Sherlock should go almost without saying for any Sherlockian sitting above the salt.

As it was by Sherlock's time a secret society, we should not expect to find references to it in the Canon, but one seems to have slipped in.

I refer to Reginald Musgrave's remark about Holmes now making his living from "those powers with which you used to amaze us" (emphasis added). We note here that it

is Holmes who relays this remark, and it may have been a slip of the tongue on his part.

Watson, (one hates to say this) as usual, did not pick up on it, but the implication that Musgrave - by Holmes's own description not a popular man - observed these demonstrations in the company of a large enough group to be referred to as "us" does suggest that they may have taken place at just such a venue as the Saturday Apostles meeting. (Musgrave, we assume, no doubt reflected the older "undistinguished" mode of membership.) The known membership of the Apostles includes some people who were very brilliant, some who became very famous, and some who became somewhat infamous.

In roughly chronological order, the following were members of the Apostles (the date in parentheses is when they became members): Erasmus Darwin (brother of Charles) (1823), Arthur Hallam (1829), Alfred Tennyson (1829), James Clerk Maxwell (1852), Alfred North Whitehead (1884), Bertrand Russell (1892), G. E. Moore (1894), E. M. Forster (1901), Lytton Strachey (1902), John Maynard Keynes (1903), Rupert Brooke (1908), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1912), Anthony Blunt (1927).

Whether Holmes would have been comfortable in this company (had he been able to know of it) is, as they say, a moot point. He almost certainly would have felt that he was in a group of his intellectual peers (see remarks on modesty, above).

As attractive a proposition as it is, are there any reasons to suppose that Holmes was, or, became, a member of this society?

I suppose it is clear that my own answer to this question is yes, but before I go to deliver my reasons, allow me to dispose of the principal objection that may be raised (there is another, but it can only be dealt with after you hear my reasons).

The principal objection is simply stated: the Canon nowhere indicates - or even hints - that Holmes was in any way associated with this group (or any other, for that matter). But is this really any objection at all? Aside from the fact that if such a standard were adhered to, a good deal of Sherlockian scholarship - to say nothing of extensive portions of *The Holmes & Watson Report* - would have to be rejected out of hand, this objection overlooks the key characteristic of the Apostles: it was a secret society. In fact, one of the most extensive studies of the society (*The Cambridge Apostles* by Richard Deacon, source for the list above), which attempts to list all members of the society, possesses extensive lacunae in

these lists simply because of this. (Holmes, let me say, is among the missing.)

Thus, we have here a classic case of absence of evidence not being evidence of absence, and we must rest our final decision on Holmes's Apostolate on the merits of the reasons adduced for his being, for a time, one of those twelve. What seems to me to be the most persuasive reason for supposing Holmes to have been an Apostle is that it provides an explanation for - and indeed some insight into - what are otherwise some very peculiar aspects of his career.

Holmes, as we all know, invented his own profession of "consulting detective," and as might well be expected, and as he acknowledged himself, he initially found it quite difficult to make any headway in establishing his career.

Indeed, one wonders how he was able to establish it at all, given that a prerequisite for a consulting career is that people must know not only that they can consult you, but that there is some reason to consult someone like you in the first place.

Despite these difficulties, he had evidently managed to do this by the time Dr. Watson made his acquaintance, for the good Doctor reports a fairly steady, if slight, flow of visitors to their new quarters.

Most of these visitors, we learn, are sent by "private inquiry agents," but this only deepens the mystery, since how did these agents learn that Holmes was available?

But however they may have been sent there, the visitors Watson observed seem a rather unremarkable lot, and while we may wonder how some of them came to hear of Holmes before his Boswell came to publicize him, he does seem, by the time Watson leaves him for a bride, to have gone on to develop a quite different order of clientele, one which we learn of first in "A Scandal in Bohemia."

In that tale, the events of which took place shortly after Watson's marriage, the King of Bohemia tells Holmes that he knows that Holmes is a man "who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated."

Having satisfactorily exaggerated his own importance, the King goes on to say, in his somewhat Germanic English, "This account of you we have from all quarters received."

The question immediately occurs: what quarters? – for one cannot imagine the King, particularly not this King, checking around with the kind of clients Watson had made mention of to see what they thought of him.

It is, of course, fairly obvious that the "quarters" from which the King has been hearing good things about Holmes are the quarters occupied by the crowned heads of Europe, and this raises in its turn the equally obvious question: why would they know anything about Holmes?

Why indeed? How does a man setting out on a career which will involve him principally in crime - and crime in the "ordinary" levels of society at that - rise to the attention of what was then (and, I suppose, still now is) the highest level of European aristocracy?

The answer which I propose - and by now it must be painfully obvious what it is - is that Holmes was indeed an Apostle, and it was through this particular manifestation of that singularly English institution, the "old boy" network, that Holmes gained his entree to the higher reaches of Continental society.

There really seems to be no other explanation as to how the practice of an immodest consulting detective could have expanded to include, among other like clients, one supposes, the King of Scandinavia, the Reigning Family of Holland, the Sultan of Turkey, the French Government, and the Vatican (an ecumenical grouping, if ever there was one).

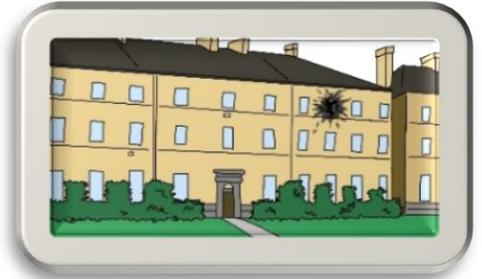
The last objection that might be raised to our posed question should now be evident, but before you utter the name "Mycroft," allow me to forestall you by saying that at the same time that Holmes was making his way in the world, Mycroft, whom I presume to have been an Apostle too, was making his own way up the civil service ladder on his way to becoming the mandarin that he did become, when Holmes could say of him "occasionally he is the British Government." (Holmes's remark in GREE that Mycroft "audit[ed] the books in some of the Government departments" no doubt reflects the reality of his early career, making Holmes's remarks in BRUC somewhat disingenuous.)

Both men, one supposes, received "legs up" in their careers from their election to an Apostolate, and if Mycroft's seems to have taken him higher, it may well have been because he had his brother Sherlock to rely upon when the going got tough.

Thoughts too late for the press: could Mycroft's auditing of the British Government's books have played some role in the downfall of the British Empire? The world wonders.

Baker Street Elementary

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



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Fog, Moon, & Mice

ONCE AGAIN OUR
TEACHER JUST DOES
NOT UNDERSTAND ME...

JUST OUR
TEACHER ?



THE STRESS OF
CONTINUALLY FAILING ME
ON OUR PAPERS AND
QUIZZES IS FINALLY
TAKING A TOLL...

I CAN'T
IMAGINE.



... AND WHAT ARE YOUR SYMPTOMS ?

BEFORE THE QUIZ, SWEATY PALMS...
AFTERWARDS, I FEEL FLUSHED AND
MY BRAIN IS ON FIRE...



I SUGGESTED SHE IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR MY
CONTRACTING "BRAIN
FEVER", A VERY
SERIOUS CONDITION...



... AND HOW DID SHE
REACT TO YOUR
SELF-DIAGNOSIS
AND ACCUSATION
SHE IS TO BLAME
FOR YOUR MALADY ?



LET'S JUST SAY THE ELEVATED
TEMPERATURE AND REDNESS
IS NOT ISOLATED TO THE TOP
END OF MY BODY NOW...

