The Bilge Pump

Vol. 10, No. 11 – November, 2022

The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star – founded November, 1970

PLEASE NOTE: December 04, Meeting NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on December 04 at 1:00 pm central. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is "The Adventure of Black Peter".

Bob Katz, BSI, ASH, will lead the discussion on the story of "The Adventure of Black Peter".

Rich Krisciunas will look at the legal aspects of the story.

Joe Eckrich, BSI, will be our featured guest speaker, and will speak on Shaw's 100, an indispensable list of books you should have in your library.

IN THIS ISSUE

For more information concerning our society, visit: http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/

You can follow us on Twitter at: @barquelonestar

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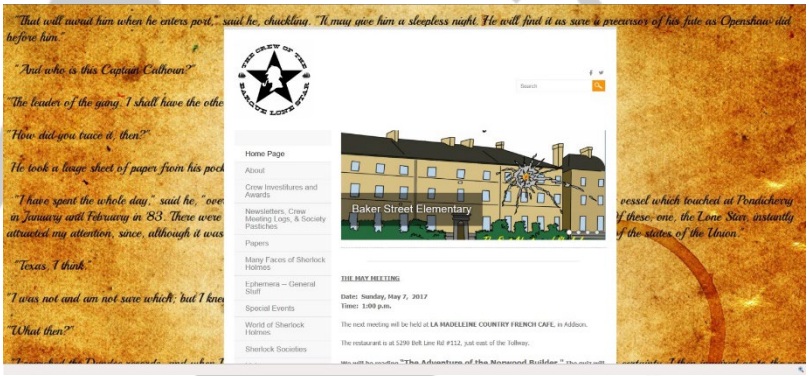

Our Facebook Page:

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

NOVEMBER 06 SUMMARY

Cindy Brown

There were **62** in attendance at this ZOOM meeting, including representatives from **SEVERAL** different countries.

The meeting was opened by **Ann Caddell**, who did the Toast "Criterion Bar" (see page 4).

We then proceeded to the quiz on today's story, "The Adventure of the Priory School".

Next our own **Bob Katz, BSI, ASH** lead a discussion of the story for the month.

The Crew of the Barque Lone Star will FINALLY celebrate our 50th anniversary, with an in-person party on December 10 (see page 5).

Two members of the Crew have recently had books published and they are Bonnie MacBird and Charles Propelec. Liese Sherwood Fabre's next book will be published in December. Congratulations to all.

The Crew of the Barque's next book has been released and is called *The Rest of the Story*. Those who wrote stories for the book will each receive two copies.

The Legion of Zoom will have another virtual conference in February 2023 (see page 6).

Sandy Konzin, ASH then did a limerick of the Priory School.

Our guest speaker for the month was Jim Hawkins, BSI (The Hans Sloan of My Age). He did a wonderful presentation on John Bennett Shaw and Ron De Waal.

We next had the lighting round of the use of Shaw's puns in the story titles.

The Dallas conference, *Lone Star Holmes: The Past, Present, and Future*, is scheduled for May 26-27, 2023 (see page 7).

Next month the story will be "The Adventure of Black Peter", and the featured speaker will be **Joe Eckrich, BSI,** who will present on **Shaw's 100, BSI.**

Rich Krisciunas then did the closing toast, to the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

As always, thanks so much to Cindy Brown for keeping the notes of the meeting.

THE CRITERION BAR

Ann Caddell

We Sherlockians are eternally grateful for the fateful meeting between Dr. Watson and young Stamford, who introduces Watson to Holmes. In the good Doctor's words, "I was standing at the Criterion Bar, when someone tapped me on the shoulder, and turning round I recognized young Stamford, who had been a dresser under me at Barts." Stamford takes Watson to St. Bart's to meet another gentleman who is looking to share lodgings in London, and the rest is literary history. But after the Holmes-Watson introduction takes place, both young Stamford and the Criterion Bar vanish from the canon, never to be seen again. (Although the bar itself, recognizing its own importance, installed a plaque in 1953 commemorating the event.) So why did Conan Doyle, who was so good at descriptions of interior settings, give us no picture at all of the spot where Watson and Stamford crossed paths – one of the most important chance meetings in all literature? Probably because his audience already knew the place.

The Criterion Restaurant in Piccadilly, in the heart of London, was an opulent restaurant/ bar/ballroom/theatre complex that opened in 1873. By 1887, when Watson described his meeting with Stamford in Beeton's Christmas Annual, the establishment was highly popular and a true London institution. Most Englishmen would have gotten a pretty good picture of the environs from the name alone.

Over the years, plenty of prominent Brits patronized the Criterion. H.G. Wells was a regular, and once addressed a meeting of the Royal College of Science there. The women's suffrage movement favored the place for afternoon tea and strategy meetings, and in 1919 Winston Churchill made a speech there advocating a coalition government to continue the wartime spirit of national unity.

The Criterion makes cameo appearances in more works of fiction as well. Both G.K. Chesterton and W. Somerset Maugham mention the place in their stories. And one of my favorite authors, P.G. Wodehouse, immortalized another meeting in the Jeeves and Wooster story, "Indian Summer of an Uncle," in which Bertie's Uncle George, assisted of course by the indispensable Jeeves, is reunited with an old flame who he met when she worked as a waitress at the Criterion. Even television has gotten into the act. In season four of Downton Abbey, Lady Edith is shown dining at the Criterion and remarking on how she could not have gone to a public restaurant before the war.

Social change, scientific knowledge, political action, literature – the Criterion has witnessed and contributed to them all. Facilitating the meeting of Holmes and Watson was only the beginning. So let's raise a glass to the place where so many of the great and the famous, both real and fictional, have raised their glasses – to the Criterion Bar!

Someone kidnapped the Duke's little son.

Maybe gypsies – could be anyone.

Holmes followed the track

And got the boy back!

"All this money! Oh, Watson, what fun!"

Sandy Kozinn, ASH

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF "THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR"

THE CREW OF THE BARQUE LONE STAR
50th
1970 - 2020

Charles & Karen Olson
MCKINNEY, TX

Saturday, December 10
3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Dinner will be provided, but feel free to bring a dessert and/or beverages

Please RVSP to karen.olson2500@gmail.com, who will send you their address
Call me at 940-546-4004 if you have any questions

2nd Annual Legion of Zoom Virtual Conference
"The Sitting Zoom at 221b Baker Street"

Sunday, February 19, 2023

2 pm Eastern, 1 pm Central, 11 am Pacific

Confirmed Speakers

- **Catherine Cooke, "The Book of Life"**
- **Susan Dahlinger, "The Bruce-Partington Plans"**
- **Beth Gallego**

Clifford Goldfarb, "Fordham, the Horsham Lawyer"

Mark Jones, "Peter Jones"

- **Burt Wolder, "The Third Pillar from the Left"**

Last year we had a wonderful inaugural meeting, including representatives from 7 different countries...

For more information and to register, go to:

http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/2023----2nd-annual-virtual-conference.html

Please Mark Your Calendars
"Lone Star Holmes"

A look at Sherlock Holmes past, present & future

May 26 – 27, 2023

Tentative Speakers include:

Barbara Rusch, BSI, ASH, MBt

Tim Johnson, BSI

Marino Alvarez, BSI

Robert Katz, BSI, ASH

Russell Merritt, BSI, ASH

Glen Miranker, BSI

Keynote Speaker
Peter E. Blau, BSI, ASH, MBt

The SMU DeGolyer Library will be celebrating the Donald J. Hobbs Sherlock Holmes Collection with an exhibition and reception

We will post further information in the near future at our website at: www.dfw-sherlock.org

Co-hosted by Southern Methodist University, DeGoyler Library, and the Crew of the Barque Lone Star Society

Lone Star Holmes

(A look at Sherlock Holmes past, present & future)
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX
May 26 -27, 2023

TOTALLY TUBULAR

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, Lone Star Deck-Mate

By the time Holmes and Watson took rooms in 221B, the Baker Street underground station had already been open for almost twenty years. Despite the proximity of one the earliest stations almost at their doorstep, Watson mentions riding the railway in only three adventures. In "The Adventure of the Red-Headed League," they ride it to Aldersgate. The other two mentions occur when a client arrives by underground in "The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet," and Holmes is called to investigate a murder where the corpse is found on its tracks in "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans."

Prior to its operation in 1863, the London Underground had a rather rocky beginning. While some ideas for subterranean rail lines date back as far as 1837, the first credible proposal appeared in 1845. Charles Pearson suggested a railway powered by air pressure (such as that used in pneumatic tubes—hence, the introduction of the term "tube" to describe the train system). He continued to champion the idea of an underground rail system. He had already successfully spearheaded the creation of the "Thames Tunnel," used for foot traffic under the Thames River. (1) The route and financing, however, created controversy throughout the 1850s, and digging did not begin until 1860. (2) Even after construction began, several scandals plagued the project, including the embezzlement of more than £20 million in today's currency by Leopold Redpath. (3)

Construction on "The Metropolitan Railway" used a "cut and cover" method. Workers dug a trench under or by an existing roadway. Tracks were laid along the trench and the walls were lined with bricks and then covered with a roof. Once completely covered, a new roadway was built over it, and the line was opened to the public in 1863. (4) The 3.75-mile line consisted of seven stops between Paddington (at that time, Bishop's Road) and Farringdon Street. Baker Street was the third stop from Paddington. (5)

The system used steam engines, filling the tunnel with smoke, steam, and sparks, which often sent passengers into coughing fits. One pharmacy even sold a "Metropolitan Mixture" for those affected by the air. The smoke was not only dangerous for the passengers, but also for the conductors, who could not always see through the pollution. Light and air shafts were bored from the surface into the tunnels to address these problems, and gas lights were provided at stations. (6) Grated "blow holes" in the roadways (now covering the underground) also allowed steam and smoke to escape. (7)

Despite such inconveniences, the ability to travel faster than through crowded roadways made it popular enough that more than 9.5 million people used it in the first year alone. The popularity led to extending the line over time to its current 41 miles and 34 stations. (8)

Additional lines were added to the system by various enterprises, the second being what was then known as the "City and South" line. Unlike the "cut and cover" approach, this line was crafted through the same method used for the Thames Tunnel—the tunneling shield. J.H. Greathead modified the design by Marc Isambard Brunel to burrow a circular channel instead of a rectangular one. The device (essentially the same still used today) bored a hole through the earth, allowing for cast-iron reinforcements to be placed along the sides and roof as it did so. (9) This route also used electric trains, cutting down on the pollution within the original line's tunnels. Opened to the public in December 1890, the

fare for this line was a flat two-pence for all passengers. (10)

As these lines appeared, some experienced financial difficulties, and soon, all but the Metropolitan Railway were merged into the Underground Group. This merger also introduced the term "underground" and the "roundel" symbol throughout the system. London took control of all the city's transportation services, including the underground, in 1933, and introduced the first diagram of the current stations.

The underground served the city's population in more than transportation. During WWII, the tunnels served as air raid shelters, a storage facility for items from the British Museum, (11) and executive meeting quarters (sometimes housing Prime Minister Winston Churchill) at the unused Down Street station. (12) Other tunnel occupants include about half a million mice and a mosquito species, *Culex pipiens molestus,* introduced into the tunnels during WWII. (13)

While Holmes and Watson's use of the underground occurred only once in the Canon, Holmes had experience riding the tube. In "The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans," Holmes described recalling the train for the Aldgate station was not covered at all points in the West End. While he did not have access to the first 1933 system map, he still had enough knowledge of the underground in his brain attic to determine the series of events leading to poor Arthur Cadogan West's demise.

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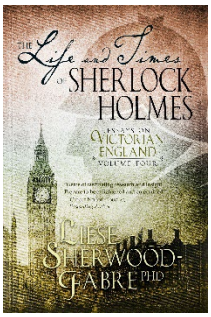
(1) https://www.britannica.com/topic/London-Underground
(2) https://londonist.com/2014/11/five-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-first-underground-line
(3) https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-history-of-london-s-underground-railway/
(4) https://londonist.com/2014/11/five-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-first-underground-line
(5) http://tube-history.uk/metropolitan-line.php#:~:text=The%20Metropolitan%20line%20opened%20in,day%20and%20was%20quickly%20extended.
(6) https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-history-of-london-s-underground-railway/
(7) Steven Doyle and David Crowder, *Sherlock Holmes for Dummies,* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2010, p. 82.
(8) http://tube-history.uk/metropolitan-line.php#:~:text=The%20Metropolitan%20line%20opened%20in,day%20and%20was%20quickly%20extended.
(9) https://www.britannica.com/technology/tunneling-shield
(10) https://www.nycsubway.org/wiki/Oldest_London_Tube_Reopened_(City_&_South_London)_(1925)
(11) https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/culture-and-heritage/londons-transport-a-history/london-underground/a-brief-history-of-the-underground
(12) https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/collections/stories/war/secret-wartime-history-down-street-station
(13) https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/facts-mice-london-underground-tube-18097665

This and an additional twenty-five articles (including one on scandal in the Canon from The Studious Scarlets' publication "Villains, Victims, and Violets") have been gathered into the latest volume of "The Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes" now available for pre-order. Find your copy at books2read.com/u/bOnezW.



CAN YOU LEND ME A MATCH

Steve Mason, BSI

Fire.

One of the four elements believed to be essential to life. Without it, we would never have a barbeque!

In the Canon, Conan Doyle gives fire a prominent role in several of the stories. It may be as simple as Holmes lighting a pipe (COPP), Dr. Watson warming his toes in front of a fire built by Mrs. Hudson (GOLD), or Watson tossing his first list of Holmes' abilities into the fireplace (STUD). However, fire plays a pivotal part in the outcome of several of the adventures, such as smoking out Mr. Oldacre (NORW), destroying key evidence of past atrocities in the American South (FIVE), ending the lives of Kratides (GREE) and Brenda Tregennis (DEVI), or attempting to destroy evidence near Eyford Station (or maybe Twyford) (ENGR).

Fire played a major role in the everyday lives of Victorian citizens – warming their homes, preparing their family meals, and helping to drive the businesses within the country. However beneficial fire may have been during the period, it also led to disastrous results for years when not controlled. A list of some of the more serious conflagrations during the period is provided at the end of this article.

Holmes is almost nonchalant when he mentions a small fire in "The Final Problem…" (which would have occurred on Saturday, April 25, 1891).

"Have you seen the morning paper, Watson?"
"No."
"You haven't seen about Baker Street, then?"
"Baker Street?"
"They set fire to our rooms last night. No great harm was done."
"Good heavens, Holmes, this is intolerable!"

Three years later, upon his triumphant return, Holmes explains to Watson…

"I came over at once to London, called in my own person at Baker Street, threw Mrs. Hudson into violent hysterics, and found that Mycroft had preserved my rooms and my papers exactly as they had always been."

Either Mycroft was amazing at fire restoration and interior design, or the fire set by Moriarty's gang caused very minimal damage. Assuming the crime boss' henchmen would know how to set a devastating fire, one should assume the lack of severe damage in the rooms was due to the quick and effective response by the firefighters of the time.

This would not have been the case not so many years earlier. Let's look at fires and the improvements in firefighting throughout the 19th century, especially in the last few decades of the 1800s.

Early Firefighting

While there is scattered evidence of fire-fighting operations in Ancient Egypt, recorded history indicates the first fire brigades responding to fires were developed by the Roman Marcus Licinuius Crassus, one of the wealthiest men in Europe. Unfortunately, his fire brigade was not created for the most humanitarian of purposes. Since Rome did not have a fire department, Crassus created a fire brigade of 500 men, who would respond to

a burning building at the first wisps of smoke. Upon arriving, the fire fighters would stand and watch the fire until the building owner was willing to pay their inflated costs to fight the fire. If a price was not agreed upon, the building would burn, and then Crassus would buy the property at a fraction of its pre-fire value.

Emperor Augustus developed "The Vigiles" (a mixture of slaves and Roman citizenry) in 6 AD to combat fires using bucket brigades and pumps, as well as poles and hooks.

The duties of the Vigiles were divided into Uncinarius, the hook-man who used a large hook for removing burning roofs; Siphonarius, responsible for the supervision and operation of water pumps; Aquarius, whose main duties were to supply water to pumps and organize bucket chains, and the Emperor who was the fire chief. The Vigiles protected Rome from disastrous fires for the next five hundred years.

In Great Britain, the first organized firefighting is believed to have originated during the Roman invasion in 43 AD. Firefighting still consisted of buckets of water being passed from person to person. Once the Romans left, firefighting was mostly lost, as English communities fell into decline.

During the Middle Ages, residences in London and other areas were subject to extensive fires due to the wood construction of most homes, thatched roofs, as well as the cramped pro ximity to each other. Very narrow streets limited the ability to effectively mount a defense to the spreading flames. By the mid- to late 1600's, most thatched roofs were banned in London and the rest of England in new construction.

Very early fire brigades simply employed buckets of water which were passed down a line of volunteers. Axes and long hooks were used to breakon down doors and tear down residential walls. Very primitive hand-held pumps could be used to move a minimal amount of water for fire-fighting purposes. Some towns even tried small gunpowder charges as fire-breaks, normally with more damage caused by the explosion than the fire itself.

Residential owners relied on friends and relatives to help replace the structure and contents after a devastating fire, as fire insurance was not available at that time.

One of the very first fire prevention regulations was passed in London in 1446 when the Lord Mayor proclaimed that any resident lighting a fire below a wooden chimney would be fined (due to their propensity of igniting due to the buildup of flammable coatings, such as creosote).

Many Puritans during this age believed fire was a punishment from God for man's sinfulness. In the years leading up to 1666, Fundamental Puritans, who were critical of King Charles II's love of women and immoral ways, predicted there would be a 'Great Fire'.

Fire history databases for Great Britain (1500 to 1800 AD) identify more than 500 "major fires" involving ten or more houses were destroyed by a single outbreak. In the 1800s, 99 major fires were recorded, with nearly 83% during the first half of the century alone.

While cities in Great Britain during the Victorian period have been wrongfully viewed as "reservoirs of disease, crime and vice," it can be argued fire also posed a significant hazard, facing both public and private authorities.

The Great Fire

London was devastated by a terrible fire, which began on September 2nd at a bakery and the baker's house, owned by Thomas Farynor (Farriner), on Fish Yard, next to Pudding Lane. Mr. Farynor was, at the time of the fire, the official baker to His Majesty, King Charles II. While fire investigations were primitive and not reliable,

many believed the fire began due to Mr. Farynor not properly extinguishing his ovens at closing time, and allowing the hot ash and embers to reignite. Although Farynor claimed to have extinguished the fire at approximately 10:00 p.m., three hours later at 1:00 a.m. his house was a blazing inferno. While Farynor and his family escaped injury, their housemaid died in the fire.

Initially, the fire did not stir much interest, to the point the Lord Mayor of London, Thomas Bludworth, exclaimed after viewing the fire at 3:00 a.m., "Pish! A woman might piss it out," and then promptly went back to bad. Within an hour or two, a few hundred houses caught flame in the vicinity, but soon the wind took the fire east, incinerating everything in its path. Homes arched out over the street below, almost touching in places, which led to the fire being able to spread even more quickly.

When the inferno reached the Thames River, it attacked warehouses stocked with combustible products, including oil and tallow. Only an earlier fire in 1833, which had destroyed and removed structures across the banks, kept the fire from spreading across the river.

As in previous fires, initial attempts included the use of leather water buckets as well as hand pumping of water. Watermills along the Thames River were designed to bring water through underground pipes into London. An unusual drought that year had caused extremely low water levels. In addition, the waterworks facility that pumped the river water caught fire shortly after the initiation of the disaster.

Once it became obvious the fire-fighting efforts were failing, Londoners attempted escape from the spreading flames, only to end up piled up along the Thames River, waiting for ferry boats to carry them to safety. The watermen (profiteers) immediately raised their fares on those trying to rescue their families, once again showing the evil side of mankind.

Author John Evelyn stated, "all the sky were of a fiery aspect, light the top of a burning oven, and the light seen forty miles around for many nights. London was, but is not more."

By September 4th , it became clear that escape was not going to save everyone, and that the only way to prevent a massive loss of life was to bring the fire under control, not just saving lives, but salvaging property also. The king, Charles II, ordered a firebreak, by pulling down all the houses in the fire's path.

Mayor Bludworth was advised to order the use of gunpowder to create fire breaks, but was reluctant, citing concerns building owners would sue the City for compensation for their destroyed structures.

Thomas Vincent, author of *God's Terrible Voice in the City,* stated "The Lord Mayor comes with his officers; a confusion there is; counsel is taken away; and London, so famous for wisdom and dexterity can find neither brains nor hands to prevent its ruin."

Samuel Pepys, Chief Secretary to the Admiralty, and later a member of Parliament, spoke to the Admiral of the Navy, who agreed they should blow up houses in the path of the fire. This extreme measure would hopefully create enough space between the burning and non-burning structures to stop the fire from spreading from house to house.

Charles finally ordered massive gunpowder explosions (using stores of powder stored in the Tower of London) – similar to blowing up a neighborhood with a bomb – so as to save the rest of the city. The Navy was ordered to carry out the request, rolling out gunpowder kegs and blowing up several buildings, thus halting the fire's spread to the East. Fortunately, the wind dropped after two days of burning, which helped minimize the spread of flames.

The fire was mostly under control by Wednesday, September 5th. However small fires continued to smolder, and the ground remained too hot to walk on, for several days. Cellar fires continued through to March of the following year.

Pepys recorded in his diary that even Charles II, was seen helping to put out the fire…

> "Lord! what sad sight it was by moone- light to see, the whole City almost on fire, that you might see it plain at Woolwich, as if you were by it."

Only one-fifth of the city's buildings were left undamaged, with an estimated 13,000 private dwellings either burned to the ground or deliberately destroyed. Additionally, the fire destroyed 87 parish churches, 44 livery stables, The Royal Exchange, Guildhall and St. Paul's Cathedral.

Miraculously, official records indicate that only six people died; however, many historians fear that numerous other people (homeless, vagrants, transients, infants, and the elderly) were lost during the bombing of the neighborhoods. It is believed the deaths of these poor and middle-class people were not recorded, while the heat of the fire (over 2900° F in some areas) may have cremated many victims, leaving no recognizable remains.

The fire was a massive monetary hardship on the City of London: the damage was estimated to be £10 million at a time when London's annual income for the entire city was only £12,000. Many people were financially ruined, and debtors' prisons became over-crowded as a result.

Sir Christopher Wren, working with Charles II, assisted with the plans for recovery from the fire, including the rebuilding of London, which took over 30 years. Wren oversaw the reconstruction of over 50 churches destroyed by the fire. The site where the fire first started is now marked by a 202-foot monument built between 1671 and 1677.

Equipment Development after the Fire

Up to the Great Fire, the only practical tools for fighting fires were leather or zinc buckets, hooks to pull down doors and walls, and hand-held pumps. In 1672, Jan Van der Heiden, a Dutch Baroque-era painter, invented a flexible leather hose with brass fittings which could be connected to a hand-pumped fire engine, also pioneered by Van der Heiden. In 1819, the hoses were improved by Jacob Perkins, who joined the two sides of the leather strips with copper rivets (in lieu of sewing), making the hose stronger and more flexible. An improved hand-pumped fire engine was created by Richard Newsham in England in 1721, in which the fire engines could be pulled to the fire scene by horses, thus reducing response times. Newsham's model was based on patents from Mandell and Grey in 1712.

The first fire engines were simply tubs carried on runners, long poles, or wheels. Water was still supplied to the engines by a volunteer bucket brigade. The tub stored the water used for fire-fighting, with a hand-operated pump (driven by several men) forcing water through a pipe or nozzle to waiting buckets to be used on the fire. Van der Heiden's hoses enabled fire fighters to work closer to the fire without endangering their engines and to increase the accuracy of water placement directly on the base of the flames.

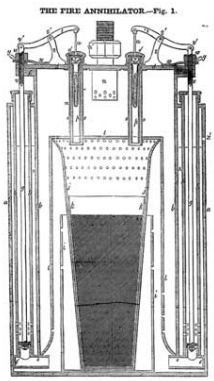
Pumpers were normally paid one shilling for the first hour, and sixpence for each hour thereafter. While a smaller fire may only have 10-20 “pumpers” assigned to provide water, larger fires could require the resources of up to 500 personnel to keep the pumps running.

In 1816, Captain George Manby invented the "Extincteur", the first portable pressurized fire extinguisher. The apparatus consisted of a copper vessel containing three gallons of pearl ash (potassium carbonate) and water, contained within compressed air. The pearl ash would smother the fire.

Daniel Maseres developed one of the first fire escapes in 1784, which, when the escape was fastened to the window, would enable a person to descend to the street without injury. In 1849, George Huttman and George Kornelio introduced the idea of a mobile fire escape. The fire engine turntable ladder was introduced in the early 20th Century, allowing firefighters easier access in narrow streets.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire (RSPLF) was formed in 1828 (with the help of Captain Manby), with the objective of providing escape ladders to assist people escape from burning buildings. The ladders were stored in churchyards during the day and placed on street corners at night. Ladder operators had to undergo training for up to six months to safely operate the mobile escapes. Early on, some models of the fire escape ladders featured a canvas chute so ladies could slide down without showing their ankles.

The steam-pump fire engine, introduced in London in 1829 by John Ericsson and John Braithwaite, was in use in many large English cities by the 1850s. These engines were equipped with reciprocating piston pumps, although a few rotary pumps were also used, and could output one hundred and seventy gallons of water per minute. Horses still were used in most situations to transport the engines to the fire scene, but a few engines were self-propelled.



Long before modern fire alarms were introduced, wooden rattles were used as a primitive alarm system. During the 1800s, fire watchmen roamed the streets armed with these rattles. The watchmen simply held the rattle by its handle, and with a rotating swing, a loud clacking sound was created, which alerted communities of the danger. Hand-held clapper bells replaced the rattles in later years. The first actual alarms were installed throughout London in 1878. By the 1880s, telephone service had sufficiently spread so that most fire houses were equipped with telephone equipment, and thus fire calls could be established.

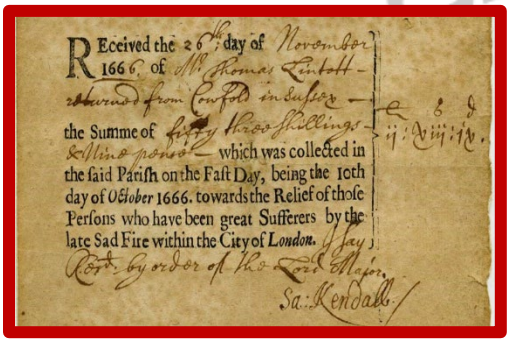
It had been accepted for year the only way to successfully to fight a large structural fire was to attack it from the inside. If the firefighters could only utilize resources from the street, a total loss of the building was inevitable. For years, however, firemen had to contend with breathing problems in the worst of atmospheres, including smoke, carbon monoxide (CO) and other toxic materials. The smoldering of hay, straw, and other organic materials added to the amount of CO within the structure. In 1830, the “Pauline Apparel” was introduced, with a hooded cloak and face piece, which would drape down to the firefighter’s waist and be secured by a tight belt. An air pipe or hose was inserted just above the belt, which would be fed fresh air by a set of bellows from outside the building. Smoke helmets, using the same supplied air principle, soon followed. Finally, in 1904 the first successful self-containing breathing apparatus was marketed in Germany and England, which provided oxygen from a small cylinder worn on the back.

One of the more creative inventions for fire-fighting was the glass grenade style fire extinguisher “Bombs,” which were glass bulbs, normally filled with a fire-fighting material such as salt water or carbon tetrachloride and a coloring agent. These extinguishers were made and used between the years of 1870

and 1910 and would be stored on the wall of a building or residence in a metal bracket. If a fire broke out, the occupant would simply throw the "grenade" at the base of the flames to help stop the spread, or even extinguish the fire.

A Change in Fire Fighting Approach

In 1668, an Act for the City of London required that all Boroughs have ladders, buckets and fire hooks available for fire-fighting efforts. While a good first step, the Act did not specify training, protective equipment, or other fire-fighting apparatus.


Received the 26th day of November 1666. of Mr Thomas Lintott returned from Cowfold in Sussex the Summe of fifty three shillings & nine pence which was collected in the said Parish on the Fast Day, being the 10th day of October 1666. towards the Relief of those Persons who have been great Sufferers by the late Sad Fire within the City of London. Say Rec.d by order of the Lord Mayor.
Sa: Kendall

After the Great Fire, savvy businessmen saw an opportunity. Nicholas Barbon (an English economist, physician, and financial speculator), along with eleven associates, founded "The Fire Office" (or "Insurance Office for Houses") in 1680, which offered fire insurance for up to 5,000 households in London. Initially, the insurance only covered the structure, not furniture or goods. Barbon's fire brigade organized Thames watermen into teams to serve as firefighters. Another early Brigade was called Phoenix, after the Greek mythological bird that rose from the ashes. For over 150 years, several similar companies protected buildings and residences in a similar nature.

Throughout the late 17th century and into most of the 18th century, insurance policy holders were given a badge, or metal fire mark, to affix to their building between or above the center first-floor windows, which indicated which Insurance Company covered the building. As many of the streets at this time were still not named (most of the people could not read street signs), fire companies had to have good maps to indicate where the buildings they covered were located. These plaques or marks were very brightly painted, so they would stand out against the wall background. Designs included: Sun Fire Office -- a large sun with a face; the Royal Exchange Assurance – their own structure; and Phoenix -- obviously the bird rising from the ashes. Later, fire marks were made of tin, copper, or similar material.

One can only wonder what mark was affixed to 221 Baker Street?

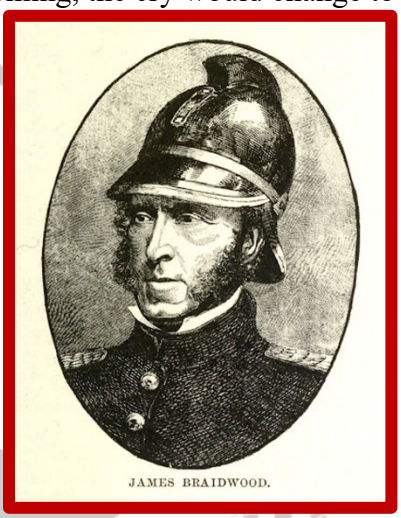
A Fire Brigade would be summoned once a fire event was discovered and reported. The fire-fighters would first take note of the fire mark and, provided it was associated with their company, initiate fire-fighting efforts. Firemen would normally take no action to fight the fire unless the building had their identifying mark, indicating the building owner was in good standing as a customer of their company. This inaction could last until the right fire company arrived at the scene. In many instances, the original responding brigade would remain at the scene to jeer at the rival brigades. Various sources do report several of the companies would work cooperatively together to ensure a fire did not spread, with payments exchanged for services provided by each company.

The Hand in Hand Fire Insurance Company was later to supersede "The Fire Office"' Company. Eventually, many of these insurance companies were to merge. The use of fire marks finally had run its course by the 1860s.

Trying to Go Modern

As well as the Fire Companies, many towns formed their own volunteer fire brigades, which would operate alongside the insurance company firemen.

The firemen of the time had little training and wore brightly coloured uniforms to distinguish themselves between the different brigades. During large fires, they would become very tired through continual pumping of the appliances, and would offer bystanders 'beer tokens' in return for their help. The pumpers would keep cadence of the pumping by chanting "Beer oh, Beer oh!". If relief was slow in coming, the cry would change to "No Beer, No water!"



The first municipal fire brigade was formed in Edinburgh in 1824 by James Braidwood, who became the brigade's first Superintendent. Braidwood was able institute the first modern standards for the operation of a fire department. These standards explained, for the first time, what was expected of a good fire department.

In 1832, Braidwood was persuaded to move to London to lead a force of professional firemen called the London Fire Engine Establishment (LFEE), which was a consolidation of ten fire insurance companies (out of the over 200 companies in existence at the time). Braidwood served as their first Fire Chief. The Company initially consisted of eighty professional firefighters at nineteen fire stations.

Braidwood introduced many firefighting principles that remain in use today, including personal protective equipment included as part of the uniform, an emphasis on training, a scientific approach to tackling blazes, and a rationale for the selection process for firefighters. He also tamed down the colors of the fire uniforms, opting for grey coats and trousers.

He once stated, "Seamen are to be preferred for firefighters… they are taught to obey orders, and the night and day watches are similar to their former habits." As early as the beginning of the 19th century, seaman discovered an advantage of serving as firefighters -- protection from being pressed into service, an important benefit during the Napoleonic wars.

Braidwood's new fire brigades were very effective. Samuel Brown observed in 1850, "The skill and intrepidity of the chief and the exertions of the men have preserved this great city from calamities…"

There was an arrangement made by the Police commissioners and Braidwood, that a policeman, on observing a fire, would communicate the incident to the nearest engine-station; and for doing so the fire brigade would give the officer a gratuity of ten shillings.

Let's Not Forget the Dogs

Fire-dogs, including Dalmatian dogs which are so strongly associated with firehouses, are descendant from 18th and 19th century "carriage dogs." Carriage dogs were the canine companions of coachmen back in the days of horse-drawn carriages. They were a sort of car-alarm with fur.

In the 1800s, horses were the primary transportation of equipment, including fire-engines. The welfare of the horse was extremely important. Horses were specifically trained to pull the engines, needing a calm temperament and not easily shied. To protect these valuable horses from harm, such as being stolen by horse-thieves, it was common to keep dogs near the horses as security.

When a fire-engine was activated to a fire scene, the dogs accompanied the horse and engine as security, as well as a calming companion to the horse.

While no specific breed of dog was singled out, the main features fire brigades looked for were long legs and a sturdy body, energy and motivation, endurance to keep up on a long journey, and good temperament and high level of obedience. Dalmations quickly became the choice of most brigades.

The earliest record of such a fire dog was a mutt named "Chance" in 1834, who would run in front of the engine "announcing the welcome advent of the extinguisher by his bark." Sadly, he was killed while attempting to jump on an engine headed for a fire.

The 1900s saw the end of the horse-drawn carriage, but the Dalmatian dog remained as a symbol of firefighting, earning a seat on the wagon with the firefighters.

The Tooley Street Fire

One of the most significant fires during the Victorian Period began on the afternoon of Saturday, June 22nd 1861 at Cotton's Wharf, the location of several warehouses. While the investigation was inconclusive, evidence indicated the fire simply began by spontaneous combustion. The buildings initially impacted were filled with a huge array of goods, including jute, hemp, cotton, spices, tea and coffee.

Braidwood's LFEE were quick to get to the scene, and by the evening hours, fourteen fire engines, including a steam fire engine and a floating engine, were all fighting the blaze.

The fire caused a huge commotion -- London Bridge was packed with bystanders who simply wanted to watch the conflagration. Arthur Munby wrote in his diary:

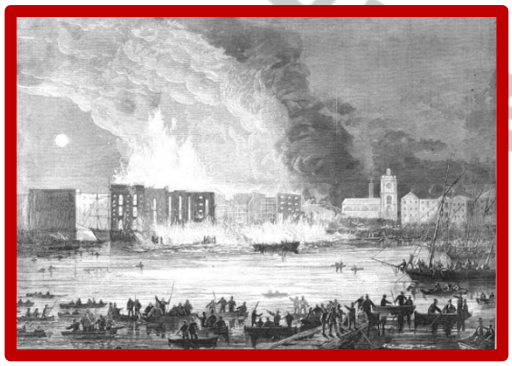
> "… every inch of room on London Bridge was crowded with thousands and thousands of excited faces."

Vendors of ginger beer, fruit and other cheap refreshments recorded a roaring trade. And the pubs remained open throughout the night – even though this was forbidden in an Act of Parliament.

By late evening the fire had quickly spread, stretching from London Bridge to Custom House... the closely packed wharves were loaded with flammable goods, providing more fuel to the inferno. Ten thousand casks of tallow were destroyed in the fire.

The fire spread quickly throughout the warehouses as the iron fire doors, which separated many of the storage rooms, had been left open against the advice of Braidwood. It is believed if they had been closed, the fire may have burnt out, avoiding disaster.

Firefighters were unable to get a supply of water for nearly an hour – the Thames was at low tide making it even more difficult to fight the fire – thus allowing the spread of the flames. The conflagration was so hot the firefighters could not get close enough to squirt the necessary amount of water to subdue the flames.



James Braidwood tragically died while "fighting" the fire. He was issuing "a nip" of rum to the firefighters to boost morale during when a flaming wall fell on him. This practice of giving rations of rum to the firefighters stems from the connection the fire brigade had to the navy.

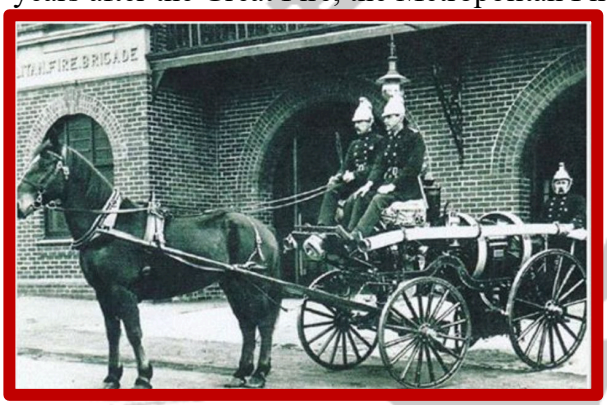
Queen Victoria wrote in her diary "it made one very sad" upon hearing the news of the LFEE Superintendent's passing.

Engines from all over the country arrived to help the LFEE, including private works brigades. It took two weeks to extinguish the fire, and cost an estimated £2 million – mainly due to the contents of the warehouses. The damage to property would cost around £166 million in today's money.

As a result of the Tooley Street fire, insurance companies raised their premiums and insisted on better storage of products in warehouses. In 1862, the insurance companies complained to the Home Secretary, stating they could no longer be responsible for the fire safety of London, as they had often were called to extinguish fires without charge. The private companies felt firefighting should become a public authority. The LFEE had been effective, but it was much too small for the growing metropolis of London.

New Municipal Brigades

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade Act was passed by Parliament in 1865, and on January 1, 1866, two hundred years after the Great Fire, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) commenced as a public service – the first modern public fire brigade.



The Metropolitan Police were originally chosen to direct the actions of the MFB, but it was soon decided the Metropolitan Board of Works would be more effective to manage the program.

Captain Sir Eyre Massey Shaw became Chief Officer of the MFB soon after its introduction, significantly changing it original charter and procedures. He established a new rank system; introduced a new uniform; built new fire stations and introduced advanced technology to improve the service.

Shaw brought in steam fire engines that could pump, on average, 300 gallons of water a minute. They were well equipped for putting out fires – provided the boilers were kept to a sufficient temperature to produce steam. Horses were used to pull the engines, which were housed at the station with the firefighters. The fire station floors were sloped, allowing engines to move out more easily, a practice known as 'on the run', a term still in use.

In 1875, Parliament passed the Public Health Act, which required each urban authority to have sufficient fire plugs, piping, water supplies, and machinery to effectively fight fires. In 1877, the Fire Brigade Association was formed by the Captain of the Marlow Fire Brigade, to help unite the volunteer fire brigades with consistent training standards, better communication systems, and benevolent fund for injured volunteers. By the end of the year, over one thousand firefighters and officers belonged to the Association.

Firefighting in the Canon

By the time the fire accidentally started by Victor Hatherley had fully consumed the house in which his thumb had met its demise (ENGR, September 1889), the equipment used to fight fires in England had changed dramatically. Some of the most important developments during the Victorian period included:

- 1849: Mobile fire escapes (fire ladders) developed, allowing firefighters easier access through narrow streets
- 1878: Fire alarms installed throughout London
- 1880s: Telephone service spread, allowing for fire calls from all areas of the City to local fire stations

So as Holmes, Watson, Inspector Bradstreet, and others reached Eyford (believed to actually be Twyford, which has two fords and two branches of the River Loddon to supply the water) to confront the counterfeiters, they instead encountered a fully-involved fire situation…

> "The road topped a low hill, and there was a great widespread whitewashed building in front of us, spouting fire at every chink and window, while in the garden in front three fire-engines were vainly striving to keep the flames under…"
>
> "…about sunset, however, their efforts were at last successful, and they subdued the flames…"

By the time of the fire at at Lower Norwood by Jonas Oldacre in 1895 (NORW) to help frame the helpless Mr. McFarlane…

> "A small timber-yard still exists, however, at the back of the house, and last night, about twelve o'clock, an alarm was given that one of the stacks was on fire. The engines were soon upon the spot, but the dry wood burned with great fury, and it was impossible to arrest the conflagration until the stack had been entirely consumed."

Fortunately, not all the pivotal fires within the Canon needed a response from volunteer or paid firefighters. The fire Holmes intentionally set in Dene Deep House to flush out Mr. Oldacre (NORW) was easily extinguished by a few buckets of water. And of course, the presumed fire at Briony Lodge (SCAN), initiated by Holmes and Watson, never actually occurred.

So, by the time Morariaty's minions attempted to destroy one of the most iconic addresses in the civilized world, the proper resources were in place to fight the fire effectively and quickly. Thus, as Holmes stated, very little damage was done, and Mycroft was able to retain the rooms exactly as Holmes and Watson had left them.

Significant Fires During the Victorian Period

Date	Location	Damaged / Destroyed / Lost
November 7, 1837	High Street Fire, London	22 lives
January 10, 1838	London	Royal Exchange
July 7, 1839	Collumpton (Devon)	140 homes / buildings
March 23, 1840	Fordington (Dorset)	Over 50 homes
June, 1841	High Street, Dunstable (Beds)	19 homes
October 21, 1841	South Molton (Devon)	74 homes
October 30, 1841	London	Tower of London armoury
September 23, 1842	Formby Street, Liverpool	9 warehouses; £500,000 in costs
1844, 1846, 1850	Gravesend	Large part of town
July, 1846	Soham (Cambridgeshire)	13 homes; 4 buildings
September, 1847	Cottenham (Cambridgeshire)	At least 10 homes
September 5, 1849	Market Hill, Cambridge	12 houses
February, 1850	Ashwell (Hertfordshire)	Half of town
April 4, 1850	Cottenham (Cambridgeshire)	Over 40 houses
1852	Mark Lane, London	Several buildings
October, 1854	Eynsham	Part of town
October 6, 1854	Newcastle, Gateshead	53 lives; hundreds injured

April, 1855	Needingworth (Cambs)	Whole village
1856	Rotherhithe	Millions of gallons of ale, wine, and beer destroyed (most catastrophic)
April, 1856	Kenton (Devon)	Whole village
September, 1859	Buttermire (Wilts)	Whole village
June 22, 1861	Tooley Street, London	Over £2,000,000 in costs
January 1, 1866	St. Katherine's Dock, London	Over £200,000 in costs
December 12, 1866	The Oaks Explosion	Over 360 lives
November 16, 1869	Whitstable, Kent	Over 70 buildings
February 12, 1874	Motcombe Street, London	Warehouse; £1,800,000 in costs
August, 1887	Paddington	Over £500,000 in costs
September 5, 1877	Theatre Royal	188 lives
July 8, 1885	University College	4 lives, several buildings
1890	Terrence Street	Several buildings
November 19, 1897	Great Cripplegate Fire	Over 50 buildings
July 18, 1898	Sutherland	Over 50 buildings

Notes

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Baker Street *Elementary*

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