

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 04, No. 11 - November, 2016
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



Please Note:

December 10th Meeting

Karen and Charles Olson will host a Christmas gathering for the Crew of the Barque Lone Star at their home in McKinney, Texas.

We should bring a Sherlockian white elephant gift for the gift exchange. (A good place to look is on ETSY website.)

Address: 1005 Sundown Circle, McKinney. South of Hwy 380, east of Hwy 75. (940) 337-4984, (940) 337-4159, (214) 491-1847 for directions.

Please RVSP Karen if you are attending:

karen2500@gmail.com

We will have the monthly quiz, on "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez."

November 6th Meeting

There were 14 attendees on hand. As we lost one of our founding members, Bill Beeson, Steve Mason read passages from **Mystic Texas**, by Bryan Wooley, which included quotes and limericks from Bill Beeson. (see page 2).

Cindy Brown and Karen Olson tied on the Quiz, with Karen winning the tie-breaker. The Quiz was based on "The Norwood Builder".

Announcements were made, including last minute preparations for the symposium held on November 7th (see page 4).

Karen and Charles Olson are planning a Victorian Christmas Party for December 10 (see page 5).

A reminder was also given for people to get their home address to Cindy Brown if they plan to participate in the 2016 Sherlockian Christmas card exchange.

It was noted November 29, 2016, our fellow crew member Linda Pieper, will be having knee surgery.

Our member, Diane Tran, is in the hospital. Please keep Diane and Linda in your thoughts.

Rusty Mason gave a wonderful presentation of the website he has designed for the Crew of the Barque Lone Star. It has to be one of the best Sherlockian websites in the country.

Herb Linder was invested as a Crewmate of the Barque for his continuing work to spread the word on Sherlock Holmes through gifts to libraries or schools and by doing presentations.

The closing reading was an excerpt "A Yellow Fog Swirls Across the Windowpane," from the June, 1989, Baker Street Journal (see page 3).

The full minutes may be viewed at our webpage: www.dfw-sherlock.org.

Thanks to Cindy Brown for developing the minutes this month.



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

You can follow us on Twitter at: [@barquelonestar](https://twitter.com/barquelonestar)

You can friend us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar>

Who dunnit:



Third Mate
Helmsman
Spiritual Advisors

Secretaries
Historian
Webmaster

Steve Mason
Walter Pieper
Don Hobbs, BSI
Jim Webb

Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison
Pam Mason
Rusty Mason

mason.steve@epa.gov
waltpieper@att.net
221b@verizon.net
jimrwebb@ix.netcom.com

myrkrid08@yahoo.com

BILL BEESON, ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE CREW

From MYSTIC TEXAS, Bryan Wooley

As we reported earlier, one of our founding members, Bill Beeson, passed over the Reichenbach in October. Rusty Mason was able to find some quotes and other informaton about Bill in **Mystic Texas**, a book written by another Bryan Wooley who has passed on. The quotes below come from the chapter, "*The Adventure of the Eccentric Sherlockians.*"

Every day, Bill Beeson takes up a volume of the Sacred Writings and reads a story or two. "I've been studying them for fifty-five years," he says. "I always find new things. I never tire of them."

"Every true Sherlockian knows that Holmes and Watson were real!" says Mr. Beeson. "And the accouts of Holmes' cases were really written by Dr. Watson! A. Conan Doyle was merely his literary agent!"

"Of course, we're serious about it!" says Mr. Beeson. "But it's all in fun." He smiles foxily.

Mr. Beeson, a retired Texas Instruments technician, also has a goal: To write one thousand verses on the events and characters of the Canon, as The Sacred Writings also are called. "Every story will be represented," he says. "I'm up to verse 328 or 330 so far."

An insomniac, he often awakes in the wee hours with a Sherlockian limerick or dactyl in his head. He jots it down and refines it later at his computer.

'Fore a fire to protect me from winter chills,
I dreamt of the Canon's familiar thrills:
Had a fine time except
Before waking, I stepped
On the tail of the Hound of the Baskervilles.

He first picked up the Sacred Writings when he was eleven, he says, and has seldom ignored them for say since. "I want to pay something back," he says. "I want to contribute to the Sherlockian literature."

As he grappled with doomed Moriarty,
Holmes remarked, at their Reichenbach party,

"I'll use my baritsu
So the waterfall gits you,
You wicked old villainous smarty!"



Mr. Beeson joined the Crew at its first meeting in 1970. He also is an invested member of the Baker Street Irregulars. In Sherlockian circles, this entitles him to place the initials "BSI" after his name.

"I've had people sneer at me, 'Why don't you get a life?'" adsss Mr. Beeson, BSI. "I have a life. There's a big, heavy-duty fantasy component to it, but it's a life." He smiles shrewdly. "Would you rather live in a world peopled by the likes of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson or one peopled by the likes of Adolf Hitler and Richard Nixon?"

A YELLOW FOG SWIRLS ACROSS THE WINDOWPANE

THE BAKER STREET JOURNAL – June, 1989

“IT WAS the end of November,” writes Dr. Watson in ***The Hound of the Baskervilles***, “and Holmes and I sat, upon a raw and foggy night, on either side of a blazing fire in our sitting-room in Baker Street.” And in ***The Copper Beeches***: “It was a cold morning of the early spring, and we sat after breakfast on either side of a cheery fire in the old room at Baker Street. A thick fog rolled down between the lines of dun-coloured houses, and the opposing windows loomed like dark, shapeless blurs through the heavy yellow wreaths.”

This is the Baker Street of Sherlock Holmes we love: the satisfying fire is in the grate— and outside the world is softened and diffused with romantic London fog in which both the criminal and his pursuer may lurk all but unseen.

So the fog is an element without which we cannot imagine the stories: it is at once sinister and cozy, a veil for crime and a medium of romance. But is this almost-mythologized impression of ours strictly Canonical? The plain fact is of the sixty Holmes adventures, only nine contain references to fog. And when these references occur, how, in fact, is this romantic fog described?

Listen to Holmes in the ***Sign of the Four***: “See how the yellow fog

swirls down the street and drifts across the dun-coloured houses. What could be more hopelessly prosaic and material?”

And to Dr. Watson in ***The Bruce-Partington Plans***: “In the third week of November, in the year 1895, a dense yellow fog settled down upon London. From the Monday to the Thursday, I doubt whether it was ever possible from our windows in Baker Street to see the loom of the opposite houses ..., the greasy, heavy brown swirl still drifting past us and condensing in oily drops upon the window-panes. ...”

In these scenes, as in others in the Canon, the presence of fog accompanies the characters’ being depressed, irritable, or both. And that Sherlockian fog which we so love is always brown or yellow, occasionally even greasy or oily.

That’s, of course, because it isn’t fog; it’s smog. It’s a nasty combination of natural water vapor and thousands of pounds of particulate waste belched yearly into London’s atmosphere by the burning of coal to heat homes and fire industry. It is yellow because of the high sulfur content of coal-fire smoke — sulfur dioxide spewed into the air and producing what we now refer to as acid rain.

In short, it’s air pollution of the most malodorous and

unhealthy kind. Little wonder such a shroud seemed to Holmes appropriate to criminous doings; little wonder that its pall depressed our heroes.

But for all this, for all of the manner in which the Victorians perceived the “greasy, heavy brown swirl,” we Sherlockians — romantic fundamentalists — are not to be dissuaded.

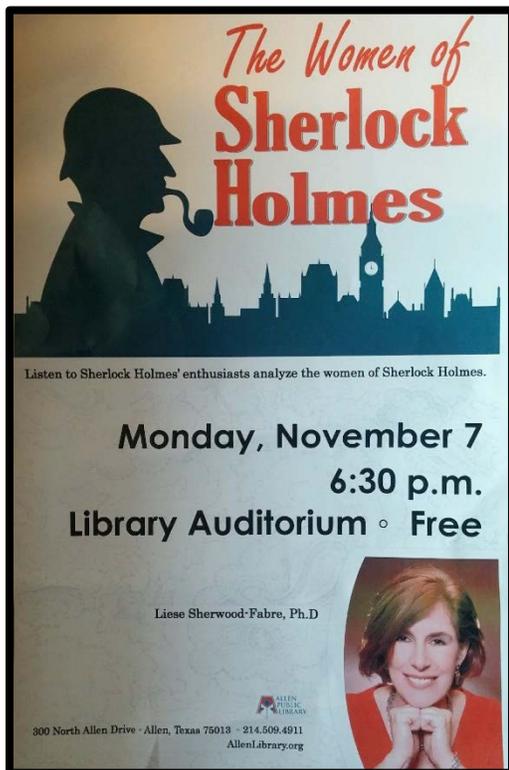
If fog appears in only a handful of the tales, we lovingly infuse the others with it. If Holmes and Watson grow impatient with its burdensome presence, from our armchairs we seek to assuage them and blanket Baker Street deeper in the stuff. For we know, with Holmes, that even “moonshine is a brighter thing than fog,” and — at least until the end of the story— we want our Sherlockian mysteries wrapped in wreaths of darkness. And we also want the rolling, dense fog-banks pressing at the windows as we ourselves push farther back into the cushions at our own firesides, setting out once more to adventure with Sherlock Holmes.

“A yellow fog swirls past the window-pane,” wrote Vincent Starrett; “the ghostly gas lamps fail at twenty feet.” No true Sherlockian would have it any other way.

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

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

THE WOMEN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES



On Monday evening, November 7th, several members of the Crew of the Barque Lone Star conducted a symposium at the Allen Public Library entitled “The Women of Sherlock Holmes.”

Liese Sherwood-Fabre started the discussions with an educational view on “The Villainesses of Sherlock Holmes.”

Next, Cindy Brown presented “Do Any of the Modern Irene Adlers Live Up to the Original?”

Tim Kline then gave the audience a view of the various female Sherlock Holmes through the years. And he also baked up several dozen Sherlock Holmes cookies for the attendees.

Steve Mason finished the presentations with “How Did Sherlock Holmes Feel About Women.”

The climax of the symposium was a wonderful mystery developed by Brenda Hutchison for the audience to participate in.

A total of 34 Sherlockian devotees were in attendance, and all of them were able to take home free books, bracelets, and other Sherlockian memorabilia.

And a few of the attendees are interested in becoming members of our Society!!

Thanks so much for the Allen Library, including Tom Keener, for hosting us again for annual symposium.

WE'RE HAVING A CHRISTMAS PARTY !!

Charles and Karen Olson have graciously offered to host a Christmas party for all of our Crew members...

DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

TIME: 2:00 – 5:00 PM

ADDRESS: 1005 SUNDOWN CIRCLE, MCKINNEY,
TX in a housing addition called
Sunset Acres, off HWY 380, just east
of McKinney

PHONE: if you need further directions, get
lost, or just want to say hi to Karen
or Charles... (940) 337-4984,
(940) 337-4159, (214) 491-1847.



Charles and Karen have a lovely house, and you will enjoy seeing their Sherlockian items, as well as wonderful items from all over the world.

There will be Victorian snacks and hors d'oeuvres... but feel free to bring your own favorite Victorian delicacy or libation to assist Karen.

We will also have a Christmas present exchange, so we are asking all attendees to bring a small Sherlockian/Victorian gift... \$10 maximum, if possible...

If you are stumped for a potential present, go to Etsy (<https://www.etsy.com/>) and search on Sherlock Holmes... they have thousands of potential gifts for an exchange (or for yourself) at reasonable prices...

Please RSVP to Karen Olson if you are attending, so she can plan for the number of attendees...

karen.olson2500@gmail.com

We hope to see you there...

Steve, Karen, Charles, Walter

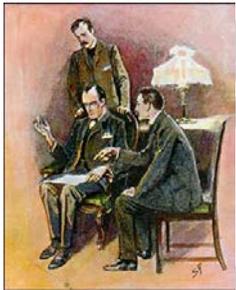
17 STEPS TO THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

Seventeen thoughts for further ponderance of the case at hand...

THAT'S ONE HEAVY TIN DISPATCH BOX

The ever-enigmatic Dr. Watson begins this week's tale with those intriguing words, "When I look at the three massive manuscript volumes which contain our work for the year 1894."



That's not one, not two, but three whole volumes and, better still, they're massive.

Then there's that word that has to set collectors' mouths to "high drool": manuscript.

Were these wondrous tomes the work of Watson alone? A combined record in the handwriting of both he and Holmes? How many cases might "three massive volumes" have held for 1894? Does this mean that Watson was recording every single one of Holmes's cases for that year?

And one for the collectors: three massive volumes of crime chronicles in the handwriting of Dr. Watson, many, if not most, of the cases unpublished. How much money would such a thing go for if it were to show up at auction?

THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS(ION)

Among the untold tales we are presented with this time is "the famous Smith-Mortimer succession case."

How many kinds of succession are there that might

pertain to this case? Did Mortimer necessarily succeed Smith, or was their succession something they shared or both caused? Or is this one just too vague?

HOW DULL WERE THE OTHER CASES?

Once more, Watson advertises this case up front in glowing terms that may not be backed up by the tale that follows: "On the whole I am of opinion that none of them unites so many singular points of interest as the episode of Yoxley Old Place, which includes not only the lamentable death of young Willoughby Smith, but also those subsequent developments which threw so curious a light upon the causes of the crime."

So *many* singular points? Well, there's the murder, the hidden panel, and the secret past ... and after "Norwood Builder" that panel isn't so distinctive. What were the "many" singular points Watson finds in this case?



HOW PROFITABLE WAS THE EVENING FOR WATSON?

"Holmes and I sat together in silence all the evening, he engaged with a powerful lens deciphering the remains of the original inscription upon a palimpsest, I deep in a recent treatise upon surgery."

Well, we know Holmes wasn't too happy with the results of his

studies, but what of the doctor? If Watson had sold his practice to Holmes's cousin, why was he reading up on surgery? Would this be a "how-to" treatise, or a study of some form of surgery? How often would Watson have been practicing surgery even if he was in practice?

SLOSHING YOUR WAY DOWN BAKER STREET

"I walked to the window, and looked out on the deserted street. The occasional lamps gleamed on the expanse of muddy road and shining pavement. A single cab was splashing its way from the Oxford Street end."

Time for some very basic questions: How much "mud" was there coating Baker Street? There was pavement under there somewhere wasn't there? Was there anyway for the dirt on the streets to wash off to?

WHERE WAS THE NEAREST CABSTAND?

For a promising young detective, Stanley Hopkins seems very free with his transportation, sending his cab away before he even knows Holmes is home, on a very unpleasant night to be walking home. What were his hopes for finding fresh transportation in that weather if he hadn't stayed?

A PRACTICAL MAN'S USES FOR A SCOTLAND YARD MAN

"It was young Stanley Hopkins, a promising detective, in whose

career Holmes had several times shown a very practical interest.”

Why was it so practical for Holmes to show an interest in Hopkins’s career? Wasn’t his connection to the Yard already well established?



GOOD MEDICINE FROM THE GOOD DOCTOR

“Here’s a cigar, and the doctor has a prescription containing hot water and a lemon, which is good medicine on a night like this.”

What else might have Watson’s prescription contained? Was this an actual attempt at a cold remedy or a bit of wassail for the caroller of criminal tales?

THE YOXLEY OLD PLACE BIOSPHERE

“If you were to search all England, I don’t suppose you could find a household more self-contained or freer from outside influences. Whole weeks would pass, and not one of them go past the garden gate.”

Would such self-containment have required any special measures in that much more self-sufficient time? What supplies might they have needed to break their solitude occasionally to go out for? How long could such a household have gone without outside contact, at the outside limit?

THE MORTIMER THAT DIDN’T KNOW ANY BASKERVILLES

“Mortimer, the gardener, who wheels the Bath chair, is an army pensioner—an old Crimean man of

excellent character. He does not live in the house, but in a three-roomed cottage at the other end of the garden.”

Does Hopkins mean Mortimer fought in Crimea, or that he’s actually of Crimean descent? Wasn’t a three-roomed cottage a luxury for a gardener at a household the size of Yoxley Old Place?

We are told that Coram couldn’t dress without the help of Mortimer, which, combined with the bath-chair business, shows that Mortimer’s duties went far beyond gardening.

Was he still referred to as the “gardener” because his employer was sensitive about his invalidated state and would not abide having a “nurse”?

THE REASONS FOR REDECORATING

We are told that Susan Tarlton “was engaged at the moment in hanging some curtains in the upstairs front bedroom.



Professor Coram was still in bed, for when the weather is bad he seldom rises before midday.

The housekeeper was busied with some work in the back of the house. Willoughby Smith had been in his bedroom, which he uses as a sitting-room.”

The upstairs front bedroom plainly belonged to neither Coram nor Smith, as they both were occupying theirs.

Being the front bedroom, it would seem the logical choice for overnight guests. Why was Susan

suddenly hanging curtains in that bedroom, when the household seems so unsocial? Was Coram expecting a guest? Or was it just time to wash the curtains and the merest coincidence to all that happened in the tale?

KNIVES FOR EVERY POSSIBLE PURPOSE

In this tale we find “one of those small sealing-wax knives to be found on old-fashioned writing-tables, with an ivory handle and a stiff blade.”

How does a knife come into play in the process of administering sealing wax or opening an envelope sealed with such wax? Is it like a letter opener, a convenient, but basically unnecessary item?

AND THIS WAS THE SCOTLAND YARD MAN HE LIKED

“What did you do, Hopkins, after you had made certain that you had made certain of nothing?”

In this tale, Holmes gives

Hopkins a little bit of the criticism he usually saves for Watson.

Were Holmes’s little digs a measure of how comfortable he was with an individual? Might his tone have been humorously such that these bits were less stinging than they sometimes appear?



STANLEY HOPKINS — MEMORY CHALLENGED?

Sherlock Holmes makes several deductions from the golden pince-nez found at the scene of the crime, which is not an

unusual thing for him to do. What is a bit different is the fact that he writes them all on paper first, rather than just announcing them aloud, as is his usual fashion. Why? Though his write-up starts in the form of an advertisement, it finishes as suggested instructions for the investigator. What purpose did this write-up have?



THE LONG HOURS OF POLICE WORK

"I had intended," Hopkins says, "to go the round of the

London opticians."

Didn't London have a good-sized number of opticians even then? Just how long would it have taken Hopkins to do the legwork involved in such an effort, even with the help of a hansom?

THE HOSPITALITY OF 221B

"Well, it's nearly one, and we had best get a few hours' sleep. I daresay you can manage all right on the sofa in front of the fire. I'll light my spirit lamp, and give you a cup of coffee before we start."

Didn't 221B Baker Street have a guest room at some point? Hopkins isn't the first Scotland Yard man to sleep in the sitting room, but he's the first that requires a night-light. Or is

Holmes's spirit lamp to be used in the brewing of coffee, and why would the detective have brewed it himself? Didn't Mrs. Hudson keep he and Watson well supplied with coffee and breakfast?

PRODUCT PLACEMENT, VICTORIAN STYLE

"Is it a simple key?"

"No, sir, it is a Chubb's key."



Would this have qualified as a commercial for Chubb's locks and keys? Or was "Chubb's" a brand like Xerox or Kleenex that came to be commonly used as the word for a product that other companies produced as well?

AND WHEN THEY GOT DESPERATE, THEY MADE MAT CREAM PIE

"The professor's corridor is also lined with cocoanut matting."

This one has always mystified me: What part of the cocoanut did they make matting out of?

APPARENTLY, HE DIDN'T MAKE IT

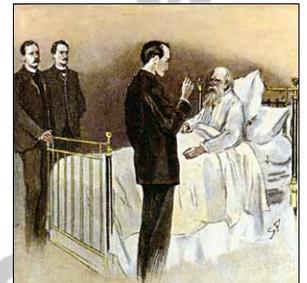
Coram brags, "That is my magnum opus—the pile of papers on the side table yonder. It is my analysis of the documents found in the Coptic monasteries of Syria and Egypt, a work which will cut

deep at the very foundation of revealed religion. With my enfeebled health I do not know whether I shall ever be able to complete it, now that my assistant has been taken from me."

How might knowledge from the Coptic monasteries have cut out the foundation of revealed religion? Is he speaking strictly of a specific religion, or all religion? Would he have found a sympathetic reader in Holmes, who enjoyed Winwood Reade's "Martyrdom of Man" so much?

HOW DID SHE KNOW HER CUE?

"She is there," announces Sherlock Holmes, pointing to a bookcase, behind which Anna Coram was hidden. Mrs. Coram has lost her glasses, and even if she had them, we're not told whether or not she had a peephole. How did she know that Holmes's "She is there." was directed at her and not a maid in the doorway?



AND THEY'RE OFF!

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

The canon includes two cases involving race horses.

Holmes is called in to investigate the disappearance of Silver Blaze (1) just before the Wessex Cup and Sir Robert Norberton's odd behavior prior to his horse Prince running in the Epsom Derby. (2)

The popularity of the sport in Victorian England, in addition to the criminal element at that time, made it a perfect backdrop for these Sherlockian investigations.

The exact time of the horse's arrival in Britain is not known, but Caesar's first invasion of Britain in 55 BC was rebuffed by a cavalry.

The animals were smaller than those today, but quite numerous. (3)



Following their use in warfare and other pursuits, racing the animals came into fashion in the early 1600s when King James 1

built the first grandstand on the Newmarket Heath.

Charles II, however, brought horseracing into its own when he built a palace and moved his court there twice a year beginning in 1669. (4)

Ever since, Newmarket has been considered the headquarters of British horseracing.

In addition to the racetracks at Newmarket, the Jockey Club built a coffee house at the site for member meetings in 1752.

This club, created by gentlemen passionate about horses and racing, became the official governing body for horseracing in 1860s in an effort to impose more control over betting and horse management. (5)

In the early 1800s, horse owners who were commoners were permitted to enter their animals in the races. (6)

As a result, the events attracted larger crowds, including the working class. (7)

Betting had always been a part of the sport, but it grew more pronounced in the 1830s and 1840s with a number of scandals coming to light.

In addition to unscrupulous bookmakers, ineligible horses (above or below the age limit for the race) were discovered among the entrants. (8)

While betting on horses had always been a part of the sport, off-course betting developed in response to the working class interest, and by the end of the 1840s, was an important feature of the activity.

For the most part, these sites evolved from tobacconist shops where men already congregated and placed friendly wagers through the proprietor.

Over time, horse betting replaced the original commercial trade in many such establishments.

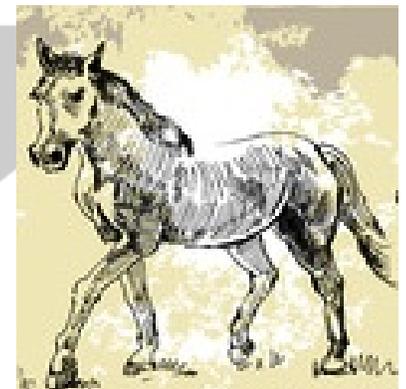
Partitions with pigeon holes for placing bets replaced the counter.

Lists of the various races and participants' odds were listed on the walls, and results were quickly reported as fast as runners could arrive from the telegraph office.

One of the most well-known and popular establishments was Dwyer's in St. Martin's Lane.

In 1851, following heavy betting on the favorite in the Chester Cup, those with winning tickets arrived to find the place emptied and the owner gone, leaving behind a debt of twenty-five thousand pounds. (9)

With The Jockey Club's management, the sport's respectability rose, and with additional security efforts, such as enclosing the tracks and



providing stands, certain races gained popularity as social events.

In addition to the race course, other amusements (from food vendors to sideshow attractions) were set up around the area. (10)

The Ascot, run in June, became part of the social season where women and men attended (and still do) in their most elegant clothes. (11)

Derby Day, also occurring in May or June, became a national holiday.

As these two Sherlockian cases show, however, despite the Jockey Club's efforts to maintain the respectability of horse racing, its continued popularity and history of betting on the outcome, fostered the persistence of a criminal element in the sport.

Gratefully, Holmes and Watson ferreted out at least two of the most grievous offenses.

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- 1) Doyle, Arthur Conan. The Complete Sherlock Holmes: with an introduction from Robert Ryan (Kindle Location 15130). Simon & Schuster UK. Kindle Edition.
 - 2) Ibid, Kindle Locations 31381-31382.
 - 3) <http://chestofbooks.com/animals/horses/Health-Disease-Treatment-4/The-Horse-In-Britain.html>
 - 4) <http://www.jockeyclubrooms.co.uk/about-us/home-of-the-sport-of-kings>
 - 5) Chesney, Kellow. The Victorian Underworld (New York: Schocken Books, 1972) 282.
 - 6) Hughes, Kristine. Everyday Life in Regency and Victorian England (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1998) 142.
 - 7) Mitchell, Sally. Daily Life in Victorian England (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996) 221.
 - 8) Chesney, 282.
 - 9) Ibid 283 – 284.
 - 10) Hughes, 142.
 - 11) Mitchell, 220 – 221.

By Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD. You can read more about this award-winning author's writing (as well as her previous articles in the Bilge Pump) and sign up for her newsletter at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com. A non-Sherlockian adventure can be downloaded at: <http://www.liesesherwoodfabre.com/extras.html>



Baskerville, A Sherlock Holmes Mystery

Date/Time

Nov 18, 2016 to Dec 18, 2016 08:00 PM until 10:30 PM

This event occurs weekly, on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The game's afoot! Austin Playhouse is delighted to once again present a famous Sherlockian tale, the Texas Premiere of Ken Ludwig's ***Baskerville, A Sherlock Holmes Mystery***. This inventive new adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" finds the intrepid Holmes and his loyal companion Watson battling their most notorious mystery amid foggy London streets and the foreboding moors of the English countryside. When a mythical hellhound begins prowling in the mists, the great detective must use every ounce of his

legendary wit and deductive power to crack the case before a family curse dooms its newest heir. With a cast of 5 actors juggling over 40 roles, *Baskerville* will be a fast-paced, pulse-pounding, and murderously funny ride.

Location: Austin Playhouse, 6001 Airport Blvd, Austin, TX

Contact email: boxoffice@austinplayhouse.com

Website: <http://https://austinplayhouse.ticketleap.com/baskerville/>

Sponsor: Austin Playhouse

Phone: 512-476-0084

The Game's Afoot or Holmes for the Holidays

By Ken Ludwig

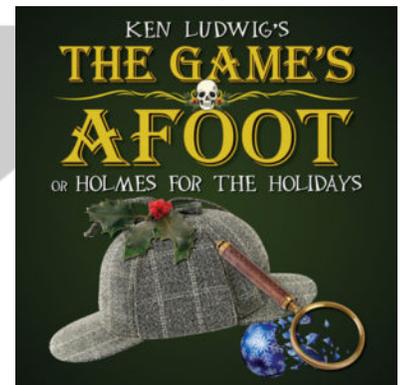
Allen's Community Theatre

December 2-18, 2016

Thursday - 7:30 pm, Friday & Saturday - 8 pm, and Sunday - 3 pm

Synopsis: In December 1936, Broadway star William Gillette, renowned for his leading role in the play *Sherlock Holmes*, invited fellow cast-members to his Connecticut castle for a weekend of revelry. When a guest is stabbed to death, the festivities in this isolated house of tricks and mirrors quickly turn dangerous. Gillette assumes the persona of Holmes to track down the killer before the next victim appears. The danger and hilarity are non-stop in this glittering whodunit set during the Christmas holidays.

For more information, visit the [Allen's Community Theatre website](#)



56 STORIES IN 56 DAYS - THE ADVENTURE OF THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ

Posted on October 22, 2011 by barefootnbakerstreet



Interestingly, Watson refers to “our work” at the start of this one, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

Watson writes: “When I look at the three manuscript volumes which contain our work for the year 1894 . . .” Clearly the business has become more of a joint venture now that Watson devotes his full-time energies to it.

They must both now live off the proceeds because Watson no longer has his medical practice.

It’s an interesting quote because Watson certainly wouldn’t have referred to it as “our work” in the early days of their union.

We also hear that Holmes won an autographed letter of

thanks from the French President and the Order of the Legion of Honour.

Wow, impressive stuff. Business has improved greatly now that Watson is back at 221B.

Hopkins appears again in this story, the young detective in which Holmes has great hope for the future.

He freely admits to Holmes that he can’t make “Neither head nor tail” of the murder of Professor Coram’s secretary Mr Willoughby Smith at Yoxley Old Place.

A golden pince-nez was found in the hand of the dead man and Holmes does his usual startling piece of analysis describing perfectly the features of the woman who was wearing them.

Another apparently innocuous inanimate object also yields a massive clue when Holmes works out that without her pince-nez the lady would have become confused by the cocanut (sic) matting and lost her way, following it into the professor’s bedroom.

Therefore he must be hiding her.

By smoking heavily and dropping lots of ash near the suspected hiding place, Holmes was able to return to the room and see that the ash had been disturbed as the person came out from their hiding place behind the bookcase.

It turns out that the professor is not English, but Russian, and the woman is his estranged wife.

Yet again, mistakes of the past come back to haunt, but this time an innocent young man was the victim as the professor’s wife accidentally stabbed him when he caught her trying to take things from the bureau.

An interesting story, but a rather sad conclusion as the woman takes her own life.

In the Granada episode, the professor is murdered in the end by a member of the Russian brotherhood who he wronged, but in the original he is the only one who survives.

I think I prefer the TV ending as this one feels a little incomplete to me.

For that reason it’s a 6 out of 10.

STORY INFO PAGES FOR "THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ"

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

First published in:

The Strand Magazine, July 1904, Collier's Weekly, October 29, 1904

Time frame of story (known/surmised):

Late November 1894, stated. Exact date not given.

Holmes & Watson living arrangements:

Together at 221B.

Opening scene:

It was a dark and stormy night. Watson was reading a surgical treatise, and Holmes was engaged with a powerful lens deciphering the remains of the original inscription upon a palimpsest.

Then, amid the droning of the wind there came the stamping of a horse's hoofs, and the long grind of a wheel of a cab as it rasped against the curb.

It was young Stanley Hopkins, a promising detective from Scotland Yard, in whose career Holmes had several times shown a very practical interest.

Holmes invited Hopkins to draw up and warm his toes.

Client:

Hopkins the detective.

Crime or concern:

Murder of Willoughby Smith, assistant to professor Coram, an elderly scholar. Smith had been stabbed in the underside of his neck, pierced with a very small but

deep wound, which had divided the carotid artery.

The instrument with which the injury had been inflicted was one of those small sealing-wax knives to be found on old-fashioned writing-tables, with an ivory handle and a stiff blade. It was part of the fittings of the professor's own desk.

Villain:

Professor Coram himself, whose treachery set it all in motion. The killer was his wife, who had been double-crossed by the professor years before.

Motive:

Anna, the wife, came back to steal papers that would exonerate her companion (or lover).

She had not planned murder, but stabbed the victim with the sealing-wax knife when he interrupted her and grabbed her.

Logic/clues used to solve:

Weapon used was not brought from outside.

The hallway to the professor's room had cocoanut matting just like the entry and the hall to the office where the killing took place.

The victim's last words, "The professor, it was she."

Found by the victim was a golden pince-nez, with two broken ends of black silk cord dangling from the end of it.

It was sized for a person with narrowly-set eyes.

Information from the housekeeper that the professor seemed to be a big eater at times.

During his interview with the professor, Holmes smoked cigarettes profusely.

He later observed traces of the ashes on the carpet that indicated someone else was present, and was hiding in the bookcases.

Policemen:

Stanley Hopkins, who brought Holmes in. The chief constable, who sent for Hopkins. Another constable met the three at the garden gate of Yoxley Old Place, the crime scene.

A Russian policeman was killed in a time of trouble by the Nihilists.

Holmes' fees:

No mention. Likely another case where Holmes was consulted (and presumably paid) by the Yard.

Transport:

Holmes & Watson and Hopkins took train from Charing Cross to Chatham at six in the morning, and got to Yoxley Old Place between eight and nine.

Food:

The three (Hopkins, Holmes & Watson) had coffee early in the morning, and then snatched a hurried breakfast after arriving in Chatham, while a horse was being put into a trap at the local inn.

The professor was a “big eater”. He was feeding his hidden wife/conspirator.

Drink:

No mention

Vices:

Professor Coram was a 3 ½ pack-a-day cigarette smoker!

Other cases mentioned:

SIGN. The repulsive story of the red leech and the terrible death of Crosby, the banker; the Addleton tragedy, and the singular contents of the ancient British barrow, the famous Smith-Mortimer succession case, and the tracking and arrest of Huret, the Boulevard assassin — an exploit which won for Holmes an autographed letter of thanks from the French President and the Order of the Legion of Honour.

Notable Quotables:

“By George, it’s marvellous!” cried Hopkins, in an ecstasy of admiration, upon having a clue explained to him by Holmes.

Watson, describing how Holmes dealt with women: “I may have remarked before that Holmes had, when he liked, a peculiarly ingratiating way with women, and that he very readily established terms of confidence with them. He (soon) captured the housekeeper’s goodwill and was

chatting with her as if he had known her for years.

“I have forged and tested every link of my chain, Professor Coram, and I am sure that it is sound. What your motives are, or what exact part you play in this strange business, I am not yet able to say. In a few minutes I shall probably hear it from your own lips.” – SH, just before pronouncing his solution.

Other interesting:

Pince-nez: A type of spectacles which are supported by pinching the wearer’s nose instead of held up by bows over the ears.

They were popular in the late



1800’s. By the late 1930’s, they were mostly used by the elderly and are rarely seen in modern times.

Famous wearers of pince-nez were Theodore Roosevelt and Anton Chekhov.

French, nose-pinch. Often provided with a loop of cord or fine chain to prevent loss or breakage.

Holmes tells us he had a very narrow face, but not as narrow as the owner of the pince-nez.

The professor had been analyzing documents found in the Coptic monasteries of Syria and Egypt, a work which would cut deep at the very foundation of revealed religion.

When all was said and done: The killer was Professor Coram’s wife. They had been Russian nihilists, and the professor had turned his wife and her companions in to the authorities.

After serving a prison term, Anna, the wife, came after the professor to steal some papers she believed would free her companions.

Willoughby Smith, the assistant, came onto Anna going through the professor’s papers and got stabbed, and Anna lost her pince-nez.

After the nearsighted Anna took the wrong corridor and ended up in the professor’s room, he hid her, and covered for her.

Holmes discovered the truth, and Anna poisoned herself, but gave Holmes some papers to take to the Russian embassy, which she hoped would free her companions.

In the end, Holmes allows Hopkins to take credit for the solution, and takes the papers to the Russian embassy.

AN INQUIRY INTO "THE ADVENTURE OF THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ"

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

"The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez" was first published in The Strand Magazine in July 1904.

According to Baring-Gould, as set down in The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, Second Edition, 1974, the case takes place on Wednesday, November 14, to Thursday, November 1894. At the time Holmes is 42 years old and Watson 44.

Lost Cases and Accepted Honors

As several times before, Watson begins this case by giving us another very tantalizing list of more of Sherlock Holmes' lost cases. In passing, he also tells us that the Great Detective was conferred (and accepted!) the Order of the Legion of Honor for his capture of Huret, the Boulevard assassin.

While it seems Holmes was as indifferent to his fees as he was to the honors the establishment was able to present, there have been times when he was very much aware of the value of money and this might have extended to the honors' category.

Watson was never clear as to why the Great Detective declined knighthood several times, yet accepted the Legion of Honor. I've speculated before that Huret might have been a serial killer, much like Jack the Ripper, and that having failed to apprehend him, Holmes did not deem himself deserving of knighthood; in Huret's case, however, he had deservedly earned the appreciation of the French. (Bald-faced plug follows)

In my book, "The Adventure of the Maiden Voyage," when the King, after again offering a knighthood Holmes declines, asks him why one and not the other, and Holmes replies, "I always thought 'Sir Sherlock' somehow has a rather pretentious-sounding alliterative ring to it, sir."

The Strange Foreign Voice

I find it curious for such a world traveler and man of the world, Anna's accent sounded "strange"

to Watson, who surely must have been exposed to hundreds of them. Also, since the British Crown had close ties with the Russian Royal Family, and Russian tourists were not rare, Watson's reaction would seem peculiar.

I've Got a Bridge I'd Like You to See

Having been at the receiving end of Czarist justice for years, and having seen its operation for even more years, how could Anna seriously believe that the papers in question would have been enough to clear and free Alexis? Even if he did, as we are told, deplore violence, he had been a member of Anna and Coram's organization.

Russian justice would not have taken this fact too kindly.

The Useless Suicide

It always puzzles me why did Anna killed herself. She had heard Holmes say the killing of Coram's assistant had been unintended and, in any case, women were rarely executed in those days.

Imagine, however, if she had gone to trial. The proceedings would have been sensational and received international coverage. That, more than the papers, might have persuaded the Russian Government to take note of the court of public opinion, making Alexis' release more likely.

What else happened in 1894:

EMPIRE

- Uganda becomes protectorate.
- Jameson occupies Matabeleland.

BRITAIN

- Gladstone retires; Rosebery becomes prime minister.
- Tower Bridge opens.
- First Lyon's tea shop.
- Big wheel erected at Earl's Court.

- St Bride's Institute opens.
- Manchester ship canal completed.
- Harcourt's Budget raises death duties.
- Parish Councils Act: Parish, Rural, and Urban Districts established.
- Thirlmere Dam completed; for Manchester water supply, aqueduct 96 miles long.
- Water tube boilers fitted in HMS Hornet and HMS Sharpshooter.
- Turbinia, first steam-turbine ship launched.
- Merchant Shipping Act: Masters, mates, and engineers to hold Board of Trade certificates.
- Railway and Canal Traffic Act; fixes existing rates as maxima.
- Official opening of the Manchester Ship Canal (begun 1887).
- Blackpool Tower opens, 518 ft high.

WORLD

- Sino-Japanese War (1894 - 95).
- Tsar Nicholas II.
- French take Madagascar.
- Alfred Dreyfus found guilty of treason.
- President Carnot of France assassinated by Italian anarchist.
- French under Joffre capture Timbuktu.
- Hawaii becomes a republic.
- Sicilian bread riots lead to martial law and suppression of Italian socialist societies.
- Italians defeat Dervishes at Kassala.
- Kurds massacre Armenians at Sassoun.
- National Society founded in Greece to extend Greek authority in the Balkans.
- Alexander III of Russia died; Nicholas II (last Romanov tsar) accedes to the Throne.
- Sergius Witte becomes minister of finance in Russia.
- War breaks out between Japan and China. Japanese naval victory at Yalu River; Japanese capture of Port Arthur.

- Alexander Obrenovitch annuls liberal constitution of 1889.
- Sale of spirits resumed in Russia as state monopoly.
- Formation of French Agricultural Mutual Loan Society.
- Baron Pierre de Coubertin initiates congress reviving the Olympic Games.
- Beginning of car racing Paris to Rouen.

ART

- Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book.
- Debussy, L'Après Midi d'un Faun.
- Toulouse-Lautrec, Les Deux Amis.
- Degas, Femme à sa Toilette.
- Strauss' first opera, Guntram, produced at Weimer.
- Monet, Rouen Cathedral.
- George du Maurier, Trilby.
- Anthony Hope, The Prisoner of Zenda.
- Oscar Wilde, A Woman of No Importance.

SCIENCE

- Escalators introduced (U.S.).
- Halstead (U.S.) details his operation for breast cancer (mastectomy).
- Sir William Ramsey and Lord Rayleigh discover existence of zero valence.
- Flagstaff (Lowell) Observatory erected.
- Oliver and Schäfer discover the nature of insulin.
- J.H. Northrop (U.S.A.) invents automatic loom.
- Louis Lumière invents the cinematograph.
- Berliner modifies earlier work on the gramophone by using a horizontal disk instead of a cylinder. Not fully satisfactory until 1897.
- Guaranty Building, Buffalo erected. Metal-framed building.

CANNONICAL FOOTNOTES

Warren Randall, The Holmes & Watson Report, January, 1998

What was Watson?

As in all things, the answer is to be found in our own Good Old Index, the Canon, if only one knows where to look.

Our very first introduction to the good doctor is his statement he took his degree in medicine at the University of London and went through a course prescribed for surgeons in the Army at Netley.

There is absolutely no indication this course had anything to do with the healing arts.

It is entirely possible and more than probable the curriculum dealt more with military matters than the medical -- saluting rather than suturing, good form in uniform, or settling up the mess bill promptly, not to mention dealing with

"indigenous personnel."

Upon entering active duty, Watson went into the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers.

A fusil is a light flintlock musket.

In modern terms this would be a weapon carried by an infantryman (or does one now have to say an

infantry-person?), a soldier who travels by foot.

Watson then reports he was removed from this regiment and attached to the Berkshires, an infantry regiment.

We should pause to ask why a surgeon would be transferred.

With all due respect to any one of the six Napoleons, the stomach an army travels on also has feet, and Watson moved along because he was almost certainly a specialist in foot problems.

Almost immediately Watson's interest in the lower extremities becomes apparent.

You must recall that he reports that he was struck in the shoulder, by a bullet which grazed the subclavian, and then, with the ink barely dry on that report, he changes the location of his wound to his leg.

This is not sloppy writing, but pure puffery, booming his own professional specialty; for Dr. Watson makes eighty-eight specific references to "feet" and to

"foot," sixty-five, even to the extent of differentiating rights and lefts.

Mindful of the criticism that might be leveled at his immodesty, for ethical doctors in those times did not advertise, Dr. Watson made sure that the majority of foot notes are credited to Mr. Sherlock Holmes, his friend and occasional colleague.

For example, it would be more than likely that Watson, who spent time in India, was the source of Holmes's comment that "the Hindoo proper has long and thin feet" and "the sandal-wearing Mohammedan has the great toe well separated from the others."

In the same case, Watson has already made a point of asking Holmes if he has "any professional inquiry on foot at present" -- talk about a straight line.

And Watson commemorates their first meeting by reporting that "he [Holmes] sprang to his feet with a cry of pleasure."

We can but imagine that Holmes was still suffering the aftereffects of the freezing of Trevor's bull-terrier on his ankle and immediately recognized Watson as an Afghanistan foot specialist who might treat him.

This painful injury might explain why Holmes often sat with his knees drawn up, thus avoiding pressure on the ankle, or curled up on the sofa, which might not be so unusual since he did spend ten days in bed after it happened.



This may also account for the weakness in his limbs which caused him to suffer a violent strain of the ankle while merely walking about in the Priory School case.

Holmes's nonchalant attitude toward his feet almost required the presence of Watson -- recall how



Holmes jammed the door with his foot in seeking Lady Frances -- ouch!

There are other ankles to be considered -- such Watson's, which he avoided injuring by falling on his face, for example, or the swollen ankles of Mr. Blessington -- of course, he was dead, but that is important only to him.

We might conclude that Dr. Watson took his specialty quite seriously given his predilection for the ladies; there is not one reference to a "well-turned" ankle.

Inspector Hopkins was invited to warm his toes on a wet, rainy night.

Would that have been a good soak in the doctor's "prescription containing hot water and a lemon"? -- a decidedly different medication than the vinegar and water prescribed for swelling about the eye.

But there are throngs of toes milling about - square, sharp, cramped or cold, which Watson treated in **A Study in Scarlet**, **"A Scandal in Bohemia"**, and **The Valley of Fear** while the instep is of interest in three other cases.

In the interest of brevity, which is the sole of something or other, I will proceed by mentioning only the problems Watson encountered or conditions reported:

Lestrade acknowledges that lameness is indicated by the less distinct impression of one foot over the other, but does not confirm Holmes's observation of "that left foot of yours with its inward twist."

One would think that Watson's surgical experience caused him to agree when Holmes commented on the difficulty "when a man has to take a foot off."

There were wet feet, feet that were drunken, uncertain, or ungainly.

Col. Barclay had tilted feet as well as command of the 117th Foot, which would have kept Watson busy for years.

There was a cloven foot and a devil's foot, bad feet, and feet that protruded and projected.

There were large feet and small feet and more bad feet to go with the bad copper, as well as trampling feet, fairy feet, and hurrying feet and a poor little old "footsore" lady.

I am happy to report that it appears that Dr. Watson enlisted the Adler Company - to Watson it was always the Shoe - to cure the Baker Street Irregulars of that unfortunate and common Victorian condition first reported by Watson, naked feet.

These were not related to the curious malady known as bare feet suffered by Arthur Holder and Eustace Brackenstall, nor were they connected to the bare ankles of Roylott or Blessington or the footprints of a gigantic hound.

To support my claim of Dr. Watson's true calling, I need only mention a word that appears many times across six adventures (SIGN, REIG, HOUN, VALL, WIST and ABBE):

TO WIT: "we may be afoot again tonight," "two of the family were still afoot," "Holmes was afoot earlier still," "there was some mischief afoot," "Something serious was afoot," "When any serious business was afoot," "there were grave events afoot."

So, now the evidence is in.

There should be no doubt in your mind - Dr. Watson was a podiatrist.

Raise your other slipper with a toast to the best and wisest mantra we have ever known: "Come, Watson, come! The game is afoot."



Baker Street Elementary

Created by Joe Fay,
Rusty & Steve Mason



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Fay, Mason, & Mason

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THIS JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME...

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING
TO MAKE SENSE OF?



I HAVE AN UNCLE IN THE STATES
WHO SENT ME A LETTER, DESCRIBING
A GAME HE WENT TO LAST WEEK.



FOOTBALL OR CRICKET?

NO, SOMETHING
CALLED "BASEBALL..."



HE WATCHED THE "KNICKERBOCKS," THE FIRST
PROFESSIONAL TEAM BEAT THE "NEW YORK
NINE;" BUT THE TERMS THEY USE STUMP ME.



"STOLEN BASE?" HOW CAN YOU CONTINUE
THE GAME IF SOMEONE NICKS A BASE?
"HOME RUN?" SO THEY RUN HOME AFTER
THE GAME IS OVER, INSTEAD OF RIDING?



SOUNDS LIKE A SPORT DESTINED TO FAIL.

ACTUALLY, MY UNCLE BELIEVES IT WILL
BECOME THEIR "NATIONAL PASTIME."



Congratulations to the Chicago Cubs and their fans!

Congratulations to the Chicago Cubs, and their fans...