

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 05, No. 04 - April, 2017
*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star*



May 7th Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, May 7th, at **LA MADELEINE COUNTRY FRENCH CAFE**, in Addison.

The restaurant is at 5290 Belt Line Rd #112, just east of the Tollway.

We will be reading "The Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans"

The quiz will cover this tale.

William Slough will present "Victorian Time: A look at the timepieces of the age and how they were made"

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

April 2nd Meeting

There were 20 in attendance. Liese Sherwood Fabre provided the opening toast which was a tribute to Edwin Richard Nye. (see page 2).

The quiz was based on "Black Peter." The quiz was won by Bill Pervin, with Jen Liang, one of our remote crew members, taking second place. Both received great prizes for their efforts.

It was announced that on April 29, the Dallas Public Library will be having a literary festival. Steve Mason and Liese Sherwood Fabre have been invited to be on a panel to discuss Pastiches of Sherlock Holmes.

Don Hobbs, BSI, gave a wonderfully whimsical presentation called "Fifty British Terms Americans Don't Understand."

On September 23, the Allen Public Library has invited us to hold another Sherlockian conference at their facility. We are planning on having a 2.5 hour conference which will include papers on Sherlock Holmes at the Movies and also show a brief Sherlockian movie.

We then invested 2 new members to the Crew Deck Mates, Bullett Lowry and Francis Morris Swift, both founding members of our Society. In addition, Sandra Little was inducted as a new Deck Mate.

Allen Osborne won the door prize drawing, a new addition to our regular meetings.

The Baker Street Journal was an excerpt on "We Are the Irregulars" from (see page 3).

We also had a lively discussion about our Facebook page and who should be allowed to add to the website, but came to no decision yet.

Steve closed the meeting with a reading from the Baker Street Journal, entitled "We Are the Irregulars."

Thanks to Cindy Brown for taking notes of the meeting.

You can read the full notes on our website, www.dfw-sherlock.org



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
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A TOAST TO EDWIN RICHARD NYE

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

On February 1, 2017, Edwin Richard Nye, age 90, crossed over the Reichenbach.

While we had never met, we had corresponded for almost three years as I shared my articles with him.

He had started the Antipodean Holmesian Society seventeen years ago with his friend Wayne Sutherland and the newsletter will now retire with the loss of its editor.



He had been a highly respected medical professor at the University of Otago in New Zealand, but his interests stretched to insect biology and malaria as well.

He was also fluent in French and Swedish and

was awarded the Knight of the Polar Star by the Swedish government for his contribution to Swedish affairs and language.

He was also an accomplished fencer.

He represented his college and university in Britain and in 1969 represented New Zealand against Australia—which he proudly shared with me as part of his request for an article on the sport.

At his funeral, the local fencing club provided an honor guard.

His interest in Sherlock Holmes led him to adapt stories from the canon for the stage as well as pen his own, collected and published as “The Teddy Bear’s Ribbon and Other Tales.”

I will miss the newsletters appearing in my mailbox and the gentle reminders from him when I wished him a happy spring that it was fall where he lived.

Here’s to Edwin Richard Nye—fair winds and farewell.

"WE ARE THE IRREGULARS"

Excerpt from BAKER STREET JOURNAL – June, 1992

THE WORD "IRREGULARS," as Sherlock Holmes uses it consistently throughout the Canon, is derived from its military definition: soldiers who are not a part of the regularly-established army but who fight, often according to their own tactics, in the interest of that army.

The Baker Street Irregulars, then, Holmes's street arabs, comprise what Holmes refers to in *The Sign of the Four* as "the unofficial force," and this is clarified in *A Study in Scarlet* in which Holmes calls the Irregulars "the Baker Street Division of the detective police force."

According to Vincent Starrett, the use of the term Baker Street Irregulars to denominate the club of Holmes devotees, formed in 1934, was Christopher Morley's idea (though Starrett himself had employed it in that way as early as 1930). No matter; Starrett credited Morley with the name and said that "no happier one could have been contrived."

We agree: Whether from Morley or Starrett, back through Sherlock Holmes, and eventually to its true source, Arthur Conan Doyle, no more appropriate name for those who serve the cause of Sherlock Holmes is ever likely to occur, especially in light of the fact that our Baker Street Irregulars have never been quite a part of the twentieth-century established way of life.

We carry on our campaign irregularly—certainly in the eyes of our contemporaries—being rooted firmly in the age of Victoria. It has been said that The Baker Street Irregulars of New York are an elite. But it is not until we focus on a line from "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax" that we realize just how elite.

In that adventure, Holmes tells Watson that the Hon. Philip Green "will set the regular forces on the move." Then Holmes adds, very significantly: "We are, as usual, the irregulars...." We are the irregulars.

This comment makes it clear that the Baker Street Irregulars of *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of the Four* are not the Baker Street Division of Holmes's private police force but that Holmes, Watson and the street arabs are all a part of the same irregular Baker Street Division of the official Police of the Metropolis. This is a subtle distinction, but it makes a difference.

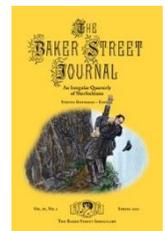
It tells us that the Canonical Irregulars are not only in the employ of Sherlock Holmes but that they include Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson as well. By extension, therefore, The Baker Street Irregulars of New York—if we model ourselves at all on the original of which we are the namesake—are not merely an organization working in the interest of Sherlock Holmes; we are an organization of which Sherlock Holmes—as he himself observes—is a fully-recognized charter member: Sherlock Holmes, BSI.

The Great Detective is more than just our hero and spiritual mentor. As he is to the Canonical Irregulars, he is our partner. Understanding this, it is ours to perceive in a richer way the irregular force whose membership includes some 300 men and women in more than half a dozen countries, a handful of sagacious children in Victorian London, and the two wisest and best men whom we have ever known, Sherlock Holmes and John H. Watson. These are The Baker Street Irregulars.

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.



FOGGY SMOGGY OLD LONDON

Liese Sherwood-Fabre

The canon contains 54 references to fog: a third of them in “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans” and almost another third in a reference to the fog covering Grimpen Mire in The Hound of the Baskervilles.

The other references are distributed among ten stories.

While Dickens romanticized it, and Doyle used it to cloak the city in greater mystery, in reality, London’s fog was a deadly brew of smoke and chemical pollution.

Smoke pollution began in medieval England when coal was burned for domestic use—primarily for cooking and heating. (1)



Beginning in the late 1700s when England experienced its Industrial Revolution, the rise of steam engines powered by burning coal multiplied the particulate matter in the air, and factories spewed other chemicals and pollutants into the mix. (2)

The result was a thick smog (a term coined by Dr. H.A. des Voeux in 1905 to describe the fusion of smoke and fog observed in London) (3) that killed 2400 alone during the winter of 1879-1880.

While the health effects of London’s air pollution were well-known and recognized, both national and local governments struggled to control it.

In the 1840s, some industrial cities passed legislation to limit smoke production, and London passed similar laws in 1853 and 1891.

These restrictions, however, had little effect on pollution.

In 1906, Parliament passed the Alkali, etc. Works Regulation Act to consolidate earlier efforts to reduce industrial pollution related to the production of soda ash. (4)

Domestic smoke, responsible for about 95% of the fumes, were not covered by the ordinances, as were other major industries.



In addition, the definition of “smoke” was not clear, making prosecution difficult. (5)

Despite such efforts, air pollution continued unabated and in December, 1952, a fog containing sulfuric acid (created from sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, by-products of coal burning) blanketed the capital for several days, darkening

the sky, reducing visibility to only three feet, and killing 4000 people and thousands of animals. (6)

In response, Parliament passed the Clean Air Act in 1956.

This legislation created areas where only smokeless fuels were allowed and reduced permitted levels of sulfur dioxide and other pollutants.

In 1968, the Clean Air Act: Tall Chimneys further reduced pollution by requiring smoke and other particulate matter be dispersed higher into the atmosphere through taller chimneys. (7)

Britain also encouraged the use of diesel vehicles because of their lower carbon footprint.

By 2013, more than 35% of the vehicles were diesel, and in an unexpected twist, are now linked to about 9500 deaths each year in London.

Diesel engines produce more nitrogen oxide than gasoline cars, creating high levels of nitrogen dioxide that contribute to respiratory problems and worsen asthma attacks. (8)

Britain's success story in fighting air pollution has come full circle.

The legendary fog from Sherlock's time has once again risen to threaten its citizens.

Not only can it hide killers who use the mist to cloak themselves and their crimes, it makes its own contribution to the deaths of thousands each year.

- (1) John Ranlett, "Environmental Pollution" Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia, ed. Sally Mitchell (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) 269.
- (2) <https://webs.bcp.org/sites/vcleary/ModernWorldHistoryTextbook/IndustrialRevolution/IRbegins.html>
- (3) <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=smog>
- (4) Susan Slocum, et al., Scientific Tourism: Researchers as Travellers (London: Routledge, 2015) 25.
- (5) Ranlett, op. cit., 269.
- (6) <http://today.tamu.edu/2016/11/14/researchers-solve-mystery-of-historic-1952-london-fog-and-current-chinese-haze/>
- (7) <https://www.pollutionsolutions-online.com/news/air-clean-up/16/breaking-news/the-history-of-uk-air-pollution-looking-back-through-smog-tinted-glasses/32595>
- (8) <http://time.com/4316873/london-mayor-election-air-pollution/?iid=sr-link1>

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>

17 STEPS TO "THE BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS"

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

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



HOW WERE THESE PEOPLE STILL ALIVE?

"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 But when, for the fourth time, after pushing back our chairs from breakfast we saw the greasy, heavy brown swirl still drifting past us and condensing in oily drops upon the window-panes"

Watson gives us a few descriptions of the noxious vapors that hung over London on one occasion or another, and this one is particularly odious-sounding. How bad a health hazard were these poison gases?

YES, BUT WAS IT A *REALLY* GOOD REASON?

Holmes brags, "Suppose that I were Brooks or Woodhouse, or any of the fifty men who have good reason for taking my life, how long could I survive against my own pursuit?"

So why didn't Brooks or Woodhouse, or any of the fifty, take a stab at killing Holmes? It's not like he was hard to find. And even if they weren't the cleverest fellows around, how much brain does it take to find a

spot on Baker Street one can take a rifle to and wait for Holmes to come out? Is Holmes over-exaggerating their desire to rid the world of him?

THE NOT-SO-SECRET SECRET PLANS

"The papers which this wretched youth had in his pocket were the plans of the Bruce-Partington submarine..."

Surely you have heard of it? I thought everyone had heard of it."

Mycroft Holmes, whose specialty is omniscience, seems to think that not only Sherlock should recognize the name of the sub, but that the newspapers would too. Yet we are told they are "the most jealously guarded of all government secrets." Wouldn't the name, and the fact they were plans for a submarine, be secret as well? How would they have gotten out?



GREAT INFLUENCE OR MERELY A GREAT OPPORTUNITY?

"If you have a fancy to see your name in the next honours list-- --" Is Mycroft making his brother an offer with that question, or just pointing out the chance for him to get a knighthood? Or possibly a little of both?

THE ECONOMICS OF TRAIN-SHUFFLING

When Holmes asks: "Would it be possible for me to inspect the train which contained the passenger who heard the thud of a fall in the fog?"

"I fear not, Mr. Holmes," the railroad rep replies. "The train has been broken up before now, and the carriages redistributed."

Why would a passenger line be broken up as a matter of course and its carriages redistributed? Was it that line's last run? Wouldn't a regularly running passenger train keep its cars day after day?



SIR JAMES'S PRIME REAL ESTATE

When Holmes and Watson visit Sir James Walter, we are told, "The house of the famous official was a fine villa with green lawns stretching down to the Thames."

Were there many mansions with lawns along the Thames? Where might one expect to find such choice riverfront property? What were the flooding risks, and wouldn't they make it hard to keep a nice green lawn there?

OH, THOSE AWFUL STAINS!

Of Valentine Walter, we are told: "His wild eyes, stained cheeks, and unkempt hair all spoke of the sudden blow which had fallen upon the household."

How did he get stains on his cheeks? The implication is surely

some sort of tear-stains, but tears don't leave stains, do they? Or has that awful London reek altered the biochemistry of Londoners to the point where their tears do stain their cheeks?

THEY DIDN'T WANT TO PAY THE MARRIED RATE TAX

Violet Westbury says her fiance had "saved a few hundreds, and we were to marry at the New Year."

Did she actually mean they were marrying on New Year's Day? Was there some advantage to waiting until the New Year to marry, like an income tax loophole, or would it have just been a purely sentimental choice?



INSPIRING, MAYBE, BUT COMMANDING?

"Mr. Sidney Johnson, the senior clerk, met us at the office and received us with that respect which my companion's card always commanded."

Why did Sherlock Holmes's card "command" respect? It's not like Holmes had any real authority. Wouldn't it have more likely have inspired shock in 1895, when most people thought he was dead?

THE BUSINESS CARD AS A SKELETON KEY

"I think, with your permission, I will now take a stroll round the premises," Holmes tells Sidney Johnson, then proceeds to inspect the most secret part of the Woolwich Arsenal. Sure, a few of the Bruce-Partington plans have been stolen,

but wouldn't those offices still contain quite a few secrets that one wouldn't want just anyone looking at? Holmes seems to have gained entry to this stronghold of British secrets with just a business card -- could spies have taken advantage of the office's state of confusion and get a look around the same way Holmes did?

AND FOR HIS NEXT LEARNED QUOTATION . . .

"I'm afraid," said Holmes, smiling, "that all the queen's horses and all the queen's men cannot avail in this matter."

Is Holmes truly paraphrasing "Humpty-Dumpty" here? Any other nursery rhymes in his repertoire? Or just another indication that the post-hiatus Sherlock wasn't up to the speed of pre-hiatus Holmes?

TRY THE LASAGNA, WATSON!

Holmes summons Watson to Goldini's Restaurant, a "garish Italian" place, where Holmes seems to have just finished dinner, and is indulging in coffee and curacao and a cigar. Watson has already eaten, so we get to see nothing of the restaurant's main course offerings.

What would one expect from an Italian restaurant in 1895 London? What might Holmes have dined on prior to Watson's arrival? Pasta? Sandwiches? Pizza?

HOW MANY TIMES DOES WATSON PULL THIS TRICK?

When Watson finally agrees to burgle the Oberstein place with Holmes, the doctor says, "for a moment I saw something in his eyes which was nearer to tenderness than I had ever seen."

In considering how much the ladies like these little moments in Watson's writings, and considering how Watson raves about their rarity every time he writes one (when he's got Holmes emoting all over the place the rest of the time), it's easy to see what Watson's "natural advantages" with the ladies might have been. He's

manly, he's got war wounds and a moustache, he's a best-selling author, and yet he's so sensitive... unlike that cold fish Holmes.

Is Watson over-playing these scenes a bit? Or do men actually look into each other's eyes for tenderness when about to break into a house?

SOMEONE PUT THOSE KIDS TO BED!

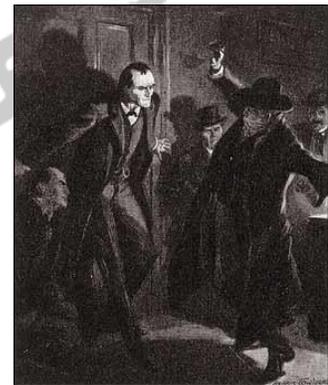
"Next door there appeared to be a children's party, for the merry buzz of young voices and the clatter of a piano resounded through the night."

Wait a minute ... Holmes summoned Watson to the restaurant well after nine. They discussed things for a bit, then walked to Caulfield Gardens. How late in the night was this children's party going on? Didn't Victorians have decent bed-times for their children?

PUTTING TWO AND TWO TOGETHER...

"Mycroft Holmes and Lestrade had come round by appointment after breakfast next day and Sherlock Holmes had recounted to them our proceedings of the day before. The professional shook his head over our confessed burglary."

Lestrade doesn't like that Holmes and Watson burgled Oberstein's, but he isn't arresting them for it. He does, however, seem to see it as a pattern of behaviour and not a unique incident. If he didn't know it then, has Lestrade finally figured out why that fellow escaping the Milverton crime scene looked so much like Watson?





THE BATTLE CRY OF THE BRITISH BURGLAR

"For England, home and beauty--eh, Watson?"

Anyone know the pedigree of this statement? Rousing one's spirits by crying "for England and home," I understand, but what "beauty" was Holmes speaking of? Did he mean beauty as an abstract, or was he saying, "for country, home, and pretty girls!"?

THE DISTRACTING POWER OF LASSUS

Watson comments on Holmes's ability to switch his thoughts from their important case to a hobbyish matter as they wait for night and their trap to be set, saying: "I remember that during the whole of that

memorable day he lost himself in a monograph which he had undertaken upon the Polyphonic Motets of Lassus."

What was it about those motets that could have intrigued a man of Holmes's faculties enough to write a monograph upon them? Surely he wouldn't have bothered unless he had some new theory to prove, or some new data to expose to the world, would he?

MYCROFT AND HIS LITTLE BUDDY

"It was a relief to me when at last, after a light dinner, we set out upon our expedition. Lestrade and Mycroft met us by appointment at the outside of Gloucester Road Station."

I don't know which is stranger: the way Mycroft actually cares enough about this case to go on a late night vigil, or the way he has Lestrade in tow every time he shows up. Was Lestrade assigned to Mycroft's side for the duration of this case by his superiors? Was there a connection there that extended beyond this tale, one that may have been the reason Lestrade had a tighter bond with Sherlock than any other man at the yard?

THE DAY AT WINDSOR

"Some weeks afterwards I learned incidentally that my friend spent a day at Windsor, whence he returned with a remarkably fine emerald tie-pin. When I asked him if he had bought it, he answered that it was a present from a certain gracious lady in whose interests he had once been fortunate enough to carry out a small commission.

He said no more; but I fancy that I could guess at that lady's august name, and I have little doubt that the emerald pin will forever recall to my friend's memory the adventure of the Bruce-Partington plans."

Watson's making a bit of an assumption here, of course. Did "a certain gracious lady" usually entertain worthies for a whole day, or might Holmes have been at Windsor actually undertaking the commission that got him the tie-pin?



Sherlockian Scholarship

Who Dung It? A Trifling Manure-graph

Rosemary Michaud, The Holmes & Watson Report, May, 1998

According to the published version of "The Adventure of the Priory School," the solution of the case rested upon cowtracks.

"They were at the morass, and again on the path, and again near where poor Heidegger met his death," Watson wrote.

Sitting in Reuben Hayes's kitchen after a day out on the moor, Sherlock Holmes illustrated his recollections of those tracks by laying out their pattern in bread-crumbs, and observing that "it is a remarkable cow which walks, canters and gallops."

Once he concluded that the cow tracks were actually left by horses in disguise, it was easy to connect the inn, the smithy, and Reuben Hayes to the kidnapping of Lord Saltire.

That's the story that made it into print, anyhow.

I'm not saying this isn't the truth, as far as it goes.

If Watson says that the horses wore cow shoes, then that's good enough for me.

But I say that there's something more to this story than meets the eye.

Why did Holmes have to create bread-crumbs on the kitchen table, when the answer to the cow versus horse question was right at his feet?

Well, not literally at his feet, I trust, since we would assume that Holmes and Watson had scraped their boots before they came into the kitchen.

But in their journey across the moor-land, I think they saw evidence that was much more convincing than mere hoofprints.

Watson hinted as much when he mentioned "sheep-marks."

Here is the passage concerning the sheep: "With a darkening face, my friend strode along the margin,

eagerly observant of every muddy stain upon the mossy surface.

"Sheep-marks there were in profusion, and at one place, some miles down, cows had left their tracks. Nothing more."

What are sheep-marks, do you suppose? Hoofprints? But in that case, why not call them hoofprints or tracks, as Watson very plainly did when he was referring to the cows?

I think that the word "sheep-marks" was Watson's polite way of referring to sheep dung. Sheep dung, of course, could not be mistaken for cow dung.

It is a question of cubic capacity, as Holmes once said in a different connection. (Traipsing over a profusion of sheep dung world, of course, account for Holmes's "darkening face.")

But notice also the further conclusion that we may draw from Watson's comment that "the cows had left their tracks. Nothing more."

He was saying that there were cow hoofprints, but no "cow-marks": that is, no cow dung.

Now let us consider the "marks" that Holmes and Watson might have seen instead.

We know that on the night Lord Saltire was lured away from the Priory School, Reuben Hayes took two horses on a fairly long trek out and hack over the moor.

It seems logical to suppose that at least one of these horses must have felt the need at some point to - well, to lighten its load, let us say.

And Sherlock Holmes, the scion of country squires, must surely have been able to distinguish horse droppings from cow manure.

Anyone who has spent any time around cows and horses can do the same.

In Holmes's day, of course, it wouldn't have taken a country boy to know the difference.

Horses were everywhere, and even the residents of the great city of London could not help being familiar with horse droppings.

Perhaps there were some city dwellers who had never seen a fully functioning cow, but they would certainly recognize cow manure as something very different from the familiar byproduct of the horse.

For those of you who have not had the opportunity to make your own observations, let me explain the distinction between the two types of manure.

Cows, being ruminants, spend considerable effort in processing their food, chewing and re-chewing the cud.

The end product which is dropped into the cow pasture has an unmistakably sloppy texture when it is fresh, due to its extremely high moisture content.

In dry weather, the cow's output undergoes a process of desiccation which renders it light and flaky, but essentially durable in shape.

Indeed, there is scarcely a country boy or girl who has not spent at least a few carefree hours in the cow pasture with his or her playmates, flinging dried cow-pats at one another.

In wet weather, however, cow manure melts down fairly quickly and is absorbed into the soil.

I mention these facts to demonstrate that Holmes could not possibly have mistaken last summer's cow droppings for those of the current spring, regardless of the weather conditions during the intervening winter.

Nor could Holmes have mistaken cow manure, whether old or new, for horse manure, or vice-versa. Horse manure is not so thoroughly homogenized as cow manure.

It emerges as a series of clearly defined spheroids, and is comprised of a considerable amount of roughage, which is visible even under the most cursory inspection.

To avoid being indelicately descriptive, let me simply call your attention to the respective euphemisms for cow and horse manure.

The waste product of the cow is known as a "cow-pie," a "cow-flop," or a "cow-pat."

The corresponding output of the horse is commonly known as a "road apple" or sometimes a "horse chestnut." Need I say more upon the subject of shape and texture? I didn't think so.

When Holmes thought back over the sights (and smells?) of the day, he recalled every detail, including the droppings - the "marks" - of the various farm animals.

No wonder he called himself a "blind beetle" when he realized the

evidence that he had overlooked earlier in the day!

And yet he had been close to seeing the truth.

Listen to what Holmes said about the area surrounding the spot where the German master was killed: "What do we find? A few cattle-tracks, nothing more. I took a wide sweep round, and there is no path within fifty yards."

Holmes had only to eliminate the letter "h" from the word "path," and the solution of the mystery would have been clear to him from the first: "There is no pat within fifty yards."

Or anywhere on the moor, for that matter.

I don't blame Watson for glossing over the scatological references when he published his account of the case.

These were Victorian times, and sex wasn't the only thing you weren't supposed to talk about in polite society.

The story of "The Priory School" is just as good without the earthier details, and if it had to be cleaned up in order to get it into print, so be it.

However, Watson seems to have left one little private joke in the text after all, when he repeated Holmes's

statement to Dr. Thomeycroft Huxtable at the start of the case: "Perhaps the scent is not so cold but that two old hounds like Watson and myself may get a sniff of it." Excrementary, my dear Holmes.

An afterthought: The question of the cow manure may give us cause to wonder about some of the other outdoor cases in the Canon.

Consider The Hound of the Baskervilles, for instance.

Did Holmes use scatological evidence to convince himself that the demon hound was corporeal rather than spectral?

Those who are interested in conducting further research into the varieties of dung and its relation to crime could do worse than make a pilgrimage to the Professor James Moriarty Memorial Manure Pile in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Sherlockian scholars have been compiling evidence on a more or less regular basis ever since this groundbreaking project was begun some years ago by the late John Bennett Shaw.

I trust that my own article has added a little something to this effort.

56 STORIES IN 56 DAYS - "BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS"

Posted on October 29, 2011 by barefootonbakerstreet

Holmes has a new hobby – music of the middle-ages – why?

Why?

Could he be any more extreme in his interests?

And how unusual to find him studying so hard at something which doesn't relate to his work, writes Charlotte Anne Walters

Normally, Holmes liked to keep his brain uncluttered and fill it only with relevant information, but then I guess music has always been an interesting exception to this.

The story reacquaints us with Mycroft Holmes, Sherlock's elder brother.

We do gain some extra information about him this time.

Holmes now felt able to trust Watson enough to tell him how indispensable Mycroft really was to the British government.

Holmes says to Watson – "You would also be right in a sense if you had said that occasionally he is the British Government".

We hear more about the similarities between the brothers such as their singular devotion to their work, the orderly brains with fantastic memories for detailed facts and the lack of ambition they both share in terms of wanting fame or wealth.

Mycroft comes to visit Holmes and Watson, causing Holmes to remark that it is only the second time he has ever done so and the case he brings must be extremely important to make him break his routine.

Mycroft is a stickler for routine – "Has his rails and he runs on them" as Holmes explains.

So again we are (or I am certainly) reminded of all those peculiarities which correlate with symptoms of autism and savantism so clearly evident in the two brothers – the genetic connection only serves to prove the theory in my mind.

A young man called Cadogan West has been found dead on the underground.

To my knowledge, this is the first time the underground has been mentioned in the stories as Holmes and Watson never seem to use it.

I have always found this rather surprising and wonder why Doyle didn't ever see fit to include this great feat of engineering in the stories before.

Anyway, Mycroft reveals that the young man was actually found to be in possession of vital Government papers which detailed the plans of the Bruce-Partington submarine.

The three most important pages are missing and Mycroft wants Holmes to find them before they fall into the wrong hands.

This is another of those cases when all seems to be in darkness and you think to yourself – "How on earth is he going to sort this one out, it's impossible" and the resolution at the end when he does is all the greater for it.

Through his investigation Holmes discovers that Cadogan West is innocent and the papers were planted on him by the brother of a high-ranking civil servant and an international agent.

He was about to expose them when they killed him and pushed his body out of a window and onto the roof of an underground carriage which passed below.

When the carriage changes track further along, the body falls to the rails.

Holmes is simply brilliant in working all this out and the story is a perfect example of his method.

And once again the benefits of being an unofficial person become clear when he breaks into the house of the suspect – no need to faff around waiting for a search warrant.

It must be remembered that this does give Holmes a massive advantage over the police and allows him to do things they simply couldn't.

Holmes asks Watson to accompany him on the illegal house-breaking mission but Watson is reluctant at first.

Holmes reminds him that this is an issue of national importance and Watson enthusiastically agrees to do his duty prompting Holmes to say – “I knew you would not shirk at the last”.

Watson then makes a lovely observation revealing so much about the depth of their friendship – ‘I saw

something in his eyes which was nearer to tenderness than I had ever seen’.

Considering Holmes has no other friends and this was only the second time his own brother had ever been to his house, he really must think a very great deal of Watson to be so attached to him.

At the end of the story we hear about Holmes receiving an emerald tie-pin “From a certain gracious lady” who I presume is Queen Victoria herself.

Though it is unusual for him to take gifts, you can quite understand him doing so on this occasion. Mycroft had made it clear that he could receive a title for his work on this case but Holmes’ nature was such that he did not want that honour – the little tie-pin does seem a more appropriate gesture.

What an adventure!

9 out of 10.

AN INQUIRY INTO "THE BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS"

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

- The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans* was first published in December 1908 in *The Strand Magazine.*
- According to Baring-Gould's chronology, as set down in *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes,* Second Edition, 1974, the case takes place from Thursday, November 21, to Saturday, November 23, 1895. At the time Holmes was 41 years old and Watson 43.

Notable Quotes:

- "The London criminal is certainly a dull fellow. Look out the window, Watson, see how the figures loom up, are dimly seen, and then blend once more into the cloud-bank. The thief or murderer could roam London on such a day as the tiger does the jungle, unseen until he pounces, and then evident only to his victim."
- "Mycroft has his rails and he runs on them. His Pall Mall lodgings, the Diogenes Club, Whitehall--that is his cycle."
- "You are right in thinking that he is under the British Government. You would also be right in a sense if you said that occasionally he 'is' the British Government."
- "I play the game for the game's own sake."
- "We must fall back upon the old axiom that when all other contingencies fail, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."
- "We can't do these things in the force, Mr. Holmes. No wonder

you get results that are beyond us."

- "How an English gentleman could behave in such a manner is beyond my comprehension."

The Book of References

We are told by Watson Holmes had spent a day "cross-indexing his huge book of references." While the Canon appears quite definite about "the huge book of references" being indeed a book, it has always seemed to me that such a way to archive data would be hideously difficult to reference. At the time there was an early version of the looseleaf binder so familiar to us today--it consisted of two hard covers with holes through the left edge, which enabled the user to string something that looked like a long shoelace through the holes, to keep the covers and pages together. I've often thought that it is likely that this was Holmes' book of reference.

Considering what Watson tells us in SCAN about finding the reference to Irene Adler "sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had written a monograph upon the deep-sea fishes," it appears the material must have been in alphabetical order. In a bound notebook, it would not be possible to paste newspaper clippings and other references alphabetically, because the pages could not be moved.

This means that soon one would lose track of the information unless a separate index was kept ("Adler, Irene, q.v., Vol. XXIII, page 104."). I was always struck by the fact that it would not occur to Holmes--an eminently logical man--to use index cards instead. Any thoughts, Hounds?

Mycroft's Position

I tend to think that even at this time in their relationship, Holmes was still keeping from his biographer the true importance Mycroft's position in the Government, even though he tells Watson that in earlier days he had kept things from him because he did not know him as well. While it may be believable that Mycroft "will receive neither honour nor title, but remains the most indispensable man in the country" it seems absurd that someone of his importance to the Empire--regardless of how much he might have shunned luxury and comfort--would be content with receiving what, by 1895, would have been the minimum salary (£450 = ~\$101,300 a year today) that would have allowed a well-bred man to live as a gentleman.

One should consider that lodgings at Pall Mall (with perhaps a minimum of two or three household servants) and a membership in an exclusive club would not have been an inexpensive way of life.

Since we are told by Holmes that his brother did not depart from a daily routine that took him to the club every day, it is very likely that he took his meals (or at least dinner) there. Again, not a very inexpensive habit.

One may deduce from this that Holmes père could not have been that poor, and that the younger Holmes' penury in the beginning of his career was a result of the eldest son inheriting the bulk of the family fortune. Which, in turn, makes one wonder why apparently Mycroft did not help him out when he was just beginning to make his way in the world.

The Bruce-Partington Submarine

By the time in which our story takes place, submarine technology was advanced to the point where we would readily recognize the result as true submarines. Very little more advancement was required to produce the familiar WWI subs.

However, like all underwater vessels of this type, it wasn't until the advent of the USS Nautilus, the first nuclear-powered vessel launched in 1954, that it became possible to remain submerged for extended periods. It would be interesting to speculate on the advantage that the Bruce-Partington development bestowed upon the submarines of the times, because they still would have been limited by the capacity of the batteries used to power the electric motors used underwater, ~8 or 12 hours, after which surfacing became necessary to use internal combustion engines to recharge the batteries.

The Uninformed Detective

Interestingly, we find Holmes unaware about who are the spies and agents of note, having to ask Mycroft for information: "Meanwhile, please send by messenger, to await return at Baker Street, a complete list of all foreign spies or international agents known to be in England, with full address." In SECO, which takes place in 1886, our sleuth appears to be very much aware who these people are: "There are only those three capable of playing so bold a game-- there are Oberstein, La Rothiere, and Eduardo Lucas. I will see each of them." Why would the Great Detective be now so uninformed about the new crop of spies?

A Magnificent Deduction

It is always a thrill to see the Great Detective at his best. His deduction in the subway tunnel, based on the points and curve of the tracks, that Cadogan West had to

have fallen from the carriage roof is pure vintage Holmes. Bravo, sir!

The Price of Treason

Back in 1895, as well as now, the price of treason, £5,000 (~\$1,130,000 today) came high.

What else happened in 1895:

EMPIRE

- Freetown, Sierra Leone, granted municipal status and privileges.
- Anglo-French interests begin to conflict in Nile Valley.
- U.S. intervenes in Anglo-Venezuelan border dispute, arbitration in Britain's favor.
- Construction of Uganda railway commenced.
- British East Africa Company surrenders Kenya as British protectorate.
- Jameson Raid in South Africa in 1895--failed attempt to overthrow the Afrikaans government.

BRITAIN

- Liberals defeated at general election, Salisbury forms his third Unionist ministry.
- Compulsory retirement of aged Duke of Cambridge as C-in-C of British Army.
- London School of Economics and Political Science founded.
- First automobile exhibition in London.
- Electrification of first mainline railway.

WORLD

- Japan takes Formosa (now Taiwan).
- Germany, France, and Russia unite to compel Japan to return Liaotung peninsula to China.
- Treaty of Simonoseki, end of Sino-Japanese war.
- Cuban rebellions begin, U.S.A. protests brutal suppression.

- Dreyfus refused new trial by French President Faure.
- National League founded in Poland; aimed at autonomy under Russian suzerainty.
- Nyssens Law extended to Belgian provinces and communes.
- Armenian demonstration in Constantinople leads to massacre of 50,000 Armenians.
- Frontiers of Pamirs fixed by commission of Russians, Afghans, and British.
- Introduction of diphtheria antitoxin.
- Completion of Kiel Canal (61 miles) makes Germany North Sea power.
- Volleyball invented.
- French troops capture Antananarivo in Madagascar.
- Abyssinia defeats Italy in the First Italo-Ethiopian War (1885-1896).

ART

- Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* debuts. Later that year, Wilde is imprisoned.
- Corelli publishes *The Sorrows of Satan*.
- H.G. Wells publishes *The Time Machine*.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Wilhelm Konrad Röntgen, German physicist, experiments with Crooke's tubes and discovers X-rays.
- Ramsey obtains helium, first identified by its spectrum in the Sun, in 1868.
- On December 28th, in the Hotel Scribe, in Paris, the first public cinema show takes place.
- Thomas Armat, of Washington, develops modern cinema projection.
- King Gillette (U.S.) invents safety razor.
- Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian electrical engineer, transmits the first wireless signal.

STORY INFO PAGES FOR "BRUCE-PARTINGTON PLANS"

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

- **First published in:** The Strand Magazine, and in Collier's Weekly, both December 1908.
- **Time frame of story (known/surmised):** November 21, 1895. (One of the few instances where Watson's statement of the date was totally clear.)
- **Holmes & Watson living arrangements:** Sharing quarters at 221B Baker St.
- **Opening scene:** November, and a dense yellow fog had enveloped London. The greasy, heavy brown swirl condensed in oily drops upon the windowpanes, and instilled a feeling of lethagy in Holmes & Watson. Holmes had on his mouse-coloured dressing-gown. Then, a telegram. Mycroft was planning a visit. Coming at once, regarding Cadogan West, a young man who was found dead on the Underground on Tuesday morning.
- **Client:** The British Government, represented by Mycroft Holmes.
- **Crime or concern:** West's body found with skull crushed, alongside the tracks near the Aldgate Station on the Underground. West was a junior clerk at the Woolwich

Arsenal, and upon his body was found some of the missing plans (but not the most crucial portions) for a top-secret submarine of a radically new and important type. Enemy naval warfare would become impossible within the radius of a Bruce-Partington's operation.

- **Villain:** Col. Valentine Walter, brother of the head of the Submarine Department at the arsenal, Sir James Walter.
- **Motive:** Sell the plans to a foreign agent to cover a Stock Exchange debt that had to be paid.
- **Logic used to solve:** The key point was that West was killed elsewhere, and his body fell from the roof of the train. Deduced by Sherlock Holmes from the fact that there was very little blood on the body even though there was a considerable wound. There was no ticket in West's pockets. There were points (switches, to Americans) on a curve of the tracks, so the carriage would pitch and sway as it came round.
- **Policemen:** Lestrade of Scotland Yard arrived at 221B accompanying Mycroft.
- **Holmes' fees:** "I play the game for the game's own sake," said

Holmes. "But the problem certainly presents some points of interest, and I shall be very pleased to look into it." After solving the case and returning the submarine plans, Holmes got a fancy tie-pin from the Queen. No mention of a monetary reward.

- **Transport:** After inspecting the location where the body was found, Holmes and Watson took their seats in the Woolwich train. Then a cab to & from Sir James Walter's house, having learned Sir James had died. He was the government expert in charge of the plans and the arsenal. His decorations and sub-titles would fill two lines of a book of reference. He had grown gray in the service, was a gentleman, a had been a favoured guest in the most exalted houses, and, above all, a man whose patriotism was beyond suspicion.
- **Food:** Holmes ate at Goldini's garish Italian restaurant. Watson joined him there. Holmes and Watson had breakfast the next day, and a light dinner that evening. The day after Holmes and Watson burgled the spy's lodgings. Mycroft Holmes and Lestrade had come round by appointment after breakfast.

- **Drink:** At Goldini's Holmes and Watson had coffee and curacao.
- **Vices:** Holmes and Watson tried one of the proprietor's cigars, which were less poisonous than one would expect.
- **Other cases mentioned:** GREE, and also mention of Brooks and Woodhouse, who had good reason for wanting to take Holmes' life.
- **Notable Quotables:** "Act, Sherlock — act!" cried Mycroft, springing to his feet. Use your powers! Go to the scene of the crime! See the people concerned! Leave no stone unturned! In all your career you have never had so great a chance of serving your country."
- "It was one of my friend's most obvious weaknesses that he was impatient with less alert intelligences than his own." — Watson, describing Holmes.
- "See the foxhound with hanging ears and drooping tail as it lolls about the kennels, and compare it with the same hound as, with gleaming eyes

and straining muscles, it runs upon a breast-high scent — such was the change in Holmes after he came up with the idea about the body falling off the train." — Watson, describing Holmes.

- "It is fortunate for this community that I am not a criminal." — Sherlock Holmes
- **Other interestings:** Having had some personal experience as a draughtsman, we wonder how much space is taken up by the plans for a submarine. We would guess closer to a truckload than a pocketful. But in this story, they were probably talking about the plans of some unique and important feature, not the whole thing. In any event, we at McMurdo's Camp do not view our role as questioning the premises of a story as related by the author.
- Mycroft's salary in his government position was £450/year.
- In this story, Sherlock Holmes developed a new hobby, music of the Middle Ages. In his spare moments, he had undertaken a monograph upon the Polyphonic Motets

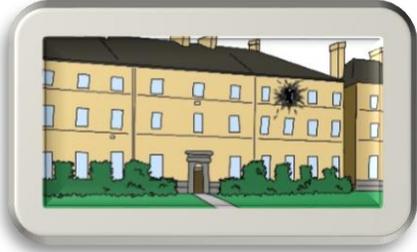
of Lassus. It was later printed for private circulation, and was said by experts to be the last word upon the subject.

- **When all was said and done:** Once Sherlock Holmes figured out the body had been placed upon the top of the carriage, he looked at the living quarters of known international spies, and quickly found the one whose rooms abutted upon the Underground (in a spot where the tracks were not under ground). He then lured the suspect to an appointment with a fake message in the agonies and captured the crooked colonel.
- After the case was solved, Holmes spent a day at Windsor, whence he returned with a remarkably fine emerald tie-pin. When asked him if he had bought it, he answered that it was a present from a certain gracious lady in whose interests he had once been fortunate enough to carry out a small commission.
- Colonel Walter died in prison two years later.

Baker Street Elementary

Created by: Joe Fay, Rusty & Steve Mason

The First Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and John Watson



This episode commemorates the 221bCon, being held in Atlanta Georgia this weekend, April 4-9, 2017.

Baker Street Elementary
Number 104 221bCon - 04/05/2017

Fig, Mason, & Moore

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MY PARENTS WENT TO AN INTERESTING EVENT LAST WEEK, CALLED "BARD-CON," WHICH CELEBRATED THE LIFE AND WORKS OF THE GREAT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

AND WHAT PRAY TELL, DOES ONE DO AT SUCH AN EVENT?

PANEL DISCUSSIONS, DISPLAY, VENDOR TABLES, AND EVEN COSTUMED PARTICIPANTS...

EVIDENTLY, THERE WAS A SPOT OF CONTROVERSY WHEN A SPEAKER SUGGESTED THE PLAYS, POEMS, AND SONNETS WERE CREATED BY A "GHOST WRITER," AND SHAKESPEARE WAS BASCIALLY THE "LITERARY AGENT," WHO WAS ABLE TO HAVE THE WORKS PUBLISHED AS WELL AS HAVING THEM PUT TO STAGE...

SOUNDS LIKE FUN... WE SHOULD VISIT ONE OF THESE 'CONS'...

ACTUALLY, THERE IS ONE NEXT WEEKEND, APTLY NAMED 'TELL-TALE-CON'...

AN ENTIRE CONVENTION BASED ON EDGAR ALLAN POE... I COULD DRESS UP AS A 'RAVEN'...

ONE OF THE POPULAR EVENTS WILL BE STAGING CLUES TO A MURDER THROUGHOUT THE VENUE, AND ATTENDEES WILL USE THE SKILLS OF MASTER DETECTIVE DUPIN TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY...

I HAVE NO INTEREST IN SUCH TRIVIALITIES... THERE ARE LEAST THREE ISSUES TO THIS CRAZINESS...



FIRST, PEOPLE SHOULD STAND ON FIRM GROUND, AND NOT FALL INTO THE TRAPS OF POE'S FANTASIES, WHICH HAVE NO BASIS IN REALITY.



SECOND, IT IS WRONG TO INFLATE THE ABILITIES OF DUPIN, WHO WAS AN INFERIOR FELLOW... HE MAY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ANALYZE CLUES ABOVE THE AVERAGE POLICE OFFICER ON THE BEAT, BUT HE WAS NOT SUCH THE PHENOMENON AS POE MADE HIM OUT TO BE.



THIRD, I CANNOT SUPPORT A GROUP OF PEOPLE, EVEN FANATICS, "PLAYING A GAME" TO SIMULATE THE ACTIONS OF A FICTIONAL CHARACTER.



C'MON HOLMES... WE SHOULD GO AND HAVE A GOOD TIME...

I LIKE PLAYING GAMES...



OK, BUT I WILL PLAY 'DUPIN' AND SHOW EVERYONE THE RIGHT WAY TO SOLVE A CRIME... AND WATSON, YOU SHALL PLAY THE UNNAMED ASSISTANT...

... AND I SHALL PLAY 'THE RAVEN...'

