

# The Bilge Pump

Vol. 07, No. 06 - June, 2019

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



## PLEASE NOTE:

### July 07 Meeting NOTICE

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

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

We will be reading "**A Study in Scarlet (part 1, Chapters 5 - 7; part 2, Chapters 1 - 3).**" The quiz will cover this tale.

**Ann Caddell will give a presentation on "Gemstones in the Canon.**

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

## June 02 Summary

There were 16 in attendance at the meeting. Dr. William Pervin opened the meeting with a toast honoring George Newnes, the founding publisher of The Strand Magazine, and Herbert Greenhough Smith, its founding editor (see page 3).

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

The Crew then took a quiz on "A Study in Scarlet - Quiz 1," which was won by Mary Butcher, with Walter Pieper taking second place.

Rusty Mason gave a wonderful presentation on Frances Glessner Lee, often considered the "mother of forensic science," and the wonderful dioramas she created for use by criminal investigators.

We closed the meeting with a reading from the Autumn, 2008 Baker Street Journal, "AH, YES I REMEMBER WELL" (page 4).

The door prize drawing was won by Allen Osborne (two months in a row)

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



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

You can follow us on Twitter at: @barquelonestar

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

### Who dunnit:



Third Mate  
Helmsman  
Spiritual Advisors

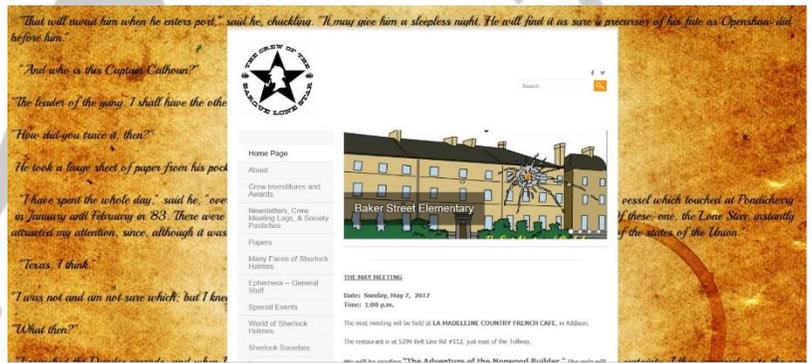
Secretaries  
Historian  
Webmaster

Steve Mason  
Walter Pieper  
Don Hobbs, BSI  
Jim Webb  
Cindy Brown, Brenda Hutchison  
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Rusty Mason

[mason.steve@epa.gov](mailto:mason.steve@epa.gov)  
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### Our Website:

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



### Our Facebook Page:

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

# STRAND MAGAZINE

William J. Pervin, PhD., Professor Emeritus, University of Texas at Dallas

Ahoy, shipmates of the Barque Lone Star!

We all know that the wonderful stories documenting Sherlock Holmes' exploits were originally published in the Strand Magazine.

That monthly magazine was published from January 1891 (actually on sale before Christmas 1890) till March 1950 with a total of 711 issues.

Their sales reached a peak when the serialization of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" was published with readers lined up outside the magazine's offices waiting to get the next installment.

It is not as well known in America after some 70 years that the Strand Magazine also published other very important works by such authors as Hornung (the adventures of A Raffles), Margery Allingham (sleuth Albert Campion), H G Wells ("The First Men in the Moon", 1900-1901 and important short stories like "The Land Ironclad" in 1903 in which he foresaw tank warfare - the story reprinted in November 1916 to remind people; also "The Country of the Blind" 1904 and an abridged version of "The War of the Worlds" 1920), Agatha Christie (Hercule Poirot & Miss Marple), Rudyard Kipling, Dorothy L

Sayers (Lord Peter Wimsey), Georges Simenon (Jules Maigret), Max Beerbohm, Winston Churchill, and P G Wodehouse (remember the wonderful Bertie Wooster and Jeeves?).



An interesting note about the Strand Magazine is that it was also known for some time as the source of ground-breaking brain teasers.

They introduced cross-number and other puzzles.

For Conan Doyle, having a publication that encouraged him and introduced the world to Sherlock Holmes was very important.

During the entire period from 1891 until 1930 the founding publisher and first editor continued to keep up the high standards of the Strand.



Without the Strand, we might not have had Sherlock Holmes!

Therefore, I propose a toast to the founding publisher George Newnes and the founding editor Herbert Greenhough Smith for their contribution to the world of great literature.

# "AH, I REMEMBER IT WELL" (EXTRACT)

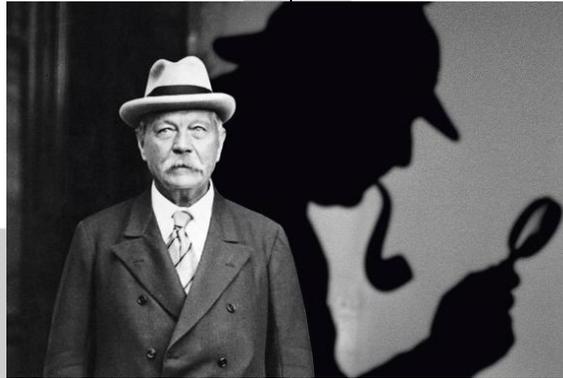
Steven Rothman, Editor, BSJ, Winter, 2008, Vol 58, No. 4

[ Last month we... ] again raised our voices in loud huzzahs to note that [sic] Arthur Conan Doyle was born 22 May 1859.

It is impossible for us to overstate the importance of this man who, as Christopher Morley once wrote,

"instead of being knighted, . . . should have been sainted."

Though we know intellectually that without Conan Doyle's imagination there would be no Sherlock Holmes and therefore no Baker Street Irregulars and no



Sherlockians, some of us do tend to forget or underplay his importance to our little game.

Though the entertainment value of stating "Sherlock lives" cannot be understated, it should never get in the way of saying "Thank you, Sir Arthur."

Our game must be played solemnly, but it must also be played honestly.

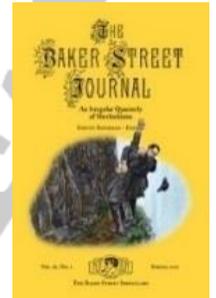
And honest men and women should praise the day that ACD was born.

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The Baker Street Journal continues to be the leading Sherlockian publication since its founding in 1946 by Edgar W. Smith.

With both serious scholarship and articles that "play the game," the Journal is essential reading for anyone interested in Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and a world where it is always 1895.

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



# UPCOMING CONFERENCES

## "Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences"

August 8-11, 2019 – Minneapolis, MN

[http://www.norwegianexplorers.org/2019\\_conference.html](http://www.norwegianexplorers.org/2019_conference.html)



## Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium

October 12-13, 2019 – Portland, OR

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



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

November 8-10, 2019 -- Bloomington, IN

<http://bsiarchivelilly.org/>



## The BSI Weekend

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

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



# A LION'S STING

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

In “The Adventure of the Lion’s Mane,” a dying man named his killer, but it took two more victims before Holmes clearly identified the culprit.

“Lion’s Mane” is the common name for one of the largest and most venomous jellyfish in the world.

While its sting is quite painful, it is usually not deadly, and new research has identified treatments that have been found effective for those without underlying conditions. (1)

When Fitzroy McPherson died in front of Holmes, the detective observed the man’s back was covered in red lesions resembling those of a flogging.

He also reported the man in great agony and spasming before expiring.

A week later, closer examination of the wounds indicated dots of “extravasated blood”—blood forced out of the blood vessels into the surrounding tissue. (2)

After a review of his “mind attic” and his retirement home’s actual attic, he uncovered a book **Out of Doors** by Rev. J. G. Wood who described his encounter with a Lion’s Mane jellyfish—or medusa—while swimming off the Margate coast, and the excruciating pain of its sting. (3)

When Holmes returned to the “scene of the crime,” he pointed out a specimen of the sea creature to Stackhurst, McPherson’s former employer, who proceeded to kill it with a boulder.

The Lion’s Mane, or *Cyanea capillata*, is considered the world’s largest jellyfish.

With tentacles that can reach up to 120 feet, a mature Lion’s Mane is larger than a blue whale.

While usually solitary creatures, they have been reported to gather in clusters along the shorelines—particularly along the coasts in the UK and the Northwest US. They prefer the colder waters of the Arctic and North Pacific Oceans, living on small fish and other sea creatures. (4)

While how a jellyfish administers poison to its victims is known, the venom’s actual mechanism for causing death has been under debate for the past decade.

Knowing the process becomes important for knowing how to treat the sting.

Jellyfish tentacles are imbedded with cnidocytes that each hold a nematocyte (capsule) which holds the venom and a tubule.

When stimulated, the cnidocyte allows water to enter, opening the nematocyte and pushing out the tubule under the victim’s skin.

The tubule turns inside out and releases the venom. Hundreds of thousands of such injections create the red welts observed on human victims. (5)

For the Lion’s Mane jellyfish, a sting is rarely fatal, but within twenty minutes can result in “back pain, nausea, abdominal cramps, sweating and hypertension.” (6)

Someone with an underlying condition could die from anaphylactic shock, and in recent years several swimmers have been hospitalized in the UK from encounters with the creatures. (7)

Another jellyfish, however, offers a much more deadly sting.



The box jellyfish—found in waters off of Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines—kills dozens each year in these countries.

Some debate exists about how the box jellyfish's poison actually affects a victim's organs, but regardless of which system is affected first, all conclude with cardiac arrest and death.

Most experts now recommend rinsing the affected area with vinegar to remove any remains of the tentacles, applying heat to the area, and using a copper gluconate cream to inhibit the venom. (8)

Fitzroy McPherson's underlying heart condition from a bout of rheumatic fever at a young age proved a fatal blow in his encounter with the medusa.

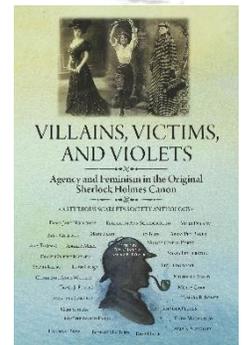
Holmes and Stackhurst's ministrations and his research, however, were able to serve Murdoch, McPherson's colleague.

Not only did they successfully treat the second man's contact with the jellyfish, but also keep him from a murder charge.

And, finally, eliminate at least one source of the Lion's sting.

- 1) <https://www.thesun.ie/news/2718688/jellyfish-galway-lethal-giant-swimmers/>
- 2) <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/extravasated>
- 3) J.G. Wood, *Out of Doors*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874, page 140
- 4) <https://oceana.org/marine-life/corals-and-other-invertebrates/lions-mane-jellyfish>
- 5) <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/11/jellyfish-almost-killed-scientist-now-she-wants-save-others-their-fatal-venom>
- 6) <https://www.thesun.ie/news/2828609/jellyfish-experts-tips-lions-mane-jellyfish-stings-irish-coastlines/>
- 7) <https://www.thesun.ie/news/2767198/swimmers-are-being-warned-about-huge-jellyfish-with-a-lethal-sting-being-found-in-irish-waters-with-several-people-already-hospitalised/>
- 8) <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/11/jellyfish-almost-killed-scientist-now-she-wants-save-others-their-fatal-venom>

There is a fascinating article on the jellyfish poisons (referenced in the article), complete with diagrams on how the poisons are injected into its victim, in case you wish more, you can access here: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/11/jellyfish-almost-killed-scientist-now-she-wants-save-others-their-fatal-venom>



Liese Sherwood-Fabre is proud to announce the upcoming publication of "Villains, Victims, and Violets: Agency and Feminism in the Original Sherlock Holmes Canon" by BrownWalker Press in August. Twenty-nine members of the Studious Scarlets Society examine the Canon's female characters. More details to follow.

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

# "COPPER BLAZE, OR THE RED-HEADED CIRCLE"

Susan Rice, *The Holmes-Watson Report*, March 2002

(Originally presented to the Montague Street Lodgers, February 7, 1999)

I recognize that I'm preaching to the converted, but I'm here today to offer yet another proof of the reality of Sherlock Holmes.

I know, I know, with such enormous piles of incontrovertible evidence, this addition is far from necessary.

While we lack an actual birth certificate, surely the absence of an obituary in the Times of London should go a long way toward proving that the Master lives.

While we can find no record of his name in the enrollment of Oxford or Cambridge or any other British school of higher learning, the very fact that the question of his alma mater continues to be argued with such vehemence substantiates his reality - after all, who would care where a fictional character attended school?

While we can find no credit offered him in any of the annals of Scotland Yard, we are not surprised to learn that Lestrade and Gregson and Bradstreet and the rest hid his contributions and kept the glory to themselves. Clearly, his absence offers further proof of his brilliance ... and his modesty.

No intelligent person can feel any doubt, and yet, I take this opportunity to step forward and offer a single small item to the towering edifice of evidence that Sherlock Holmes is a real man.

To illustrate this tiny new sliver of proof, I must draw your attention to the world of Sherlock Holmes and the people he encounters.

We are exposed to only a fraction of his world. We know just sixty of the hundreds of cases he solved; Watson makes that clear with his offhand mentions of dozens of untold tales.

And yet, those sixty cases bring the detective and the doc into contact with hundreds of interesting, eccentric, diverse personalities.

Let your minds roam around the stories for a moment.

Think of the odd, colorful characters -- the villains, the adventuresses, the noblemen, the policemen, the fools -- that Mr. Holmes encounters in the course of his profession.

Each and every one is vitally different from all the others, each possesses his or her own personality, his or her own separate and distinct character.

It is an astounding diversity, and it is my contention that such richness occurs only in nature, never in fiction. Holmes himself said, "... for strange effects and extraordinary combinations we must go to life itself, which is always far more daring than any effort of the imagination."

What writer of fiction could afford to be so profligate with his characters? What writer of fiction would create a unique character and then assign him a single scene, a mere walk-on, a throwaway role?

I would put our canon up against the novels of Charles Dickens or all the volumes of Anthony Trollope, to name two 'of the richest creators of fictional characters in our language.

Nothing but reality possesses the abundance, the extravagance, and the off-hand diversity of the world revealed through the writings of John H. Watson, M.D., in only 1,122 pages.

While the truth of this assertion seems evident, I feel compelled to offer some small proof of my thesis.

I decided I could best demonstrate the remarkable profusion of characters by showing you a sort of cross-section, by drilling down through the stories and removing a core sample.

I looked around for a subset, a small one for this brief paper, and decided to honor my favorite hair color by giving you this, a core sample of redheads.

I don't know that I can succeed in offering straw, lemon, orange, brick, Irish setter, liver, and clay, but I can reintroduce you to a baker's half-dozen of markedly dissimilar redheads.

"The Red-headed League" includes two of the most remarkable redheads. We will start with Jabez Wilson.

He is a rather unappealing specimen, described by Watson as "a very stout, florid-faced, elderly gentleman with fiery red hair."

He looks out on the world through small, fat-encircled eyes.

Holmes is kind when he describes him as "not overly bright," and we may go further and label him phlegmatic, oddly uncurious, and deeply dense.

He is among the first to be overwhelmed by the Master's observations about his not very tidy person, and then to disparage the deductions after they're explained by saying, "Well, I never! I thought at first that you had done something clever, but I see that there was nothing in it, after all."

He is a dull man, and the only thing vibrant about him is his head of flaming red hair.

The other redhead in this story is Duncan Ross, but you may call him Archie. His hair is even redder than Jabez Wilson's.

We are told that he is a small man, but his greatest distinction in my mind is that he is permitted to utter one of the most memorable lines in all the sixty stories: "I could tell you tales of cobbler's wax which would disgust you with human nature."

Doesn't that little additional touch, that gilt gingerbread on the Red-headed League scam, reveal a great deal about John Clay's confederate?

What an unusual, rather theatrical character is displayed!

Oh yes. There is a third redhead in this tale: Ezekiah Hopkins of Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

I need not elaborate on him because the plot reveals that he is a mere fictional device and thus has no place in this catalog of the real world.

Among our crop of redheads there is only one true villain: Roaring Jack Woodley, who pursues the solitary cyclist.

Here is Violet Smith's first impression of this despicable redhead: "Mr. Woodley seemed to me to be a most odious person. He was for ever making eyes at me -- a coarse, puffy-faced, red-moustached young man, with his hair plastered down on each side of his forehead."

When he bursts in on Holmes in a country tap-room, the Master says, "He had a fine flow of language, and his adjectives were very vigorous," which is a delightful description of a catalogue of profanity.

You may remember that this comment was closely followed by "a straight left against a slogging ruffian."

Later, in the clearing, the red-moustached Woodley was one of the parties in a marvelously brief melodramatic exchange:

"You're too late. She's my wife."

"No, she's your widow."

Bang.

He, too, is a distinct and despicable personality.

Our next redhead makes only a single abrupt appearance in one of the two tales Holmes narrates himself: "The Lion's Mane."

He is Tom Bellamy, the father of the beautiful and appealing Maud, and in spite of the brevity of his appearance, a real picture of the man emerges. Holmes learns that he "owns all the boats and bathing-cots at Fulworth. He was a fisherman to start with, but is now a man of some substance."

He is described as "a middle-aged man with a flaming red beard. He seemed to be in a very angry mood, and his face was soon as florrid as his hair."

He is the only one of our redheads to demonstrate the fiery temper believed to go with fiery hair, but he is more well-rounded than that stereotype might indicate.

He is clearly all at sea when it comes to raising a beautiful daughter, and falls back on his pride and his belief in the British class system when he says, "I object to my girl picking up with men outside her own station."



Tom Bellamy is dissimilar to any of the other redheads in the core sample survey.

Redheads five and six come bracketed together, and one description will suffice for both, especially as it is one of the most evocative descriptions in Watson's writings: "a small man with a very high head, a bristle of red hair all round the fringe of it, and a bald, shining scalp which shot out from among it like a mountain-peak from fir-trees.

He writhed his hands together as he stood, and his features were in a perpetual jerk - now smiling, now scowling, but never for an instant in repose.

Nature had given him a pendulous lip, and a too visible line of yellow and irregular teeth, which he strove feebly to conceal by constantly passing his hand over the lower part of his face.

In spite of his obtrusive baldness he gave the impression of youth. In point of fact, he had just turned his thirtieth year."

It is, of course, Thaddeus Sholto (SIGN), who looked so like his twin brother Bartholomew that when Watson spied the hideously dead Bartholomew through the keyhole, he involuntarily shot a look at Thaddeus to make certain he was still in the hallway.

Thaddeus is quite a character, living in great wealth and luxury in a grimy, third-rate neighborhood, surrounded by tapestries, Oriental vases, French paintings, two great tiger skins, and a huge hookah.

As soon as he is introduced to Dr. Watson he requests a medical examination, saying, "I have grave doubts as to my mitral valve," and he gives a strong indication of his singularity when he proclaims, "There is nothing more unaesthetic than a policeman."

Moreover, I'll bet many of us learned a new word from his proclamation, "I am compelled to be a valetudinarian."

Thaddeus and his brother Bartholomew, who died with a grin on his face and a thorn behind his ear, are certainly two of the most memorable people we meet, and could not be confused with any other person who appears in the Canon.

The final redhead we encounter is another of the rare fictional characters in the Canon, and as such has no real place in this survey, but he actually emerges more vividly than his creator, a rather dull suburbanite.

I'm sure you will recognize him: "His appearance, you see, is so remarkable that no one can pass him without observing him.

A shock of orange hair, a pale face disfigured by a horrible scar, which, by its contraction, has turned up the outer edge of his upper lip, a bulldog chin, and a pair of very penetrating dark eyes which present a singular contrast to the colour of his hair."

It is, of course, Hugh Boone, as impersonated by Neville St. Clair (TWIS).

So there we are, perhaps not a coster's orange barrow, but still a colorful collection of redheaded persons.

Those are only the redheads -- the Canon contains a vast rainbow of blondes, chestnut tresses, black hair, grey beards, white locks - why, Holmes himself has donned most of those when seeking a disguise.

Chosen this way, at random by a single attribute, these characters form a core sample of a rich and various universe.

How can any reader doubt the reality of a universe so diversely populated?"

# DATE OF BIRTH?

Late Rev. Raymond L "Vic" Holly, OEH, Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn (HSU)  
(Originally presented to the HSU, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1989)

## (Thanks to the "The Whaling News")

Most of my argument for the birth-date of Sherlock Holmes being 5th April 1854, and not 6th January of that year as generally accepted, has appeared in print (before).

The argument, as I present it, is slightly revised from what was presented in the Deal Table, #3, Autumn 1987.

I attempt to consolidate the material in previous articles and to add a little confirmation.

The Sherlockian world is indebted to Steven Lauria for calling attention, in an article entitled "On the Birthday for Sherlock Holmes" in the BSM #28, Winter 1981, to the fact that Maundy Thursday, the Thursday of Holy Week, was called Shear Thursday in England, from the custom of getting a haircut before Easter.

Although this was undoubtedly the popular understanding of the term, Webster's Third New International Dictionary gives it as "Sheer Thursday."

"Sheer" means "pure" (as in "sheer nonsense" or "sheer precipice"); Maundy Thursday was called "Sheer" or "Pure" Thursday from the custom of making one's confession before Easter (The term "Shrove" applied to the day before the first day of Lent has a similar etymology).

As Lauria properly points out, however, the popular mind in the

nineteenth century had come to associate the Thursday of Holy Week with ridding of hair rather than guilt.

Anglican custom was to give a name from the church calendar from the day of baptism, not from the day of birth.

Two causes had joined in making this custom.

One, was the rubric in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, still the official liturgy of the Church of England, that "The people are to be admonished, that it is most convenient that Baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays, and other Holy Days, when the most number of people come together."

Ordinarily, then, baptisms were administered on Sundays or, perhaps more commonly, Holy Days that came during the week.

(Two), was the fact that a person was given his Christian name in baptism.

Although a child was born with a surname, he or she was not regarded as having a Christian name (what is now often called a given name or first name) until it was bestowed in baptism.

It was natural to note the day on which a person was named by giving a name of a saint or a name which otherwise indicated the day; thus, a person's naming day was also his name day.

It is common in liturgical churches even today for a person to think of the day of the saint whose name he bears as his name day, although it not so common

now for it also to be his naming or baptismal day.

Sherlock Holmes later said of his ancestors that they were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class [GREE].

Such people might very well name him Sherlock if he were baptised on Shear Thursday.

"Sherlock" is, or course, "Shear-lock" and means "barber."

When the priest took the infant Homes in his arms and directed the godparents, "Name this child," they may very well have given the child a name which indicated the day, "William Sherlock Scott." [ASH I:47]

The other elements in his Christian name together with the initial of "Sherlock" give the name of William Escott, which he took in CHAS. The British often use three or more Christian names.

Once the "Sherlock" was decided upon, for the day, it was natural to add "William" before it, and thus get double-duty from it, with a reference to one who in 1854 was still a well-known theologian and writer, William Sherlock (1641-1707).

The "Scott" perhaps was added as giving a contemporary writer.

It would appear that the home of Siger Holmes had a well-used library.

It was the custom in the Church of England to baptize on the eighth day of life.

Originally, this was counting by the method used in The Bible.

Today, we think of such an expression as “the eighth day” as the “the eighth day of,” counting the base point as the first day.

In church usage until recently, a major feast had an octave, which was eight days starting with the feast itself; the last day was called the octave day of the feast.

Thus, 1st January is the octave of Christmas. Baptism was to occur, according to this tradition, on the octave day of birth.

Most people – including country squires – not used to counting in the ancient or Biblical way, but knowing the tradition of baptism on the eighth day, often thought of it as meaning, not exactly a week after birth, but a week and a day – not on the eighth day of life, but when eight days old.

Baptism on the eighth day arose partly in imitation of a Jewish practice of circumcision on the octave day.

As that had been the initiation into the Old Covenant, so baptism was thought of as the initiation into the New Covenant.

It arose partly in pursuit of the admonition which another rubric in the Book of Common Prayer directed the clergy to give often to the people “That they defer not the Baptism of their Children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other Holy-day falling between, unless upon a great and reasonable cause, to be approved by The Curate.”

(“The Curate” in those days meant the pastor; a parish might have assistants also known as curates, but The Curate was the rector or vicar.)

John Wesley, preaching as an Anglican priest, made a passing

reference to baptism at the age of eight days: “Was you devoted to God at eight days old, and have you been all these years devoting yourself to the devil?”

[The reference is in Sermon 39, III, 4, in Sugden’s edition of Wesley’s sermons. A singular “you” took the verb “was” during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.]

The sermon apparently was first preached on 29th May 1743, and was used many times later. Wesley preached it three times in 1760.

The custom it referred to might very well have still prevailed in rural England a century later.

The number eight is associated with baptism in other ways (the mention of eight persons in the ark in the baptismal passage in I Peter 3:20-21 has something to do with this); baptismal fonts are generally eight-sided.

Consequently, Holmes’ birthday should be about eight days earlier than 13th April, which was Maundy Thursday or Shear Thursday in 1854.

[This can be easily checked in many places. The authority I use was the 1928 Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, page liii, which gives Easter Day of 1854 as 16th April. Maundy Thursday, of course, is just three days earlier.]

If the birthday had been 5th April, the parents, used to the modern way of counting, might very well have asked for the baptism on Maundy Thursday.

So far, I think that I have established some small probability for the date of 5th April.

It needs, however, confirmation, to be taken seriously.

Such confirmation appears, it seems to me, in three stories in The Canon.

Any one of these by itself, like the original argument, is weak; taken together, it seems to me that they corroborate each other with considerable force.

The murder of Ronald Adair is dated 30th March 1894 [EMPT 3:F], and Baring-Gould points out that the inquest cannot have been before, or long after, Monday, 2nd April 1894 [ASH: II, page 330, note 5].

Holmes returned on the day of the inquest.

The night was bleak and boisterous: Baring-Gould says that the only day in early April, 1894, of which this is true in London was Thursday, 5th April. [ASH: II, page 341, note 35]

It was very like Holmes to indulge his flair for the dramatic gesture by returning from The Hiatus on his birthday, and on the fortieth birthday at that, widely recognized as the beginning of middle age and an appropriate time for a new beginning of his career

[I owe that last sentence to Stephen Lauria, who made that comment on my revision of his suggestion that 13th April had been Holmes’ birthday].

Baring-Gould’s chronology was published in 1955. A table of the first day of each of Sherlock Homes’ recorded cases by month and day of month, following the Baring-Gould chronology, is worthy of some attention.

Two cases are not dated precisely (VEIL is simply some day

in October, and MAZA is sometime in summer).

Five days have two cases each. 5th April alone has three cases.

Not only does no other date have that many, but no other date has any more.

It is not necessarily very odd that out of sixty dates, three should happen to be the same.

That these three, however, should also happen to be the date that other evidence, first gathered 28 years after Baring-Gould's chronology was published, indicates this may have been the birthday of the principal person involved in the chronology – that is unusual.

I suggest that there is a good reason for 5th April to begin more cases in The Canon than any other date.

If, as I suggest, Homes returned precisely on his fortieth birthday to begin middle age and his second career on the same day, he planned for EMPT to begin on 5th April.

The other two may have been recalled by Watson because of associations with the birthday of The Master.

Though he did not record the fact that they came on Holmes' birthday, that very fact may be partly responsible for nudging them into the front of his mind so that he did record them.

The fact that a case was recorded might depend to some extent upon there being something to make it stand out in Watson's thought.

The first of these is COPP, the beginning of which is dated 5th April 1889. H B Williams and Robert Schutz have conjectured [ASH: II, page 119, note 19] that

Violet Hunter was Sherlock Holmes' half-sister.

(This appears to be contradicted by the text: Holmes responds to Watson's question, "Do you know the young lady?" with "Not I," and she said, "I have no parents or relations of any sort from whom I could ask advice." Possibly one could argue that Watson put this in to conceal the fact that she was indeed Holmes' half-sister.)

If this were the case, then she might have gone to her half-brother on what she knew was his birthday, appealing, as does the Declaration of Independence, with the voice of consanguinity to the ties of common kindred.

My argument does not demand that Violet Hunter be Sherlock's half-sister, but if that is the case, it adds force to the argument.

At the very least, the fact that Watson included this story with two others, which occur on 5th April, argues that the date held some significance for him.

Here is a second point of confirmation, establishing a greater probability for 5th April as The Master's birthday.

The other case is 3STU, starting 5th April 1895, just one year after Holmes' return from The Hiatus.

Watson warns us at the beginning of the story that he will use due discretion to prevent an exact identification.

In details about one of the three students, which, due to this due discretion, probably are quite unlike anything in the real incident, he makes references to the card-playing Colonel Moran of EMPT.

The third student is Miles McLaren, who was nearly expelled after a card scandal in his first year. "Miles", of course, means "soldier", and together with the card scandal points to the old shikari.

The surname of McLaren is not without interest.

There was another well-known writer at the time with the name John Watson, but he did not write under his own name, but used the pen name of Ian McLaren.

Watson may very well have been pointing back to the Moran case, exactly one year earlier, when Holmes, Watson, and Colonel Moran met in that room in the empty house.

Here is a third point of confirmation, establishing greater probability for 5th April as The Master's birthday.

I might suggest that we have here a rope woven of four strands.

The primary one is form the name "Sherlock", indicating baptism on Shear Thursday.

The other three actually were in the Strand magazine – COPP in the Strand of June 1892, EMPT in the Strand of October 1903, and 3STU in the Strand of June 1904.

These three Strands with the primary strand make a stout rope. Koheleth wisely pointed out that a threefold cord is not quickly broken [Ecclesiastes 4:12]; we have one that is even stronger, of four strands, three of which are Strands.

The first time that 6th January was suggested as the birthday of Sherlock Holmes was in an astrological speculation at the first BSI dinner on 5th June 1933, and Christopher Morley adopted it because his brother Felix was born

on 6th January 1894, which would then have been Holmes' fortieth birthday.

[Little mention is given that 6th January was the first weekend in which the repeal of the prohibition acts was effective, a good reason for the clubbable Christopher Morley to schedule a party. Ed.]

In 1957, a very little Canonical evidence was fitted to the theory when the passage from VALL to the effect that on 7th January Holmes "leaned upon his hand with his untested breakfast before him" was adduced by Nathan Bengis as evidence of "some small jollification the night before."

In the story, of course, it is a sign of Holmes' interest in the message from Porlock before him, not of jollification on the previous evening.

This, together with the fact which William S Baring-Gould appeals to – that Holmes quotes

twice from Twelfth Night, the only Shakespearean (Oxfordian) play he quotes more than once – is the Canonical evidence.

(The term "twelfth night" is commonly applied to 6th January or Epiphany, although, strictly speaking, it means the evening of 5th January, the twelfth day of Christmas. As pointed out earlier, it depends on how you count. 5th January is the twelfth day of Christmas, and 6th January is the twelfth day after Christmas.)

This is the Canonical evidence for 6th January, and it seems to me to be meagre, in comparison with the probability of 5th April, which has three points of confirmation.

The date of 6th January has associations with the history of the Baker Street Irregulars, and probably with always be the time of the annual BSI dinner, but that it means anything in the life of Sherlock Holmes has not been

established with anything like the force of the evidence for 5th April.

For those who are interested, if the date of 5th April is correct, Sherlock Holmes' astrological sign is Aries, the first sign in the zodiac and the sign under which many leaders are claimed to be born.

The first sign of the zodiac for the first consulting detective is, I suggest, another interesting astrological speculation, with which he can give a protective wrapping to our stout rope of four strands.

I submit that Sherlock Holmes was born on 5th April 1854, and baptized a week and a day later, on Maundy (or Shear) Thursday, 13th April 1854; that he returned from The Hiatus on his fortieth birthday, 5th April 1894; and that nudged by the fact that they took place on The Master's birthday, Watson reported two other cases that started on 5th April 1889 and 5th April 1895.

## SEEN ON THE INTERNET - PETER CUSHING



Killed Dracula with a pair of candle stick holders ...

... Blew up Alderan ...

... Fought Daleks ...

... Has been at the Earth's core ...

... Killed more vampires than Buffy ...

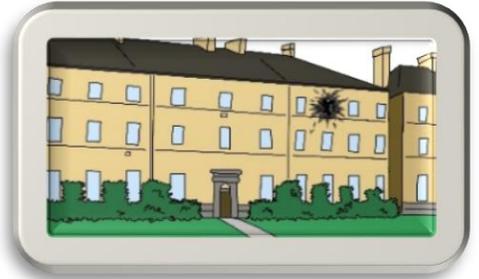
... Outsmarted Moriarty ...

... Verbally b\_\_\_\_\_ slapped Darth Vader ...

... Do you really think Chuck Norris can top this ??

# Baker Street Elementary

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



Baker Street Elementary  
Number 220 - 06/09/2019

Fay, Mason & Mason

SHERLOCK, CAN YOU SHARE WITH THE CLASS ANY QUIRKS ON "THE CONCEPT OF TIME" YOU CAN THINK OF?



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EASY... TWO MINUTES AFTER I OPEN MY CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, I AM READY FOR NEXT CHRISTMAS TO ARRIVE...



BUT YOU CAN GIVE ME 39 YEARS, I STILL WON'T WRITE MY ESSAY UNTIL THE NIGHT BEFORE...

