

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 07, No. 10 - October, 2019

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



PLEASE NOTE:

November 06 Meeting

NOTICE

The next meeting will be held on **Sunday, November 03**, 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 Scandal in Bohemia**." The quiz will cover this tale.

Julie McKuras, BSI, and Bonnie MacBird, BSI, will be our guest presenters.

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

September 01 Summary

There were 14 in attendance at the meeting. Liese Sherwood-Fabre gave a wonderful opening toast, "Ode to the Irregulars" (see page 3).

The Crew then took a quiz on "The Sign of Four-Quiz 2," which was won by Ann Caddell.

We discussed the movie night at Half Price Bookstore on November 15, Bouchercon and the Saturday night dinner, as well as SMU's planned conference in October 2021, which we will be actively supporting.

Ann Caddell gave a very interesting presentation on the similarities between Arthur Conan Doyle and H.P. Lovecraft including Sherlock Holmes and Cthulhu. Tim Kline has various books and video games that tie Holmes and Lovecraft together.

The Beacon Society is supporting an essay contest in memory of Joel Senter available to 4th through 12 graders. Details are on the Beacon Society website.

We closed the meeting with a reading (by Bray Fisher) from the Autumn 2010 Baker Street Journal, "As We Dream by the Fire" (page 4).

The door prize drawing was won by Jim Robinson.

Thanks to Pam Mason for recording a summary of the meeting.



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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Our Facebook Page:

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

"ODE TO THE IRREGULARS"

Chrys Kegley, *The Serpentine Muse*, Spring, 2009

From two-two-one-b there
rose up the call:

Assemble Irregulars-come
one, come all!

Up seventeen steps young
Wiggins would fly ,

To get his charge from the
famed private eye.

A shilling to each was their
expected pay-

A guinea the prize when a boy
won the day.

The lads see it all, as through
London they go,

Overhear everyone, then let
Holmes know.



The Aurora was found in the
Sign of Four,

Holmes and Watson soon
settled the score.

The Baker Street Arabs, dirty
and coarse,

Holmes' division of the
detective police force.

Baker Street Irreg'lars- a small
motley crew!

On your diamond anniversary,
we all toast to you,

Salute all Irregulars from both
far and near

And canonical camaraderie
we all fondly share.

"AS WE DREAM BY THE FIRE" (EXTRACT)

Steven Rothman, Editor, BSJ, Autumn, 2010, Vol 60, No. 2

Now that the autumnal is closing in, and days are getting shorter, our thoughts turn—more than ever—to Baker Street.

Something about the Canon gives off a greyish tone: a hint of clouds and cold, mixed with a desire to be indoors. Yet, only about half of the stories occur during the six darker months.

We might just as well imagine Holmes shining forth in most glorious summer, striding through sunny days, shedding light on the darkest of human events. Why don't we?

The most evocative scenes in the Canon are those set in the Baker Street sitting room. Watson draws us in by recounting his banter with Holmes and we, having entered 221B, are loathe to go out again.

Also, we get to know Holmes best (not always first) in books and reading; and even sitting on a tree branch in midsummer is very much an interior activity.

Our fondest personal memory of reading the Canon for the first time is of a Saturday afternoon

in early January. We had just checked out The Valley of Fear from the library.

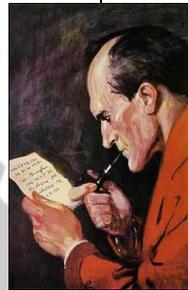
As we opened the book, the skies went from brilliant, if weak, winter sunlight to dark grey clouds. Prone on the floor by the radiator, we learned of Porlock and the doings at Birlstone Manor.

Slowly large snowflakes came down and continued to do so for the rest of the day and well into the night.

But we cared not at all; we were upstate in the Vermissa Valley and needed to know just what evil the Scowrers were doing. The snow was shoveled late that Sunday; Bakerstreeting came first.

So for us, Baker Street is Holmes and Watson by their fireside discussing some hideous crime in the newspapers just before learning that a new unfortunate seeks their aid.

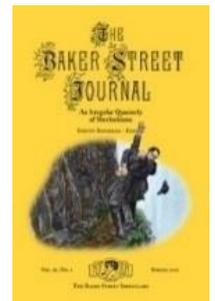
Scholars have allowed mere facts to get in the way of truer perceptions. And that, of course, is the very core of all Sherlockian scholarship: "Only those things the heart believes are true."



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

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

November 8-10, 2019 -- Bloomington, IN

<http://bsiarchivelilly.org/>



"Sherlock Holmes Birthday -- The BSI Weekend"

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

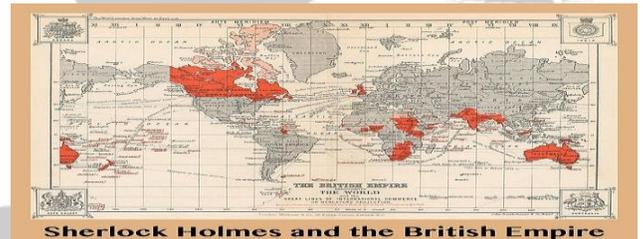
<https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/bsi-weekend/>



"Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire"

July 17-19, 2020 -- Bear Mountain Inn, NY

<https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/2019/08/03/bsi-2020-conference-dates/>



"Holmes in the Heartland"

July 24-26, 2020 -- St. Louis, MO

<https://parallelcasestl.wixsite.com/home/holmes-in-the-heartland>



AN INTERVIEW WITH BONNIE MACBIRD

Author of Art in the Blood, Unquiet Spirits, and The Devil's Due

Bonnie MacBird, a member of the Baker Street Irregulars (BSI), has just published her third Sherlock Holmes novel, **The Devil's Due**. Bonnie graciously agreed to answer questions concerning her career and book for our newsletter. We have included a couple of illustrations created by Bonnie for her first novel.



Thanks so much to Holly Watson for helping get this accomplished.

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1. You were raised in the San Francisco, CA area, attended Stanford, received three Emmys to this point, and wrote the screenplay to **Tron**. What else should we know about you?

I'm married to computer scientist Alan Kay, and we live part time in LA but increasingly in London. We are music lovers (that was my undergraduate degree), and we infected our defenceless niece Kirstin (at age 12) with a love for Holmes by watching the Granada series with her when she spent summers with us as a child.



2. What was your first exposure to Sherlock Holmes – the Canon, a pastiche, or another medium (film, television episodes)?

The canon. A Study in Scarlet. And then all the rest. I inhaled the canon. I was ten. After that Basil Rathbone on TV. Even as a child I was horrified at the change in time period to the forties in those movies. That was just "all wrong"!

3. Can you tell us about your favorite Canonical word that almost got you in trouble in school?

My parents had a huge dictionary in our living room, on a stand. I was encouraged to look up words I didn't know and use them soon after in a sentence.

One day my mom got a call from the principal of my grammar school and was asked in to explain where I might have

"learned this word!" She pointed to something in my fourth-grade story.

My mother laughed and said "She'll bring in the book to the teacher the next day." I showed up with The Adventures, open to A Study in Scarlet.

"Ejaculate!", I pronounced in my prim little fourth grade know-it-all manner. "It means 'spit out'. What is the problem?" Of course, I had no idea of any other meaning at the time.

By the way I never put that word in my books now, even though Conan Doyle used it. For the modern reader it would jolt them out of the story, it would feel self-conscious and that goes against good storytelling.

Why draw attention to the writing? That's not how Conan Doyle wrote. His was remarkably ego-free writing.

4. When did you first feel you were "a Sherlockian?"

Oh, er, well, when Les Klinger said I was one. He tends to pluck us all from the ether and plunk us down in the world.

And thank goodness for that. He told me I'd find my best friends in the Sherlockian world. And in fact, most of the people I spend time with now, are Sherlockians.

What a delightful and surprisingly wide-ranging passion that unites so many different kinds of people. Thank you, Les.

5. What prompted you to decide to enter the Sherlockian pastiche world?

After recovering from a serious illness, I took a fresh look at what I wanted to do next in life. Write a novel was the answer. And who did I want to spend the next couple of years with? Sherlock Holmes!

I did not deem it a commercial choice. There was already Downey and BBC Sherlock and seemed like too much "in the air". But I didn't care, because it was what I wanted to do. So, I did it, on spec, not expecting much. I wrote the book I wanted to read.

I did draw some very specific lines in the sand for myself so I'd know if I'd "succeeded".

Some of my rules were: don't contradict canon, go for look/feel/sound like the originals, do not recycle the Doyle deductions, come up with all new ones, or go home. No romance for Holmes.

But stretch the form to novel length, which means, creating a triple plot, convolved, like a

triple helix, otherwise the smartest man in the world would have it solved by page 30. And... add in some thematic content.

For book one, that was a look at the perils and gifts of the artistic temperament. Which Holmes possesses in spades, and is a favourite personal subject.

6. Can you give us a short two-line synopsis for the three novels? OK, you can use three or four lines for the most recent one.

THE DEVIL'S DUE -- Winter 1890.

Philanthropists laundering dirty money across London find themselves creatively murdered.

A self-named "Lucifer" claims credit, and the net is cast wide, with innocent family members also killed.

Holmes and Watson race to stop the carnage but in their way is a vicious new man at Scotland Yard, a do-gooder with an agenda, and the distractions of a parallel case of French anarchists. When Mycroft disappears, the threat takes on a new dimension.

UNQUIET SPIRITS -- Whisky, Ghosts, and Sherlock Holmes. Winter 1889. Holmes and Watson travel to the south of France and the Scottish Highlands to untangle a bloody, ghostly set of cases that convolve into one very dangerous one, which comes to a head in the haunted castle of a Scottish whisky dynasty.

Holmes must put to rest a ghost of his own to solve the case.

ART IN THE BLOOD — the cases of a missing child, a stolen statue and a threatened French singer all seem to point a single untouchable man.

Holmes and Watson travel from Paris to Lancashire to rescue the boy and discover the



horror behind one of the world's great art collections, as the simultaneous gifts and peril of the artistic temperament nearly cost Holmes his life.

7. What seems to be more important – writing in the style of Doyle, or ensuring you do not contradict something Canonical?

That's a great question. I'd say writing in the style of Doyle is most important. I'd like not to contradict something canonical but even Doyle contradicted himself – the wounds, the marriages, etc. Even "James" for Pete's sake!

That's not to condone sloppiness. I made a gross error in chapter one of my first book, however, with Mary mentioning her mother, who is of course dead, but as Leah Cummins Quinn pointed out in "The Well-Read Sherlockian" Doyle made that same mistake in a later work himself.

I try not to do so, though, and can be seen blushing and cringing over that one. But let's look at the more important question "writing in the style of Doyle".

It is only by capturing the essence can one hope to provide enjoyment for the deep Sherlockian. And I do aim for that. And, also because I think he's a truly great writer.

So, it's a worthy goal to emulate this fluid, deceptively easy, engrossing and humorous style.

8. Doyle's stories have been run through various reading level software. Many believe part of his popularity was the stories were written at a level the masses in Victorian England (many who had just started reading) could follow and enjoy. Your three novels seem to continue that ability. Do you have to remind yourself to keep

your novels at that level to make them more accessible to all readers?

The voice comes naturally to me, but I work to stay "in shape" as an athlete does. I read Doyle aloud. I read my own work aloud.

Many people who try to emulate another writer take this granular, left brain approach which doesn't really work – analysing the vocabulary and debating the sentence structure.

The essence of Doyle, a quite emotional man -- after all, look at his life decisions! - is that of a master storyteller. It is story above all. Narrative drive. That is what is essential to capture.

That and the generous spirit and sharp observations of the narrator, John Watson. Watson is an army man, he doesn't wax poetical about the scenery or the meaning of life.

He is emotional, and there is poetry in him, but he leads always with story. That is what I fixate upon. When I write, I picture and write for a highly intelligent reader - in today's modern world the subject matter pre-selects for that.

I try to keep the vocabulary period correct, and I know people have google at hand. I have occasionally been criticised for throwing in foreign language phrases but again, google. They're peppered throughout the canon, so I feel justified..

I was snarked at once for using "said" so much, as though I might be too lazy not to think up retorted, bellowed, rebuked, spat or chided.

No, it's a choice, and one Conan Doyle made as well. It's when you want the "teller" to disappear and the story to come alive. And, also when the dialogue itself should convey its tone.



So "said" is very much a choice. That's partly what I mean about low ego storytelling. That's what he did and frankly it's harder to do than the show-offy stuff.

9. ***Art in the Blood*** is accepted as one of the best pastiches developed. Were you surprised how well the book was received by Sherlockians?

Oh, that is lovely to hear. I am particularly pleased when a serious Sherlockian enjoys my books. That is the highest praise.

10. In ***Art in the Blood***, you mimicked the voice and the general atmosphere of the Holmes canon wonderfully, while dealing with issues of the Victorian period that still resonate in the 21st century, such as attitudes toward child labor and child poverty.

The particular two issues you mention were, in fact, widely regarded, debated, and proselytised about at the very time of the story.

So, these attitudes are hardly modern, Steve. Just as there were temperance unions, organisations to promote women's rights and other social movements of the time, so there were many voices speaking out on the rights of children in general, and in the factories specifically.

Orphanages, schools for street children ("ragged schools") were all in full flower. The Victorian era is said to be when "childhood" was invented as a concept and the notion of

protecting children really came to the attention of the larger world at that time.

11. For non-writers, how long does the research for a novel take, and the timeframe for the actual writing part of the story?

I'm sure it's different for each writer. The first three books have each taken me two years. The fourth is being asked for on a shorter lead time.

12. Plans for any of the three novels finding their way onto the big (or little screen) in the future?

They'd be perfect. No question.

13. Are there any other Sherlockian novels already trying to escape your own "brain-attic"?

Yes. Constantly.

14. What was your reaction when Wiggins announced your investiture as "Art in the Blood" at the Baker Street Irregulars dinner?

Oh my, oh my, oh my. Speechless. As many of you saw.

I always thought of my obsession as a private, slightly silly one. Now it is a public, slightly silly one.

I am delighted to be a member of this grandly humorous, and yet amazingly encyclopaedic and rich group of devotees.

I definitely feel I've found my tribe.

Advance Praise for *THE DEVIL'S DUE*

“Beautifully plotted, canon faithful... I’m pretty sure MacBird has sold her soul to the Devil in return for talent... A damn fine novel!”

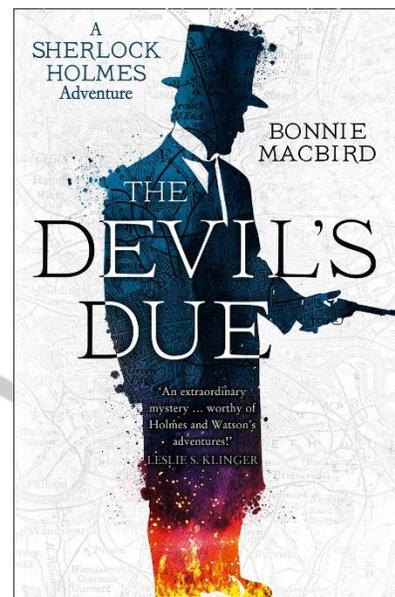
Nancy Holder, New York Times bestselling author of the *Wicked Saga*

“Another worthy tale of Holmes and Watson’s adventures... an extraordinary mystery!”

Leslie S. Klinger, BSI, Editor, *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*

“Gorgeously crafted and marvelously entertaining! MacBird writes with grit and spark, her wit, intelligence and passion infuse every action-packed page.”

Hank Phillippi Ryan, internat’l best-seller and award-winning author of *The Murder List*



After *Art in the Blood* and *Unquiet Spirits*, Holmes and Watson return in the third of Bonnie MacBird’s critically acclaimed Sherlock Holmes Adventures for HarperCollins, written in the tradition of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Winter, 1890. *The Devil's Due* (Harper Collins, On Sale: October 29, 2019) finds the newly famous Sherlock Holmes facing his worst adversary to date – a diabolical villain bent on destroying some of London’s most admired public figures in singularly gruesome ways. A further puzzle is that suicide closely attends each of the murders.

With Watson at his side, Holmes tracks the killer through fog-bound London, battling both an envious new man at Scotland Yard and a vengeful journalist as he follows a complex trail leading from performers to princes, artists to anarchists.

But when his brother Mycroft disappears, Holmes’s response makes even Watson wonder how close to the flames his friend has traveled. Has Sherlock Holmes himself made a deal with the devil?

Harper Collins; October 29, 2019

\$26.99; Hardcover; 384 pages

Also available as an ebook and audio book

ISBN: 978-0008348106

SEVENTEEN STEPS TO "A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA"

Brad Keefauver, Sherlock Peoria

Seventeen thoughts for further ponderance of "A Scandal in Bohemia" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

THE RETURN OF DOCTOR WATSON

After two novels worth of nursing his wounds, John H. Watson suddenly has a home, a wife, AND a job, all his own.

But the doctor's exact words are "I had now returned to civil practice." In the opening of "A Study in Scarlet," he seems to have gone straight from medical school into the military.

He doesn't seem to have a civil practice in either of the first two books... so when was he working as a civilian doctor before this?

Some time between the shoulder wound and the leg wound, perhaps?

Back when he had to support his "first" wife?



THE WOO DOOR

The front door at 221 Baker Street is one that Dr. Watson says he will always associate with his "woeing."

Now, the Smash did a little wooing once upon a time himself, and he will always associate a certain front door on Polk Street with that period of time.

The door of one's beloved is certainly the place one awaits the divine presence that one is utterly smitten with.

So why is Watson associating the front door to 221 with his dating?

One almost imagines Mary Morstan dropping him off, and the two spending a parting moment there, but that would never have been done in Victorian England, would it?

Or was did the door just happen to be the same style that Mrs. Cecil Forrester had on the front of her house?

THE SHOULDER WOUND? HEALED!

Holmes casually tosses a case of cigars at Watson when he comes in the door, perhaps a gesture of celebration at Watson's return.

Would Holmes be tossing it at the doctor if Watson was still holding that left arm in an unnatural manner?

And this cigar case... am I right in assuming this would be a small, pocket sized case?

Or was Holmes tossing a wooden box at his friend, which would definitely require a two-handed catch?



WHERE THE HECK?

Holmes's Continental Gazetteer has convenient listings for Eglow and Eglonitz. In Jack Tracy's "Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana," the late Mr. Tracy has put an asterisk next to each of these references, denoting them as "fictitious."

In die-hard Sherlockian terms, this means Mr. Tracy couldn't find

them in his researches and simply gave up looking.

But the key to all research is knowing where to look.

As we know they're on "the Continent" (Europe), we at least have a starting place, but past that where would the Hounds look for these places based on the makeup of their names?

My first thought is Eglow, Scotland and Eglonitz, Transylvania, but I'm sure there are better ideas out there.



A PAIR OF BEAUTIES

While Watson goes on about how loveless Holmes is, and how immune Holmes is to the charms of women, we do find Sherlock talking about a pair of beauties in this tale.

Later, we even find that Holmes was out rubbing down some other specimens of that charming type.

Now that I have the Lascar's attention, I would ask the Hounds if they find that Holmes has a special fondness for horses, or that he was just a typical citizen of a horse-powered world?

THE RICHNESS OF THIS WRITING!

In one fabulous sentence, Watson tells us:

"My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to



absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his

whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature."

The mind whirls!

"Home-centred interests" -- Was Watson buying or renting?

If he bought, was he doing home improvements?

Or were these interests simply the setting up of a household, complete with boot-slitting servants?

Was he helping Mary decorate?

Or is "home-centred interests" just Watson's way of saying he was spending every night romancing his new wife?

(And we won't even get into the Seinfeld-reminiscent "master of his own establishment.")

And Holmes!

"Buried in old books." Buried!

While we're treated to a lot of books by name in the Canon, what we wouldn't give to know what those burial piles consisted of.

Criminal histories?

Old law books?

Music?

He "loathed every form of society" -- does this mean he hated gatherings of every sort, or is Watson saying he actually hated people? "

The drowsiness of the drug" -- don't know much about cocaine, but my impression was that it was a stimulant.

Was Watson mixing up the drowsiness of Holmes's ambition ("I am the most incurably lazy devil that ever stood in shoe leather") with the fierce energy of the drug?

KING OF HIS BOHEMIAN SOUL

In the that quote from the last section, we saw how Holmes had a "Bohemian soul."

And here's the King of Bohemia appearing and offering Holmes unlimited funds to do his bidding, producing a king's ransom in gold and currency as temptation.

The Hounds have discussed the foulness of this tale's doings before, but taking from a step back, this tale begins to look like "The Devil of All Bachelors and Sherlock Holmes."

Symbolism a-plenty in this tale.

Watson, the tale's patron saint of marital bliss, begins by telling us how Holmes had no special fondness for women.

Mr. Bachelor and Mr. Married seem to have fallen out of touch, leaving Holmes easy prey for the Bachelor King's offer to pay Holmes to betray an Angel of a Woman. (Irene the adventuress, an angel?)

Well, she leads Holmes to a church, and later, will only let him in her house if he comes as a holy man.)

In the end, Holmes must decide between taking the snake (ring) or the angel's (photograph).

Holmes chooses the angel, no doubt thanks to the recent return of the saintly Watson.

(It must be noted that Holmes later took the King's "reward," as we find in "A Case of Identity," and offered its contents to Watson, symbolically tempting him back into the he-man woman-hater's club.)

My question for the Hounds: Am I imagining all this in a fit of late-night desperation?

Or is there an allegorical aspect to this tale?

THE SERPENTINE AVENUE IRREGULARS

We've seen Holmes using his gang of street urchins in the previous two tales, but now Holmes has gone a step further and come up with a gang of full grown adults.

Shabbily dressed loafers, a scissors-grinder, two guardsmen, a nurse-girl, well-dressed young cigar-smokers, stable-hands, serving maids, and... oh, yes... a certain doctor.

Where did Holmes find this bunch, and how much was he paying per person?

Did the stablehands come from the ranks he'd been socializing with earlier in the tale?

Apparently they were men and women Holmes trusted, as all it would have taken was one traitor to go up to Briony Lodge and say "I'll tell you who was behind that mess for a sovereign" to spoil his whole plan.

Yet Holmes is confident enough in this bunch that he doesn't come back until morning.

Or was he betrayed?



THE LIMITS OF AN INDEX

"For many years he had adopted a system of docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information."

One would suspect these paragraphs came out of the London papers.

But the sheer scope of performing one's own extract service from every daily paper in London seems immense.

While his system must have had certain built-in efficiencies, Holmes had to set some criteria for his data gathering.

What sort of criteria might that have been?

Were the people limited to citizens of London?

Were the subjects limited to those he perceived had some point of contact with crime?



STOP THAT BROUGHAM!

Time moves strangely in the Canon.

In "Copper Beeches," Violet Hunter arrives at 10:15 in the morning and bids Holmes "goodnight" as she leaves, when nothing seems to have occurred that took all day to take place.

And in SCAN, we find this odd passage:

"Then, good-night, your Majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good-night, Watson," he added, as the wheels of the royal brougham rolled down the street."

The coachman obviously has as little respect for the King as we do, and decided to take off when his shift was over, king or no king.

Of course, we see no indication that the king used the door and the seventeen steps on his way out, perhaps he lept from the window in that pause between sentences.

(What a sight that would have made with his mask back on his face and that deep blue cloak flying behind him!)

Do these strange time tricks of the Canon hide moments and

conversations that Watson would rather not tell us about?

In this tale, might it not be the place where Holmes and Watson reconciled after some disagreement that had kept them apart since Watson's wedding?

IT'S HARD TO SAY GOOD-BYE

Speaking of Holmes's goodnights, has anybody noticed that when Holmes says "good-bye" or "goodnight" in the Canon, it's never the end of the sentence?

It's always "Good-night, and I trust that we shall have good news for you," or "Good-night, and I'll call upon you tomorrow."

It's a great little technique, but the Smash has to wonder: Does he do it on purpose?

Or were there hard goodbyes in his past, and he can't let that be the last thing out of his mouth?

The added line always makes it seem like he and the listener will have some future contact, and this could be a sign of Holmes's softer side.

THE MYSTERIOUS MRS. TURNER

One of the most popular bits of Sherlockian trivia originates in SCAN.

In the tale previous to this one, and in every tale mentioning Holmes's landlady after this one, her name is "Mrs. Hudson."

In "A Scandal in Bohemia," however, it would seem her name is "Mrs. Turner."

But is it really?

What the story truly contains are two separate statements taken in close succession:

"When Mrs. Turner has brought in the tray I will make it clear to you."

"He turned hungrily on the simple fare that our landlady had provided."

Mrs. Turner brought in the tray. The landlady provided the food. Need they be one in the same? And if they're not one in the same, who's the lady bringing in the food?

The cook at 221?
Another servant?

Or the "Wiggins" of Holmes's Serpentine Avenue Irregulars, hanging around Baker Street to await last minute instructions?

CIGARS, CIGARETTES, PECCADILLO?

Upon looking again at the cigar case incident, the Smash notices that Holmes then lights a cigarette.

Does this indicate that Watson was a regular cigar smoker, as opposed to Holmes being the cigarette man?

These fellows never seem to be too picky in their self-poisonings where tobacco are concerned... pipes, cigars, cigarettes, snuff (at least they seem to avoid the chew and spit routine), but do more tobacco-conscious Hounds perceive patterns in their tobacco consumption?



GROSSIN' HANKIES?

Godfrey Norton's call to the cabbie, "Drive like the devil, first to Gross & Hankey's in Regent Street, and then to the Church of St. Monica in the Edgeware Road," perplexes a bit, as we don't really know what Gross & Hankey's is at all.

It's presumed by some to be a jeweller, where Godfrey quickly bought a ring for the wedding that was his next stop.

If Godfrey and Irene had gone to the trouble of getting a license, wouldn't they have picked up the ring already as well?

Do you see any other possibilities for what Godfrey was doing at the mysterious Gross & Hankey's?

THAT "GOOD FOR NORTON" IRENE

Sherlock Holmes holds Irene Adler in high regard.

Irene Adler holds Godfrey Norton in high regard.

Sherlock must watch Irene marry Godfrey, and even aid in creating that union, because his client's welfare is best served by the marriage.

It's his job to make sure his ideal woman marries another man -- is this a great plot for a romance, or what?

(And not the kind with knights and dragons, either!)

For a man who stole Holmes's perfect woman, Godfrey Norton is still someone we know darn little about.

Was he Irene's true love or just a convenient hireling willing to take on the role of husband for a time?

Why does he pace and wave his arms in that half hour before they head for the church?

Is the marriage up for debate, or is he just impatiently waiting for Irene to get dressed?



BOMBS AWAY!

Holmes has a very simple little task for Watson in this story: "When I raise my hand--so--you will throw into the room what I give you to throw."

And what does Holmes give Watson to throw?

"It is an ordinary plumber's smoke-rocket, fitted with a cap at either end to make it self-lighting."

Caps are something that seem to be moving further and further away from common usage.

Toy cap-guns aren't in the hands of boys everywhere anymore and blasting caps are for professionals.

What kind of caps was Holmes using on his smoke-rocket, and what would use would these have normally been put to?

Were such caps sensitive enough to trigger upon hitting a couch or some other object they might encounter, flying through a window?

STUBBORN ABOUT SINGLE WOMEN

"Irene Adler, as I will still call her..."

Watson writes after the part of the narrative where he learns of Irene's marriage.

An interesting choice, as I would think a writer's natural inclination would be to refer to her by her married name from that point onward.

Why would Watson make such a choice?

Did he think his readers couldn't keep up?

Or is this his way of passing judgement on the validity of the Norton nuptials.

SHERLOCK'S NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD

In at least two cases, Sherlock marked a mystery's end by attending an opera.

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, he mentioned having a box for *Les Huguenots*, in which the Des Reszkes brothers were performing.

At the close of "The Adventure of the Red Circle," he noted that he and Watson would be able to catch the second act of a Wagner opera at the Covent Gardens if they hurried.



By 1888, when *The Hound of the Baskervilles* occurred, the opera house in Covent Garden was the third constructed on the same site.

Covent Garden was originally a Benedictine convent garden where monks grew their vegetables.

In 1536, King Henry VIII seized the land as part of his dissolution of the monasteries and finally awarded it to John Russell, the first Earl of Bedford. It remained ignored until the 1630s when the 4th Earl of Bedford, Francis Russell, hired the Royal architect Indigo Jones. (1)

At that time, the Earl of Bedford decided to develop the 20-acre pasture that was part of his estate and open it to leases.

Jones designed a piazza (the first in England), bordered by houses, including three built by the Earl himself to serve as models for later construction. (2)

The Earl's ownership are memorialized in Russell and Bedford Streets within the Covent Garden area.

In addition, he commissioned Jones to design a church for the inhabitants—St. Paul's Church. (3)

In 1663, Charles II gave a charter for the first Royal Theater— also built in the area.

This edifice followed a market that appeared in the square as soon as construction began and granted a royal charter in 1670.

While theater-goers might have added prestige at night, the attraction of those interested in profiting from them (from flower vendors to prostitutes to thieves) as well as the merchants during the day soon pushed the original nobility out of the area's homes. (4)

In 1732, a second theater, Covent Garden Theatre, opened.

George Fredric Handel, who favored opera, administered much of the repertoire, making it primarily an opera venue.

In 1808, this structure burned down and was rebuilt on the same site.

Because of financial problems, the theater was reorganized as the Royal Italian Opera House in 1847, well-named as it presented the British premiere of Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *Il Travatore*.

The emphasis on "Italian" opera reflected a dominance of that language (regardless of the original libretto) throughout the nineteenth century. (5)

Once again, the theater burned down in 1856 and was reopened in 1858. (6)

It became The Royal Opera House in 1892 after offering the British premieres of Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Verdi's *Aida*.

This theater also had economic difficulties and was sold and reopened in 1888 as Royal Opera Company.

In keeping with the tradition, most of the works were still Italian. (7)

In 1892, it became the Royal Opera House and more German and French pieces were performed. (8) According to one account, Jean de Reszke, a Polish-born tenor, was indeed at the Royal Opera House in 1888, and sang in a number of operas, including Les Huguenots and Wagner's Lohengrin. (9)

His brother Edouard, a bass, often appeared with him—just as Sherlock mentioned—and did perform at the Royal Opera House in 1888 in Les Huguenots. (10)

Baring-Gould's summary of research, however, indicated the brothers were performing in New York during that time, but did leave open the possibility they did appear in London while on tour. (11)



By 1902, both brothers had retired and couldn't have appeared in the Wagnerian opera (most likely Tristan and Isolde) (12), which just might have been in German (instead of the traditional Italian).

During both world wars, the opera house closed but reopened afterwards.

While parts of the structure were renovated throughout the years, the first major reconstruction of the building did not occur until 2000.

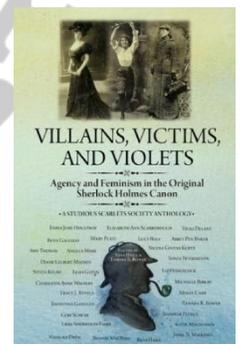
At that time, the building was opened to the public during the day for tours, allowing the modern aficionado an opportunity to imagine the great detective and the good doctor strolling through its doors in formal evening attire on their way to a performance. (13)

- 1) http://www.coventgardenmemories.org.uk/page_id__33_path__0p36p.aspx
- 2) <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol36/pp25-34>
- 3) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Drury-Lane-Theatre>
- 4) http://www.coventgardenmemories.org.uk/page_id__33_path__0p36p.aspx
- 5) Sally Mitchell (editor) Victorian Encyclopedia, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 557.
- 6) <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/architecture/barryem/1.html>
- 7) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Royal-Opera-House-London>
- 8) https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Royal_Opera_House
- 9) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_de_Reszke
- 10) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89douard_de_Reszke
- 11) William Baring Gould, The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, Volume 2, (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1967), 112.
- 12) William Baring Gould, The Annotated Sherlock Holmes, Volume 2, (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1967), 704.
- 13) https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Royal_Opera_House.

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>

Liese Sherwood-Fabre's articles on Sarah Cushing and Scandal in the Canon are now out in "Villains, Victims, and Violets," a study of feminism and agency in the original Sherlock Holmes stories. Available in paperback and eBook from BrownWalkerPress, Amazon, and Barnes and Noble.



WAS 'WATSON' A NON-DE-PLUME?

Peter Liddell, *Hounds of the Internet*

John H. Watson, MD, is the key to our understanding of Holmes' activities.

Not only was he, apparently, the scribe without whose efforts we would know nothing of Holmes, but also his personal history, more so than Holmes', is keyed to recorded history and therefore central to the successful development of Canonical chronologies.

Unfortunately, try as one might, there appears to be no record of a "John H. Watson", not in the recorded history of the 2nd Afghan War or in the form of publication records.

Histories of the 2nd Afghan War list members of the Army Medical Department who served in Afghanistan - not one named Watson.

There was an army surgeon wounded at Maiwand - Surgeon-Major A.F. Preston MB - an officer who served during the Second Campaign in medical charge of the 66th Regiment, taking part in its advance to Kandahar, and subsequently, with General Burrows' Brigade, to the Helmand River.

He was present at the action at Girishk and the subsequent battle of Maiwand, in which he was severely wounded while attending a disabled man in the front line of fire.

He was in Kandahar throughout the siege. (He was subsequently mentioned in despatches.)

Preston was with the 66th before they transferred to Kandahar, unlike 'Watson' who tells us that he was already there and joined the 66th on their arrival.

By 1896, according to the London Gazette, Preston was a Surgeon-Colonel and was listed as being promoted to Surgeon-Major-General (effective 30th March 1896).



The London Gazette of November 1st 1901 announced that Preston, by then a Surgeon-General, "was to be an Honorary Physician to the King".

Not at all the subsequent career path followed by 'Watson' it would seem.

I find two Watsons in the officer lists for the War: first - Major-General John Watson C.B., V.C., A.D.C., Bo.S.C.; second - Major R.J. Watson who was an Adjutant with the 59th during both of the War's campaigns.

He was invalided out temporarily from August 1879 and re-joined the Regiment on March 3rd 1880, shortly before the 59th left Kandahar with Stewart on his march to Kabul.

If as I suspect 'Watson' served with the 59th before being transferred to the 66th at the end of March 1880, there can be little doubt that he knew Major Watson well.

The two might well have been friends.

That medical staff were transferred between regiments is a matter of record: we find, for example, Surgeon-Major W.G.R. Hinds who served initially with the 1st Division Kandahar Field Force from February 1880, but who later was in medical charge of the 66th and, like Preston, was also present in Kandahar throughout the siege.

As the 66th did not arrive in Kandahar until the end of March 1880 and the Kandahar F.F. 1st Division left for Kabul at the beginning of April, his transfer to the 66th would appear to mirror exactly that experienced by 'Watson'.

What if, for the purposes of his relationship with his Literary Agent, 'Watson' chose, or was urged, to adopt a 'nom-de-plume'?

Just as the Editorial Team seemed to see need to disguise the real address of the rooms in Baker Street, to avoid, it would appear, later occupants at the actual address being inundated with unwelcome interest, so too did they perhaps see fit to protect the real identity of Holmes' compatriot.

This would by no means have been the first example of this practice and most definitely was not the last.

'Watson' seems a common enough name, a name that would not excite any particular interest, and the chosen initials were sufficiently different that no attention was likely to be drawn to Major Watson.

I for one will not be worrying too much about the middle initial 'H'.

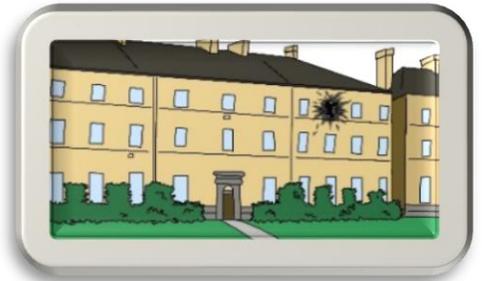
If a 'nom-de-plume', what does it matter what the middle name really was?

In fact, if a 'nom-de-plume' there probably never was a middle name.

The search for the 'real Watson' will continue!

Baker Street Elementary

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



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Fay, Mason, & Mason

HOLMES, THANKS FOR AGREEING TO CAMP
OUT WITH US FOR THE METEOR SHOWER

I JUST HOPE NO
ONE STEALS OUR
TENT AGAIN



SO WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN A 'METEOR' AND A
'METEORITE'?

"-ITE"



A METEOR IS AN ASTEROID THAT VAPORIZES
UPON ENTRY INTO THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE...
IF A METEOR SURVIVES THE PLUNGE THROUGH
THE ATMOSPHERE AND LANDS ON THE EARTH
SURFACE, IT'S KNOWN AS A METEORITE.



SO A METEORITE MAKES A
DEEPER IMPACT ON US...



DO YOU KNOW HOW THE MAN IN
THE MOON CUTS HIS HAIR ?

I AM GOING TO
HATE MYSELF FOR
THIS... HOW ?



'ECLIPSE' IT...



WE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH LUCK
SEEING THE SHOWER WITH A
FULL MOON OUT... JUST OUR LUCK.



DON'T KNOCK THE MOON... IT'S
MORE USEFUL THAN THE SUN.

WHAT'S YOUR
RATIONALE FOR
THAT THOUGHT ?



WE NEED THE LIGHT
MORE AT NIGHT.



YOU DO KNOW WHY THE COW
JUMPED OVER THE MOON ?

NO, WHY ?

THE FARMER'S HANDS
WERE ICE COLD.

