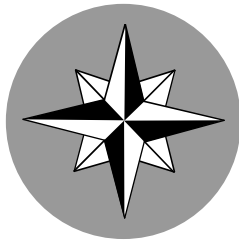




EXPLORATIONS



FROM THE PRESIDENT

If we had any doubts that summer was over, and fall upon us, the last few days of cool and rainy (with even some snow thrown in) weather have been all the proof anyone would need. It makes one look ahead to a winter evening when we can sit by a fire and immerse ourselves in the Canon.

Fall has started out extremely well for the Norwegian Explorers. I would like to welcome three new members to our group: Jeff Noble, Arlene Kase and Raymond Scallen, M.D."

Arlene and Raymond were able to attend our meeting on September 19, and I hope that we all had a chance to say hello during this wonderful evening. We were so very fortunate to have Steve Doyle as our guest speaker at the combined Norwegian Explorers and Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Col-

lections meeting. Accompanying Steve from Indianapolis was Pat Ward, whom many people recognize from her contributions "Sherlock Stateside" in the magazine *Sherlock*. Another Explorer from afar who was able to be present was Bob Hasebrook of Omaha, who extended a vacation trip to include a stop in Minneapolis. It was a pleasure to give all three of these intrepid travelers a tour of The Sherlock Holmes Collections and the Elmer L. Andersen Library. Susan Dahlinger of New York City, who had been in Minneapolis all week doing research on William Gillette, was able to attend as well.

Our September 19 meeting ended our summer hiatus for 2002 - luckily we had a shorter hiatus than Mr. Holmes - and
(Continued on page 2)

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Once again, the Editor's Desk has been blessed with a steady stream of submissions. Bob Brusica reviews a new pastiche by Twin Cities author Larry Millett, Phil Swiggum reviews two Twin Cities restaurants, and Phil Bergem guides us to informative Web sites in "Internet Explorations." Charles Clifford reports on the Study Group, and Julie McKuras reports on a meeting of a neighboring

scion. The "Found but Not Lost" feature begun in the last issue reports on a long overdue award recently bestowed upon Holmes. As usual, we take a look at recent and upcoming Explorer and Study Group happenings and highlight events in the wider Sherlockian world.

Please email items in Word or plain text format to bergq003@tc.umn.edu. ❖

John Bergquist, Editor

EXPLORERS' HAPPENINGS

NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS' 2002 CHRISTMAS ANNUAL

The Norwegian Explorers' 2002 Christmas Annual is becoming a reality. The problem has not been to assemble enough suitable material for a booklet, but rather to choose among the many fine entries. We have received scholarly Doylean and Sherlockian articles, whimsical essays, poems, illustrations, – even a crossword puzzle! Besides being considered for inclusion in the Christmas Annual, all submissions have been automatically entered in the 2002 Sigerson

Award competition.

The Christmas Annual will be distributed at the Norwegian Explorers Annual Dinner in December and at the Baker Street Irregulars Annual Dinner and the Baskerville Bash during the New York Birthday Weekend in January. ❖

John Bergquist



**The Annual
Dinner will be on
Thursday,
December 5 at
the Minneapolis
Golf Club.**

FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

we began this new year with an update from The Sherlock Holmes Collections and a business meeting. The Board members for the Friends group are Richard Sveum, M.D., B.S.I. as president, John Bergquist as Vice-President, yours truly as Secretary and Editor of the newsletter, Timothy Johnson as liaison with the Library, Lucy Brusic as Volunteer Coordinator, and members at large Michael McKuras, Steve Stilwell and Pat Nelson. We reviewed the finances and the state of the Collections. The Norwegian Explorers were then pleasantly surprised when Steve Doyle announced it was time to break his silence – he must be related to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or else how could he have so many shared family photos? Everyone was tremendously entertained by Steve's slide show and subsequent presentation about the adventures of being a Sherlockian publisher. In honor of the 100th Anniversary of the setting of "The Illustrious Client," a quiz was given. Getting a perfect score and displaying his remarkable knowledge of the story was John Bergquist. Coming in a close second was Karen Murdock. A silent auction was held during the meeting with the proceeds going to The Sherlock Holmes Collections.

On October 14 a number of Explorers were present at Once Upon A Crime for the premiere of Larry Millett's new book, *The Disappearance of Sherlock Holmes*. (See Bob Brusic's review of the book on page 5. –Ed.) I was fortunate to be able to introduce Larry and then join the audience as Larry talked about writing this book and some of the settings he used to tell the story.

Our next meeting will be the Annual Dinner on Thursday, December 5 at the Minneapolis Golf Club. Planning is underway for an engaging evening with another entertaining speaker. Flyers will be sent out soon, but mark your calendars.

The Study Group is actively investigating the Canon with monthly meetings. It's been an interesting departure from our previous locations as each of the three co-leaders of the Group has chosen a different setting for the session. We've gone to the University Club, a coffee house and a library, so hopefully we have something for everyone. If you're interested in becoming a member of the study group, please let me know and I will add your name to the mailing list.

Julie McKuras, A.S.H., B.S.I.

“WE CAN STOP AT MARCINI’S...”

BY PHIL SWIGGUM

In the final paragraph of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes suggests to Watson that they stop at Marcini’s for dinner. Given that 2002 is the 100th anniversary of the book publication of HOUN, it seems appropriate to take Holmes’s suggestion literally with this restaurant review. As an added twist, it is presented in a Minneapolis vs. St. Paul context.

SHERLOCK’S HOME **** out of 5 stars

Sherlock’s Home is located in the Minneapolis suburb of Minnetonka, just east of Shady Oak Road and north of the Crosstown Freeway. On a blustery fall day a gust of wind ushered me into the warm atmosphere of Sherlock’s, amid the British-imported décor. My lunch companion was definitely *the woman*, if only for the lunch hour – good fortune does follow all Sherlockians, at least some of the time. The ales and lagers at Sherlock’s are world class. They’re so good, in fact, that they have a tendency to overpower the entrees. My order was a pint of Stag’s Head Stout, which is a warm ale, malty in flavor, black in color, and served at precisely 52° F – excellent. Entrée suggestions would be Royal Pheasant Pie or Shepherd’s Pie. Both are served piping hot and flavorful without going overboard. The dining staff is courteous and attentive.

(Michael Jackson, the esteemed British beer reviewer, has written that Sherlock’s serves the most authentic English bitter in the U.S. My personal favorite of Sherlock’s excellent brews is Piper’s Pride Scotch Ale. – Ed.)



ZANDER’S RESTAURANT AND Z’S CAFÉ ***** out of 5 stars

Zander’s is located at 523 Selby in the Cathedral Hill District of St. Paul. Alexander (Zander) Dixon is the owner/chef. He is a 1982 graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York and remembers Chef Fritz Sonnenschmidt, who presented the 2001 Sir Hugo Dinner (see *Explorations*, Issue No. 40, Oct., 2001).* If Sherlock’s is London without the overseas airfare, then Zander’s is Hyde Park without the cross-country airfare. Z’s Café is directly across the street from Zander’s. It is open for breakfast and lunch. Both buildings date to the early 20th century and are a throwback to a bygone era in the Twin Cities. The breakfast recommendation at Z’s would be eggs Benedict in your choice of classic, New York, Florentine, or New Orleans style. The menu at Zander’s is changed seasonally. However, My appetizer pick would be the pine nut and basil risotto, which is a creamy rice dish with nuts, sautéed mushrooms, grilled leeks, and braised peppers. Superb. My entrée pick would be Pan Fried Arctic Char served with a side mix of squash, asparagus, crayfish tails, and wild mushrooms. The taste is quite sharp and makes a nice compliment to a choice of wine from their extensive wine list.

*(Frederic [Fritz] Sonnenschmidt, B.S.I. and Julia Carlson Rosenblatt, B.S.I. collaborated on the Sherlockian cookbook *Dining with Sherlock Holmes* as well as on presenting a series of Sherlockian-themed dinners at the Culinary Institute of America, known as the other C.I.A.–Ed.)



“The ales and lagers at Sherlock’s Home are world class.”

THE ILLUSTRIOUS CLIENTS OF INDIANAPOLIS

It wasn't long after our meeting on September 19 (See *From the President*, page 1) that a small contingent of The Norwegian Explorers journeyed to Indianapolis to mark the 100th Anniversary of the story "The Illustrious Client" with The Illustrious Clients. The titular scion society located in the heartland of Indiana planned a wonderful evening on the 21st, and Dick Sveum and I (both members of that group) flew into the capital city just one day after tornadoes ravaged parts of the area. We were lucky to have good weather for our flight on Saturday afternoon – something our friends Steve Doyle and Pat Ward didn't have for their return trip home on Friday the 20th.

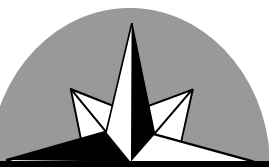
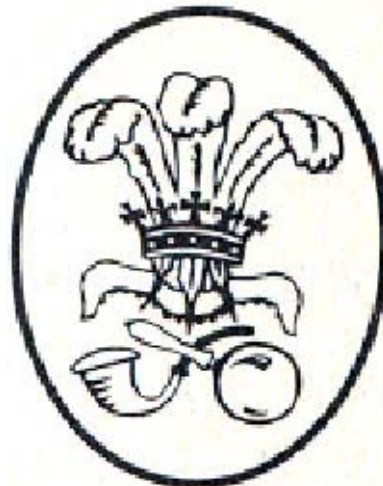
The evening began with a 5 pm gathering at the Biergarten, located outside the historic Athenaeum Restaurant. The weather was mild and sunny and we had an opportunity to visit with many of the Clients as well as some familiar faces who had traveled to Indianapolis for the event. At 6 pm our entourage went inside to our reserved room in this German restaurant. The room was crowded as our German waitress advised us "I will take your order...and you WILL enjoy your dinner!"

The Illustrious Clients had a number of activities planned. We were entertained by a group of talented singers, toasted various characters, took a quiz and were treated to a number of short papers. Steve Doyle was fortunate to have the book titled "Baron Gruner's Love Diary." He was only able to read excerpts due to the graphic nature of the contents, but one notable diary entry was "That Kitty Winter. Hot, hot, hot." Brad Keefauver told us about the Dr. Hill Barton Center for the Study of Chinese Pottery, located in his hometown of Peoria, IL,

and his subsequent discovery of the Shomu pottery dish. (which looked quite a bit like Shamu the killer whale.) Meredith Granger of the Clients had contacted the offices of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Prince Charles and Queen Elizabeth in order to obtain greetings from them on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the story. Okay, maybe he didn't get greetings from them, but he did get letters from their offices telling him that they wished they could send a personal letter.

The evening was over all too soon, but it demonstrated what many of us feel is one of the more important aspects of being a Sherlockian: the opportunity to meet and make friends with people from all over the country who share our common interest. ❖

Julie McKuras, A.S.H., B.S.I.



"The evening demonstrated one of the more important aspects of being a Sherlockian: the opportunity to meet and make friends with people from all over the country who share our common interest."

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: A MYSTERY FEATURING SHADWELL RAFFERTY

by Larry Millett. Viking, 2002. Pp. 340.

Book review by Robert Brusic

If Larry Millett keeps writing of Sherlock Holmes's adventures in North America, one may begin to surmise that the great detective spent more time on our shores than he did on his native soil in England. In Millett's fifth American outing, which reportedly takes place in 1900, Holmes does not make it all the way to Minnesota as in previous adventures. Instead, after some initial investigation in London and Ridling Thorpe, Holmes and Watson expend their considerable energies mostly in New York City and Chicago.

The mention of Ridling Thorpe should remind many readers of an earlier (and some would say Canonical) case of Sherlock Holmes, "The Adventure of the Dancing Men," which occurred in 1898. In that exploit Holmes not only cracked the eponymous cipher, but he also tricked and cuffed Abe Slaney, who was responsible for the death of Hilton Cubitt and the near suicide of his wife, Elsie.

The essential elements of that earlier Sherlock Holmes story are recounted in Millett's text and his extensive footnotes. What is of great importance in the book is the report of Abe Slaney's survival, for the authorities believed he drowned in Plymouth Harbor after escaping from Princetown Prison. Of equal importance is the widow Cubitt's recovery and subsequent complex relationship with Holmes. These two factors move the plot of Millett's novel like a piston driving a powerful machine.

Because Elsie Cubitt appears to have been kidnapped by Abe Slaney, Holmes swiftly goes in pursuit, first to New York and later to Chicago. The stage is set in the book's prologue in which a thick fog swirls around lower Manhattan, rivaling the great pea soupers of London. "Well past midnight, in fog so thick

that it seemed to have swallowed up all of Manhattan, Sherlock Holmes stood beneath the portico of St. Paul's Chapel on Broadway, waiting for a ghost from his past." (p. 1)

Holmes is lurking in the fog, having been lured by a diabolically clever set of circumstances which do not become apparent until the air is cleared more than 300 pages later. Along the way Holmes finds himself in deep trouble because he is the object of many forces: an incompetent member of Scotland Yard, the corrupt Tammany apparatus in New York, and an equally malign machine in Chicago. Galling insult is added to literal injury by the yellow press of three cities, smearing Holmes so badly that he and Watson are accused and all but tried and convicted of kidnapping and murder!

These unbelievable circumstances are in part due to someone who impersonates the detective in a damaging way. However, most of Holmes's trouble stems from a female antagonist who could teach Moriarty a thing or two. Like a malign puppeteer this character pulls the strings that entangle and nearly hang Holmes and Watson. The reader is grateful that Shadwell Rafferty is available to lend a hand. Mercifully, several uncorrupt policemen render invaluable aid as well, so that justice is meted out in the final exciting scenes.

Some of those chase scenes seem to play like pastiche within pastiche. That is, Holmes's breathless railroad ride at Horseshoe Curve reads like a hair-raising sequence from a James Bond story. In Chicago, when the gunplay begins in the squalid Sons of Hibernia Hall, the action is akin to a climactic shootout in an old fashioned western. Elsewhere, Holmes and Watson find themselves in a hotel room with a naked female corpse, whereupon the narrative begins to feel like one of those move-the-body farces from a 1930s William Powell movie.

(Continued on page 6)



Unlike in earlier Millett pastiches, in this adventure, "Holmes does not make it all the way to Minnesota."

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: A MYSTERY FEATURING SHADWELL RAFFERTY (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 5)

Not to put too fine a point on the matter, there is even a dandy locked chapel puzzle (St. Paul's Chapel, in fact) on which much of the plot depends. Watson and police detective Hargreave solve that one, but not before tramping through "a disgusting layer of guano, rat droppings and other animal excretions, which combined to produce a foul stench." (p. 200)

These various elements in the narrative add breathtaking propulsion to the overall plot. At the same time Millett does a fine job at creating the foggy and dangerous atmosphere of 1900 New York City. Watson's uptown tour of Grant's Tomb and the violent action in lower Manhattan evoke a rich sense of place. Millett is adept at blending historical and fictional places and events, as his detailed footnotes reveal. Of course, avid readers of Sherlock Holmes stories are never truly certain where historical fact leaves off and imaginative fiction begins. The author plays that game for all it's worth.

Millett has also authored several books on architecture, so he is right at home taking readers on an architectural crawl of the City – and also of the Second City. In the story and in the many pages of footnotes Millett takes us on a turn of the century tour of these two metropolises. One could only wistfully wish that it were possible for the publisher to have included some period illustrations as in Jack Finney's similarly evocative novel, *Time and Again*.

Readers who have enjoyed Millett's four other Sherlock Holmes books will doubtless take pleasure in this one. The plot is rich, the atmosphere is ripe, and the various characters are either incorrigibly corrupt or appealingly upright. Moreover, readers will revel in the female Moriarty who gives Holmes a long and difficult run for his money. Upon reading this book many may choose to conclude that it is arguably Elsie Cubitt, and not Irene Adler,

who is really THE woman in Sherlock Holmes's life.

But mostly one can take delight in reading a crackling good story well told. The title tells us that Holmes disappears, and he does for about 70 pages in the course of the narrative. His absence, however, gives Watson, Rafferty, and even Elsie Cubitt ample opportunity to show their stuff; and they all, especially Elsie, have a lot of stuff to show.

When Holmes does reappear, he arrives with the dash and panache of the U.S. Cavalry coming to the rescue. One hopes that Millett will have Holmes and friends return for further adventures, for his is a good company. After all, ours is a vast continent with many more stories to tell; and there are many wrongs this indefatigable detective can put right. In *The Disappearance of Sherlock Holmes* the great detective faces and chases the ghost he awaited in the fog. And the world, at least for a little while in the mind's eye, is a cleaner and better place. ❖

Robert Brusic



"Millett does a fine job at creating the foggy and dangerous atmosphere of 1900 New York City."

INTERNET EXPLORATIONS BY PHILLIP BERGEM

"He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its Web..."

For this issue, I would like to recommend three Web sites of varying topics. The first is an on-line exhibition titled "Bloomington by Gaslight: Sherlock Holmes in the Lilly Library." <<<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/holmes/index.shtml>>> The Lilly Library at Indiana University has a very nice collection of Sherlockiana. The site presents interesting text on the background and development of the Holmes stories with numerous pictures of books and treasures in their collection to illustrate the content. Examples include an original 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual* and the manuscript of 'The Adventure of the Red Circle.'

The second site can assist those of us who wish to research some of the elements brought up in the Canon. The 1911 Encyclopedia consisted of 29 volumes and over 44 million words. <<<http://1911encyclopedia.org/>>> While 1911 is past Holmes and Watson's prime days, it still presents a perspective of the British Empire missing from more recent resources. Using this site, an interested reader can get some added background on Agra, Khartum (as the encyclopedia spells it), Bimetallism or Tibet. There are a number of problems with the site. These consist of annoying pop-up adverts, typos due to the character recognition process of scanning the original pages, and broken links. However, for the purpose of reading some interesting entries, these can be worked around. For the 'Khartum' entry, the direct link was broken so I had to click on a prior word (Kharput) and scroll down the page. The 'Tibet' entry is very elaborate and informative, but has quite a few extra characters that confuse the reading. However, it is a chance to read what a leading encyclopedia wrote about the country less than 20 years after Holmes traveled there.

With the third site we can get some background of one of Watson and Holmes' pleasures, the Turkish bath. Turkish baths are mentioned in the Canon twice, once in the opening of *LADY* and, at the start of *ILLU*, Holmes and Watson are relaxing at the Northumberland Avenue Turkish bath. The Web site <<<http://www.victorianturkishbath.org/>>> presents us with a background of the Turkish bath, its place in Victorian times and even lists places you can take one today, or at least the next time you pop over to England. (There are 21 current establishments, 7 of which are classed as 'Victorian.') Following the 'Turkish bath directory' link we can get to an article about the establishment at 25 Northumberland Avenue. The site's author, Malcolm Shifrin, mentions the Holmes and Watson visit and tells of other literary visits including one by Raffles and Bunny, the thieves written of by E.W. Horning, Conan Doyle's brother-in-law. The Northumberland page also has pictures and even floor plans! All in all it is an interesting site. ❖

Phillip Bergem



**"The 1911
Encyclopedia
presents a
perspective of
the British
Empire missing
from more recent
resources."**

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP



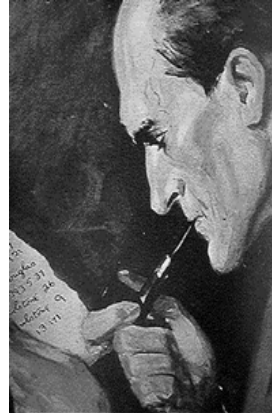
“We wondered why the Musgrave family had been unable to decipher the ritual in all the years since it had been first passed down.”

THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL

Summer is over, as evidenced by the resumption of Sherlock Holmes Study Group meetings. September 21st, 2002, found the group meeting for the second time at Black Bear Crossings, a coffeehouse near the Southeast corner of Lake Como, in the confusing city of St. Paul. In the evenings, musicians serenade coffee sippers there, but on that Saturday afternoon, the back room was humming with chatter, as the group members told of their summer adventures. Several traveled to Sherlockian events and one member traveled extensively in Europe. Unfortunately, no videos were available at the time. A short preview of a “Sherlock Holmes Almanac” was presented by discussion leader Karen Murdock, who is collaborating on the work.

The discussion eventually meandered toward the story for the month, “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual”. The story was first published in 1893, and is believed to have taken place in the time period 1878 - 1880. It was the second case in Holmes’s career to be documented by Dr. Watson. Holmes, just beginning his career, was waiting for the opportunity to solve an actual case. He was visited by a school colleague, Reginald Musgrave, who had a perplexing problem. Holmes seized the opportunity, and accompanied Musgrave to the family manor house of Hurlstone, in Western Sussex.

Musgrave was confounded by the recent disappearances of two of his staff: the butler, Richard Brunton, and a maid, Rachel Howells. Brunton had recently been dismissed because of some snooping that involved a paper on which a family ritual was documented. Rachel had been romantically involved with Brunton, but had been recently been “thrown over.” Holmes quickly solved the riddle of the family



After a break for the summer, the Study Group resumed monthly meetings in September.

ritual, which led to the solution of the disappearance. Quite a neat little bit of work by Holmes, but as we know, very few cases could challenge his great mind.

Some group members insisted on scrutinizing the case, however. First of all, we wondered why the Musgrave family had been unable to decipher the ritual in all the years since it had been first

passed down. That might have been due to the lack of intelligence and memory of the eldest of Sir Ralph Musgrave’s sons. It was pointed out that the oak and the elm, which figure so prominently in the ritual, had probably grown over the years. The angle of the sun could also make the shadow of the great oak vary by many feet, depending on the season. Conan Doyle and Dr. Watson, so cleverly, make it clear that it was only a coincidence that Brunton and Holmes solved the riddle. Holmes was merely trying to solve the disappearance, and so was just trying to trace Brunton’s train-of-thought. Holmes was no doubt aware of the meanderings of the sun. Musgraves for centuries might have been digging all over the lawn, deceived by a ritual, without some forgotten lines. As a side note, it was verified that English oaks could indeed live for many centuries.

It was pointed out that the crown of Charles I was certainly made of silver or gold, and many precious gems, and could hardly have been confused with “a mass of discoloured metal and several dull-coloured pieces of pebble and glass.” This was the description given by Reginald Musgrave, who was either of poor eyesight or attention to detail. Conan Doyle did have a tendency to portray the upper classes as buffoons.

The room that Brunton was found in contained some fungi, but was evidently air-

(Continued on page 9)

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 8)

tight. Group members felt that some fungi can survive without the presence of oxygen. Brunton may have fainted from the stale air, fallen, hit his head, and died, rather than suffocating. Sherlock Holmes, quite out-of-character provided us with no insight into this matter. We debated the guilt or innocence of the maid, Rachel. One of our legal experts tried to plead her side of the case. Again, Brunton may have passed out, and the wooden piece holding up the slab may have slipped, leaving a Rachel in a state of shock and unable to move the slab. She may not have been in control of her senses for hours afterwards. Others felt that she may have given the support a slight nudge on purpose, and due to the jealousy of a scorned woman may have neglected to summon help. It was suggested that Brunton's affliction with "Don Juan Syndrome" might have clouded his judgment, allowing him to trust Rachel with his fate, as he descended. Each reader can decide – even Mr. Holmes could not be sure.

The subject of "intellectual property" was discussed. Some thought that the story resembled some previously published works. Conan Doyle was apparently never sued for stealing anyone else's stories. In this day and age, he would probably have been sued for any number of reasons, probably none legitimate. We discussed briefly the works of Edgar Allen Poe. It was pointed out that Poe's development of his detective's character was minimal, compared with that of our favorite, Sherlock Holmes. ❖

Charles Clifford

THE REIGATE SQUIRES

The Sherlock Holmes Study Group members huddled together in a private dining room of the University Club on the last Saturday of October, 2002. On the raw, dark, and windy day, the warmth of the surroundings and the excellent view of St. Paul eventually brought out a vigorous discussion of "The Adventure of the Reigate Squire." This excellent "East side" site attracted the usual suspects and a few others. Next month, however, the Golden Valley Library is rumored to be the home for a discussion of "The Adventure of the Crooked Man."

Many of us remembered this month's story as being "The Adventure of the Reigate Squires." Our discussion host, University Club member John Bergquist, explained that the story originally appeared in the Strand in 1893, as "Squire," but was changed in later releases to "Squires," even though it was proper to have just one squire per Surrey town. "Reigate Puzzle" appeared as the title of the Harper's and subsequent U.S. versions, but "Reigate Squires" eventually became the accepted name. John also mentioned that "Reigate Squires" was one of Conan Doyle's favorite stories. An informal poll was taken among the group, and most felt that it was not one of the "ten best," but was certainly in the "top twenty."

Why did we like it? It was a neat, brilliant piece of work on Holmes's part. It gave us some insight into the Holmes character, describing him "prey to the blackest depression" and an invalid due to nervous exhaustion. What kept this story out of our "top ten"? What Dr. Richard Sveum refers to as the "cozy" is missing. The "cozy" is the scene in the Baker Street digs in which Holmes often amuses himself by dumbfounding his friend Dr. Watson by making a series of deductions. Although we expect this "cozy" in a Sherlock Holmes story, it is actually missing in many.

(Continued on page 10)



"Poe's development of his detective's character was minimal, compared with that of our favorite, Sherlock Holmes."

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 9)

Group members also found other faults in the story. Squire Cunningham and his son Alec seem to go to great lengths to make stupid mistakes. The reader has trouble believing they would even write the note, let alone write alternating words. It would seem that one's front door might not be the best place to commit the murder, either. And then, to keep the note but not notice that a corner had been torn off? Julie McKuras may have summed it up best, declaring, "Criminals just aren't that bright!" They aren't, and the wealthy are often portrayed as "cerebrally challenged" in the Canon. Of course, handwriting as it relates to detection is a fun topic – never mind that it is not always reliable. John passed around a short monograph on the subject as evidence.

Blackmailers or would-be blackmailers such as William Kirwan seem to meet with death quite often in the Canon. It was men-

tioned that Holmes was able to visually deduce that Alec was untruthful because of the lack of black powder marks on Kirwan's clothing. Although Holmes has been recognized by the Royal Society of Chemistry (See page 11), he may or may not have been able to scientifically ascertain the presence of gunpowder had that been necessary. One group member informed us that such a "paraffin test" was not available until the 1920s.

On a lighter side, we marveled at Holmes's acting abilities concerning his well-timed seizure. It was noted that Colonel Hayter was one of the few, possibly the only, benevolent Colonel in the Canon. The title of "Colonel" was then discussed in detail. The meeting was adjourned after a digression about

whether Holmes would have been able to sniff out and capture the Washington, D.C.-area snipers earlier than did the official forces. An enjoyable two hours it was! ❖

Charles Clifford



"Squire Cunningham and his son Alec seem to go to great lengths to make stupid mistakes."



“[Holmes] embodied ... personal traits that society seeks in today’s law officers — personal rectitude and courage.”

FOUND BUT NOT LOST

We continue our feature in which Explorers report on items of interest encountered in their readings.

Sherlock for Governor

As I write this, the Minnesota Governor’s race is still up for grabs. Readers unimpressed with the major party candidates may want to consider the “Sherlock for Governor” campaign promoted by Sherlock’s Home restaurant and brewpub in Minnetonka. (See the review of *Sherlock’s Home* on page 3.) Regardless of how you cast your ballot, completist collectors will want to stop in at Sherlock’s for a bumper sticker and campaign button. (Ed.)

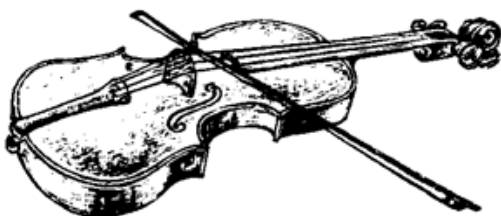
Can You Imagine Arguing About Such Minutiae?

In the July 8, 2002 issue of *TIME*, which focuses on the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition, writer Joel Stein reports on a group of Lewis and Clark fanatics, who dress in period clothing and attempt to follow in the footsteps of their heroes. Stein writes:

“We know from the Internet that everything has its freaks.... You always suspect that these people are half ironic, that part of their fun is pretending to be obsessed.... Like any other group of the obsessed, Lewis-and-Clarkheads like to display their obscure knowledge by arguing over factoids.... There is bitter disagreement over how much meat the explorers ate each day. One camp sticks to the commonly believed nine-pounds-a-day-per-person theory, while the other camp puts its estimates closer to three.”

Hmm ... one wound or two? One wife or two (or three)?

(Ed.)



Royal Society of Chemistry Honors Sherlock Holmes



Dr John Watson (yes, really!), a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, places a ribbon representing an Honorary Fellowship on the statue of Sherlock Holmes in front of Baker Street Station in London. (AP photo/Richard Lewis)

(From a Royal Society of Chemistry press release:)

“October 16, 2002: On October 16, Britain’s Royal Society of Chemistry bestowed an Extraordinary Honorary Fellowship on Sherlock Holmes. ‘The first detective to exploit chemical science as a means of detection’ was honored for his contributions to chemistry and crime-fighting.

Dr David Giachardi, Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Chemistry, said: “The value of the Holmes legend ... is profound, having brought tangible moral benefits to society.... Our particular interest is his love of chemistry, and the way that he wielded such knowledge for the public good, employing it dispassionately and analytically. He also embodied other personal traits that society seeks in today’s law officers — personal rectitude and courage.... Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, through Holmes, anticipated 120 years ago the utilisation of chemistry in the battle against crime.”

(At least one Web site reporting on this event expressed disappointment that despite bestowing this long-overdue award, the Royal Society referred to Holmes as a fictional character. -Ed.)





“Conan Doyle was so successful in constructing the character of Holmes that he came to be resented by fans who saw him as proof that their hero was mere fiction (sic).”

FOUND BUT NOT LOST (CONTINUED)

Arguments through the ages Conan Doyle: ‘on the contrary, Watson, you see everything’

We Sherlockians and Doyleans need no convincing of the significance of our heroes, but it’s always gratifying to see recognition in the mainstream press. In the November 4, 2002 Minneapolis StarTribune, the recurring feature “Arguments through the ages: Samples of great rhetoric from the past” has this to say about Arthur Conan Doyle:

“Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), himself an amateur detective, is best known as the creator of the fictional consulting detective Sherlock Holmes and his associate, Dr. John Watson. Conan Doyle was so successful in constructing the character of Holmes that he came to be resented by fans who saw him as proof that their hero was mere fiction. Holmes, like Conan Doyle, was adept at deducing facts from seemingly inconsequential clues, a talent he demonstrated in such stories as “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle,” excerpted here. In this passage, Holmes and Watson are discussing the identity of a man who, assaulted while carrying home a goose, fled the scene — leaving behind his hat and the goose.”

Then follows the well-known passage in which Holmes confounds an incredulous Watson with a scintillating series of deductions about Mr. Henry Baker, based solely upon observations of Mr. Baker’s hat. (Ed.)

“Here is my lens. You know my methods. What can you gather yourself as to the individuality of the man who has worn this article?”

...

“I can see nothing,” said I, handing it back to my friend.

“On the contrary, Watson, you can see everything. You fail, however, to reason from what you see. You are too timid in drawing your inferences.”

“Then, pray tell me what it is that you can infer from this hat?”

“... That the man was highly intellectual is of course obvious upon the face of it, and also that he was fairly well-to-do within the last three years, although he has now fallen upon evil

days. He had foresight, but has less now than formerly, pointing to a moral retrogression, which, when taken with the decline of his fortunes, seems to indicate some evil influence, probably drink, at work upon him. This may account also for the obvious fact that his wife has ceased to love him.”

“My dear Holmes!”

(The reader is encouraged to go to the source to refresh his or her memory of how Holmes arrived at his deductions. -Ed.)



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NEWS OF YOUR
FRIEND.”**