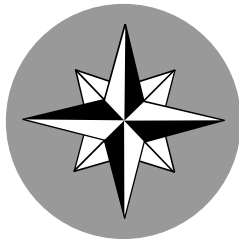




EXPLORATIONS



FROM THE PRESIDENT

While we all anxiously await the beginning of summer, the winter and spring haven't been a time of hibernation for The Norwegian Explorers. We've got reports of Sherlockian gatherings, new members, an upcoming conference, more meetings, as well as the very successful annual dinner held in December.

Some scion societies have indicated concerns over dwindling numbers and the lack of young people joining their ranks. I'm happy to report that our group doesn't find itself in the same situation. Since the last newsletter in Autumn of 2003, we've added twelve new members to our ranks, and I

hope you'll all take the opportunity to make them feel welcome. They are Paul Bergly, Stephen Cribari, Michael Ferguson, Marion and Bjorn Godlien, John Hanlon, Kate Hannah, Kirsten Johnson, William Knight, Joann Kruckeberg, Tim Reich and Holly Stone.

The volunteers working on the conference committee have stayed busy with the work necessary to make our June 11-13 "A River Runs By It" conference another success in the long line of Norwegian Explorers symposiums. We've got another great group of speakers scheduled, and they include

(Continued on page 2)

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Norwegian Explorers continue to live up to their name, with many members traveling to out-of-town Sherlockian events. This issue of *Explorations* offers reports on recent travels – to Indianapolis, London, New York and Los Angeles – along with other happenings, including our Study Group sessions. With this issue we are happy to welcome Regina Harris as a new contributor, reporting on an event in Los Angeles.

It's not too late to register for our June Sherlockian/Doylean conference! Please see "From the President" for details.

We were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely death of Richard Lancelyn Green at age 50, on March 27 in London. Richard was one of the great Sherlockian and Doylean scholars of our day, and his vast store of knowledge and willingness to help others will be sorely missed.

Submissions for *Explorations* are always welcome. Email items in Word or plain text format to bergq003@tc.umn.edu. ❖

John Bergquist, Editor



EXPLORER NEWS

FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

Georgina Doyle, Doug Wrigglesworth, Phil Bergem, Gideon Hill, Peter Blau, Jon Lellenberg, Les Klinger, Barbara Roden, Bill Nadel, Barbara Rusch, Dan Posnansky, and Dayna McCausland. In addition to the speakers, The Red-Throated League of the Norwegian Explorers will be performing an Edith Meiser radio program for the conference attendees. Members of the conference committee are Phil Bergem, John Bergquist, Mike Eckman, Tim Johnson, Dick Sveum, Gary Thaden and me, with our resident artist Lynette Yencho doing the artwork for the logo of the conference. Registration flyers were sent out previously and if you have any questions, feel free to call me at 952-431-1934.

The annual presentation by the Red-Throated League at the Pavek Museum in St. Louis Park entertained the large audience and

JAMES SHANNON

We mentioned Jim Shannon's passing in the last Explorations. Here, Pj Doyle adds some perspective on our late, lamented friend. -Ed.

James Shannon, a noted educator, philanthropist and Minnesota Sherlockian died of a stroke on August 27, 2003 at his home in Plymouth. Shannon, who resigned as auxiliary bishop of the St Paul-Minneapolis diocese in 1968, quietly reconciled with the church several years before his death. A longtime member of the Norwegian Explorers, he was one of the contributors to *The Baker Street Dozen*, penning a delightful essay on the 13th selection - "Silver Blaze." Despite a demanding schedule which included his role at the head of St Thomas College and, later, the General Mills Foundation, Jim always

gave many a chance to view this fascinating museum for the first time. This year's performance, on Saturday, April 17, was of the Edith Meiser script *The Complicated Poisoning at Eel Pie Island*. Bob Brusic did his usual fine job of assembling and rehearsing the cast.

I hope you'll enjoy reading of the exploits of some Norwegian Explorers in London, New York, Indianapolis and Los Angeles over the past few months. Regina Crossley-Harris, in her first piece for this newsletter, has certainly captured the enthusiasm many of us feel for meeting and making friends with Sherlockians from afar. Attending this summer's conference will be an excellent opportunity to meet some of those fascinating, traveling Sherlockians. ❖

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

found time to participate in Explorer events. Under his leadership, the Explorers celebrated their first Silver Blaze race at Canterbury Downs in 1985. Jim is survived by his wife of 25 years, Ruth. Jim Shannon was 82. ❖

Pj Doyle



**It's not too late
to register for our
June
Sherlockian/
Doylean
conference!**

THE NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS CHRISTMAS DINNER AND ANNUAL MEETING

The Norwegian Explorers' Annual Dinner for 2003 was held at the Minneapolis Golf Club on Thursday night, December 4. More than fifty Explorers and guests attended. As was the case last year, the Club provided a delicious buffet in an elegant setting decorated for the holidays.

During the cocktail hour the traditional toasts were given, as arranged by Phil Bergem. As diners took their seats they inspected the favors at their place settings, which included a "\$" charm provided (with printed explanation) by Gary Thaden, and a copy of the hot-off-the-press 2003 *Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual*, edited by John Bergquist. After Reverend Robert Brusic gave a poignant, canonically themed invocation, the enjoyment of the British-themed buffet began in earnest.

When the dessert dishes had been cleared, we were treated to a delightful talk by our guest speaker, local author Erin Hart. Erin, whose new mystery novel, *Haunted Ground*, spoke of her research in Ireland for the novel, which is set on the Emerald Isle. As well as being an accomplished author, Erin is a singer who often performs traditional Irish music with her husband, Paddy O'Brien, a well-known button accordionist in the Twin Cities. Not surprisingly, the singing of traditional Irish music figures prominently in *Haunted Ground*. More information about Erin and her work can be found at www.erinhart.com.

During the business meeting portion of the evening, the incumbent officers and board of directors were once again re-elected by acclamation. Julie McKuras conducted a challenging quiz, followed by Bob Brusic's annual caption contest, in which groups compete to name the actual captions for original canonical illustrations by Paget and later artists – and also come up with "gag" captions in the form of (sometimes hilarious) limericks. The Sigerson Awards for 2003 were presented to Andrew Malec, Bob Brusic and Mike Eckman (in absen-

tia), all of whose winning entries grace the *Christmas Annual*. Dr. C. Paul Martin did a touching *Here we stand upon the terrace ...* for fallen comrades James Shannon and Dr. Donald Jorgenson, both of whom had been close friends of Paul's. Garry Peterson and Mike Miller finished the program with their annual "alternative" quiz, leaving Explorers and guests with smiles on their faces as they ventured out into the December night.

Special thanks to Julie McKuras for working with staff at the Club (reservations having been made by Club members Wade and Mary Manthie), providing the printed programs with apropos canonical quotations, securing the guest speaker, serving as MC, and taking care of innumerable details that made the evening a success. ❖

BAKER STREET WEST: THE MINNEAPOLIS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On January 6th a group of Norwegian Explorers gathered to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Sherlock Holmes's birth. The event at The Local, an Irish pub along Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis, was well attended by 27 members and guests. We filled the area set aside for us and, as usual at group gatherings, engaged in scintillating conversation. For dinner there was a choice of salmon, Shepherd's Pie, and fish & chips – all of them prepared very well.

Toasts were eloquently made. Wade Manthie heartily offered a toast to Sherlock Holmes on his natal day. Karen Murdock, in a self-confessed effort to increase recognition to lesser-known Canonical characters, offered a toast to Cartwright of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Julie McKuras outlined events of 1854 in a toast to that auspicious year. Karen made a second toast to David Mitchell of Brookings, South Dakota for traveling the farthest to attend the event. Phil Bergem toasted Julie and Mike McKuras and Inez and John Bergquist, "our own Norwegian Explorers," wishing them *bon voyage* on their trips. (A Scouting commitment prevented John from being in attendance, but he was there in spirit.) Julie, Mike and John

(Continued on page 4)



"Sigerson Awards for 2003 were presented to Andrew Malec, Bob Brusic and Mike Eckman for their pieces in the Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual."



**“Edward
Hardwicke (Dr.
Watson of the
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series) joined in
the fun and proved
to be a charming,
friendly and
modest guest.”**

EXPLORERS AT LARGE

also attended Birthday events in London and New York and were flying out the next day or so. And last, but certainly not least, Gary Thaden proposed “a toast for the host” – Wade Manthie’s effort in setting up the dinner was vocally appreciated by all, as was Julie’s help with the notice.

Following dinner there was a very tough quiz (reminiscent of Shaw’s quizzes) by Karen Murdock and a wonderful puzzle/quiz prepared by Pat Nelson. As usual, a grand time was had by all as we basked in the wonderful friendship that these gatherings help to foster. ❖

Phillip Bergem

FROM GILLETTE TO BRETT

It’s always entertaining to join the Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis. It doesn’t matter what the occasion is; it’s always fun. The Wessex Press symposium, “From Gillette to Brett: Sherlock Holmes on Stage, Screen and Radio” was certainly a great November weekend marked by the hospitality of the Clients and an illustrious program.

Dick Sveum, my husband Mike and I went to Omni Indianapolis North Hotel to participate in the conference. It began on Friday evening with an open house in the suite of Illustrious Client and Wessex Press publisher Steve Doyle, who many of you remember from his appearance at our 2002 annual meeting for The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Members of the Illustrious Clients acted as hosts, and we were all pleased to greet Edward Hardwicke (Dr. Watson of the Granada Television series) who joined in the fun and proved to be a charming, friendly and modest guest.

The next morning began with the choice of a Sherlockian Film Festival Program or wandering the dealer’s tables. Edward Hardwicke and Nicholas Meyer were available during the morning for signing books and photographs as well as being the subjects of photos. Dick and I were

delighted to spend a few moments with Mr. Hardwicke and learn that as a child growing up in Hollywood’s World War II British colony, a frequent visitor to his parents’ home was Nigel Bruce, whom we all know from the Basil Rathbone series. The afternoon program featured S. E. Dahlinger who spoke on William Gillette, Gordon Kelley with Sherlock Holmes on the Air, David Stuart Davies on the actors who starred as Holmes, Paul Herbert on the Rathbone play, Nicholas Meyer on his book “The Seven-Per-Cent Solution” and its evolution from book to screen – and lastly a conversation with Edward Hardwicke. This was conducted by David Stuart Davies in an interview format. Saturday ended with a banquet and the attendees taking over the hotel lobby bar. This was done by previous arrangement and didn’t include us having to throw anyone out of the bar.

Sunday had no formal program, but the Gillette to Brett breakfast found many of the group, including Edward Hardwicke, assembled for a last chance to talk and discuss what a wonderful time we all had. When we host our symposium this June, I hope that we can all be as gracious hosts to our out-of-town attendees as the Clients were to us. ❖

Julie McKuras

ANNUAL DINNER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

I don’t often have the chance to tell people “Let’s meet for dinner tomorrow night at the House of Commons,” but that opportunity presented itself this January. As a member of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, I was pleased to see that their annual dinner was going to be held on Jan. 10 in the Members’ Dining Room of the House of Commons.

The trip to London is always a long one but was happily an uneventful flight. The greeting of friends began in New York when Mike



“It was a memorable evening and quite an experience to leave a dinner walking immediately beneath Big Ben.”

EXPLORERS AT LARGE (CONTINUED)

and I happened upon fellow Explorers Paul and Margaret Smedegaard of Racine, WI in JFK airport in New York. On our first night in London we dined at the Sherlock Holmes Pub in the good company of Sherlockians from New York and Los Angeles.

The next evening was very exciting for all of us. We arrived at Parliament a bit early so that we could clear through their very thorough security. The House of Commons was quiet on a Saturday evening with only the guards and the Society present and it gave us a chance to walk through the gallery and admire the artwork.

Society Chairman Philip Porter called the evening to order and greeted those assembled. He greeted members and guests from Germany, Japan, Holland and Spain, inviting them to stand. When he came to the United States, he called the names in alphabetical order – which meant he started with our own John Bergquist. He stated to John “I hope you’re strong and haven’t had too much to drink because you’ll be standing quite a while. With so many Americans here (33), the U. S. must be empty.” Toasts were made, and we were addressed by Sir Sydney Chapman, MP, our host for the evening. There was a sentimental presentation about Tony Howlett, who passed away last year, and the first Tony Howlett award, given in the spirit of a man who had a light touch of humor, was given to Richard Lancelyn Green. The guest speaker for the evening was mystery writer Simon Brett, who regaled the crowd with a number of anecdotes. It was a memorable evening and quite an experience to leave a dinner walking immediately beneath Big Ben.

The next morning found us at The Sherlock Holmes Hotel, where we gathered for the “Morning After” brunch. This was followed by a tour of the Sherlock Holmes Collection at the nearby Marylebone Library given by Catherine Cooke.

It was a wonderful trip with a number of

non-Sherlockian tours and entertainment but I think the evening that will stand out in the years to come will be our dinner at the House of Commons (see photo, inside back cover). ❖

Julie McKuras

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A RAMBLE THROUGH LONDON?

One of my many interests in the study of Holmes is what the British refer to as Canonical topography: the identification of buildings, streets and other place names mentioned in the Canon. Many actual place names were recorded by Dr. Watson, but whether to protect the privacy of persons involved or for some other reason of his own, he disguised place names as often as he disguised personal names and titles, leaving much for scholars of succeeding generations to uncover. Although the armchair traveler can deduce much through the study of contemporary maps and reference books, nothing beats field study on the holy ground itself. After the festivities surrounding the annual dinner of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, I had almost three full days to roam around London on my own in the footsteps of Holmes and Watson. Although I had walked the streets of London in search of Canonical haunts on earlier trips, I had not before had such a glorious block of unimpeded time. (Early January may not seem like the ideal time to spend outdoors at latitude of 51 degrees, 30 minutes N, but the weather was surprisingly mild, with only occasional light rain and temperatures in the upper 40s and lower 50s F.)

Armed with a pass for unlimited travel on the London Underground, or “Tube,” and guidebooks by David Hammer, Bill Dorn and the late Gunnar Sundin, I set off to find as many sites as possible. Perhaps the holy grail of Canonical topography is to identify the exact location of 221B Baker Street. Starting out from my base of operations at the Sherlock

(Continued on page 6)

EXPLORERS AT LARGE (CONTINUED)



“Armed with a pass for unlimited travel on the London Underground and a set of Sherlockian guidebooks I set off to find as many canonical sites as possible.”

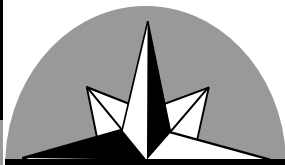
Holmes Hotel, guidebooks in hand, I walked up and down Baker Street and the warren of former mews behind buildings on the east side of the street to assess the leading candidates that have been put forth by scholars over the decades. Sadly, the Blitz and urban renewal have brought many changes to Baker Street, but many structures from Holmes’s day still stand. Dr. Gray Chandler Briggs’s choice for 221B at 111 Baker Street can still be seen, as can James Edward Holroyd’s choice at 109 next door. To my eyes, Holroyd’s 109 has the proper look. The “Empty House” corresponding to either of these choices (Briggs’s Camden House School), at 118 is still intact. Another leading candidate for 221B, Bernard Davies’s 31, has disappeared into a faceless modern commercial block, but Davies’s “Empty House” at 34 has been spared. The back entrance to 34 seems to fit Watson’s description in “The Adventure of the Empty House.”

Spreading out from Baker Street, over the three-day period I sought out and found many actual Canonical sites and likely prototypes for disguised place names as identified by topographical scholars. I stood by the third pillar from the left at the Lyceum Theatre [SIGN], sipped a brandy at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in Pall Mall (a few doors from the Diogenes Club) [GREE], inspected the little door at the foot of the Duke of York’s steps [LAST], strolled through St. John’s Wood in search of Serpentine Avenue/SerpentineMews and of necessity trespassed on the grounds of Hammer’s candidate for Briony Lodge [SCAN], sat beside the coal fireplace in the Sherlock Holmes Pub (whose building is said to have formerly housed the Northumberland Hotel [HOUN]), prowled dockside alleys that could have been the model for Upper Swandam Lane and the Bar of Gold [TWIS], found and photographed a poultry-seller’s stall in Smithfield Market (although Breckenridge supposedly had his stall at Covent Garden, that market was exclusively for sellers of fruit, vegetables and flowers) [BLUE], quaffed pints at both the Museum Tav-

ern and the Plough (both likely candidates for the Alpha Inn, although I prefer the Museum Tavern) [BLUE], popped into the bar of the Criterion to view the plaque commemorating Watson’s fortunate meeting there with Young Stamford [STUD], dined at Simpson’s in the Strand [DYIN] and walked through Fleet Street, King Edward Street and likely prototypes for Poppins Court and Saxe-Coburg Square [REDH].

But the piece de resistance was finally finding the plaque in St. Bartholomew’s Hospital (Bart’s) commemorating the first meeting of Holmes and Watson [STUD]. My wife, Inez, and I had visited Bart’s some years ago but were unsuccessful in finding the plaque. On a later trip to London I telephoned the hospital to try to make arrangements but was told that the offices would be closed during the time we would be there. This time I was not to be denied. Sundin’s guidebook included a key bit of information I had not had before that led me directly to the door of the former laboratory (now an office) in the Pathology Department that contains the plaque. No one answered my knock, and I found the door locked. However, determined to find that plaque at all costs, I sought out a helpful librarian in a nearby room who referred me to one person who in turn referred me to another person, and so on, until I had (politely) disturbed six professionals at their work. Luckily for me, everyone I met at Bart’s was most courteous and helpful. The last of these six persons called the office in question and found that its occupant had just returned and that he would admit me to the sanctum! I retraced my steps and knocked at the door once again. This time it was opened by a youngish, prematurely gray staff doctor who unenthusiastically but graciously let me examine and photograph the plaque. As he continued working at his computer while I reveled in my good fortune, I realized that his gray hair probably was due to his being constantly interrupted in his work by dotty pilgrims like me. I thanked him

(Continued on page 7)



Seven Norwegian Explorers attended the annual Sherlock Holmes Birthday Weekend in New York City.

EXPLORERS AT LARGE (CONTINUED)

profusely and left him to continue discovering a cure for cancer or whatever other important project he was working on. Thank you, Bart's.

Oh - and I also successfully sought out the building at 2 Upper Wimpole Street, which housed the office of Dr Arthur Conan Doyle at the time when the first Adventures of Sherlock Holmes were written and published. I even discreetly peeked through the window alongside the door to view the front hallway where the young oculist had hoped to greet the patients who never came. Thank you, would-be patients. ❖

John Bergquist

BIRTHDAY WEEKEND IN NEW YORK

The Norwegian Explorers were well represented in New York this year, with Paul Martin, Dick and Jennifer Sveum, Julie and Mike McKuras, Tim Johnson and I all in attendance. For the first time this year, I arrived early enough to take in the ASH Wednesday dinner at O'Casey's restaurant. This informal event has no program, other than for old friends and acquaintances to greet each other after having not seen each other for as long as a year. The next morning, ten brave souls, Mike McKuras and I among them, braved sub-zero wind chill to join Californian Jim Cox and New Yorker Dore Nash on the annual Christopher Morley Walk, a tradition began by Explorer Allen Mackler some years ago. On the Walk, which included interludes on the subway and the Staten Island Ferry, we visited haunts of Morley from his years in New York, including the Gotham Book Mart, the office building that housed The Saturday Review of Literature, City Hall, the Woolworth Building, McSorley's tavern and other City landmarks.

The first official event of the weekend was on Thursday evening: the Baker Street Irregulars' Distinguished Speaker's Lecture at the Wil-

liams Club. This year's distinguished speaker was novelist John Berendt, best known as the author of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Perhaps the best line from the witty Berendt was his answer to a question from the audience after his talk. When asked whether he liked the movie made from his book, Berendt replied, "I love it. It bought me a house in the Hamptons."

Friday was a day of eating, starting with Mrs. Hudson's Breakfast at the Hotel Algonquin, the unofficial headquarters for the Weekend. Mid-day brought the William Gillette Luncheon at Moran's Chelsea Seafood Room, with tributes and skits presented by talented Sherlockians. On Friday afternoon, many conference attendees made their way to The Mysterious Bookshop, where proprietor Otto Penzler held a wine-and-cheese open house and tempted aspiring collectors with a great array of Sherlockian books.

The focus of the Weekend was the Friday evening dinners: the Annual Dinner of The Baker Street Irregulars at the Union League Club and the Baskerville Bash at the Manhattan Club. At the BSI Dinner, Irregulars and invited guest attendees toasted Martha McCormack as *the Woman* before moving into the dining room for an evening of toasts, talks, skits, song and general good cheer. Mike Whelan (the BSI's "Wiggins") presented Investitures to Gideon Hill ("Jack Prendergast"), Doug Wrigglesworth ("The Retired Colourman"), Michael Ross ("Von Bork"), Bernard Oudin ("Our French Gold"), Francine Kitts ("Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope"), Nicholas Meyer ("A Fine Morrocco Case"), and Costa Rossakis ("St. Bartholomew's Hospital"). The rarely bestowed Two-Shilling Award was presented to Paul Herbert. To acknowledge his many contributions to the cause, Peter Blau was presented with the Dr. John H. Watson Afghan Campaign Desk.

The Bash, which grew out of the former

(Continued on page 8)

EXPLORERS AT LARGE (CONTINUED)

Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes (ASH) Dinner, featured entertainment inspired by Victorian music hall.

On Saturday morning the dealers' room at the Algonquin further tempted aspiring collectors with books and other Sherlockiana. The last official event of the weekend was the BSI's Saturday-afternoon cocktail party at the National Arts Club, the highlight of the program being Al and Betsy Rosenblatt's annual review of the previous year's events – in verse.

On Sunday, forty or so die-hards said a bittersweet goodbye until next year over a brunch arranged by ASH at the Baker Street Pub. ❖

John Bergquist

A NORWEGIAN EXPLORER MEETS SOME CURIOUS COLLECTORS

An elegant lady, dressed in an antique Victorian gown patterned with tiny blue forget-me-nots, passes through the doorway into the banquet room. She is immediately followed by the larger-than-life figure of the Tiger of San Pedro, John Farrell, BSI.

These were only two of the attendees at the Curious Collectors of Baker Street (CCOBS) event held in Los Angeles, California, on February 28, 2004; it was an event that was my good fortune to be able to participate in. Located in the posh restaurant of Maggiano's Little Italy, just outside the Farmer's Market commons, the CCOBS celebration was saluting several milestones: the 150th birthday of our great and beloved detective; the 13th anniversary of the CCOBS, and the 10th anniversary of their Sherlockian publication, Baker Street West 1.

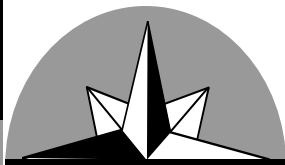
Nearly 40 of the approximately 120 members of the Curious Collectors of Baker Street scion attended the fête. Jerry Kegley is the CCOBS president as well as editor in chief of Baker Street West 1. Right beside him is Chuck Kovacik, who is the art director for their

erstwhile publication and who, based on my conversations with him, must possess the most thoroughly thought out replication of the 221B sitting room imaginable. While celebrating, investigating, and illuminating Sherlockian lore is central to the scion's raison d'être, the CCOBS has taken on an additional mission as well. Through sponsored book drives, the CCOBS is seeking to put a copy of the "Adventures" in each of Southern California's district libraries, making the genius of Mr. Holmes and his good friend, Dr. Watson, available to all who may be interested.

The CCOBS is also the sponsor of the Gasfitters Ball, an annual affair that recreates the glitter, gaiety, and elegance of a Victorian-style grand ball soirée. Traditionally the Gasfitters Ball takes place on the first Saturday in November; those who may be interested in details should, of course, first contact the Curious Collectors for particulars on the event. It should be noted too, that Jerry and Chuck's Sherlockian work extends beyond that which they undertake for the Curious Collectors of Baker Street scion: they are also members of the Beacon Society, whose mission is to support educational experiences that introduce young people to the Canon and to recognize exemplary efforts that do so.

Should you ever be in the Los Angeles area, I highly recommend touching base with Jerry Kegley to see what the CCOBS might have in store for your visit. It is also a must to make time to see Chuck Kovacik's wonderful sitting room recreation. Chuck's attention to the detail of, and his incredible research on, this ever-enhanced project is truly an inspiring labor of love. For those unable to make the journey in person, you can take a virtual tour of his Baker Street digs via the Internet. That address is: <http://221bbakerstreetla.com>. To learn more about the Beacon Society and their work, please visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/beaconsociety>. For more information on the CCOBS, email Jerry at: ccobs1@aol.com. ❖

Regina Harris



Jerry and Chuck are members of the Beacon Society, whose mission is to support educational experiences that introduce young people to the Canon.

SHERLOCKIAN EVENTS

Note: Unfortunately, the following event probably will have already taken place by the time you read this, but please keep it in mind for next year. -Ed.

MYCROFT'S LEAGUE SYMPOSIUM

When Sherlock Holmes uttered the following enigmatic phrase, he raised the intriguing idea of creating a new nation by joining the United Kingdom and the United States of America:

"...the folly of a monarch and the blundering of a minister...will not prevent our children from being citizens of the same world-wide country under a quartering of the Union Jack with the Stars and Stripes."

What national structure was envisioned and how would the union be realized under the U.S. Constitution?

What would a "quartering" of the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes look like? And whatever would happen to that "certain gracious lady," H.M. Queen Victoria?

Mycroft's League, a Philadelphia Sherlock Holmes society, will explore these Anglo-American questions in a day-long symposium at the new National Constitution Center (NCC) on Independence Mall,



Time: Saturday, 8
May 2004 9:30
AM to 5:30 PM
Place:
National Constitution
Center
Independence Mall
525 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Penn-
sylvania 19106

Contact:
Gideon Hill
ghill221b@yahoo.com
(215) 280-2004
or
Ben & Sue Vizoskie
svizoskie@aol.com
(914) 948-1376



Gideon Hill, MCBS, BSI



What would a
"quartering" of
the Union Jack
and the Stars and
Stripes look like?

INTERNET EXPLORATIONS

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

This month's installment of recommended Internet sites consists of a variety of pages I have had recommended to me in the past few months. The first is a tool that I use to give me a better understanding of the world of Sherlock Holmes. Holmes gives the Irregulars a shilling each, or in a pastiche, someone presents a five Pound note as a bribe. Have you ever wondered how much those amounts would be today? Economic History Services has a site that allows you to figure it out. You can input an amount (in Pounds, shillings and pence) and a year (back to 1264) and it will calculate the current value. (Well, actually the value in 2002 when the program was written. Close enough for me.) The program also allows you to compare values between two different years. It is located at <http://www.eh.net/hmit/ppowerbp/>. If you need to change from Pounds to dollars, there are a number of sites that make that calculation. One is <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>. By the way, one shilling in 1895 would be worth about £3.20 (\$5.90) today. A bribe of five Pounds would be about £320 (\$590).

Christy Allen has developed a site devoted to Arthur Conan Doyle's father Charles Altamont Doyle. All Sherlockians should recognize the Altamont name from Holmes' pseudonym in "His Last Bow." Charles was also the second person to illustrate Holmes, done for the first book version of *A Study in Scarlet* by Ward, Lock and Co. in 1888. Christy's page is located at <http://www.unc.edu/~richc/Altamont.htm>. It is well laid out and is a nice tribute to a talented but tortured soul who does not normally get a lot of recognition. (Our modest Mr. Bergem fails to mention that he is acknowledged on this site for his contributions to the project. - Ed.)

The third site comes from Doug Elliott of the Bootmakers over a Web-based bulletin board and is directed at people interested in Sherlock Holmes movies. It is <http://www.thedigitalbits.com/articles/barriemaxwell/maxwell021704.html>. This is a nice site that

gives a little background of the early Holmes movies and lists some that are available on DVD or video.

The final site was recommended by fellow Explorer Andrew Malec. Andrew has done an extensive study of Frederic Dorr Steele and his drawings, as evidenced by his feature article in this past year's Explorer's *Christmas Annual*. In his research he found that the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. has sections of their Web site that show illustrations in the collection. Although the pictures are small, they are still interesting to see and read about. The page is found at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/caiquery.html>. Type in "Frederic Steele" and hit SEARCH. There are 142 illustrations available and 5 are from Sherlock Holmes stories. From "The Creeping Man" we have 'Something was moving...', 'Woman and men talking...', 'With his dressing gown flapping...', and 'I dare say...'. From "The Blanched Soldier" is the illustration captioned 'He was deadly pale...' and there is a poster illustration from Gillette's farewell appearances as Sherlock Holmes. There is also at least one illustration from a G.K. Chesterton story. It is fascinating what can be found over the Internet and this is one more tool that a number of people can find useful or interesting. Happy Exploring!. ❖

Phillip Bergem



"Holmes gives the Irregulars a shilling each — have you ever wondered how much those amounts would be today? "

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

On Saturday, September 20th, 2003, the downstairs meeting room at the St. Paul Library, Merriam Park Branch, was the site where the Sherlock Holmes Study Group met once again after our summer hiatus. Phil Bergem was the discussion conductor. A “how I spent my summer vacation” took place, before a discussion of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. A brief mention was made of the tri-yearly conference in the Twin Cities, coming up in June of 2004.

Phil related some of the history of the story: It took place in 1889, but appeared first in the Strand in August of 1901 through April of 1902. At the time of publication Sherlock Holmes was believed to have been dead, as “The Adventure of the Empty House” would not appear until October of 1903. Many have speculated that Arthur Conan Doyle developed the story for a non-Canonical application, but later changed his mind, needing Sherlock Holmes to make it a great story. He did succeed in making it one of our all-time favorites, loved by all, and retold often by Hollywood. Have we not all experienced a cold shudder at the baying of a hound on a cold, dark evening (imagined baying?). Thank this story.

The “Hound” legend apparently came from a variety of European countries. Conan Doyle quite possibly heard the legend while visiting the Dartmoor area. It was noted that such legends often involved a wolf attacking man, which quite possibly may have occurred at some time in history, but records of which don’t seem to exist. The “legend” document, which Dr. Mortimer reads from, is not only a creation of Conan Doyle; In fact, as Phil related, although the Dartmoor of Baskerville Hall is much as described in the story, it does not contain bogs that swallow up human beings or moor ponies.

The moor itself, in addition to the hound, is given sinister, life-like qualities by Conan



The Study Group reconvened in September after a summer hiatus.

Doyle. The fog seems to be animate too. Throw in ancient mines, ruins, a sparsely inhabited region — and you have the ideal setting for a crime. Characters are few, but those we meet are developed well. As in the other novels, Sherlock Holmes is absent for a long period of time. We feel his presence but can’t rely on him to soothe our feelings of insecurity.

Watson’s bumbling is not easily apparent, but many facts escape him as usual. We postulate, but can’t be sure of anything. Then Holmes returns, and before we know it the villainous Stapleton is exposed. The story is not over, of course: for Stapleton to be caught red-handed, Sir Henry’s life must be placed at risk. And yet, not one of us could put the story down until the final sentences.

The group did not discover many loose ends in this story. Oh yes—quicksand does not pull a person down. Laura Lyons seems a little too easily used. The paint could not have been phosphorous. A hound that big could not possibly exist. What is an “unsigned warrant,” anyway? And how could our hero have exposed Sir Henry to such risk? We do realize though, that Holmes is interested in justice as much as he is concerned with saving the life of his client. We have a whole Canon to testify to the quality of Holmes’s character. We cannot tolerate speculation that Holmes might have risked Sir Henry’s life on purpose, so as to do him in, send Stapleton to his maker, and have Mrs. Stapleton for himself. No we cannot, yet there will always be some who speculate.

Almost unanimously, we agreed that *The Hound* is a wonderfully written story. All the Canon’s best elements seem to be present. The Paget artwork from the original publication in *The Strand* magazine is outstanding. Try as you will, pastiche writers, but you cannot come close to the greatness of this tale. ❖

Charles Clifford



“The moor itself, in addition to the hound, is given sinister, life-like qualities by Conan Doyle.”

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

THE NORWOOD BUILDER

To the criminal out there (who knows, they might be monitoring our meetings): if you're trying to frame someone, don't introduce evidence after the crime scene has been inspected, at least not inspected by Sherlock Holmes. In "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder," our villain, Jonas Oldacre, makes just this mistake and is undone by Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Not that Mr. Oldacre couldn't fool Scotland Yard and its leading detective, Inspector Lestrade; he did. Scotland Yard began using fingerprint evidence in 1901, but of course, it would take a while for them to learn how to use this new tool properly. Sherlock Holmes had been using fingerprints for years; he certainly could not be deceived. Both Lestrade and Oldacre found this out in dramatic fashion as Holmes toyed with them, lighting a small, smoking fire, and inviting all to shout, "Fire!"

The warm weather on a sunny, fall day brought a good-sized group to the basement of the Nokomis Library in Minneapolis on October 18, 2003. "The Norwood Builder" first appeared a hundred years earlier, in the *Strand* and *Colliers*. Holmesians believe that the story actually took place in 1894, however. Holmes had asked that Dr. Watson refrain from publishing his exploits for many years, but he eventually relented. Watson, whose practice had been bought out a short time prior to this story by a relative of Holmes, had joined Holmes in a partnership of some sort, and was living in Baker Street at the time. Most chronologists

speculate that Watson's first wife had died a bit earlier.

Our group liked the story but did not believe it to be one of the best tales in the canon. It does contain most of the essential Holmes story elements, as listed by discussion leader Karen Murdock. We do have the "cozy" discussion in Baker Street, in which we learn of Holmes's mourning of the passing of Professor Moriarty for his own selfish personal and professional reasons. Strangely enough, Holmes had apparently not realized what a gem of a case presented itself in that day's paper. The dramatic arrival of John Hector McFarlane dumped the antidote to boredom right in his lap.

As usual, discussion group members pointed out the shortcomings of Watson's recollections. How could the bones of an animal be confused with human bones, from a fire of such short duration? Maybe Oldacre soaked the carcass in creosote. Why would McFarlane not have been suspicious of Oldacre? Why would the authorities not be able to trace the missing securities? Did the details not appear rather quickly in the press? Would the housekeeper not point the finger at Oldacre? Oh well, we all did enjoy seeing Lestrade's ego taken down a notch. The Scotland Yard man had a large ego but he also had a good heart, and he was thankful for Holmes's help. Holmes, however, kept himself out of the limelight as best he could — but as literature's greatest detective he could not help but fail to do this entirely. ❖

Charles Clifford



"If you're trying to frame someone, don't introduce evidence after the crime scene has been inspected."



SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

THE DANCING MEN

Sometimes, it is not what you say, but what you don't say, that counts. In "The Adventure of the Dancing Men"

Sherlock Holmes summons a cold-blooded killer to his arrest with the four words "Come here at once," written in code. On Saturday, November 15, 2003, John Bergquist was able to summon the usual suspects to a meeting at the University Club of Saint Paul, with the coded messages: "Attention" and "Is the Dancing Men code really that hard to decode?"

Given the key to the code, it is not, as evidenced by the fine turnout for this meeting.

With the weather turning colder outside, the discussion inside warmed up. John pointed out that the story first appeared a century earlier, in the December, 1903 edition of the Strand. The events of the story actually took place in July of 1898, in all probability. John mentioned that at the time Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was intrigued by the work of a C. J. Cubitt who employed some "Dancing Men" figures in writing his own name. It does look as if Doyle was influenced by those "dancing" figures. A Mr. Hilton Cubitt, of Ridling Thorpe Manor, Norfolk, became Sherlock Holmes's client, and also the murder victim in "The Dancing Men."

Our group had many questions for Steve Miller, our legal expert. Was this a case of felony murder? Given the element of self-defense, possibly not. A judge did commute a jury's

death sentence to penal servitude. Was Elsie in danger of arrest for murder, if Abe Slaney had not confessed? Possibly. Was Holmes guilty of a crime for not contacting Cubitt immediately

after cracking the code?

No, but he was guilty of an error in judgment. Yes, Holmes is human.

"The Dancing Men" was Conan Doyle's third most favorite Canonical story. It certainly ranks in the top ten for most of us. The way the story unfolds, the way we get to know Mr. Hilton Cubitt — the quickness and unavoidability of the murder shock us so. We feel sorrow for Elsie. Abe Slaney even evokes some pity despite his horrible actions and past. We are

given many of the essential canonical elements: the "cozy" at Baker Street, the telling of the facts by the client, the solving of the case (the logic of breaking the code), and the apprehension of and confession by Abe Slaney.

But certain features puzzled us. Why would Elsie not warn her husband? Where did she get the vast sum with which she was going to "buy off" Slaney? Why would Cubitt not press Elsie for more information? Why would Slaney eject the shell casing from his revolver at the scene? How could Elsie survive her head wound? Why would Abe Slaney return to the scene of the crime for any reason? These topics were discussed, but by no means resolved. Of special note was Holmes's treatment of Inspector Martin. Holmes gave all the credit to Martin and made no attempt at embarrassing him. Martin showed respect for Holmes and his methods, was rewarded for this, and we hope learned something in the process. And so, we hope, did we. ❖

Charles Clifford



"Was Holmes guilty of a crime for not contacting Cubitt immediately after cracking the code? No, but he was guilty of an error in judgment."



"In America, 100 years is a long time. In Britain, 100 miles is a long distance."

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

THE SOLITARY CYCLIST

The discussion group opened up its 2004 season on Saturday, January 17 at the Merriam Park Library in St. Paul. Phil Bergem served as discussion leader. This Saturday was the midpoint of the Birthday Weekend events in New York City, so our group was bereft of several of its stalwarts. Nonetheless, the eight assembled Explorers (and one guest) carried on a very lively discussion of an hour and a half centering upon "The Solitary Cyclist."

Our guest was Elisabeth Norman from the scion The Knights of Shag of South Carolina. She is an undergraduate at Wofford College doing independent research at the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the U of M.

Phil B. showed maps of the area covered in "The Solitary Cyclist." He quoted something he had read once about an important difference between America and Great Britain: "In America, 100 years is a long time. In Britain, 100 miles is a long distance." Karen Murdock asked, given such insularity, how did Violet Smith ever meet her fiancé, Cyril Morton, in Coventry?

Steve made the point that bicycles gave women independence (it was the end of chaperones) and allowed liberated young women like Violet Smith to get about wherever they wanted to go. It was generally agreed that Bob Carruthers had to have kept his bike hidden in the yew hedge or thereabouts at Charlington Hall and not at his own house, where it would have been seen. But how could he have taken the time to walk two or three miles to his bike to accompany Violet when she went biking by Charlington Hall?

Legal questions were thrown to Steve Miller and David Wiljamaa, our lawyers in residence. The question was how could Williamson and Woodley possible figure that the "marriage" of Woodley to Smith was legal? Steve speculated that the reason for the unusual open-air marriage was that there would be no

barriers between the performance of the ceremony and the quick consummation of the marriage in the bushes nearby. He said that, if the marriage had been consummated, getting out of it would be very difficult for Violet, since she would have been considered "disgraced." Karen Ellery added that, in those days, a woman could not legally testify against her husband in court and, furthermore, a husband could not, in the eyes of the law, "rape" a woman to whom he was legally married. David wondered of Ralph Smith, "If he really has a fortune, why can't he hire somebody to write a will for him?"

Karen E. also found it odd that, as events in the story move to their climax, Doctor Watson completely ignores a gravely injured young man (Peter the groom) and completely ignores a man who has been shot in the chest (Woodley). Watson offers medical help to neither of these needy patients. Who does he help out at this time? A woman in distress!

Phil asked how "dastardly" a plot this whole thing was and David thought it was "Victorian dastardly."

Elisabeth wondered about the "spirituality" Holmes saw in the face of Miss Violet. It was concluded that Holmes had a soft spot for artistic, spiritual types, due to his being a descendent of French painters and having "art in the blood."

The dramatic technique of Holmes revealing the plot in the presence of the perpetrators was raised. He gets some things wrong. Steve said that mis-statement was "a common interrogation technique," so Holmes may be more subtle than we give him credit for.

Steve said that the Carruthers figure, the figure of "the repentant villain" was common in melodrama of the day. This stock character was usually an evil man who turns to good under the influence of a good woman. ❖

Karen Murdock



Julie and Mike McKuras and John Bergquist in the dining room of the House of Commons (see p. 4)

The Norwegian Explorers

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