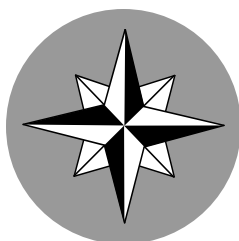




EXPLORATIONS



Inside this issue:

The Valley of Fear tour	3
Explorers Annual Dinner	4
BSI Weekend in New York	5
Klinger's <i>New Annotated</i>	7
Study Group	8
Internet Explorations	12

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope that the first half of 2005 has been a good one for all of you. In a world that sees so much unrest it's good to have the opportunity to revisit our old friends in those familiar rooms in Baker Street where it's always 1895 and there's a strong sense of certainty and comfort. I would like to welcome the new members to the Norwegian Explorers:

Cecilia Heffron,
(Bill Turley's granddaughter)
Tom Jefferson
Jeffrey Kase,
(Arlene Kase's son)
John Kenyon
James Land

Eden Leone and Joe Erickson
Eugene Spott,
(Patrick Spott's father)
Ken Timoner

As you can see, in some cases the Norwegian Explorers seem to be a family affair. We're happy to have all of you join our ranks.

2004 and the first half of 2005 have been memorable for the Explorers. We hosted our conference "A River Runs by It," which was well-attended and positively reviewed; Les Klinger spoke at our meeting on Nov. 11 while touring to promote *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, our membership
(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

For those subscribers who have thought it has been a long time between issues of *Explorations*, you are right. For a variety of reasons, mostly due to poor planning on the part of your editor, we sent out only two issues in 2004. We return to a three-a-year schedule with this issue, and we hope to make it up to you over the coming year with reports of varied Sherlockian happenings in the Twin Cities, around the country, and abroad, along with book reviews and other items of interest.

In this first issue for 2005, we report on activities over the past several months,

including Norwegian Explorer gatherings, travels of Explorers to other events, featuring Gary Thaden's report on the annual Birthday Weekend in New York, Bob Brusick's report on Les Klinger's visit to Minneapolis, four reports from Charles Clifford on our monthly Study Group sessions, and Phil Bergem's "Internet Explorations."

Submissions for *Explorations* are always welcome. Email items in Word or plain text format to john.bergquist@gmail.com. ♦

John Bergquist, BSI
Editor, *Explorations*



FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

grew and shows no sign of stopping; The Red-Throated League performed at both our conference and the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting; our annual dinner on Dec. 2 was a success; we had another fun movie night; and our study group continues to attract a good audience. The Baker Street Buffet sponsored by The Friends of the Library at the Campus Club at the University of Minnesota on February 10 was an enjoyable dinner. We've also had a change to the Board: Vice-President Wade Manthie stepped down after many years of service on the board, and Gary Thaden has assumed the position.

A number of Explorers have been busy with Sherlockian travels. Many of us journeyed to New York for the Sherlock Holmes birthday weekend in January and shared in the honor of having one of our own, John Bergquist, become a member of the Baker Street Irregulars. In March, Pat Nelson and John took part in the Sherlock Holmes Society of London's Mini-Festival. In May, Dick Sveum attended the STUD-Watsonian weekend in Chicago, and I attended Malice Domestic in Washington, D.C. Later in May, John and Dick attended The Speckled Band dinner in Boston, and John also attended The Sons of the Copper Beeches and Mycroft's League events in Philadelphia. I presented a paper at "Holmes Under the Arch II" in St. Louis on May 21 and was joined by Dick and my husband Mike in the good times held further south on the Mississippi River. *(The next issue of Explorations will report in more detail on these and other recent Sherlockian travels by our members. – Ed.)*

One Explorer in the news recently is Steven Schier, political science professor at Carleton College. Steve was quoted in an article about an upcoming Minnesota congressional race in the June 6, 2005 issue of *Time*.

I hope all of you enjoy the summer months and our short hiatus before we resume our activities in the fall. As ever, please feel free to contact me if you want to join the monthly study group or have any thoughts or suggestions for the group. ❖

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS
FEATURED IN ARTICLE IN
ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS

Just as this issue of *Explorations* was going to print, the St. Paul Pioneer Press published a feature article on local Sherlockians in their Sunday, June 5, edition. The story, titled "Elementary? You bet," by Press reporter Jim Ragsdale, appeared on page 1 of the Local News section, and – at least for a time – is available online at

<http://www.twincities.com/mld/twincities/11812138.htm> (no break in URL).

The genesis of the story came about earlier this year when Jim and his friend Mary Meador, a member of the Norwegian Explorers, were talking about recent national news stories featuring Sherlock Holmes enthusiasts. Mary revealed that she was a member of the local Holmes group, and that her friend Inez's husband (your editor) had just been invested in the Baker Street Irregulars. Jim thought this would make a good story and called me for an interview. I told Jim about the scope of Sherlockian activities in the Twin Cities and then called Tim Johnson and Julie McKuras, who graciously agreed to give Jim a tour of the Collections at the U. of M. Julie and I had further interviews with Jim, and the Press sent out a staff photographer, Jean Pieri, to photograph us in our own libraries.

To give Jim further background, I invited him to a study group session I was leading at the University Club. In the article he portrayed the setting in this atmospheric way:

"The foul weather out the picture window is as greasy as Holmes ever encountered in foggy London. The drumming of rain on the roof, the shiny silver tea service on the sideboard and the clock on the wall stuck mysteriously at 6:57 contribute to the Sherlockian aura.

The game is afoot!"

Our thanks go out to Mary for the suggestion and to Jim for writing such a sympathetic, engaging article. ❖



**2004 was a
memorable year
for the Explorers,
and so far 2005
is following suit.**

THE VALLEY OF FEAR EXPEDITION



Were the Molly Maguires brutal thugs or just misunderstood Irish immigrants?

One might ask the question why normally logical people would want to enter a location known as the Valley of Fear, and subject themselves to some jail time. The answer is an easy one: because it was a well-organized opportunity sponsored by the Baker Street Irregulars to visit the area immortalized in *The Valley of Fear* and to spend time with good friends from across the United States and Great Britain. Local Norwegian Explorers attending were Dick Sveum, Jennifer Olson, Mike McKuras and me.

October 22 - 24, 2004 saw a group of 90 Sherlockians descend upon Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania and commandeer The Jim Thorpe Inn. After receiving our registration packets (which included the book *Murderland* edited by Steven Doyle) we settled into our spacious suite and prepared for what was to come. We had been warned that our evening activities might require warm clothing, and that proved to be true. We walked through the appropriately Halloween-decorated streets of this small town and approached the forbidding old Mauch Chunk (the former name of the city) Jail. It wasn't just the late fall weather and cold damp that sent a chill through the visitors, but the knowledge that this jail had been the site of hangings of men known as Molly Maguires, prototype of the Scowriers in *The Valley of Fear*. The jail is now a private museum, and the current owner gave us a bit of history before the keynote speaker of the evening, Professor Kevin Kenny, spoke about the difficulties experienced in this coal region in the 1870's. Professor Kenny certainly set the tone for the weekend when he discussed the differing views of the Molly Maguires and how history has treated them. Whether the organization (certainly no documentation exists that gives us any hard facts about the group) was dedicated to violence or labor rights is a controversy that lives on. The evening ended with musical entertainment provided in the inn's saloon by Henry Boote, BSI.

The next day was bright and sunny as we piled into the two comfortable coaches. The two buses went in opposite directions, each with different speakers on board, which gave everyone the chance to learn from experts in local history. Jim Thorpe proved to be a more

prosperous area than the surrounding towns we saw during our tour. Local historian Howard Crown pointed out historical sites during our drive, which ended at the Hibernian House in Girardville PA. Jack Kehoe, a Boss McGinty prototype, had once run the tavern, which is still being operated by his descendants. After our luncheon break, we returned to our original bus, which was now hosted by a different set of speakers including Julia Rosenblatt BSI, Judge John Lavelle (previously Carbon County's only magistrate and the man who suggested his strict sentencing had once caused felons to rename the Jim Thorpe Jail "Lavelle's Hotel") and Prof. Kenny.

Our afternoon break allowed us some time to wander the streets of Jim Thorpe and do some shopping and sightseeing - it doesn't take long in a town this small. We soon convened at the Mauch Chunk Museum where we enjoyed dinner, and a presentation by Catherine Cooke, BSI about the identification of Birlstone Manor. Henry Boote concluded the evening with his own "Music in the Valley."

We met on Sunday morning at the Carbon County Courthouse. Judge Albert Rosenblatt, BSI chaired the program, which included Judge Lavelle, Professor Harold Aurand, Patrick Campbell, Howard Crown and Prof. Kenny. When I was later asked by someone whether the opinion of the speakers swayed toward the guilt or innocence of the Molly Maguires, I could honestly answer that all of the speakers seemed to strive toward a careful neutrality. They all acknowledged that while not everyone may have been guilty, certainly hardly anyone was totally innocent. What was certain, however, was that the trials themselves were hardly the benchmark of judicial propriety, and that the bigotry toward the Irish in those times was a prominent factor in the outcome of the hearings.

Our thanks go to Albert and Julia Rosenblatt and Mike Whelan and Mary Ann Bradley for the long hours they put into organizing the weekend and to all those who helped make The Valley of Fear a fun and instructive experience. ♦

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS ANNUAL DINNER



The theme for this year was the 100th anniversary of the initial publication of nine adventures included in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

As the first snow of the season fluttered to the ground, the Norwegian explorers gathered at the Minneapolis Golf Club on December 2, 2004, for our Annual Meeting and Dinner. The theme for this year was the 100th anniversary of the initial publication of nine adventures included in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

After the traditional toasts, diners enjoyed a hearty British buffet, featuring shepherd's pie, fish and chips, and Yorkshire pudding. The menu and printed program cleverly prepared by Julie McKuras included appropriate canonical quotations for all the items.

President Julie McKuras led the business meeting, which featured a glowing financial report from Treasurer Mike Eckman. The officers and Board of Directors were re-elected, with the exception of Gary Thaden replacing the retiring Wade Manthie as Vice President. Wade was applauded for his years of service.

The annual Sigerson awards were presented to Mike Eckman, Bob Brusic, Karen Murdock and Regina Harris, all of whose pieces were included in the *Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota 2004 Christmas Annual*, a copy of which was at each diner's place setting. The feature piece in this year's annual, which was edited by John Bergquist, was by Derham Groves, BSI, a professor of architecture at the University of Melbourne, Australia who has long-standing ties to the Explorers.

John Bergquist did a "Stand with me here upon the terrace..." tribute to Governor Elmer L. Andersen. Although to our knowledge Andersen was never a member of the Norwegian Explorers, he was a good friend of Explorers founder Theodore C. Blegen, and his contributions to the University of Minnesota Libraries were second to none.

Dick Sveum led a difficult quiz on the stories from 1904, and then Phil Bergem gave the "keynote address," an illustrated talk entitled *Travels with Doyle and Holmes*, featuring Phil's slides of many sites related to the Doyle family.

Garry Peterson and Mike Miller presented their annual lighthearted "groaner" quiz, and Bob Brusic presided over the annual caption contest, in which those at each table choose the most humorous caption for a familiar Sher-



Phil Bergem giving his presentation on Sherlockian and Doylean sites in the British Isles.

lockian image. This year, the image was a still of Basil Rathbone as Holmes, holding a doll in his left hand, speaking to a Gypsy fortune teller in the Universal film *The Spider Woman*. One of the better captions has Holmes asking the fortune teller, "You say you found this Yellow Faced doll, with a Twisted Lip, in a Cardboard Box, in an Empty House?"

Thanks to Minneapolis Golf Club members Wade and Mary Manthie for once again making reservations for the Explorers at this fine venue. ♦

John Bergquist, BSI





"I have been a Norwegian Explorer for over 20 years; have heard about the legendary dinners for even longer. I always wondered what people did and more important, why they went. Conversing with friends is the answer."

NEWBIES IN NEW YORK THE BSI WEEKEND, JANUARY 2005

What do all those Sherlockians do in New York City in January at the BSI weekend? Why go all the way from Minneapolis to New York and talk about Sherlock Holmes? Some of the other Norwegian Explorers encouraged me to go; my wife, Andrea (Andy), wanted to go; I had never been to New York City and had always wanted to go – so we went.

We had a 7 am flight out on Thursday morning so we could spend the day enjoying NYC. Five other Norwegian Explorers were on the same flight. Good, some guides for the weekend events and for New York.

We were lucky enough to get a room at the Algonquin Hotel (59 West 44th St.), the "official" hotel for the BSI weekend and a beautiful place. The rooms are small but very nicely done. Why spend time in your hotel room when we had Manhattan to explore? The lobby served as a meeting place (formal and informal) for Sherlockians all four days we were there. The Algonquin is just a couple of blocks from Times Square in Midtown and after dropping off our luggage, a group of us (is there an official name for a group of Sherlockians? A shovel of Sherlockians? A hopper of Holmesians?) started walking north towards Central Park.

We stopped for lunch at a New York deli with twelve inch high pastrami sandwiches (yes, twelve inches. We shared one sandwich). After lunch we kept walking north of the hotel towards Central Park and visited Otto Penzler's Mysterious Bookshop on 56th St. Met Otto, looked at books. Mouths and wallets were opened repeatedly.

Thursday night at 6 pm was the BSI Distinguished Speaker Lecture at the Williams Club on 39th St. Gahan Wilson talked about his life as an illustrator, telling many funny stories. Many of the audience waited in line to have him autograph Wilson memorabilia, most of it Sherlockian. He stood and talked to everybody that was in line. He was very gracious.

On Thursday, we had met Roy Pilot (co-editor of *The Annotated Lost World*) in the lobby of the Algonquin. He talked about his research at the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library (you know, with the lions out front). He

graciously offered to bring John and Inez Bergquist and Andy and me to the collection the next day. So on Friday, Roy led us to the library, to the proper computer terminal to fill out a form, then to get our picture taken at the counter, then into an office for the official blessing to get into the rare book area. Once there we saw Charles Dickens's desk and the library's Doyle manuscripts, including a complete chapter of the *Hound*. Exciting!

On Friday, January 7th Otto Penzler had an official open house for Sherlockian authors, from 11 am to 4:30 pm, but since we had already been to the Mysterious Bookshop (and there is so much to see in New York) we explored Midtown Manhattan.

The William Gillette Memorial Luncheon was held at Moran's Chelsea Seafood Restaurant on Tenth Ave., organized by Susan Rice. Drinking, food, talking, lecture, and a skit. After the Luncheon we strolled over to the Strand bookstore and took the subway (only one misdirection) back to the Algonquin.

Friday evening was the Big Night of the weekend. The BSI dinner for Irregulars and invitees at the Union League Club, or the Baskerville Bash for the rest of us. The Bash was held at the Manhattan Club on 52nd St. and was filled with drinking opportunities, eating opportunities, and lots of amusing and well executed skits. Many waited at the Manhattan Club to find out who had received this year's Investitures. Finally the newly crowned "King of Scandinavia" (John Bergquist) arrived. He and three of his loyal subjects went out to celebrate another Norwegian Explorer receiving such a high BSI honor. Later we all went back to the Algonquin for more talking.

On Saturday morning the dealers' room was open on the second floor of the Algonquin. Again, mouths and wallets were opened repeatedly. In between the dealer's room in the morning and the reception in the afternoon we squeezed in some sightseeing.

The BSI Annual Reception was held at the National Arts Club (15 Gramercy Park) in the former mansion of Samuel J. Tilden, once Governor of New York and Democratic Presidential



"Explorers were feeling a bit chesty this evening, for we have had three of our members invested in the BSI in the past five years (Julie McKuras, Dick Sveum, and now John Bergquist)."

NEWBIES IN NEW YORK THE BSI WEEKEND (CONTINUED)

Candidate in 1876. This event is open to all Sherlockians and friends. We sat with two couples from England, including the Secretary of the Sherlock Holmes of London. Drinking, eating, and short speeches, including the Rosenblatts' poetic summary of Friday night's BSI dinner. The best event in my opinion. Maybe I was just getting my sea legs for a BSI weekend.

Saturday night a number of us went to a Broadway show, *Democracy*. It is the story of West German chancellor Willy Brandt and included marital infidelity, political intrigue, and possible resignation from office, all on a very minimalist stage setting. At intermission, the crowd started whispering and pointing down to the first few rows (we were in the balcony having purchased rush seats that afternoon). There was former President Clinton and Senator Hillary Clinton. After the show ended, the Clintons began to leave and the crowd spontaneously broke into applause. It took them a few minutes to leave; Bill Clinton, ever the politician, was working the crowd with handshakes and discussions.

On Sunday was the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes brunch. More conversation, food and drinking. Some BSI and guests, including the Bergquists, went on a bus tour to Gillette Castle in Connecticut. Six of us Norwegian Explorers had a 5 pm flight back to Minneapolis.

It was great fun going to the BSI weekend in New York. I have been a Norwegian Explorer for over 20 years; have heard about the legendary dinners for even longer. I always wondered what people did and more important, why they went. Conversing with friends is the answer. I reconnected with old friends I had made at conferences here in Minnesota, I talked to old correspondents I only knew by email or U. S. mail, and I made new friends. And that is the reason for going. Conversations with friends.

We are already saving up for next year. ❖

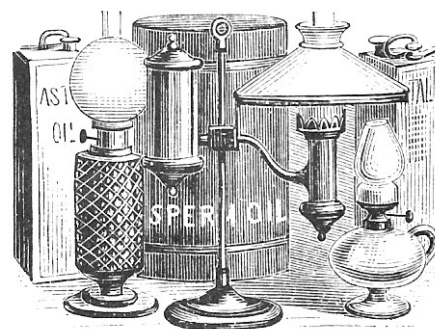
Gary Thaden

BAKER STREET WEST IN MINNESOTA

The annual Baker Street West dinner in honor of the Master's birthday was held Wednesday, January 12, 2005 at the Outback Steakhouse in Bloomington. Twenty-some Sherlockians (and indulgent spouses) braved the slushy roads to attend. Several Explorers were recently returned from the Birthday Weekend celebrations in New York City, including John Bergquist, who had just won his Irregular shilling and been invested into the Baker Street Irregulars as "The King of Scandinavia." John was much congratulated and toasted (but modestly declined to wear the gold cardboard crown with two deerstalker brims fore-and-aft custom made for him by Gary and Andy Thaden). Pat Nelson offered a toast to the publisher of *The Strand* magazine, George Newnes, after handing out an attractive souvenir folder bearing a photograph of Newnes and a quotation from his writings. Karen Murdock toasted Sherlock Holmes, "The Man of the Year in '05," pointing out how important the number 5 was in several Canonical tales.

Dick Sveum gave a thorough summary of the Birthday Weekend activities, with other observations added by Julie McKuras, Gary Thaden, Tim Johnson, and "The King of Scandinavia." All Explorers were feeling a bit chesty this evening, for we have had three of our members invested in the BSI in the past five years (Julie McKuras, Dick Sveum, and now John). The food was fine, the beer was Foster's, and the mood was buoyant. ❖

Karen Murdock





"Klinger's volumes are a treasure house for those strong enough to pick them up them and use them as ballast for their journeys of pleasure, research, and reflection."

SHERLOCKIAN EVENTS

KLINGER INTRODUCES THE *NEW ANNOTATED TO* THE NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS

Some time ago an exercise called "Creative Problem Solving" enjoyed a vogue among educators. Part of that process involved thinking of alternative ways to use common everyday objects. So, for instance, students were challenged to see how many different ways (beside the obvious) they could use a paper clip or a toothbrush. If one had been likewise challenged at a gathering of the Norwegian Explorers on November 11, 2004, the exercise might have been framed this way: how many different ways could one use Leslie S. Klinger's *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*? In fact, a couple of folks in the back row did offer one or two such uses: it would make a great door stop; it could help determine how heavy your bag of apples is (the boxed brace of books, containing all of the 56 Holmes short stories, does weigh ten and a half pounds according to my kitchen scale).

Well over two thirds of those who attended the meeting (that is, 28 eager Sherlockians) purchased the Annotated. It is not likely that any of those doubtless satisfied customers will use the handsome set to hold doors open, though mine is being pressed into service as a kind of book end – the other end being my venerable boxed set of William S. Baring-Gould's 1967 *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. Both sets are alike in terms of bulk, scope, and middle initial of each author.

Baring-Gould's encyclopedic work, however, is understandably out of date (and is two pounds lighter). Klinger's massive contribution takes advantage of the rich harvest of over three decades of subsequent Sherlockian scholarship. Moreover, Klinger charts new territory: Victorian studies, newer and improved reproduction techniques, and comprehensive charts that give a year by year account of canonical and historical doings from 1844 (when Holmes's parents married) to 1930 (the year after John H. Watson died "under circumstances unknown").



All these things and more Klinger detailed in an informative talk to the rapt audience. He not only gave his overview of those two towering tomes, but he also illuminated some of the background and thinking that went into the overall project (which will include a third volume – containing the four Holmes novels – in November, 2005). Klinger spoke about how the publishers (Norton Press) sought him out for the work. They not only did a splendid editing job, he said, but they went to great extremes to print crisp illustrations. The folks at Norton gasped, but they did not balk, when the project expanded to nearly 2000 pages. When the third volume is completed and released next year, the set will be the largest publishing venture Norton has ever undertaken.

In speaking about the life and times of Sherlock Holmes, Klinger clearly whetted the appetite of his hearers and purchasers. He admitted, for instance, that the Victorian period was far from perfect. The air was foul, the city of London was begrimed and unsafe, injustices to the poor, to women, and to outsiders were pervasive. Still, he reflected, in our hearts and minds the period of the late 19th century has acquired a mythic quality like Camelot or, for Americans, the old West. We can know and understand the difference between perceived reality and softening myth, but we can also know and appreciate the balance that one provides the other for the sake of knowledge and imagination. Hence, generations past, present, and yet unborn can visit the London of 1895 in fact and fancy; and all can be enriched by the journey.

Klinger's door- and heart-stopping volumes are a treasure house for those strong enough to pick them up them and use them as ballast for their journeys of pleasure, research, and reflection. While heavy, they provide imaginative lift for our many years to come. ♦

The Reverend Robert Brusic

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP

THE THREE STUDENTS

Sherlock Holmes is often inclined to chastise Dr. Watson for passing on to his publisher only the most “sensational” of his cases. “The Adventure of the Three Students” was obviously an effort, on Watson’s part, to counter that criticism. Nothing of a sensational nature occurs in this story, just pure deduction and reasoning. Yet we, the reader, find this story less satisfying than most of the Canon. That was the general opinion of the study group that met, with John Bergquist’s direction, at the luxurious University Club in St. Paul on September 18th, 2004.

In the midst of our discussion, a question was raised. Are we guilty of what Holmes often asserts? Do we require violence, blood, death, even murder, to captivate us in what we read? The group thought not, but we may have given ourselves the benefit of the doubt in reaching that conclusion. Well then, assuming that we were truthful, what is lacking in this story besides sensationalism? For one thing, the Baker Street lodgings were absent from this story. We had a bit of a “cozy” (where the victim often relates the basics of the case, usually in 221b), but in this story, we missed the crackling of the fire, the sound of a cab scraping at the curb, and the inhibiting presence of Mrs. Hudson. Perhaps Holmes’s deductions here are not as brilliant as those we are used to. Perhaps the red herrings are too obvious. Did we resent

the fact that the pencil led us nowhere, or that Gilchrist’s past was kept from us? Holmes tried to turn down the case; would the school really have suffered much if Soames had gone public? Did the case really require the time and effort of the greatest mind of our time? Probably not.

Holmes knew from the start that Watson’s

revolver was not needed. Watson was not even required as a sounding-board. Holmes warned Watson, “Not one of your cases, Watson—mental, not physical. All right; come if you want to.” Obviously, Watson felt otherwise. Perhaps he had a point to prove. Could this story be a complete fabrication? There are those who feel that the entire *Return* consists merely of creations of Dr. Watson. Did Watson concoct them just for the money? Did Holmes refuse to allow any more cases to become public? Did a demanding public force Watson’s pen?



The imagination can suggest many strange possibilities. One of our members, whose opinion is certainly to be trusted, endorses the possibility that the case might have a ruse woven by Watson and Conan Doyle to bring Holmes back from the darkness of a terrible drug addiction. As can be seen, our study group entertains all perspectives. ❖

Charles Clifford

Story illustrations by Sidney Paget

“Are we guilty of what Holmes often asserts? Do we require violence, blood, death, even murder, to captivate us in what we read?”

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP

(CONTINUED)

THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ

Sherlock Holmes often expounds on the science of deduction in the Canon. To paraphrase, one must eliminate each alternative; what remains is then used to construct a theory of how the crime was committed. Only then, a test of that theory may be conducted, exposing the criminal.

In this month's story, "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez", this methodology is carried out step by step by Holmes. Our Study Group, meeting downstairs at the Merriam Park Library on Saturday October 16, 2004, followed Holmes's thought processes, dissected them, but could not find fault in his methods.

Granted, Mr. Holmes did perfectly describe the suspect for police detective Stanley Hopkins without even leaving Baker Street. Today, anyone wearing golden pince-nez would be quickly identified, yet in turn-of-the-century London they were much more common. Yet, Holmes was able to draw a complete picture of myopic Anna, former campus radical and prison camp resident of aristocratic birth.

While listening to Hopkins, Holmes immediately realized that it would have been a difficult task for a nearly blind person (even with a second pair of glasses) to quickly escape Yoxley Old Place without leaving a trace upon the path. Holmes also notes that the corridor (with coconut matting) to Professor Coram's room was very similar to that leading to the garden path. Holmes is thorough, inspecting the path himself. Then he discovers the curious scratch on the face of the wooden bureau. The Professor's room was cluttered with books and stacks

of paper, yet curiously, the way to a high bookcase was open. Armed with this circumstantial evidence, a Scotland Yard man would have certainly ordered a complete search of the premises. Holmes, on the other hand, proceeds to chain-smoke, laying down ash to test his hypothesis. He then leaves the room, intending to let the hungry Anna come out and partake of

Professor Coram's lunch.

Holmes cleverly extracts from Miss Marker that the Professor's appetite had actually increased since the murder of young Willoughby Smith.

Only when he is completely certain, (with a minimum of theatrics, in consideration of Stanley Hopkins's fine attitude) Holmes exposes the perpetrator of the crime.

Our group, as usual, went off on several discussion tangents. It was speculated that Coram smoked five hundred cigarettes per week. We talked about poisons, wondering about this poison's ability to grant Anna time for a final speech. We touched

on the popularity of Russian secret societies in the literature of that time. We speculated on Anna's motives. We wondered if Professor Coram would have been charged with a crime. Even the stirring of the logs at the Baker Street hearth was discussed. It was noted that Watson's description of the cold, stormy evening was particularly well-written and added much to the story. We wondered about the diagram being in Doyle's own hand, and the label "Car." We can only conclude that Watson's diagram was not very legible and that Doyle copied it incorrectly. Oh, the "palimpsest" had to be touched on, too.

It was a warm fall day, and we left to enjoy it, for such days would not persist much longer in Minnesota. ♦

Charles Clifford



Our group, as usual, went off on several discussion tangents...

We wondered about the poison's ability to grant Anna time for a final speech. We also touched on the popularity of Russian secret societies.

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

THE MISSING THREE-QUARTER

Most of us admitted we had been puzzled when we first read the title "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter." We can all take heart in the fact that Sherlock Holmes was also ignorant of the meaning of the term "three-quarter" as used in this tale. Our study group journeyed to the far-off shores of White Bear Lake, to meet in the conference room of that city's public library, on Saturday, November 13, 2004. A surprisingly large number of us attended the meeting, which was hosted by Karen Murdock. It seems that lately, every month we meet we are celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of the American release of our story, and this month was no exception.

Before starting in on the story, we were able to examine Dr. Paul Martin's copy of Leslie Klinger's first two *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* volumes. The books are every Sherlockian's dream. The Once Upon a Crime mystery bookshop in Minneapolis has copies, and the book is also available on the Internet.

First came a necessary discussion of Rugby. Though it was a forerunner of American football, Rugby is actually quite different. It is a very rough sport, and the participants play without the protection of helmets and shoulder pads. They toss, dribble, kick, and carry a ball that resembles an American football more than it does a European football (soccer ball). Rules were passed around for all to read. From the rules I gleaned (I think) that a team strives to score a "touchdown," although the touchdown itself does not win the team any points – rather, the ensuing kick after a touchdown can result in a point. The games are generally very low-scoring, which is surprising, because Rugby is similar to Australian-rules football, whose games tend to be high-scoring. But, as someone has said, I digress.

In "The Missing Three-Quarter," Holmes is asked to find a missing person, Godfrey Staunton, the star three-quarter of the Cambridge "amateur" Rugby team. There exists the possibility that Staunton may have been kidnapped by some interests that have money on the Ox-

ford team. Young Stanley Hopkins has referred Cambridge coach Cyril Overton to Sherlock Holmes. Holmes, possibly on the verge of a return to cocaine use, gladly takes the case. We are soon introduced to Staunton's miserly uncle, Lord Mount-James, who is afraid that his nephew's disappearance might cost him money. Holmes sees the old lord as a hindrance to his investigation. He is quickly able to get Lord Mount-James out of the way, however. We are then introduced to Dr. Leslie Armstrong (*the BSI Investiture of our Dr. Paul Martin – Ed.*). This man is described as capable of assuming Professor Moriarty's position at the center of the criminal world. He certainly is devious, leading Holmes away from the location of our Godfrey Staunton. Holmes finally has to call in a "special consultant." Pompey, the four-legged draghound, easily tracks down Staunton, and we reach our not-so dramatic conclusion.

This story does not involve the usual great deductions that we expect from Holmes. Rather, Holmes uses his charm to view the Staunton telegram; then faced with defeat at the hands of Dr. Armstrong, he employs Pompey. It was a great move, but not a great deduction. Pompey, helped by Holmes's application of aniseed to Dr. Armstrong's coach, is hardly even challenged. Hopefully, he was well-rewarded with a large bone. Our bone was an enjoyable story in which nobody was murdered. It was mentioned that, to our group's knowledge, this story has never been adapted to film or stage. ❖

Charles Clifford



To our group's knowledge, this story, which does not involve the usual great deductions that we expect from Holmes, has never been adapted to film or stage.

SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

THE ABBEY GRANGE

A Minnesota blizzard limited attendance at the January, 2005 study Group meeting. Some of us were latecomers, arriving after shoveling our way out of the first appreciable amount of snow this season. Inside, all fingers and toes were warm and toasty, at the enjoyable University Club on St. Paul's famed Summit Avenue. John Bergquist hosted the discussion of "The Abbey Grange."

In our story, Sir Eustace Brackenstall died from a blow to the head from a fireplace poker. As a result of that blow, evidence was sprayed over the entire room. Brackenstall's wife was found bound to a chair, with terrible bruises to the head as a result of an attack. At first, we're not sure why the familiar Scotland Yard Inspector Stanley Hopkins summoned Sherlock Holmes. Apparently he had been greatly agitated by the scene at the old Brackenstall house, but by the time of Holmes's arrival, Hopkins believed that the case's mystery had been solved. Nonetheless, Holmes inspected the scene.

Holmes noted that Lady Brackenstall had been tied with sailor's knots. Lady Brackenstall admitted that her marriage had been "troubled." Despite noting something amiss with the wine glasses, Holmes had not seen enough "irrefutable evidence" to reverse Hopkins's conclusions. Holmes and Watson returned to London; that is, they boarded the train for London, but Holmes began to have second thoughts. The duo jumped the train and returned to the scene of the crime in Kent.

On return, Holmes re-interviews Lady Brackenstall and insinuates that she has not told the truth. The lady, possibly out of love for someone involved, sticks to her story. Mr. Holmes restudies the crime scene. He notes the cut bell-rope and the knots, a stain on the chair that was supposed to have been occupied by Lady Brackenstall, and the three nearly empty wine glasses. The condition of the wine-glasses was what made Holmes jump the train and return to Kent. One contained more beeswing than the others. The type of knot securing Lady Brackenstall, and the physical size and fitness

that it took to cut down the bell-rope, pointed Mr. Holmes in the direction of the real poker-wielder.

Our group enjoyed the story for reasons besides the "sensational details" alluded to at the beginning of the story. The story started out on an exciting note, with Holmes shaking Watson to wake him. The tone of Hopkins's note and the quick train ride added to the pace of the story. In this case, Holmes was nearly blinded by the charms of a beautiful and persuasive woman; our hero very nearly made the "blunder of his career." That was an interesting element. Hopkins's obtuseness was as expected, for Scotland Yard at least. The mystery figure coming to Baker Street to confess, as in "STUD," was an enjoyable element. The most illuminating aspect of the story was that this was one of the situations where Sherlock Holmes failed to enlighten Scotland Yard, to the benefit of a "mystery figure" and Lady Brackenstall.

Oh yes, our group did have side discussions. We talked about wife-beaters. We noted how Doyle went even beyond "wife-beating" to make Sir Eustace more despicable, justifying Holmes's actions. We were all disappointed in Hopkins; Lestrade could have done as well with this case. Some of us, however, subscribed to the theory that Hopkins saw through the Brackenstall ruse, and brought in Holmes to make his own "looking the other way" more justifiable. We noted how common the "other gang" red-herring is employed in mystery stories. We also discussed the possibility that Holmes may actually have been successfully deceived by Lady Brackenstall, Theresa, and Captain Croker. Could they have planned the murder in advance, then passed all of Holmes's tests? ♦

Charles Clifford



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INTERNET EXPLORATIONS

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

I missed the last issue so as penance I will present several sites that I have found interesting. The first is a wonderful web page by Brad Keefauver. Many of you will know of Brad from his *Holmes and Watson Report*, a bi-monthly production of interesting articles and opinions. Somehow he manages to find time to host www.sherlockpeoria.net.

Brad has always been a good friend of *The Norwegian Explorers* and the Sherlock Holmes Collection at Andersen Library and mentions Minnesota connections many of his issues. His website is another wonderful experience. Of particular note is the 'Action Sherlock Brain Theatre.' Click on "Find the rest of the series here..." and you will find some of the funniest Sherlockiana on the Internet. (The Action Theater is also featured on the covers of the most recent *Holmes & Watson Report*.) Brad uses action figures and clever writing to present a series of amusing skits.

If you are interested in pastiches, you will find the site www.schoolandholmes.com an essential resource. The site provides story summaries, character descriptions, locations, mistakes, and a plethora of other information for a great number of pastiches. (They claim to cover 269 books and 771 short stories.) (This valuable site also posts free downloadable files of indexes for many classic "Writings on the Writings" that were published without indexes. – Ed.)

A noteworthy site for those interested in Arthur Conan Doyle is www.thesussexweald.org. This site provides some nice information about Doyle as well as the places he lived and visited in Sussex. There are some interesting articles on Doyle and many pictures of the area. One word of warning. They have a link to www.sherlockholmesonline.org, which is, in my opinion, a disreputable site that contends to be responsible for licensing Doyle's work.

Finally, if you don't yet know about these next sites, you should. They are a useful resource generally, and can be applied to the Holmes genre as well. They the Internet Movie Database and the Internet Broadway Database sites (www.idmb.com and www.ibdb.com) and can be used to search for movies and plays related to Sherlock Holmes. ❖

Phillip Bergem



Speaking of explorations, here is Explorer Mary McDiar-mid outside a tobacconist shop she spotted last year while in Prague, Czech Republic.



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The Norwegian Explorers

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