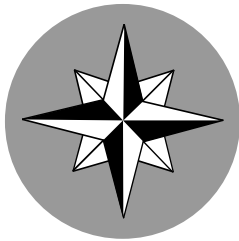




EXPLORATIONS



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN¹



We are into late spring in Minnesota.² Our annual meeting last December is behind us, as is our celebration of the Master's Birthday.³ Recently, we had a board game night (organized by Soren Eversoll).⁴ And, our very own talented Red-Throated League recreated a 1940's radio show at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting.⁵ Articles on both activities are in this issue of *Explorations*.⁶

Our Study Group is going strong and is working its way through *The Return*.⁷ If you cannot wait for the Explorers next conference in 2013, the Bootmakers of Toronto will be conferring about "A Study in Scandal" on October 13-16 (<http://acdfriends.org/sins.htm>) and Wessex Press will be viewing "From Gillette to Brett 3" on November 11-13 (<http://www.wessexpress.com/html/g2b3.html>).⁸

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¹ "There is half a **column** of print, but I know without reading it that it is all perfectly familiar to me." *Case of Identity*

² "Cormac placed his hands on the stove for an instant—it had been lighted, for the **spring** nights were still cold." *Valley of Fear*

³ "The case might have been dealt leniently with, but the laws were more harshly administered thirty years ago than now, and on my twenty-third **birthday** I found myself chained as a felon with thirty-seven other convicts in the 'tween decks of the barque Gloria Scott, bound for Australia." *Gloria Scott*

⁴ "Surely the **game** is hardly worth the candle" *Sign of the Four*

⁵ "A cast of your skull, sir, until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological **museum**." *Hound of the Baskervilles*

⁶ "You may have read of the remarkable **explorations** of a Norwegian named Sigerson, but I am sure that it never occurred to you that you were receiving news from your friend." *Empty House*

⁷ "You must **study** him, then," Stamford said" *Study in Scarlet*

⁸ "I think, Count, that it would be as well to have your friend Sam at this **conference**." *Mazarin Stone*

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It's possible the summer solstice may have occurred before some of you receive this issue of *Explorations*. My apologies - as the fault is mine. To pull a quote from Christopher Morley's classic *The Haunted Bookshop*, "fatigue, most potent enemy of all who do and dream." However, I am glad this is in your hands now and *Explorations* will be back on schedule with the next issue.

I appreciate all the efforts made by our contributors featured in this issue. They bring you a delightful mix of original Sherlockian articles, pleasant event reports, and rich travel narratives. Please enjoy.

And as always, submissions for *Explorations* are welcome. Email them directly to me in plain text or in Word format to: twinsfan1@earthlink.net

~Tim Reich

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(Continued from page 1)

Explorers member, Don Shelby, late of WCCO-TV, was recently on our local public TV station during a showing of the BBC show "Sherlock" during which he managed to sneak in a reference to the Explorers.⁹ Thanks!¹⁰

Tim Reich has put together another great issue for us, so read on Explorers.¹¹

~Gary Thaden, President¹²

⁹ "On account of the bequest of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, of Lebanon, Penn., U.S.A., there is now another vacancy open which entitles a **member** of the League to a salary of four pounds a week for purely nominal services." *Red-Headed League*

¹⁰ "But **thanks** to my cheque-book, and the good Altamont, all will be well tonight." *His Last Bow*

¹¹ "We had strict injunctions, however, on no account to pass the falls of **Reichenbach**, which are about half-way up the hills, without making a small detour to see them." *Final Problem*

¹² "The famous Smith-Mortimer succession case comes also within this period, and so does the tracking and arrest of Huret, the Boulevard assassin—an exploit which won for Holmes an autograph letter of thanks from the French **President** and the Order of the Legion of Honour." *Golden Pince-Nez*



A STUDY IN BARITSU

There has been much speculation over what Sherlock Holmes did to Professor James Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland. Many movies have tried to portray it, many tapes record it, and now I will add my idea of *what* happened that fateful afternoon. When reading Less Klinger's book, *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, I read one theory that Holmes slipped out of Moriarty's lock-hold, fell to one knee, took Moriarty's groin and pushed forwards, sending Moriarty toppling into the falls. I have also recently read the first edition of *The League of Extraordinary Gentleman* in which Moriarty lunges at Holmes with a knife, tries to stab him, but Holmes takes his knife hand and pushes, also sending the professor to his death. Combining these two, I have devised the following theory:

Professor Moriarty puts Holmes in an arm lock, in which he quickly struggles free. Dropping to one knee, Holmes then takes Moriarty in the groin of his captured leg and pushes forwards. The professor then falls on the rocks and now very mad, he tries to stab Sherlock with his knife. Sherlock, taking his knife arm, pushes forward again, this time sending Moriarty toppling into the abyss.

I hope I have constructed a plausible description of what Sherlock Holmes did to Professor James Moriarty, and may he rest in peace.

~Soren Eversoll



HOLMES SIGHTINGS

Michael Korda makes a couple of references to Sherlock Holmes in his book *Hero: The Life and Legend of Lawrence of Arabia*. On page 28, Korda reports that the British military historian and philosopher of war B. H. Liddell Hart compared Lawrence to Sherlock Holmes because of Lawrence's "extraordinary perceptiveness of details which other men missed." Near the end of the book on page 663, Korda writes that "Liddell Hart was a formidable logician and analyzer of facts. Had the line 'Elementary, my dear Watson!' not already been used, he could have made it his, for in many ways he resembled Sherlock Holmes, although his magnifying glass was turned toward tactics, lines of communication, and fortifications instead of cigarette ash and footprints."

In *The Emperor of all Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, Siddhartha Mukherjee introduces each chapter with quotes from various texts. For the introduction to Part One, he uses a Sherlock Holmes quote from *A Study in Scarlet*: "In solving a problem of this sort, the grand thing is to be able to reason backwards. That is a very useful accomplishment, and a very easy one, but people do not practice it much."

P. G. Wodehouse made Sherlockian references quite often in his works and in the novel *Summer Lightning* he makes them without even mentioning Holmes's name. Hugo Carmody has been assigned the task of engaging the inquiry agent P. Frobisher Pilbeam to investigate the theft of Lord Emsworth's pig. In notifying Pilbeam of Hugo's arrival, the office-boy is tempted to say that "beyond the obvious facts that the caller was a Freemason, left-handed, a vegetarian and a traveler in the East, he had made no deductions from his appearance." Upon being introduced, Hugo cheerfully states, "And this, if I mistake not, Watson, is our client now." Later in the interview, Hugo asks about detection: "What does the work consist of? ... Measuring footprints and putting the tips of your fingers together, and all that, I suppose?" Later in the story, Lady Constance is asked about any conclusions she has drawn. Wodehouse writes that "Lady Constance felt dull and foolish. She felt like Doctor Watson – almost like a Scotland Yard Bungler."

Stieg Larsson has gained posthumous fame for writing the Millennium Trilogy of *The Girl* books. Kurdo Baksi, a fellow journalist, writes in *Stieg Larsson: Our Days in Stockholm* that Stieg was made the crime fiction specialist of the agency for which he was a graphic artist. Barski reports that Stieg "had read practically everything that had been written in the genre for the past two hundred years." Barski lists the authors that influenced Stieg and it is not surprising the Arthur Conan Doyle is in the list. Stieg's favorite authors, however, appeared to be more contemporary.

Barry Forshaw's *The Man Who Left too soon: The Biography of Stieg Larsson* has several reference to Doyle and Holmes. A section of the book is given to analysis and criticism of the Trilogy by critics and authors. Mark Lawson of the Guardian sees Larsson's central character Lisbeth Salander combining "the brain of Sherlock Holmes with the martial arts skills of Lara Croft." On the other hand, the author Val McDermid states that because Lisbeth can control events from her hospital bed in the third book "She almost becomes a kind Moriarty figure, although admittedly you don't think such things at the time of reading."

Val McDermid goes on to say that she is a political animal, just as Larsson was. In particular, both are feminists. McDermid relates a story of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle touring a cordite plant in Scotland with Rebecca West during the First World War. When Doyle saw that most of the employees were women, "he said decisively 'Women should get the vote.'" McDermid sees this event as "the precise point at which Conan Doyle became a feminist."

Forshaw also states that many who come to Stockholm take the Millennium walking tour of sites from the Trilogy and Larsson's life. Some of the people on these tours "are familiar with those for whom the dividing line between fantasy and reality is a touch blurred." Forshaw includes in this group with the "blurred" line those who presuppose "that the Great Detective is not the fictitious creation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or that Holmes is the oldest surviving Victorian."

~Mike Eckman



**"...the brain of
Sherlock Holmes
with the martial
arts skills of Lara
Croft."**

A WONDERFUL VISIT TO THE WEIN'S

[Tim Reich and Julie McKuras have asked that I write a description of my meeting with Richard and Cynthia Wein last summer in in Long Island. I was visiting my grandfather there with my family and we were invited to visit the Wein's house. It was a highlight of my summer.]

When I first got out of the car to see the Weins, I noticed the stained glass sign of 221b Baker Street and Sherlock's silhouette in the downstairs window. When I came into the living room, I was overwhelmed by Mr. and Mrs. Wein's tremendous collection. Richard has a wonderful knowledge of the stories, pastiches and everything else Holmes. We started talking like old friends, and soon Mr. Wien showed me his downstairs Sherlockian collection too. He even has Sherlock Holmes children's books and stuffed animals (my sister was in her glory when she saw *them!*).

Then, my grandpa took the hamburgers off the grill and we were called to dinner. The

dinner was quite tasty and we had great conversation to go along with it!

Richard then took me into their garage filled to the top with VHS tapes, cassette tapes and books. Surprisingly, all of these were duplicates. Richard generously allowed me to pick out anything that caught my interest. I ended up taking two boxes of stuff! Mrs. Wein was quite pleased to see the stuff go for they were taking up garage space. I will always remember the night I met one of the most interesting Sherlockian couples.

I would like to thank Elyse Locurto who I met at the Spirits of Sherlock Holmes conference. She arranged our meeting when she learned we were coming to New York. Without her, none of this would of happened. I'm grateful to be a part of the Sherlock Holmes community.

~Soren Eversoll



"I will always remember the night I met one of the most interesting Sherlockian couples."

THE RED-THROATED LEAGUE DELIVERS AGAIN

What has really become a tradition in recent years is the annual performance of an Edith Meiser radio play adapted by our local group, The Red-Throated League. I've seen many of the plays, and I think both the script and performance this year are my favorite.

The play was held on April 3, 2011 and was titled, "The Affair of the Politician, the Lighthouse, and the Trained Cormorant." It was delivered again at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. A large audience of Explorers, Sherlock Holmes fans, and old-time radio enthusiasts were obediently in their seats and quiet when the "ON AIR" box lit up and The League, under Bob Brusic's direction began the show.

As with other Meiser radio plays, we have a mystery solved by Holmes and Watson, however three things contributed to why this one is now my personal favorite.

First, we have Holmes involved in what seemed to be almost every scene. This really gave everyone a chance to see the Master at work.

Secondly, actor Jamie Hubbs's, role as the cormorant still makes me laugh. Seeing women and men in the audience (including me) jump in their seats when Jamie delivered the first spine-tingling "Caw!" as the bird established its presence in this case gave a wonderful dose of humor to the production.

Finally, even though I tend to avoid the "rougher" parts of town in real life, I'm always intrigued when a story guides me into the dangerous parts of city where hazards lurk and criminals behave by their own set of rules. This play transported me there when the duo investigated leads near the eastern docks of the Thames. The Limehouse area brought encounters with colorful characters such as Hawkins and Mother Fishface.

If you live near the Twin Cities in Minnesota and you haven't seen one of these performances, you are really missing out. To watch the sound effect guys work their magic is worth the trip by itself. The entire cast was excellent. I look forward to next year!

~Tim Reich



BOOK REVIEW



Karen Murdock, ASH, with *Sherlock Alive* at a recent study group meeting.

“Karen shows her passion for the world of Vincent Starrett.”

Sherlock Alive: Sherlockian Excerpts from VS’s Book’s Alive Column in the Chicago Tribune 1942-1967, Vincent Starrett, compiled and annotated by Karen Murdock.

The mystique of Sherlock Holmes had no greater admirer than Vincent Starrett - sometimes called the soul of Sherlockian studies. Certainly none have surpassed such works as *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* and *221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes*. Who has written a better homage to the great detective than the sonnet “221B” which promises the eternal survival of Holmes and Watson in a world that is always 1895?

In *Sherlock Alive* Karen Murdock captures a 25 year segment of this Holmesian worship by collecting all Starrett’s mentions of his hero in the “Book’s Alive” and other columns appearing in *The Chicago Tribune*. We read of Sherlockian controversies and characters. The foundings and doings of Baker Street Irregular groups including our own Norwegian Explorers are chronicled. We see the development of a vast Sherlockian literary outpouring and the camaraderie of the cult of Baker Street. With Starrett we await the unveiling of a lost Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes story only to find it another pastiche. Like VS we can only wonder why English courses and lists of great books omit Holmes. With Starrett we deplore the

domination of the mystery story by the brutality of Mickey Spillane’s Mike Hammer to the detriment of the amateur sleuth. “Book’s Alive” celebrated the world of good books and good reads to a public aspiring to something better than the trash literature of its day.

Gathering the Sherlockian bits from a quarter century of newspapers is an achievement in its own right. The book also includes a “Personalalia” section consisting of mini-biographies of authors and personalities mentioned by Starrett in his columns. A chronology of world and Starrett events gives context to the era in which “Book’s Alive” appeared.

Combined with extensive and informative footnotes, Karen shows that her passion for the world of Vincent Starrett is as great as his for the immortal Sherlock Holmes. For information on ordering this book, one site to check out is <http://www.batteredbox.com>.

~Steve Miller



IT'S THE STAIRWAY THAT COUNTS

The autumn staging of *The 39 Steps* at the Guthrie Theater stirred my imagination and caused me to think about other steps we encounter in life. For example, there are numerous 12 step programs that help people deal with personal problems and concerns. There are also a multitude of Seven Step offerings – more than 80 Google pages of them – with the same aim in mind. These include such life-enhancing things as Seven Steps to Better Blog Entries, Seven Steps to Getting Better Service at a Coffee Shop, and Seven Steps in Planning a Better Jail.

Those who are privileged to step into the Sherlockian universe eventually come across a seventeen step program of great significance. It occurs in that memorable encounter between Holmes and Watson in *Scandal in Bohemia* where we learn something profound, even life-enhancing:

“You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.”

“Frequently.”

“How often?”

“Well, some hundreds of times.”

“Then, how many are there?”

“How many? I don't know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed.”

Trying to take Holmes' admonition to heart and fashion my life accordingly, I have conscientiously sought to apply it whenever I climb a flight of stairs. I have come to recognize that stairs are often even-numbered, that is, eight or sixteen steps per flight. Perhaps that has something to do with code and height requirements in most buildings. However, there are occasions when steps can number many more or less. For example, it is usually only one step from the street to most sidewalks, while the Grand Staircase at the Metropolitan Museum in

New York ascends to the second floor in forty-six lofty steps.

Sometimes, unpredictably, I climb a set of stairs and discover a connection to the flat at 221B Baker Street. “Why, that was seventeen steps I have just climbed up (or down),” an inner voice declares. That awareness struck me with the force of revelation as we were moving into our St. Paul residence on a cold November day in 1989. While I was lugging boxes of books, and the lesser necessities of life into our new home, it occurred to me that I was regularly ascending and descending 17 steps (!) at 2134 Knapp Street – one rise of eleven and another of six. I was flushed with humility and excitement, for it took me only thirty or forty trips to realize what took Watson ‘hundreds of times’ and, in the end, coaxing by Holmes.

That staircase of revelation has stayed with me over time, so that whenever I climb a flight of stairs, I hear an inner voice counting as I stride up or down. My wife and friends have remarked that my expression turns glassy and my conversation becomes muddled as I climb stair cases. Every time I think I have found an example of this *sacra numerum*, I make an effort to retrace my steps a second or a third time just to be sure. I often give a little ‘yelp’ when I find a 17 stepper – as I did, for example, climbing from the first to the second floor of Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis for a coffee concert. Just think of it, there are *seventeen steps* right there in the heart of Minneapolis! My preoccupation with those symphonic steps came at a social cost, though, for fellow concert goers gave me skeptical looks and a wide berth as they made their way into the concert hall. To my mind they remained blissfully unaware of what was happening beneath their feet. Well, of course, they only saw but they did not observe; they climbed but they did not count.

Since then, I have kept a running list of this *memento bakerana*. I have come to realize that my life is numerically enhanced whenever I go down or up a certified score minus three steps. The Midway YMCA in St. Paul, for example, regularly provides such uplift whenever I travel from the dressing room to the weight room. For

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“I hear an inner voice counting as I stride up or down.”

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me history conveys increased meaning every time I mount the first floor staircase (seventeen steps) in the Minnesota Historical Center. I find the thrill of books is increased whenever I make the ascent to the second floor (in three rises) in the Central Library in Minneapolis.

I have found this stepping up in the world to be an exportable experience as well. I have encountered more than one subway station in New York City with that Bakerian number of steps. You'll find one at 116th street near Columbia University and another at Lexington & 86th Street, to mention two passages from and to the lower depths. Once, while looking for a place to eat in Chicago near the river, I had the satisfaction of descending seventeen steps from Wabash Avenue on my way to a restaurant. I spent so much time verifying the number that my dinner companions had gone ahead; and I almost missed my meal at the Star of Siam. American tourists (of which I was one recently) can knowingly climb that same number of steps in the American Bookstore in Warsaw, Poland – only there, I'm told, the actual number (in Polish) is *siedemnaście schodow*.

But home is where the heart and feet are. Whenever I climb with my baritone horn into the choir loft of a local Lutheran church to play in a wind ensemble, I have the assurance of



**“I have become
committed
Watsonian, aware
of where I am and
where I am
going.”**



Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota



Landmark Center, St. Paul, Minnesota

climbing seventeen steps closer to heaven. This past season, while Christmas shopping, I discovered a flight of seventeen steps at one of the street level entrances to the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul. Saint Anthony Main and the Edina Movie theaters, after I purchase my ticket and climb to the appropriate theater, raise me up with that sweet seventeen underfoot. And when the next cinematic version of Sherlock Holmes arrives in town, I expect I will park my car in the Roseville Mall, walk past Panera, and ascend that magic number of steps in order to view the action-packed adventure at the AMC Theater.

That won't be the end, of course; I suspect I shall keep counting as I walk up, down, and through life. I have become committed Watsonian, aware of where I am and where I am going. Counting steps, I find, is one way to stay in touch with my inner Baker Street. As I step along through life, I intend to hold that Holmesian dictum in mind: to see and observe, always keeping an eye on where and in what I am stepping. Even when I am far away from home, I am rarely many steps away from Holmes.

~Bob Brusic



NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS 2010 ANNUAL DINNER

December, Second, Golf, and Club were the first four answers to the fill in the blank quiz that Julie McKuras constructed for the 2010 Norwegian Explorers Annual Meeting. As Julie warned us when the quiz was distributed, all of the answers had something to do with the evening and, in fact, they did provide a blueprint for the meeting. It was held on December 2 at the Minneapolis Golf Club, with members Wade and Mary Manthie as hosts. 60 Explorers gathered to enjoy each other's company, celebrate, conduct some required business, and learn a little more about the Canon.

The fifth quiz answer of "Prayer" referred to Bob Brusica's invocation. Bob did note that we may, however, be either invoking or provoking the divine. The next answers of Buffet and Toast described the progress of the evening. The British Buffet of tossed salad, shepherd's pie, Yorkshire pudding, pea salad, carrots, fish and chips, and berry trifle has become a well established tradition.

Ray Riethmeier began the toasts by toasting Watson, noting that Watson did not flatter himself in the stories as he could have done. The good doctor was that sounding board that Holmes and all of us need. Gary Peterson reminded us that Irene Adler was *The Woman* with not only the definite article but italicized. Other examples of *The Woman* are the Little Red Headed Girl for Charlie Brown and Miss Piggy for Kermit the Frog. Gary Thaden pointed out that Garry Peterson may be considered The Coroner because of his work on a case that was detailed in a recent StarTribune article.

Dick Sveum toasted the Ma'am - Mary Foley Doyle, Arthur Conan Doyle's mother. The Ma'am was responsible for keeping Holmes alive as she pressed her son to continue writing the stories. In support, Dick referred to the authorities of E. W. McDiarmid, our Sigerson, and Ronald Knox.

Mike McKuras noted that the second Mrs. Watson as very generous in her willingness to share her Husband with Holmes and that we do not know whether she was the second of three, four, or five. Truman Schwartz, in his toast to Holmes, noted that in our new connected culture privacy is almost dead. But even Holmes was

forced to disappear in an earlier time and take on the personas of Sigerson and a bee keeper. Nevertheless, the crimes found Holmes while he was trying to hide.

Our quiz had the unfinished "I determined to start in _____ for myself," the answer was Business, and we moved onto the business meeting. Mike McKuras gave the report of the nominating committee and disposed of the election very quickly. Gary Thaden was elected President, Tom Gottwalt was elected Vice-President, and Mike Eckman was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Tim Reich, John Bergquist, Robert Brusica, Timothy Johnson, and Richard Sveum were elected as board members at large. Past Presidents Pj Doyle, Paul Martin, Bruce Southworth, and Julie McKuras continue on the board.

Mike Eckman presented the financial report noting a healthy bank balance of \$11,000 and the fact that the Explorers had made substantial contributions to the Collections. While our modest dues does not allow us to accumulate a large surplus and we have made substantial contributions to the Collections, our conferences presented in conjunction with the University, have been a source of funds.

Tim Reich, the editor of *Explorations* and the 2010 Christmas Annual, presented the Sigerson Awards. (See the recipients below.)

SIGERSON AWARDS

- Poetry: Ruth Berman
- Quiz: Karen Murdock, ASH
- Artwork: Soren Eversoll
- Pastiche: John Ward
- Personal Narrative: Jerry Gale
- Musical Discovery: Bob Brusica
- Couragous Research: Mike Eckman
- Tribute to Women: Pj Doyle, ASH, BSI
- Heroic Article: Pat Accardo, BSI
- Contributions as Editor: John Bergquist, BSI

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"The quiz answers provided a blueprint for the meeting."

ANNUAL DINNER

(Continued from page 8)



“Our last three quiz answers served to indicate the main speaker for the evening.”



A limited number of 2010 Christmas Annuals are available for purchase. The cost is \$8.00 each (post paid).

To order: please send a check payable to *The Norwegian Explorers* with your order to:

Tim Reich
6809 Pillsbury Ave,
Richfield, MN 55423



Russell Merritt, BSI, presenting during the Annual Dinner.

A special Sigerson Award was given to John Bergquist who had started the Christmas Annual, edited the first eight of them, and retired this year to pass the editorship to Tim. The theme of the 2010 Christmas Annual was “Heroism, Courage, & Valor” in the Canon and a copy was distributed to each attendee. Dick Sveum also saw to it that each attendee received a copy of some excerpts from Holmes’s *Practical Handbook of Bee Culture* that were discovered by Laurie King.

Julie McKuras “stood up on the terrace” and remembered Pat Nelson. Pat had served on the board of the Friends of the Collections, was a retired English teacher, and a life long student. Surprisingly, given her temperament, she also worked at a bad bill collection agency. Pat enjoyed travel and supported the interests of her children and grandchildren.

Our last three quiz answers were Russell, Merit, and Irregular and served to indicate the main speaker for the evening: Russell Merritt, BSI. Russell is a semi-retired Professor of Film Studies at the University of California Berkley. He had intended to address the conference earlier this summer but suffered a broken leg in a hiking accident. He did provide us his talk for

the conference but wanted to visit Minnesota and the Collections so agreed to present a new talk at the Annual Meeting.

After some minor AV problems, Russell began by showing pictures from the first BSI dinner that he had attended fifty years ago. He identified many noted Sherlockians, including a young Peter Blau. Meeting with these Sherlockians, Russell quickly learned that there are just some Holmes stories that are not discussed. Foremost among these stories are those in *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes*. *The Case Book* was written in the 1920s about events in 1903. Why would a reader want to be in 1903 when he could go to other stories and experience the comforts of 1895. Even at the time the stories were published, Holmes was not the cover boy on American magazines that he once was and the stories were demoted to third or fourth place in the magazines’ table of contents. In England, however, the British continued to feature him on the cover of “The Strand.”

By 1944, Anthony Boucher argued that Watson did not write the stories in *The Case*

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ANNUAL DINNER

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Book. Others questioned whether the literary agent had shelved these inferior stories earlier and only produced them when the amount of money offered was too large to pass up.

It is true that the Case Book stories are quite different from the earlier ones. The stories lack the fairy tale quality of the preceding ones and do not have the old, comfortable, characters that we had become used to. There are no recurring characters in the stories and Watson's descriptions are repressed. The cases do not dovetail with each other and each in a world of its own. Not only do the stories lack a fairy tale quality, but they focus on decay, aging, decrepitude, disease, and disfiguration.

Russell opined that the author of the stories takes a new direction in an effort to keep the same principle characters but bring them into a new post World War I world. The stories are racier and more lurid. One of the factors that shaped the stories is the fact that the reading public had now seen Holmes on the stage and screen. Many had been introduced to Holmes by the stage and screen versions and not by reading the earlier stories. Their image of Holmes was different from someone who had only read the stories.

The attitude toward race in general and Steve Dixie in particular in 3GAB is based on that found in American writers of the period. It is clear from the dialog of the story that Steve is an Afro-American. The plot of VEIL reflects the popular circus stories of the period that featured beautiful but shallow performers, including the handsome strong man and the misunderstood clown. 3GAB is a typical Hollywood plot of the period with a femme fatale. CREE reminds us that at the time the stories were written there was an interest in the use of monkey glands to prolong life.

Russell noted that the stories are really grounded in the 1920s in which they were written. In the Q&A that followed, Paul Martin pointed out that STUD, the first Holmes story, has images of Mormons that were taken from contemporary sources. Thus, the fact that The Case Book reflects its times should not come as a surprise.



The contest photo - as submitted by Bob Brusic; and Ray Riethmeier's limerick (below) was one of the many witty captions/poems read aloud for all to enjoy.

Sherlock Holmes addressed the old coot
Who'd prepared by removing his boot
"If for apples you're bobbing
In the end you'll be sobbing
I assure you, the game's NOT a foot!"

In a couple of side comments, Russell noted the solemnity of the Annual Meeting crowd and thought wistfully of the old days of "cigarettes and booze." Also, considering the memorable characters of the Canon, why do we fail to toast Porky Shinwell Johnson?

After the presentation, the quiz was administered. Karen Murdock took first prize followed by John Bergquist, Ruth Berman, and Gary Peterson. Russell Merritt complained that he did not even get correct the questions with his own name as the answers.

The source of Bob Brusic's Holmes photo (pictured above) was quickly identified as "The Scarlet Claw." With Watson's feet in a tub, many of the captions and limericks also dealt with crushing grapes.

Tom Gottwald closed the evening with a reading of "When I Spend a Long Evening With Holmes."

~Mike Eckman



"Russell noted that the stories (from *The Case Book*) are really grounded in the 1920s in which they were written."

NEW YORK CITY BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

Early January found an intrepid group of Norwegian Explorers descending on New York for the annual birthday weekend. The Minneapolis-St. Paul based Explorers included Pj Doyle, Dick Sveum and Jennifer Olson, Tim Johnson, John and Inez Bergquist, Mike Miller, Mike McKuras and me. Tim Reich has asked me to provide the readers of *Explorations* with a very brief overview of the events that were held.

We were fortunate that we missed much of the bad weather that has plagued the East Coast this winter and we arrived between snow storms. We're all mostly creatures of habit, but there was a change this year. Instead of the usual lodgings at the Algonquin Hotel, many of us stayed at the lovely Yale Club. Greeting friends is one of the most pleasurable activities of the weekend and one that I look forward to all year so it was a gratifying to see a number of familiar faces in the lobby. For most of us, after checking into our respective hotels, the four day weekend began with a walk around the area and then moved on that evening to either the Distinguished Lecture series or dinner with friends. It's always a good start to a busy couple of days.

Friday is certainly the busiest day of the planned activities. As it has for years, Moran's Chelsea Restaurant was the site of the William Gillette Memorial Luncheon which is expertly organized by Susan Rice and Mickey Fromkin. After lunch we were entertained by the Friends of Bogie and with the presentation of the Jan Whimsy Award which is given for the *Serpentine Muse* article which best represents the spirit of the late Jan Stauber, a member of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes.

The Baker Street Irregulars annual dinner was held that evening at the Yale Club. I'm sure that many of the women in attendance that evening were glad to have the dinner held at the same place we were staying; it meant we didn't have to walk outside in high heels. After the cocktail hour and the presentation of *The Woman* honorific to Gail Postal, we moved upstairs to the dining room. Michael Whelan welcomed the Irregulars and guests to the annual dinner, and then recognized four Irregulars who have been members for over fifty years. They included George McCormack, Russell Merritt

(our speaker at our annual dinner this year), Art Levine, and Peter Blau who has been a long time member of the Norwegian Explorers as well as a speaker and guest at our conferences. Medals and Irregular shillings were handed out, toasts were given, and rituals were followed. The subject of the evening was Ronald Knox, as he was at our own conference this past summer.

Saturday began with a visit to the Vendor's Room. The Baker Street Irregulars sales table, organized by Michael Kean, featured two familiar faces. Norwegian Explorers Michael Miller and Michael McKuras ably worked at the table and helped customers with their purchases of the three new books published by the BSI this year, *Bohemian Souls*, *The Grand Game Volume One and Italy and Sherlock Holmes as well as past BSI publications*. (visit the website <http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com/itemsforsale/allitems.html#recent> for information on ordering these books.) I had the distinct pleasure of sitting at the Wessex Press table with my co-editor Susan Vizoskie and signing copies of our own *Sherlockian Heresies*. (<http://www.wessexpress.com/html/heresies.html> for ordering information).

The Baker Street Irregulars annual reception was held on Saturday afternoon at the New York City Bar Association. With the conclusion of the reception, some people began their journey home while others drifted off to dinners, plays and other individual activities.

On Sunday we took the opportunity to visit with friends and tour the New York Public Library exhibit "Three Faiths." The brochure indicated that one of the curators and advisors was the BSI's own George Fletcher. It was a wonderful ending to the weekend.

This year was a nice combination of something new—staying at the Yale Club—as well as something old—the lectures, dinners, luncheons, cocktail parties as well as the separately attended plays and museum visits which have become part of our own rituals. It's always a pleasure to see old and new friends at the various events. If you haven't been to the Birthday weekend, consider 2012 as your inaugural year.

~Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI



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BAKER STREET WEST DINNER

Thirty Norwegian Explorers and guests gathered at Brit's Pub in Minneapolis January 30, 2011 to celebrate the birthday of the Master. The event is known as "Baker Street West" to acknowledge that it held far west of New York City and often west of the Mississippi river. Its primary purpose is to provide an opportunity for the group to receive news of the annual New York City weekend's events which include the Baker Street Irregulars' Dinner.

Tom Gottwalt made the advance arrangements for the event and welcomed the attendees as they arrived. The group dined on typical English fare and enjoyed pints of various English ales, lagers and ciders mixed with some more typically American libations.

The conversations flowed easily; as there was a nice mix of newer people and long-time members getting to know each other. A table near me seemed to have a an energenic and passionate discussion on book collecting. (Not an uncommon subject for Sherlockians!)

After dinner, Gary Thaden coordinated a round of introductions and then introduced John Bergquist who recapped most of the weekend's events. John began with a description of the ASH Wednesday evening welcome dinner and followed that through other traditional events such as the Christopher Morley Walk, the Distinguished Speaker Lecture, the open house at Otto Penzler's Mysterious Bookshop, the William Gillette Memorial Luncheon, the Dealers' Room, the BSI Cocktail Reception and the Sunday ASH brunch. He recapped the events of the Irregulars' Dinner in more detail, including listing the newest BSI investitures, which included Peggy Perdue ("Violet Westbury"), the Toronto public librarian



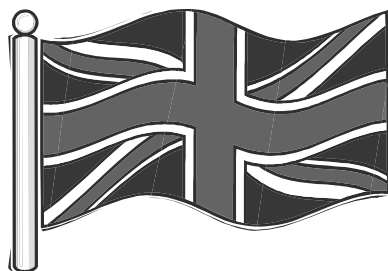
Brit's Pub, Minneapolis, Minnesota

whose company many of us enjoyed during last summer's "The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes" conference. Reportedly, one of the highlights at the Gaslight Gala dinner, which is held at the same time as the BSI dinner, was the entertainment provided by the Explorers' own Mike Miller and Garry Peterson in the form of their famous "Groaner Quiz." It was gratifying for the group to learn that Mike and Garry are sharing the "pain" of this quiz with the wider Sherlockian world and that we are no longer suffering alone.

After John's "Weekend Update," Gary Thaden addressed the group once more for some reminders of upcoming chapter events and other chapter developments.

After the formal remarks ended many Explorers remained for more conversation and good cheer before departing into the mild January night.

~Tom Gottwalt



"The group dined on typical English fare and enjoyed pints of various English ales, lagers and ciders..."

A NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS GAME NIGHT



Local members of the Norwegian Explorers engaged in "221B Baker Street."

**"the game we
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THE GREAT GAME

Under the deft organization of Soren Eversoll, a Norwegian Explorer Game Night was held on Wednesday, March 16, at the Roseville Library. A half dozen Sherlockians assembled to play "221B Baker Street: The Master Detective Game."

For those unfamiliar with it, "221B" is a game similar to CLUE, except that there are more detailed bits of evidence to be gathered, read, and deciphered during the course of the

game as players visit different locations throughout the board's various London settings.

By chance, the game we found ourselves playing involved a dastardly scheme by Professor Moriarty to steal some valuable jewelry using his associate, Moran, as a pawn. Modesty precludes me from disclosing the winner of the night's great game, but I'm sure we would all agree that a fun time was had by all.

~Ray Riethmeier



A LETTER FROM LONDON...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MR. HOLMES

I am living in London for six months, in a flat located behind the Theatre Royal Haymarket, one block from Trafalgar Square. 6 January being a putative birthday of Sherlock Holmes, I took in *The Complete Holmes* at Barons Court Theatre in west London. I felt like paying homage to someone who never existed but seems always to have been.

According to the published literature, Barons Court Theatre is located 'downstairs at The Curtain's Up pub,' a lovely pub on a quiet residential corner of west London just south of the congested crossroads that is Hammersmith. So I walked from my flat up to Piccadilly Circus, picking my way through the crowd gathered under the portico of the Theatre to shelter from the rain. Water gushed in Eros fountain at the Piccadilly entrance to the Underground and splashed in puddles in front of the Criterion Restaurant, significant to Sherlockians of course as it was there at the Criterion bar that Watson encountered 'young Stamford, who had been a dresser under (him) at Bart's' and who introduced Watson to Holmes.

The Piccadilly Line running west stops at Green Park (known as Dover Street in Holmes's day) then continues to Hyde Park Corner. To this point, the line runs under Piccadilly. At ground level on the north side would be Mayfair: upper upper class hotels, the non-existent 110 Piccadilly (the London address of Dorothy Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey), the buildings not originally grand hotels such as The Ritz the London homes of the wealthy; the playground of Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster. On the south side of Piccadilly, Green Park slopes down to The Mall and St. James's Park, Whitehall and Buckingham Palace. At Hyde Park Corner, the Wellington memorials are triumphant and unmistakable, but often overlooked is the Derwent Wood memorial to the World War I machine gun corps. Wood was a sculptor who became a leading force in the making of masks for those who suffered horrid facial

disfigurement in WWI, mostly from machine gun fire. These were early attempts at prosthetics and plastic surgery.

The line continues from Hyde Park Corner to Knightsbridge (Harrod's and the late and great Edwardian era Basil Street Hotel), thence to South Kensington whose above-ground station has been fought for. That is to say, it and its immediate neighbourhood have been preserved in their original states, lovely and warming to look at.

Next stop Gloucester Road, home of Rumpole of the Bailey and of Sherlockian significance as the location where Cadogan-West's body was dumped on top of the Underground car in *The Bruce-Partington Plans*. I think it's just north of the station, where the line curves toward the points and houses back up to an exposed cut in the Underground. And trains do sometimes stop here still, waiting for the switching of the points. On to Earl's Court and Barons Court and the Barons Court Theatre. The Piccadilly, District and Circle lines run together here and all these stops feature above-ground stations that date to the early Twentieth or late Nineteenth Century and which stand still in time and architecture.

Barons Court Theatre, I discovered, is not so much 'downstairs' as it is underneath The Curtain's Up pub. It's a black box of a theatre that is, in fact, in 'the cellars' of a building that may be centuries old. The ceiling is low, almost claustrophobically low. The brick walls and the ancient brick work pillars and arches are painted black. Four short rows of old movie theatre seats rise on three sides of an open space not much larger than twenty by twenty feet. The place smells musty and mouldy like a tomb, no doubt owing to the pub's subterranean loos and the general dank that seeps up out of London and the Thames. In short, it's creepy. The sort of place where Holmes might find something unspeakable.

(Continued on page 15)



"I felt like paying homage to someone who never existed but seems always to have been."

A LETTER FROM LONDON...

(Continued from page 14)



“...the creepiness
of the venue
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air.”

In a small box office inside the theatre sat a willowy young man, maybe twenty-four, thin blond hair parted in the middle and combed straight down over his ears. He wore a funereal grey vest and ill fitting tie and had an air of disengagement about him. He’s a ‘type,’ you understand, one of those outliers who dress not so much according to the style of an earlier period but according to their mind’s image of the style of an earlier period, as if by so dressing they make the period normative for everyone else, though they would deny it. It’s not a question of costume. They’re not acting though they often become actors.

The set was nothing but a yellowish green velvet curtain with a hint of malaria about it hanging on the rear brick wall and flowing over a small table next to which a folding chair was concealed under a black velvet throw. The boy from the ticket office took centre-stage, I thought to make an announcement but this was Robert Crichton, the actor who has been performing the entire Sherlock Holmes canon two a night since November. ‘What’sOnStage’ describes it as ‘one of the most extraordinary dramatic events in theatre history.’ I’d forgotten about the acute British sense of irony.

And so the play began, or perhaps better to say the performance. Well, no, not so much a performance as, well . . . I think the generic ‘show’ most apt for being least precise for what Crichton did was read *The Sussex Vampire* and *The Three Garridebs*.

A gesture here, at times an intonation, a gesture there, punctuated the reading which was pleasant enough, sincere enough, but the actor neither became the characters nor did the characters inhabit the actor. This stage is such an intimate yet troubling space - perfect for an adults only show! – that it cannot avoid becoming a character in any performance. And yet this silent, omnipresent character was ignored. As a result, the creepiness of the venue clung like a bad odour in the air. It became the guest at the party whom no one likes, whom everyone ignores, and whose presence is felt all the more strongly.

There’s no denying that the late Holmes adventures are often not particularly adventuresome in the telling. Nonetheless, *The Sussex Vampire* with its hot Latin woman and incestuous blood sucking would lend itself to the creepy Barons Court Theatre under-pub setting. Crichton had discarded the third wall when as Watson he spoke directly to the audience and he could have used that intimacy to play off the sexual over-and under-tones of the story. He didn’t. So in the end, this was not much more than an odd young man reading a Sherlock Holmes story in a very dank and darkly intimate setting as if he were sitting at home in Baker Street having invited you up to the flat for tea. And at no time did anyone mention Holmes’s birthday.

I often listen, late at night, to recordings of the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. They’re my book-at-bedtime and help me fall asleep. So the result was inevitable: by the middle of *The Three Garridebs* my eyelids were heavy and it was a tired, cold walk in the dark back along Barons Court Road to the Tube.

The narrow street curled among close houses some of them of Tudor wood and stucco construction. The dim street lamps gave off a gauzy haze and there, through the drizzle, down at a turning in the road, glowed Barons Court Station. I had not noticed it when I’d arrived as I’d quickly left it behind me, but now that I was walking toward it I could see that it, too, had been cleaned and restored. The original red sandstone building shone in the night and the glazed green tile work sparkled from inside the ticket hall.

The station opened just at the turn of the last century and but for the cars parked along the street it could well have been that December in 1905. It was the most Holmesian moment of the evening, walking in the mist and rain, feeling that someone who never existed might have seen, even used, Barons Court Station, as I was seeing it and using it now and thinking: Happy Birthday, Mr Holmes.

~Stephen Cribari



STUDY GROUP MEETING REVIEWS

The Adventure of the Norwood Builder

Discussion leader: Steve Miller

Date: November 20, 2010

Location: Roseville Library

Ten Norwegian Explorers met to discuss the first “regular” case reported by Watson after the incident at Reichenbach Falls. Steve Miller, our able leader, noted a subtle change in the relationship between the Master and his amanuensis. Watson, now sans practice and sans wife, has become a bit more of a quasi-colleague and is less in awe of Sherlock. Perhaps the Great Hiatus gave the good doctor a chance to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of his friend. And Holmes may have mellowed during his days with the head Llama of Lhasa or, more likely, his travels with other dour Norwegian Explorers. He even treats Lestrade with something approximating respect and seems to acknowledge that the Inspector might be correct in his conclusion that McFarlane is guilty of the murder of Oldacre. It may be, but your secretary pro tem finds it difficult to believe that SH would seriously entertain the notion that he could be wrong.

We considered the possibility that McFarlane might well be the “biggest dope” among Holmes’s many clients, falling for a scheme that approximates the latest e-mail opportunity from Nigeria. (But what about the guy who was hired to copy the encyclopedia?) We also wondered if the case against the naïve young solicitor was as strong as Lestrade believed or Sherlock feared it to be. In the absence of a corpse, a good barrister probably would have won an acquittal. And had CSI been involved, the charred remains would have been recognized as fraudulent in an hour (with commercial breaks). In deference to modern sophistication and skepticism, the Granada/Brett version of this story had Oldacre burning a bum, not a bunny.

We finished by speculating on the mood-swings of the Master, which are particularly evident in this case. Are his boredom, exhilaration, depression, and giddiness evidence of bi-polar disorder? Possibly, but we concluded that a 7% solution of cocaine was a more appropriate drug of choice than lithium carbonate. Had Holmes been calmed down with the latter, we might not have any stories to discuss.

The Solitary Cyclist

Discussion leader: Kristi Iverson

Date: January 22, 2011

Location: St. Anthony Park Library


A weather-resistant 14 members & guests braved near-zero temperatures to gather at the library. Nobody rode a bicycle to the meeting.

Kristi Iverson led the discussion by passing around Google maps images of the Farnham area, which is 28 miles from London. She said that contrary to what the reader might assume, “the solitary cyclist” is not Violet Smith but the mysterious man who is following her. Karen Ellery pointed out that, Violet is hardly ever “solitary” since the mysterious man is always following her. I added that Andy Peck solved this mystery of the cyclist with the story’s manuscript; the original title was “The Solitary Man,” so “the solitary cyclist” must be Bob Carruthers.

Several people speculated about the jail sentences for the guilty parties. Williamson got a jail term of 7 years and Woodley 10 years for “abduction and assault” of Violet. Yet, Carruthers, who actually shot somebody, probably got off with just a few months in prison. Steve Miller said crimes against chastity were taken very seriously at the time and Carruthers would have been seen by 12 male jurors as chivalrously “defending womankind” by his actions.

Soren Eversoll wondered what “Uncle Ralph” was doing in South Africa. Karen pointed out the opportunities to get rich quick in diamond or gold mining, but added there was a great deal of crime and violence in South Africa at the time. She wondered if Uncle Ralph, Carruthers, and Woodley might have been career criminals rather than fortune-seeking gold hunters. I protested that Carruthers seemed much more refined, kind and courteous than Woodley. Steve said the “good crook/bad crook” dichotomy was a cliché of crime literature and that the influence of a good woman had perhaps turned Carruthers “into the gentleman he always was” underneath his criminal veneer.

Kristi inquired why Holmes was “always in training” if he got very little exercise. This phenomenon remained unexplained, but since the story took place in 1895, Holmes, at 40 or 41, could still call upon his youthful vigor to give chase on foot to a horse-drawn dog-cart.



“Perhaps the Great Hiatus gave the good doctor a chance to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of his friend.”

~Truman Schwartz

~Karen Murdock, ASH

STUDY GROUP MEETING REVIEWS

The Priory School

Discussion leader: Steve Miller

Date: February 19, 2011

Location: Shoreview Library

With ten Explorers and two guests in attending, Steve Miller said that PRIO has one of the most dramatic entrances in the Canon - Dr. Thorneycroft Huxtable fainting upon his entrance to 221B Baker Street. When he asked about other dramatic entrances, we volunteered Steve Dixie in 3GAB, Alexander Holder in BERY, and several entrances of Holmes in disguise. Karen Ellery said the picture of Huxtable sprawled on the bearskin rug is an example of “how visually” Doyle writes. The scene is the more dramatic because of the contrast between the great solidity and respectability of the head of the Priory School and the low level (literally) to which he falls. And I also noted that many characters faint in the Canon and Huxtable did so from a combination of hunger and emotional stress.

Karen thought that Mycroft Holmes might have played a behind-the-scenes role in this story and that both Sherlock and Mycroft would wish to prevent a scandal in high society. She hinted darkly that Hayes might meet with an “accident” in jail before the case came up for trial. Gary said that the defendant could waive his right to a jury trial. Holmes assumes that the Duke of Holderness could pay Hayes (or his wife) enough money to buy their silence.

Yale Stenzler, a visitor from Watson’s Tin Box of Maryland, said that PRIO was not the only time in the Canon that Holmes plays both judge and jury in the case, citing also DEVI and ABBE.

John Kenyon said that PRIO was not fair to the reader because the reader could not solve the case on his own; this required the inside information Holmes has about the case. Steve pointed out that the “fair” tradition in detective fiction did not develop until after the Sherlock Holmes stories were written.

A question was raised about how Holmes came to find the right culprit at The Fighting Cock Inn so quickly. The buildings along the road near the inn included a church and “a few cottages” comprising “a low, gray village which lay in front of us and marked the position of the Chesterfield high road.” How did Holmes and Watson come so quickly to hone in on “the

forbidding and squalid inn, with the sign of a game-cock above the door?” One suggestion was Watson left out the other places they looked in the village before they stumbled upon the inn.

It was thought that perhaps the “cow shoes” for horses were upon the premises of The Fighting Cock Inn when Holmes and Watson arrived and that Hayes was suspicious of their snooping about because he was afraid they would find them.

Steve then asked how bad the Duke of Holderness’s family was on a scale of dysfunctional Canonical families. Some Explorers thought the families in SPEC and IDEN were worse, but a general agreement was that the Duke’s family rated about 90% on a dysfunctional scale.

I wondered about “Edith, daughter of Sir Charles Appledore,” how she came to marry a Duke, and that Edith was probably “to the manor born” and came from a very wealthy family herself (with possibly a chateau in the south of France). Karen thought that Edith was probably more spirited than the woman with whom the Duke fathered James Wilder.

Steve provided the legal opinion that, in this case, the Duke is “accessory after the fact” of Heidegger’s murder—and so is Sherlock Holmes. Wilder is an accessory *before* the fact. John Bergquist, quoting Jack Tracy, said that the crime was “misprision of felony” and Steve added that all these charges fall into the general category of “obstruction of justice.” In Wilder’s defense, Yale said that murder was “way beyond what Wilder signed on for.”

One of my favorite lines in the story come when Holmes sees an unfamiliar bicycle track on the moor. He contemplates the possibilities for a while, then said, “*It is, of course, possible that a cunning man might change the tyres of his bicycle in order to leave unfamiliar tracks. A criminal who was capable of such a thought is a man whom I should be proud to do business with.*”

I also admired the ruggedness of the bicycles in this story. Though not designed to go “off road” they held up well across rugged rocky moors and through brooks and swamps. Apparently, they were early prototypes of what was to become, in the late 20th century, the “mountain bike.”

~Karen Murdock, ASH



“A question was raised about how Holmes came to find the right culprit at The Fighting Cock Inn so quickly.”



Sidney Paget,
The Strand Magazine,
February 1904

The Norwegian Explorers

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