



THE NORWEGIAN EXPLORERS
OF MINNESOTA, INC.



EXPLORATIONS

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"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 of your friend."

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Editor's Desk

I am at the age where I go to more funerals than weddings. This year, there was one wedding, that of a niece, and two funerals, one for the father of a good friend and the other, shortly before Thanksgiving, of my wife's uncle. All of these give one pause for thought as we meet these milestones of life. In a similar manner, there are milestones within the Explorer's group. We experienced the deaths of two members and had an event as exciting to me as a wedding.

On August 20, Dick Caplan of Iowa City, Iowa, passed away. He was an active member, contributing to past Christmas Annuals and attending various Explorers' functions. We are saddened by his passing. Bill Goodrich, BSI, of Winnetka, Illinois, was an honorary member of the Explorers

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A Word from the President

BY TOM GOTTWALT

It has been a wonderful year for the Norwegian Explorers. We started off in January with several members attending the BSI Dinner and related New York festivities. They returned to Minnesota to tell us of their adventures at the "Baker Street West" gathering held at Fitzgerald's on Cathedral Hill. It was attended by 33 Explorers and guests. There have been several Sherlockian plays or movies throughout the state that members attended, including an April presentation of an Edith Meiser play by the "Red-Throated League."

August saw us hosting the highly successful triennial conference, which included another performance by the Red-Throated League and a brilliant exhibition at the Elmer L. Andersen library. We had a great number of positive comments and people expressing how they are looking forward to our next conference in 2022.

We continue with the popular Study Group sessions every month except July. Thanks to our Study Group leaders Kristi Iverson, Mary Loving, Steve Miller, and Steve Schier.

Regarding our recent Annual Dinner, I would like to express our appreciation to Nicholas Meyer who gave a wonderful presentation and was a fun guest. Thanks also to Devin Abraham of Once Upon A Crime bookstore and members and guests who traveled from Iowa City, Omaha, Madison, and elsewhere. You all helped make for a wonderful evening.

It is a great time to be a Sherlockian, and we are blessed to have an active and thriving organization. 🐾

A Toast to Mrs. Hudson

BY TIMOTHY REICH

[This toast was delivered by Tim Reich on December 7, 2017, during the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota Annual Dinner. It was good enough that it deserves publication, even if somewhat delayed.]



hen we raise our drinks during a toast we often don't give much thought to the liquid in our glass. But tonight, as we honor Mrs. Hudson, let's consider what liquid she might have had in her glass.

We know beer was popular in Victorian London and in the residence at 221B. In "The Scandal in Bohemia" Holmes rings for some cold beef and a glass of beer. And in *The Sign of Four*, Mrs. Hudson ventured to say something about cooling medicine for Holmes. Could that "cooling" medicine actually have been beer as well? I think so!

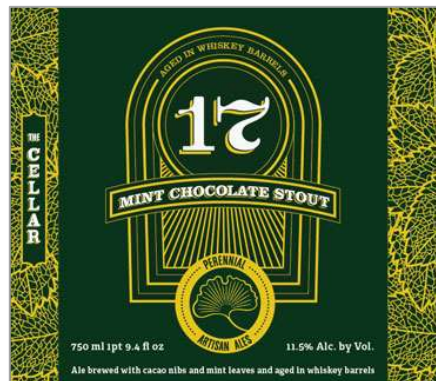
Now, one thing some of us beer geeks will do is have a beer with a name appropriate for a specific occasion. An example of this occurred in August 2017 when I traveled with family and friends to witness the total solar eclipse. To celebrate the occasion, I brought two beers: a bottle of "Darkness" by Surly Brewing (Minneapolis, MN), and a can of "Sip of Sunshine" by Lawson's Finest Liquids (Waitsfield, VT).

And before we continue, please allow me to stretch the reality of Victorian London a little and make this one assumption: Let's assume that when Mrs. Hudson reaches into her cupboard for a brew, she has the ability to magically pull out any beer that has ever existed — including beers that have recently been available in contemporary America. With that premise in place, let's discover what she might have selected.

Of course, there are easy examples of beers Mrs. Hudson might have consumed on any given day, such as "Mrs. Hudson" brewed by Redbeard Brewing (Staunton, VA), "The Peculiar Mr. Holmes" by Saints Row Brewing (Rockville, MD), or even the English mild ale "221B Baker Street" by The Tap Brewery (Bloomington, IN). But let's look deeper into her life and explore the occasions when she might have picked a beer specific to an event.

There was the time in *The Sign of Four*, when Mrs. Hudson raised her voice in a wail of expostulation and dismay as the dozen Baker Street Irregulars rushed in and invaded 221B Baker Street. After all that excitement, she might have slouched

back in her chair and popped the cap off "17" by Perennial Artisan Ales (St. Louis, MO) in a sarcastic salute to each of the steps she had to clean after the soiling from the swift pattering of naked feet of the dirty



and ragged street urchins. Or maybe Mrs. Hudson blew the suds off her frosty mug and drank "The Racket" by Taft's Brewing (Cincinnati, OH) after she survived the loud ringing of the bell and the tumultuous entry and clattering high voices. And



yet, maybe she took a different approach and, in honor of Sherlock's unofficial force, she selected an ale by Broken Goblet Brewing (Bristol, PA) named "Irregulars Coffee Cream Ale" and cheered them with her glass

held high as they buzzed back down from the first-floor flat and out onto the street.

In "The Empty House," we know that Mrs. Hudson stayed up late into the night and sneaked over every quarter of an hour to adjust the wax bust of Holmes that cast a shadow on the sitting room window shade. Eventually she heard the tinkle of broken glass as Colonel Moran's bullet whizzed into the room and passed through the wax head. That bullet was fired from an air-gun of tremendous power, and even though it flattened to the wall and fell to the carpet, it could very well have ricocheted off a hard surface such as the fireplace mantle or a gasogene — in fact, it could have even struck Mrs. Hudson. She could have been killed! Surely, Mrs. Hudson needed some of her cooling medicine to calm her nerves after she considered that possibility. She might have slammed a pint of "Bust Head" by Old Bust Head Brewing (Vint Hill, VA) or maybe "Decoy" by Bluejacket Brewing (Washington, D.C.); but if you consider

that she just spent hours [...yes, hours!] crawling back and forth to the dummy to reach up and alter its position, I believe it was surely the beer brewed by Summit City Brewerks (Fort Wayne, IN) that



she reached for with the name "Bloody Knees."

And during Dr. Watson's introduction to "The Dying Detective," he refers to Mrs. Hudson as the long-suffering landlady of Sherlock Holmes. We saw her genuinely concerned for Holmes's well-being when she disobeyed his masterful commands and went to fetch Watson's help. Later, after learning of Sherlock's 3-day ruse of feigned illness and the emotional toll she experienced while tending to him, she might very well have opened "In The Name of Suffering" by 3 Floyds Brewing (Munster, IN) or even "My Suffering is Your Nourishment?" by Moustache Brewing (Riverhead, NY); and yet she just simply may have rolled her eyes and found comfort in "Suffering Soul" by TRVE Brewing (Denver, CO).



Let's conclude our toast by thinking about Mrs. Hudson very late in her time on Baker Street — after all the events and drama over the many years. When she thinks of everything that she has put up with regarding Holmes and his behavior, what beer might she reach for in a quiet reflective moment such as that? Well, I've found it! It's a rye beer by MacLeod Brewing (Van Nuys, CA) by the name of "The Drunken Landlady."

Let's all raise our glasses to Mrs. Hudson holding her own glass of "The Drunken Landlady!" Cheers! 🍷

The Explorers' 2019 Triennial Conference — A Summary

BY CHARLES PREPOLEC

From the "Bootmakers' Diary" section of the Fall 2019 issue of Canadian Holmes. Reprinted by the kind permission of Charles Prepolec and Mark Alberstat.

Thursday, August 8 through Sunday, August 11, 2019 — Approximately 150 Sherlockians gathered at The Graduate Hotel in Minneapolis for the latest triennial conference of The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota, and the University of Minnesota Libraries. The theme this time was "Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences," with an accompanying exhibit at the nearby Elmer L. Andersen Library, including the Allen Mackler Sherlock Holmes sitting room re-creation. Canadians and Bootmakers were well-represented with Kris and Charles Prepolec, Cliff and Doris Goldfarb, Donnie Zaldin, Barbara Rusch, Brian Collins, Constantine Kaoukakis, Stephanie Thomas, Ed Van der Flaes, Peggy Perdue and James Trepanier all in attendance.

Events kicked off with a pre-conference reception on the Thursday evening, after which 24 Sherlockians, led by Monica Schmidt, enjoyed drinks on a Ferris wheel at Betty Danger's Country Club, a Minneapolis bar. Programming began in earnest on Friday, with registration at 11:00 A.M. and presentations beginning at 1:30 P.M. with Ross Davies delivering "Dark Places in 'The Empty House,'" followed by Regina Stinson on "Deceptions, Disguises and Dark Secrets," David Harnois on "Boswell's Journey to the Dark, Wicked and Strange" and the day closing with the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Meeting and an amusing improv by playwright Jeffrey Hatcher and members of the audience.

Saturday's presentations began at 9:00 A.M. with Alan Rettig's "A Scandal in Manhattan" illuminating a Sherlockian connection to the game show scandals on the 1950s, Barbara Rusch's insightful look at "The Creeping Man and Other Dark Tales of the Canon," and Dan Polvere's "Baritsu to a T: The Japanese Art of Wrestling" before a boxed-lunch break. The afternoon sessions

began with Dr. Carlina de a Cova's revealing presentation "A Most Worthy Colleague in Anthropology," examining ACD's knowledge of anthropology, followed by Cheryll Fong on "Minneapolis and the Farewell Tour: William Gillette and the Metropolitan Opera House," and closing with Day Payton taking a good look at "Victorian Attitudes Toward America" in the Canon. A banquet was held that evening with a string of toasts, including one from [Bootmaker] Peggy Perdue, and a deceptively clever and timely address from Bill Mason, "Once More Unto the Breech, Dear Friends, Once More: The Daily Battle for Sherlock Holmes," looking at the diverse, and sometimes conflicting, nature of our hobby.

Sunday's presentations began with Shannon Carlisle's "Whimsical Little Incidents and the Three Pipe Problem in a Sherlockian Themed Classroom," then a three-member panel, consisting of Judy Margolin, Mike McKuras, and Barbara Shaw, providing insight into the lives of family members living with Sherlockians. The weekend closed with a radio-play style performance by the Red-Throated League of Edith Meiser's "The Adventure of the Hound of the Baskervilles, Part VI."



My Conference Experience

BY JEFF FALKINGHAM



I met Peter Blau! Of all the amazing things (and there were many) that I experienced at my first Holmes conference in August, that's one that stands out: I met Peter Blau!

I'd first heard of Mr. Blau some 15-plus years ago. Here's the story: Shortly after the publication of my first pastiche, I received a phone call in the middle of the night.

"Is this Jeff Falkingham, author of *Sherlock Holmes and the County Courthouse Caper*?" the voice on the phone asked. Yes, I confirmed. "This is Peter Blau." Again, I replied affirmatively — this time with a question mark at the end. (At the time, I'd never heard of him.) Undaunted, he continued, "Can you mail me a complimentary copy of your book?" New to the book business, I was not (yet) in the habit of doing such a thing — and politely told him so.

"It could be to your advantage," he suggested. I didn't see how. But eager to get back to sleep, I took his name and address, telling him I'd think about it in the morning. Of course, once I'd had a chance to Google his name, I immediately mailed him a copy of my book! That set in motion a chain of events that led to me actually meeting the man himself this summer.

To make a long story short: After Mr. Blau mentioned my pastiche in his *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, I heard from Joel Senter. He not only offered to stock my book in his *Classic Specialties* shop (and promote it in his monthly e-newsletter); he also put me in touch with Roger Johnson and Jean Upton, who featured me in *The District Messenger* ("Newsletter of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London").

Suddenly, I was hearing from Sherlockians around the world! Many challenged (inspired) me to write a sequel, which I eventually did. That led to the launch of my Book Talks program, which caught the attention of Phil Bergem, who urged me



Photo by Mark Engebretson, Director of Communications for the University Libraries.

to join the Norwegian Explorers, who invited me to have a dealer's table at their conference — where I finally met Peter Blau!



Jeff Falkingham, Amanda Downs, and Peter Blau
Photo by Rob Nunn

I should mention that Mr. Blau is not the *only* person I had the pleasure of meeting at the conference in August. Far from it! To begin with, my dealer's table was located between those of Rob Nunn and Howard Ostrom. Though I had not met either of these gentlemen before, I had corresponded with both of them. Rob had approved my book(s) for the Beacon Society's Booklist for young readers, and also assigned Derrick Belanger to submit a review to *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere*. Howard had heard of my "Elementary, My Dear Watson!" multimedia presentation, and requested further details on the volunteers who had played Holmes. I soon found that I shared a common interest with each of them: Rob and I in recruiting young fans to Sherlock; Howard and I in the many actors who'd portrayed Holmes on stage and in film.

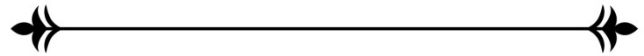
Dozens of other Sherlockians stopped by my table to visit. All were delightful! I won't try to name them all, for fear of leaving someone out. Several have since become Facebook Friends, whose posts I follow with great interest. Many bought copies of my new book. Jeffrey Hatcher, Amanda Downs Champlin, and Shannon Carlisle are among the 'stars' for whom I was thrilled to sign copies!

Whether they purchased my wares or not, everyone with whom I spoke seemed genuinely interested in my own take on Holmes, and were respectful of my opinion, whether it matched

theirs or not. (It was the same attitude I'd seen from Mr. Blau, in our occasional exchanges of emails after our first brief telephone talk.) *All* conversations were warm and welcoming!

Since I know they're covered in detail elsewhere in this newsletter, I'll refrain from talking about the on-stage presentations — other than to say that they were all informative and entertaining. It never ceases to amaze me that Sherlock Holmes can be "investigated" from so many different angles! There was never a dull moment in this well-planned event. I do have to give special mention to The Red-Throated League, whose performance I particularly enjoyed, since many of the cast members are regulars in my monthly Sherlock Holmes study group!

In conclusion, I enjoyed every minute of the "Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences" conference. From the very first moment to the bittersweet last, I felt *welcomed* into this fabulous, fascinating family — AND: I met Peter Blau! 🐾



Study Group Discussion: *The Dancing Men*

BY KAREN MURDOCK



dozen Explorers met in the basement of the Saint Anthony Park library on Saturday, September 21. Steve Miller led the group in a discussion of "The Adventure of the Dancing Men."

Steve M. showed some of his recent book acquisitions including *The Mile End Murder: The Case Conan Doyle Couldn't Solve*. Beverly Proud showed a copy of the semaphore alphabet (Mary Loving said when she was a signalman in the Navy, they still learned this code). Karen Murdock passed out a list of notable figures of speech in DANC, magnets featuring Cumberbatch and Freeman in Victorian garb, a bottle of "Victoria" beer (brewed in Mexico), and copies of her articles, "An Odd Place for a Tool Shed and other architectural anomalies of Ridling Thorpe Manor" and "'God Knows I am Sorry for It': Pious Criminals in the Canon." Karen Ellery showed a Dancing Men font. Amanda Champlin showed a stamp of Sherlock Holmes with a quote from SIGN which she found on Etsy. Mary Loving showed a charm bracelet of Basil Rathbone movie posters, which she bought

from Regina Stinson at the conference here in August. Mary also showed off two Christmas ornaments, a Great Mouse detective pin and lithograph, two Howard Ostrom books on the films of Sherlock Holmes, and a book, *The Night Side of London*, which has a chapter about London clubs. (Watson could have belonged to clubs for doctors, or authors, or military men, or all of these.)

Steve M. said that DANC is “one of many ‘lost love’ stories” in the Sherlock Holmes Canon (other examples are CROO, ABBE, REDC, ILLU, and NOBL). DANC has a creepier edge than many stories, however, and Abe Slaney ends up stalking his lost love, Elsie.

Steve Schier asked what the difference in age was between Hilton and Elsie. (In the Jeremy Brett version of this tale, there is a big age difference between the two.) Ages are not mentioned in the Canon, but Elsie must be at least 18 or 21 in order to have access to her own money. Abe Slaney and Elsie might be about the same age and have grown up together.

Karen M. pointed out that in the other tale in which Holmes’s client is murdered, “The Five Orange Pips,” Holmes can receive some of the blame; knowing what he (Holmes) knew about the KKK, Holmes should never have allowed John Openshaw to walk the streets without protection. However, in DANC, the murder takes place in Norfolk, and Holmes and Watson take the soonest train they can grab from London that will get them to East Anglia — but it arrives too late to save the life of Hilton Cubitt.

Karen E. said one thing she really likes about DANC is the interactions between Holmes and Watson — “they’re arguing like an old married couple.” Near the end of the story, Holmes actually apologizes to Watson for keeping him in the dark (“As to you, friend Watson, I owe you every atonement for having allowed your natural curiosity to remain so long unsatisfied.”) Steve S. said that

several of the story elements enhance the drama and Holmes is “at the top of his form.” Curt Proud said there was a revolver manufactured at the time that was semi-automatic.

Mary L. said she had been fascinated by codes ever since she was a kid and got a Scholastic Books book on codes and secret writing. Kristi said that Enigma machines were still in use when she was in the military in the early 1980s.

Steve S. asked why Slaney was not convicted of murder. He shot in self-defense because Cubitt shot at him. However, Steve M. pointed out that Slaney was a menacing trespasser who had sent threatening messages to the wife in the house. Karen E. said that Dorothy Sayers had Lord Peter Wimsey break a code in the novel *Have His Carcase*. Mary L. said that, to Slaney, a good way to

get ahead in the gang was to marry the boss’s daughter.

Karen M. wondered if “Elsie” was the name the woman was christened with or if this was a nickname for something else. Ellen? Eleanor? Steve S. looked this up on his smartphone and said that Elsie started out as a nickname for the Scottish name Elspeth. The name hit its high point of popularity in the United States in 1898. The fact that the Borden cow in the 1920s was named Elsie dampened enthusiasm to give one’s human child this name, however, and one seldom encounters it today.

Mary L. said the tragedy could have been prevented Elsie had been honest with her husband. Steve M. said she was ashamed of her background because “she’s the daughter of the Godfather.”

Karen M. wondered what would have happened if Hilton Cubitt had followed his own course:

“My own inclination is to put half a dozen of my farm lads in the shrubbery, and when this fellow comes again to give him such a hiding that he will leave us in peace for the future.”




Steve M. replied, "I see many dead bodies" strewn about the shrubbery if that course had been followed, because Abe Slaney was always well armed and would have had no hesitation in shooting anyone who stood between him and Elsie.

Karen M. said that one of Larry Millett's novels, *The Disappearance of Sherlock Holmes*, is a follow-up to DANC. In Millett's novel, Abe Slaney escapes from prison, kidnaps Elsie, and drags her off to New York then Chicago. Holmes and Watson both follow, and Shadwell Rafferty gets mixed up in things also. Kristi Iverson said she would have liked a happier ending for Elsie: perhaps she could find that she was pregnant at the time her husband was killed and she could then raise her son at the manor house.

Karen M. wondered about Abe Slaney's religious background. He says, of Elsie, "I may have threatened her — God forgive me! — but I would not have touched a hair of her pretty head." He also quotes from the Book of Amos ("Prepare to meet thy God"). Mary L. said Bible lessons were taught in public school at the time. She also looked online and found an old hymn entitled "Prepare to Meet Thy God," which Slaney might have heard played by a Salvation Army band on the streets of Chicago.

Steve S. found a contemporary rock band named Baritsu which has recorded many songs with Sherlockian titles, including "Am Here Abe Slaney" and "The Great Hiatus."

Most Explorers rated the story very highly. Kit Gordon liked the interesting villain. Jeff Falkingham liked the snappy dialogue and how Holmes manages to solve two mysteries at once. 

Cold and Nearly Frozen, but Thankfully Alive!

BY REV. ROBERT BRUSIC



While excavating a pile of long dormant magazines in my study recently, I came upon an old copy of *McClure's Magazine* dated March 1894. Wondering where that treasure had come from, I idly thumbed through scores of Victorian advertisements. They had a kind of dated charm which said something about what people of that time bought and used, like *Syrup of Figs*. Demurely, a well-proportioned

lady could be seen daintily sipping a small wine glass of the effusion, while the accompanying text promised: "Syrup of Figs effectually cleanses the system; it has given satisfaction to millions because it acts on the Kidneys, Liver and Bowels without weakening them...." All that, we are assured, for only 50 cent and \$1.00 bottles.



Settling down in an easy chair with a glass of sherry (there was no Syrup of Figs in my wine cabinet), I perused the contents of the newly uncovered *McClure's*. To my intense interest I discovered an illustrated eight-page article by Arthur Conan Doyle entitled "The Glamour of the Arctic." I am aware that Doylean aficionados are well acquainted with the young doctor's whale-hunting adventure in the Arctic, but it was new territory for me.

In 1887 the twenty-six-year-old Doyle, itching for adventure, signed on as ship's doctor for seven months. In the article he described the trip as dangerous but glamorous. He gave a good account of the perils of whale hunting and the economics of the whale industry. In detail he depicted the rigors of the hunt, the fearless crew, and the perils of negotiating the gnarled, rugged, and treacherous walls of ice as the ship traveled north. I was thrilled to learn about this aspect of Doyle who, it turns out, was much more than the creator of Holmes, Watson, and 221B Baker Street. The "Glamour of the Arctic" opened a door and I wanted to know more about this frozen expedition.

Happily, my bookshelf also contained a copy of Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales*. And beginning on page 37 of this excellent biography of Arthur Conan Doyle, Stashower gives an account of this Arctic adventure with a surprising twist. Doyle pulled his weight and even became adept at hopping from one ice floe to another in pursuit of

seals. On one fateful occasion, however, as he was leaning over a dead seal, Doyle thoughtlessly stepped on the ice. He misstepped, slipped, and fell into the freezing arctic water, an act that could readily lead to a frozen death.

Stashower describes how Doyle tried mightily but vainly to extricate himself from his deadly situation, but he kept slipping back. After several thrashing but fruitless attempts to pull himself back onto the ice, in the words of Stashower, he (Doyle) “remembered the seal he had been skinning. With a desperate effort ... he managed to grab hold of the dead animal’s hind flipper. Using the seal as leverage, he began hauling himself out of the water.... It was a kind of nightmare tug-of-war with Conan Doyle trying to ease himself over the rim before the animal came crashing down on top of him” (38).

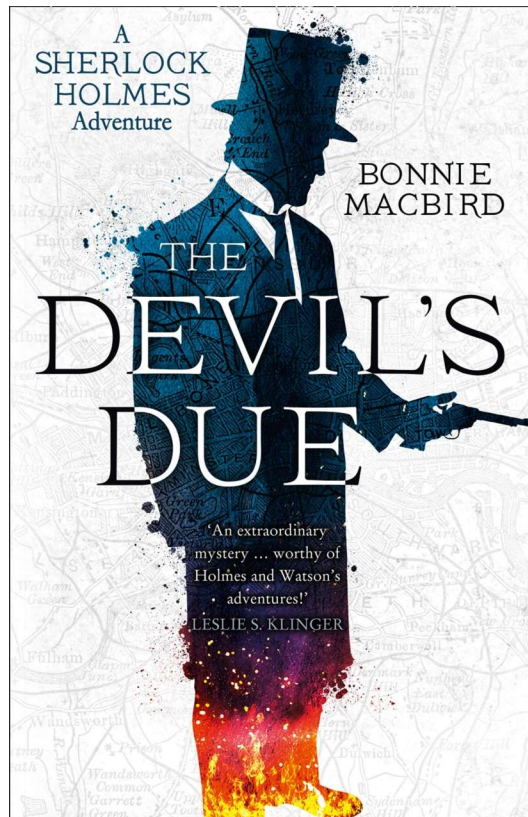
Whew! Fortunately, the thrashing ship’s doctor, with an unexpected assist from a dead seal, made it back to the ice floe and the ship, wet and half frozen, but alive. And, as we all know, Doyle’s life story went on. In gratitude, let us raise a tumbler of Syrup of Figs and never forget that if it weren’t for a dead seal fortuitously lying on the ice, there would be no Sherlock Holmes, no Dr. Watson, and no Norwegian Explorers. 🐻

The opening line of the book reads: “London could be heaven; London could be hell.” MacBird takes the reader along as we learn that it’s not just the physical aspects of the city that run the gamut of heaven to hell, but the people as well. As the story begins, the lovely and intelligent Mrs. Watson encourages the good doctor to visit his friend Holmes as she travels to the Cotswolds. Holmes relates a recent crime to his former flatmate, and it doesn’t take long before the cozy setting of 221B Baker Street is invaded by the first of the villains of the story. The action moves quickly as Holmes and Watson take a “ramble in Hyde Park.” It proves to be more than a walk in the park as we’re introduced to, using a phrase we hear all too often now, a journalist who specializes in fake news and the successful smearing of Holmes’s reputation, going so far as to call him the devil. London readers begin not only to doubt him

but to lose respect for him as well. As if the newspaper writer isn’t bad enough, we soon learn that new Metropolitan Police Chief Commissioner Titus Billings will certainly aggravate any situation with his loathsome, biased anti-immigrant views and antipathy toward Holmes. We’ve got an interesting mixture of familiar and new characters to explore the recent suicides that have inexplicably plagued London.

There are additional elements which complicate the story, but none are included without good reason. French anarchists, a new young lady worthy of comparison to Wiggins, secret organizations, Mycroft Holmes, a school for young ladies, and a complicated murder scheme all serve to drive the narrative. Throughout the story the reader is put in the position of questioning what the truth is behind each character and death. Are they good or evil? Is it murder or suicide?

MacBird excels in leading us through the streets of the Victorian metropolis, in itself a character. She’s adept at describing the heavenly parts and portrays the grim reality of the less-than-fashionable areas of the great city. One can envi-



A review of *The Devil's Due* by Bonnie MacBird

BY JULIE MCKURAS

It’s always a pleasure to receive a new book. The pleasure greatly increases when I know the author and her commitment to keeping to the spirit of the Canon. *The Devil’s Due* is the third of MacBird’s books and I was anxious to read it having read and enjoyed the first two in the series, *Art in the Blood* and *Unquiet Spirits: Whisky, Ghosts, Murder*.

sion the action in fog, with grime and odors. Evil lurks throughout and is found in some very surprising places. Throughout it all, Holmes and Watson depend upon each other.

What is amazing is how well this volume portrays the events of 1890 and subtly reminds the reader that the same problems and attitudes exist today. The reader never feels that MacBird is trying too hard to draw a parallel between those Victorian years and today.

After reading this book, sometimes late into the night, I was struck by something Raymond Chandler wrote in his essay “The Simple Art of Murder” about the detective story:

Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. He is the hero; he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor — by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world.

Bonnie MacBird has portrayed just such a man, and she doesn’t stray from the Canon we all love. I would encourage you to read *The Devil’s Due*. I enjoyed it so much that at times, I forgot I was reading a book written by a friend. That is just how much the author caught the spirit of Holmes and Watson. I’m already looking forward to her next book. 🐾

Tim Johnson at the Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium

BY PHILLIP BERGEM

The Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium was held at the University Place Hotel and Conference Center in Portland, Oregon, on October 12th and 13th. Two Explorers, Julie McKuras and Tim Johnson, attended the symposium and gave presentations. I’ll mention Julie later on, but would like to focus here on Tim’s presentation.

The website www.leftcoastsherlock.com/2019-symposium lists the various people who spoke, and titles and a synopsis of their talks. On Sunday, Tim’s presentation was “‘Hum’ — Reflections on a Sherlockian World, Inspired by Poetry,

Roses, and Bees,” with a free-verse poem of his own inspired by the poem “Hum” by Mary Oliver. I wanted to highlight this presentation not only to identify what Explorers get up to, but because of the response it evoked. Tim received a standing ovation from the hundred-plus attendees and the Twitterverse was “ringing with his name,” highlighting what a wonderful presentation it was. In addition, Brad Keefauver blogged about it on [sherlockpeoria.blogspot.com / 2019 / 10 / left-coast-sherlockian-symposium-more.html](http://sherlockpeoria.blogspot.com/2019/10/left-coast-sherlockian-symposium-more.html).

By the grace of the Internet, you can follow along as I did. Tim has the text of his presentation on his own blog, “Special & Rare on a Stick” ([umbookworm.blogspot.com / 2019 / 10 / hum-reflections-on-sherlockian-world.html](http://umbookworm.blogspot.com/2019/10/hum-reflections-on-sherlockian-world.html)). Reading it you see what we have heard from Tim over the years. As he put it in his talk, “I am a ‘big tent’ Sherlockian. There’s plenty of room in the tent for everyone.” Essentially, the Sherlockian world is large and there is no need to exclude people because of the way they came to the Canon, or the way that they choose to enjoy the writings, or the movies, or the television shows. We can be, and should be, welcoming to all.

In addition to reading, we are fortunate to be able to hear Tim’s words as given. @211bCrow recorded the presentation and they gave permission (as did Tim) for the Watsonian Weekly to include it as a podcast. This can be found at [watsonianweekly.libsyn.com / watsonian-weekly-special-hum-reflections-on-a-sherlockian-world](http://watsonianweekly.libsyn.com/watsonian-weekly-special-hum-reflections-on-a-sherlockian-world). It is well worth the listen, even with the limited sound quality. (It was not originally intended for larger distribution.) It gives me further appreciation for Tim as a person, as the Curator of Special Collections & Rare Books and the E. W. McDiarmid Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections for the University of Minnesota Libraries, and as a fellow Explorer. 🐾

A Review of The Missing Mr. Moonstone by Peter Tong

BY REV. ROBERT BRUSIC


Botswana has Precious Ramotswe; the United States has Jessica Fletcher. And now, according to the notice on the cover of *The Missing Mr. Moonstone*, England has “The first Female Private Detective.”

That mantle rests on the sturdy shoulders of Mrs. Hudson who, following the presumed demise of Sherlock Holmes, assumes the role of Detective Lady of Baker Street. In the tradition of loyal sidekick and friend, the role of assistant detective is assumed by Fanny-Annie Grubbins, a loyal and personable street urchin.

This pair of self-appointed detectives, of course, echo the roles of Holmes and Watson. However, the book's tongue-in-cheek literary style more reflects the antics of Abbott and Costello. The humor derives from Fanny-Annie's street-wise upbringing and her ability to say and do the unexpected.

The "detectivist" duo manage to get a client. A weepy Mrs. Moonstone reports that her husband and all her jewelry have gone missing. Oh, where have they gone? Mrs. Hudson promptly sets aside her philanthropic duties: she regularly bakes ten dozen pork pies and stitches together fifty pairs of gloves for the needy of Baker Street.

Their detectivising leads them all over London, including a smoggy excursion on the underground, an unsavory trip through a dangerous part of town, and a scene of near-arrest with a dedicated but dense constable. There is also a lengthy breath-taking chase in and through the Tuskers, a steamy male club, on the order of a down-scale Diogenes Club. Much is revealed as the plump Lady Detective and her gutter girl assistant track down their quarry and set the stage for further mayhem. This incident is followed by a surprising resolution which suggests a sequel.

In the extensive world of Holmesian story telling, *The Missing Mr. Moonstone* is a light-hearted romp occupying a middle ground between parody and pastiche. It is all quite improbable, of course. But in the realm of pastiche the improbable often, for better or worse, becomes indubitable. Holmes is away: Mrs. Hudson's in play. 

Study Group Session: The Retired Colourman

BY KAREN MURDOCK



ur by-now-traditional October gathering was held at the home of Karen Ellery (a.k.a. The Queen of Halloween) in northeast Minneapolis, held this year on October 19th. A dozen Explorers enjoyed scones, tea, cider, nibbles, the plethora of Halloween decorations, and the devotion of Karen's cat, Musette.

In Show & Tell, Karen Murdock passed out bookmarks of eight men who have played Sherlock Holmes (the group identified the one unknown to Karen M. as Tom Baker, who did a version of HOUN). She showed a pin from The Unemployed Philosophers Guild of Queen Victoria saying, "We are not amused," but added that the dour image of Queen Victoria is being counterbalanced by the current BBC series, which shows Victoria as a young queen. Amanda Downs passed out bookmarks of Holmes and Watson with the inscription, "I never guess. It is a shocking habit, destructive

to the logical faculty." Beverly Proud said that Nicholas Meyer has come out with a new book, *The Adventure of the Peculiar Protocols*. Steve Miller showed several pastiches, including *The Holmes-Dracula File* by Fred Saberhagen. Mary Loving showed a "Sherlock Bones" figurine from Department 56. Curt Proud showed a new book

by Malcolm Gladwell, *Talking to Strangers*, which is about how we detect truth. Cherie Miller showed a DVD of a program that appeared on public television, "How Sherlock Changed the World: His Impact on Real-Life Criminal and Forensic Investigation."

Karen E. highly recommended a Holmes pastiche, *A Night in the Lonesome October*, which also has a Halloween theme.

Kristi Iverson led the discussion on "The Retired Colourman." She said she thought Arthur Conan Doyle wrote this story on deadline and his



heart wasn't in it. Cherie said that, though she had not previously read the story, "as soon as that guy started painting, I knew he did it." Kristi said that she was certain that Watson, an experienced army surgeon who no doubt had amputated many legs, would surely have recognized that Josiah Amberley had an artificial leg.

Kristi asked why the smell of gas persisted long after it had been used to kill Amberley's wife and her lover. Wouldn't the gas have dispersed? Curt said that coal gas used in Britain had a nasty smell and did not dissipate readily.

The group kicked around comments on the word "colourman." Is this not an odd title for a seller of paints? The company of Brickfall and Amberley did not sell house paints but watercolor and oil-based paints used by artists. Karen M. said she is currently reading a biography of Berthe Morisot (1841–1895), the French Impressionist painter. Morisot was painting from a very young age and had professional teachers. Sketching and painting were skills taught to all middle to upper class young ladies in late 19th century France and England. This was considered part of a proper young lady's upbringing, so there would have been a constant demand for artistic paints. Karen E. pointed out other arts and crafts popular with women at the time: artificial flowers, jewelry made out of hair, lace, needlepoint. Young ladies were expected to keep busy and also to make things they could use after they were married.

Kristi asked if a theatre would keep records of exactly which seats were occupied. The group readily accepted this practice. Even today theatres keep such records (tickets these days are scanned as patrons enter the theatre — 100 years ago this all had to be done by hand). Steve said theatres keep such records for financial reasons and also to decide if they want to keep the play in performance or move on to a more lucrative play. Karen E. pointed out that theatres will sell seats if the theatregoer does not show up and fill that seat 10 to 15 minutes before the curtain rises. (Apparently the play for which Amberley bought tickets was not a very popular one because the Haymarket Theatre did not sell the two seats Amberley had reserved.)

Other cases in which Holmes sends Watson to investigate are LADY and SOLI. Steve said, "Watson is in remedial detective school."

Steve said the most interesting thing about this case was the use of a gas chamber. This is

what made the crime sensational. This method of killing was practiced by H. H. Holmes in Chicago in 1893. He preyed upon young women who came to visit the World's Columbian Exposition (this real-life mass murder was described in the Erik Larson book *The Devil in the White City*). Kristi said other stories in which death occurs by suffocation are MUSG, GREE, and possibly DEVI. Karen E. said that this case was published after the success of the William Gillette play "Sherlock Holmes," and ACD had the Stepney gas chamber scene in mind when he wrote RETI. Lindsay Hall said that the Edith Meiser radio play of RETI has a scene of Mrs. Amberley and Ray Ernest in the gas chamber.

Beverly said the case also had a salacious element because of the sexual seduction implied. Sex sells.

Watson describes the ill-kept gardens at The Haven:

I have never seen a worse-kept place. The garden was all running to seed, giving me an impression of wild neglect in which the plants had been allowed to find the way of Nature rather than of art. How any decent woman could have tolerated such a state of things, I don't know.

The house, too, was slatternly to the last degree.

Karen E. said it was unfair to blame Mrs. Amberley (this character is never given a first name in the story) for the unkempt state of the garden. She was an abused woman, was depressed, and "there is a point at which even abused women stop taking care of things." Josiah was too cheap to pay for a gardener.

Bob Brusica wondered, "What's positive?" about this story. Steve said there were six points that made the story interesting:

- evidence of forensic science
- the interesting way the villain killed his victims
- the fact that this story is the only one in which the villain hires Sherlock Holmes
- the rival detective, Barker (who actually works with Holmes on this case)
- the fool's errand to get the perp out of the way
- the interactions between Holmes and Watson

Karen M. thought the clergyman, J. C. Elman, acted in a rather unclerical way, kicking Watson and Amberley out of his study before they had even discussed their reason for coming. Steve hy-

pothesized that Holmes had sent people here before to get them out of the way, and Elman was sick of it.

Amanda thought the story was weak because there was no character development. We never get to see Mrs. Amberley or Ray Ernest.

Steve thought Amberley erred in claiming that his wife had stolen money and securities. Without the theft issue, the case would have been just one of two missing persons and would have been a lower priority to the police, so Amberley might have gotten away with the murders. His biggest blunder, however, was hiring Sherlock Holmes. 🐾

BSI-Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana

BY C. PAUL MARTIN

[Three Explorers, Dick Sveum, John Bergquist and C. Paul Martin attended the "Building an Archive: A Celebration of the Arrival of the BSI Archive at the Lilly Library" conference held in Bloomington, Indiana on November 8–10. Paul was kind enough to write about the event.]

In early November of 2019, the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana and the BSI celebrated the arrival of the BSI Archives and the exhibit of materials documenting the history of the BSI since its beginning in 1934. Unfortunately, the Professor (M) was present and caused the power on the campus and in the library to fail as the first day of the exhibit began. Forty university buildings were affected, so the visiting Sherlockians retreated from the cold to the hotel for a day of warmth, conversation, and other investigations.

On Saturday, Mary Ann Bradley and the library staff skillfully reworked the schedule to allow tours of the Lilly Library, the BSI exhibit, and continuing Sherlockian interaction among the 105 attendees. Following the morning library experiences, several librarians, including Director Joel Silver of the Lilly Library, shared the challenges and opportunities presented by the presence of the BSI Archives. Several well-known book people and collectors including Nicholas Basbanes, Peter Blau, and Otto Penzler shared their experiences in "collecting" over the years, precipitating considerable nostalgia in the crowd and an enthusiastic rush to view the treasures presented the following

morning at the "Baker Street Bourse." In the words of Basbanes, the entire experience exemplified his view of book collecting as a "Gentle Madness," but we all had fun! 🐾

2019 Explorers' Annual Dinner

As has now become tradition, the Norwegian Explorers met for their Annual Dinner at the Minneapolis Golf Club in St. Louis Park on the first Thursday of December (the 5th). A larger-than-usual number of people, seventy-three, were in attendance, likely a result of the popularity of the evening's guest speaker, Nicholas Meyer. There was a wonderful buzz of conversation during the social hour as people caught up on events since last seeing each other. When we gathered at our tables, we were greeted by a gorgeous program flyer put together by Julie McKuras. She had illustrated the front with the covers from Meyer's four Sherlockian books and, to go along with the events and dinner outline, she had found appropriate quotes from the four books.

Tom Gottwalt acted as the host for the evening, leading us through the night's agenda. After an inspiring invocation jointly performed by Bob and Lucy Brusic, we were treated to the traditional toasts, organized this year by Steve Schier. The toasters, Steve Miller, Mike Eckman, Amanda Downs Champlin, Mary Loving, and Lindsay Hall, wrote great toasts, which were infused with humor and presented well. The toasts are included later in this article. Following that, we gathered our food (traditional English-style fare) and ate.

Devin Abraham from the Minneapolis bookstore, Once Upon A Crime, had brought along copies of Nicholas Meyer's latest book, *The Adventure of the Peculiar Protocols*, and had them available for purchase. Nicholas sat with Devin at a table and signed copies for attendees who purchased it. He was also gracious enough to sign the older copies of "The Seven-Per-Cent Solution" and even Star Trek memorabilia that people brought for the occasion. While this was going on, the Norwegian Explorers business meeting was held. Phil Bergem gave the Treasurer's report which effectively said that summer's conference resulted in a profit, and, after we donate the excess amount to the University of Minnesota for the Sherlock Holmes Collections, we will still be in good shape finan-

cially. Tim Johnson accepted a check for \$3,221 for the Collections.



*Tom Gottwalt, Tim Johnson, and Phil Bergem
Photo by John Bergquist*

The full slate of Board members returned for another year and were accepted unanimously by a vote. The Board consists of president Tom Gottwalt; vice president and treasurer Phil Bergem; secretary Mike Eckman; at-large members Dick Sveum, Ray Riethmeier, Tim Johnson, Lindsay Hall, Bob Brusic, and John Bergquist; and past presidents C. Paul Martin, Pj Doyle, Bruce Southworth, Julie McKuras, and Gary Thaden.

Another tradition is the presentation of Sigeron Awards to contributors of the Christmas Annual. A copy of the Annual was given to each person attending the dinner. Other copies are sent to New York for the Gaslight Gala, the BSI Dinner, and *The Woman Dinner*. Award titles were wittingly developed once again by Julie McKuras, this time taken from *The Adventure of the Peculiar Protocols* by Nicholas Meyer. The titles were proofed and page numbers provided by Ray Riethmeier. The winners and award titles were:

- Amanda Downs Champlin's art – The "You Astonish Me" Award (Chapter 1, page 3)
- "The Horror at Pondicherry Lodge" by David Forest Hitchcock – The "What a Strange Pair They Were" Award (Chapter 6, page 104)
- "The Mystery of the Missing Miss Holmes" by Michael V. Eckman – The "A Most Unusual Pairing" Award (Chapter 6, page 100)
- "The Old Man in the Dead-House" pastiche by Kaj Johansen – The "Bilious Stench of Mortality" Award (Chapter 3, page 35)
- "This Empty House Is My Tree: Sherlockian Trees" by Ruth Berman – The "Shaded by Splendid Trees" Award (Chapter 9, page 154)

- "A Dark, Wicked, and Strange Word Search" (puzzle) by Melissa Aho – The "Very Pretty Problem" Award (Chapter 8, page 145)
- "Le Horla vs. Sherlock Holmes" by Tim Reich – The "Unparalleled Malice" Award (Chapter 9, page 157)
- "Watson's Believe It or Not!" by Michael V. Eckman – The "Mischievous Conclusions" Award (Chapter 2, page 31)
- "Doyle's Imagination Reflects Visions of — a Screen Writer!" by Jeff Falkingham – The "Let Me Prophecy" Award (Chapter 3, page 36)
- "Imagination is Everything" poem by David Forest Hitchcock – The "Lightning Flashes of Inspiration" Award (Chapter 5, page 82)
- "Monument Station" pastiche by Julie and Mike McKuras – The "Running Commentary of Exclamations and Surprise" Award (Chapter 12, page 225)
- "Pouliau Pastiches: The Best of the Worst" by Pasquale Accardo – The "Nerve Pinch to the Neck and Shoulder" Award (Chapter 9, page 167, with a special nod to our guest speaker)
- "The Drawing Room" by Kaj Johansen – The "Ferocious Baritsu Kick" Award (Chapter 9, page 167)
- "Fiddling Around with Sherlock Holmes" by Robert Brusic – The "His Beloved Stradivarius" Award (Chapter 8, page 144)
- "The Strange Case of Moriarty's Spirit!" pastiche by John Ward – The "Dreamy Abstraction" Award (Chapter 10, page 181)
- "Mystery, Imagination, and Horror" poem by Art Hogenon – The "Where Do Ideas Come From?" Award (Chapter 12, page 219)
- "The Adventure of the Murdered Mountebank" pastiche by John Clemo – The "I Am Reminded Anew of Your Narrative Abilities" Award (Chapter 7, page 119)
- "A Chamber of Horrors: *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*" by Steven Schier – The "We Live in Strange Times" Award (Chapter 12, page 227)

Following this, there was a more somber moment when we memorialized two members who passed away this year. Monica Schmidt recognized Dick Caplan, and Dick Sveum highlighted Bill Goodrich.

Then came the marquee moment of the evening, the talk by Nicholas Meyer. The group was truly blessed by how wonderful and kind a

speaker and guest that Nicholas Meyer was. He gave a great presentation, talking of his long-time interest in Sherlock Holmes, his love of music, favorite composers, and a good range of other interesting topics. Following his presentation, he took questions from the audience. Throughout the evening he interacted with the group, especially in



Nicholas Meyer before an appreciative crowd

regards to signing books and other items, and truly seemed to be appreciative of being with us for the evening. While we have had a number of good speakers over the years, I don't believe that we have ever had a better one.

Following Meyer's presentation, we had time for additional fun. Lucy and Reverend Bob Brusich once again furnished us with a Sherlockian image and asked that people identify the story it came from, the caption, and to develop their own humorous caption or limerick. At this point in the evening, Tom asked the various tables to provide their responses for the enjoyment of all. Bob and Lucy also devised Sherlockian-based lyrics to two popular Christmas carols which the group sang. (By the way, it's difficult to sing when you are laughing.) The lyrics were great enough that they are also reproduced later on.

The evening wound down when Amanda Downs Champlin recited Bill Schweikert's poem "When I Spend a Long Evening with Holmes." Following that, participants departed into the night, filled with good seasonal and Sherlockian cheer.

TOASTS

A Sherlock Holmes Toast – by Steve Miller

I give you a master of disguise. Who else can impersonate Sidney Paget's brother, stage actor William Gillette, and silent film stars Eille Norwood and John Barrymore? Who else can do movies as Reginald Owen, Arthur Wontner, Raymond Massey, and even Basil Rathbone? Rathbone may be his stage name as well as his day job.

On television he can appear as Leslie Howard's son, Ronald, Douglas Wilmer, and Peter Cushing. He can hang out with Sigmund Freud looking like Nicol Williamson in *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*. (This is a plug for our speaker tonight.) He can pretend to be a fake detective impersonating Michael Caine in *Without a Clue*. He drops all disguise except for calling himself Jeremy Brett on Granada BBC.

He can look like Iron Man without the armor, using the name Robert Downey, Jr. He can be a high-functioning sociopath who looks just like Benedict Cumberbatch. He can be a recovered (sometimes) heroin addict using the name Jonny Lee Miller in "Elementary." He can sneak onto Russian television.

Finally, he can impersonate Will Ferrell. He can even do a passable imitation of our President, Tom Gottwalt. I could go on but have been given only two and a half minutes.* I toast, a man of a thousand faces and identities — Sherlock Holmes.

(* I have been chastised for failing to include Ian Richardson. Some might also wish to add Christopher Lee.)

A Toast to Mycroft – by Mike Eckman

A proper toast to Mycroft is a trick.

What of many styles should I pick?

Most are somber of tone

And delivered with a drone

So I thought why not try a limerick?

Holmes saw Mycroft as one of the curiosities
Who belonged to the club Diogenes.

A club, if you can buy it,

Had a strict rule of quiet

So, I guess, members could catch a few zzzzzz.



Mycroft lived quite alone in Pall Mall
 Walking only 'round the corner to Whitehall
 And to cross the street to his club
 Never, never, to a pub
 Like a tram-car that leaves its rails not at all.

Holmes says, "Brother Mycroft is coming around"
 With a problem to Sherlock to propound.
 Mycroft really showed zest
 In the case of Cadogan West
 When Oberstein the spy was found.

In the case of the interpreter Greek
 Mycroft did Sherlock's counsel seek.
 The brothers arrived too late
 To save Paul from his fate
 But Sophy got her revenge, sweet.

Mycroft served Watson as a coachman.
 When Holmes created a plan
 To flee Moriarty
 and the rest of his party
 And away to the continent ran.

During Holmes's long absence from 221B
 Mycroft sent him funds and did the rooms oversee.
 So upon Holmes's return
 Watson suffered a turn
 But in the end greeted Sherlock with glee.

Watson reports Mycroft was corpulent.
 But had an indispensable mental bent.
 His mind was unique
 That despite his physique
 At times he was the British government.

Yes in Mycroft's gross body we find
 A most dominant and omniscient mind
 That combined the facts he was sent
 From each government department.
 Truly Mycroft was one of a kind.

To Mycroft

To Mrs. Hudson – by Amanda Downs Champlin
 "Mrs Hudson, the landlady of Sherlock Holmes,
 was a long-suffering woman." DYIN

She is mentioned in only eleven out of sixty stories, and only speaks three times. But for all our lack of knowledge about her, Mrs. Hudson is a crucial part of the Canon. She is the ideal Victorian landlady: reliable, willing to tolerate her renters' comings and goings at all hours, and able to produce food as if by magic when it is ordered.

She is a capable proprietress and most importantly, the trusted heart of Baker Street.

The majority of her words in the Canon exist in "The Adventure of the Dying Detective," when Holmes is homebound and (allegedly) dying on the premises. When Watson leaves Baker Street to confront Culverton Smith, Mrs. Hudson shows great emotion as she is left "trembling and weeping in the passage." She clearly cares about her renters, however peripheral she may seem in their lives. Later in the story, she is all but forgotten as Holmes and Watson venture out for a celebratory dinner.



Amanda Downs Champlin
Photo by Gary Thaden

Some might think Holmes and Watson are dismissive of her. I don't think so. As their landlady, she was aware of their dangerous adventures and even enjoyed observing their exploits. Her invisibility in the Canon speaks volumes about their faith in her. Mrs. Hudson is not simply a businesswoman and a cook; she is a powerful ally for a detective who needs a safe home-base where he can do research, devise plans, and unravel mysteries. Mrs. Hudson is even a willing helper to achieve his goals. She plays a literal "pivotal role" in the capture of Colonel Moran in "The Adventure of the Empty House."

That Holmes makes few remarks or observations about her is an indicator of his respect for Mrs. Hudson. She is above suspicion and dependable. That is high praise from Sherlock Holmes. So please raise a glass with me to toast literature's most esteemed landlady, Mrs. Hudson.

Mrs. Watson II: The Search for the Second Mrs. Watson – by Mary Loving

[Note the homage to Star Trek, recognizing Meyer's contribution to that Canon ~ Ed.]

Without a name, an unknown face,
 She must have had a certain grace,
 To capture Watson's warm embrace,
 Who's the second Mrs. Watson?

Or was she third or number four?
Allegedly there's many more,
Through Baker Street's revolving door,
Of brides lined up for the "hot one!"

Or...

Perhaps since his belov'd Mary,
John preferred the solitary,
Choosing license literary,
For a second Mrs. Watson?

Was Holmes's most famous allusion,
Just some cocaine-fueled confusion,
Of "selfish" Watson's desertion,
For a second Mrs. Watson?

When was that wedding anyway?
Searching through my Doubleday,
I didn't see Holmes give away,
John to the next Mrs. Watson.

For much that feeds Sherlockian lore,
So little fact lies at its core,
That's never stopped us all before,
Doyle seldom give it a thought, son.

So as we plan our fabrications,
Please note a lady's reputation,
Save some due consideration,
For the second Mrs. Watson!

It's time to all lift up our glass,
As here we sit upon our ... chairs,
To toast this enigmatic lass,
To the second Mrs. Watson!

A Toast to *The Woman* – by Lindsay Hall

When I found out I'd be toasting not just any woman, but *the* woman tonight, I was overwhelmed. She's kind of a legend, and I thought, what could there be to say about her that hasn't already been said?

But then I remembered why I joined the Norwegian Explorers in the first place. Because Sherlockians are the most interesting people in the world ... with the pawkiest sense of humor. And I love to ask people who love Sherlock Holmes what's on their mind.

So just for fun, I recently put a post in The Stranger's Room on Facebook to find out:

If you could ask Irene Adler one question, what would it be?

I wasn't disappointed. Sherlockian friends from around the world, including several people in this very room, weighed in.

Some said they would use the opportunity to ask about Adler's career as an opera singer, from her dream role to her favorite song to perform.

Others wanted to know how she met Godfrey Norton, why they fled to the continent, or whether she really thought that blankety-blank King of Bohemia would marry her.

A few would inquire about a certain orchid-collecting private detective from New York who's rumored to be her son ... but I won't go into that.

Our pal Steve Mason wondered, "When Watson called you the 'late' Irene Adler, did that mean you were dead, or just never on time?" And Ann Lewis would ask, "You're from Jersey? What exit?"

And of course, the million-dollar question from Mario Olckers — "How does it feel to have outfoxed the great sleuth?"

It turns out, Irene Adler remains a woman of great mystery — and that's a good thing, because it means we'll never stop talking, writing, and dreaming about her.

So I invite you to raise a glass to *the* woman and consider, what might *you* ask her if she was sitting at your table tonight? Cheers!

CAROLS

"Sherlock, the Great Detective"

Sung to the tune of "Rudolph
the Red-Nosed Reindeer"

LYRICS BY BOB & LUCY BRUSIC

Sherlock, the Great Detective,
Had a rather daunting case;
And his a-man-u-en-sis
Grieved that Holmes had lost this race.

Mycroft was soon consulted,
Had a frown upon his face;
Said if Holmes failed to solve it
He would wind up in disgrace.

Holmes deduced about a goose,
Blue gem in its crop;
Sherlock with his brain so bright
Bought the goose that very night.

"Well done" said John H. Watson,
Chronicler of this fowl case.


"You are the great detective
Tops in every time and place."

“’Twas Lestrade”

Sung to the tune of “Good King Wenceslas”

LYRICS BY BOB & LUCY BRUSIC

’Twas Lestrade from Scotland Yard
Came to 2-2-1-B.
“Mycroft sent me over here,
For there is a mys-t’ry!”
“Pray sit down,” said Holmes to him,
“How about a brandy?”
“Must confess that’s why I came,
It’s quite el-e-men-ta-ry.”

“Let me pour a little more
Of this fine effusion;
Mycroft sent you here, you said;
Here is my conclusion:
Yes, I see what’s going on
(Truth and not illusion),
Brandy is to wean me from
A seven per cent so-lu-tion.” 

(Editor’s Desk – continued from page 1)

and passed away on October 20th. While not an active member in the Explorers group, he will be missed.

The exciting event of the year for me was, of course, the Triennial Conference, “Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences,” held on the University of Minnesota campus on August 9–11. I have had the good fortune to attend ten of these triennial conferences, the first being in 1993, and have assisted with the last seven of them. We are fortunate to have a strong group of members who can work together to plan and host these events, and a great association with the University of Minnesota Libraries and the Elmer L. Andersen Library, who are our partners in the conferences and present an astounding exhibition at the Library. The great group of members who plan these (and any) events, are one third of the necessary contribution. The other two parts are fantastic speakers and wonderful attendees, both of which we had. After a bit of a rest, a committee will form for the next conference scheduled for 2022. If anyone is interested in participating with the planning, let one of the Explorers’ Board members know in about a year.

As a counterbalance to lost members, either from death or disinterest, we do have twelve new

members who joined in 2019. We heartily welcome them to the group, whether local and able to participate in ongoing events, or more distant and partaking through this newsletter. For them, and for all members, if you have any questions — or if there is something that you would like to see covered in the *Explorations* — please inform either Tom or me and we’ll do our best to help. ~ Phil



Parting Words and Trifles



n September, Julie McKuras marked her twentieth year as editor of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections newsletter. It is a remarkable achievement and one to be applauded. Thank you, Julie, for all that you do.

- As mentioned earlier, Julie, along with Sonia Fetherston, gave a presentation at the Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium in October. The title of their talk was “Nevertheless, She Persisted: Women Who Broke the Sherlockian Gender Barrier,” which was also well received.

- The well-traveled Julie also was a special guest and gave a speech at a presentation at the Crew of the Barque Lone Star meeting on November 3rd in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas. As Julie wrote to me, “I didn’t have a title. I just discussed the Collections and how it started and grew. Steve Mason invited me and Bonnie MacBird as well. We’re both now members of the group. It was a nice meeting.”

- The *Baker Street Journal 2019 Christmas Annual* is titled “Baring-Gould of Baker Street: The Life and Footnotes of William S. Baring-Gould.” There are distinct Minnesota connections with Baring-Gould. He was born in Minneapolis in 1913 and graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1935. Another Minnesota connection is that the Annual was written by Julie McKuras, Timothy J. Johnson, Richard Sveum, and Gary Thaden. The Annual is available only to subscribers of the *Baker Street Journal*.

- Japan is experiencing a number of Sherlockian television shows recently. Last year saw eight episodes of “Miss Sherlock” (ミス・シャーロック) with Yuko Takeuchi as Miss Sherlock and Shihori Kanjiya as Dr. Wato Tachibana. This year, and currently appearing, is a live-action series “Sher-

lock” (シャーロック) and an animated series “Kabukichō Syarokku” (歌舞伎町シャーロック). The live action, known in English as “Sherlock: Untold Stories,” has Dean Fujioka as Shishio Homare (Holmes’s role) and Takanori Iwata as Junichi Wakamiya (Watson’s role). These can be found on the Internet, either dubbed or with subtitles. Kabukichō, in the title of the animated series, is a sketchy area in Tokyo known as an entertainment and red-light district. All three of these shows are set in present-day Japan, likely influenced by the success of BBC’s “Sherlock.”

- As further evidence of the continued popularity of Sherlock Holmes, “Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol” will be performed at the James J. Hill House in St. Paul from December 6–22. Unless you already have tickets, you will be disappointed if you try to attend, as the event is sold out.

- The Explorers’ Baker Street West event will be held on Sunday, January 26th, 5:00 P.M., at Kieran’s Irish Pub in Minneapolis. Lindsay Hall

(lindsay.s.hall@gmail.com) is taking reservations. There is no cost beyond your restaurant bill, but we do need to know how many people will be there.

- Fellow Explorer Jeffrey Hatcher’s play, “Holmes and Watson,” will have a run at the Park Square Theatre in Saint Paul from June 12 to July 26, 2019.

- Plan ahead: The 2022 Bouchercon will be held in Minneapolis. September 8–11, 2022 and hosted by Once Upon A Crime bookstore. (www.bouchercon.com)

- Copies of the book given to attendees of the summer’s conference, *The Best of Friends*, are available from Phil Bergem. Contact him at pgbergem@gmail.com for details. The 2019 *Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual* is sold out, but select back issues are available.

- Membership dues are, well, due. A number of folks have already paid, and for that we thank you. If you have not yet done so, please check our website, www.norwegianexplorers.org/membership.html, for payment details. 🐱

The Norwegian Explorers

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