



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

As we come up to a full year of concerns over Covid-19, social distancing, cancelled or postponed conferences, and multiple Zoom meetings, I must say how thrilled I am with how well many of us are handling the situation. While I certainly prefer in-person meetings and socializing, given the circumstances, I am glad to hear how well the study groups are faring and to see a number of fellow Explorers at various on-line functions. Given that many groups have implemented web-based meetings, it is easier to participate in meetings around the country and the world.

One of the thrills I received during the virtual BSI Dinner in January was to hear co-editor and dear friend, Ray Riethmeier, get invested into the

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A Word from the President

BY TOM GOTTWALT

Since our last issue we held our December Annual Meeting virtually with most of the usual activities. We shared toasts, held a brief business meeting, made a donation to the University of Minnesota Libraries Holmes collection, distributed Sigerson Awards to contributors for the Christmas Annual, Stood Upon the Terrace for John Pforr and Susan Rice, heard from Keynote Speaker, Robb Nunn, enjoyed some laughs with "Captions Courageous," and concluded the evening with a reading of "When I Spend a Long Evening with Holmes."

We also hosted our annual January "Baker Street West" event to recount and hear about the happenings at the New York City Irregular and other events. A highlight this year was learning that our own Ray Riethmeier received his investiture. Congratulations, Ray! There are good articles on the Annual Meeting and "Baker Street West" in this issue.

Monthly Study Group sessions continue virtually, and in June — with our non-Canonical detour — we'll tackle three tales featuring Edgar Allan Poe's C. Auguste Dupin.

Please watch for additional events and other details in the monthly Notices.

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't remind you that a new year has started and to please remit your \$20 annual dues if you've not done so already. If you are unsure if you have paid already for 2021, please contact Phil Bergem. (pgbergem@gmail.com)

As always, thank you for your membership and please spread the word to others. We're always looking for new members. 🐾

Explorers' Annual Meeting



he Annual meeting was held on Thursday, December 3, 2020, but — given the pandemic situation — it was done virtually and without gathering for dinner as we have traditionally done. People linked into the Zoom connection for the 6:30 start. President Tom Gottwalt began welcoming the participants. There were 46 connections, with several links involving multiple people, so there certainly were more than 50 Explorers and guests attending. Next came the toasts organized by Steve Schier. Bob and Lucy Brusic presented a toast to Mycroft Holmes; John Bergquist did one for Wiggins; Karen Ellery noted *The Woman*; Steve Miller recognized Inspector Lestrade; and Steve Schier toasted Charles Augustus Milverton. (Several of these are included later in this issue.)

Tom returned for further introductory comments including a recap of the year's events. He outlined the Baker Street West event in January, Study Group sessions in January and February before the Covid-19 restrictions interfered, Monica Schmidt's popular Saturday movie viewing events, and the amazing work the Study Group leaders did to resume monthly sessions using the Zoom platform.

Following Tom's comments Phil Bergem gave the Treasurer's report. The finances are doing well enough that the group was able to make a \$1,017 donation to the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota. Tim Johnson expressed his appreciation for the ongoing support by the group and how delighted he was to see so many friends on the computer screen.

Next up on the agenda was the distribution of the Sigerson Awards. These are given to everyone who submitted something for the Norwegian Explorers *Christmas Annual*. Normally the *Annual* is given to attendees of the Annual Meeting but, since this year the event was held virtually, sans Dinner, the Board of the Norwegian Explorers decided to have copies mailed to all members. A digital copy was provided as part of the electronic "handouts" for the BSI Dinner and the Gaslight Gala Dinner in January, also virtual meetings this year.

The exceedingly clever award names, all quotes from the Canon, were devised by Julie McKuras. Certificates were also printed by her

and sent to recipients. Ray Riethmeier, the chief editor of the Annual, announced the contributors as the certificates appeared on the screen. These were:

- The "Light into the Darkness" Award (REDC) to Pasquale Accardo
- The "Mental Aspects of the Matter" Award (STUD) to Melissa Aho
- The "Such Rarified Heights of Pure Mathematics" Award (VALL) to Christopher Atkinson
- The "Two of the Family Were Still Afoot" Award (REIG) to Ruth Berman
- The "Time-Stained Portrait on the Wall" Award (HOUN) to Bob and Lucy Brusic
- The "Touch of Charlatanism" Award (SIGN), "The Most Unscrupulous Rascals" Award (LADY) and the "Student of the Unusual" Award (REDC) to Michael Eckman
- The "Every Link Rings True" Award (REDH) to Jeff Falkingham
- The "Justice Had Overtaken a Villain" Award (CHAS) to Bruce Harris
- The "Peace or War May Hang Upon the Issue" Award (SECO) to Art Hogenson
- "The Hidden Wickedness" Award (COPP) to Julie McKuras
- The "Carefully Guarded Account of the Incident" Award (SECO) to Brenda Rossini
- The "Two Separate Chains of Thought" Award (LADY) to Steve Schier

After the awards we had the typical election of the Norwegian Explorers Board where the current members agreed to continue and were voted back to their positions. (If any members are interested in joining the Board, please contact Tom Gottwalt.)

Next came a more solemn moment as we came to the time for "Stand upon the terrace." Dr. C. Paul Martin provided a eulogy for John Pforr, and Dr. Richard Sveum gave us a tribute for Susan Rice. (The tribute for Susan is included later in this issue.)

Following those, we came to the evening's speaker. Rob Nunn, an Explorer from the St. Louis area, gave his fantastic presentation titled "A Friend of Sherlock Holmes is Always Welcome." Several of us had heard it at the Left Coast Sherlockian Symposium in October, but it was great to hear it again and to share it with the rest of the group. Rob teaches fifth-grade

students and uses the Canon heavily while doing so. He outlined, in a very entertaining fashion, how he uses it in his classes and provided tips he has learned from sixteen years of teaching. Many in the audience wished we would have had more teachers such as Rob as we were growing up.

After that, Bob and Lucy Brusic assisted with the ever-popular and always-appreciated “Captions Courageous.” Bob had provided a Pagent illustration from SIXN that Tom had sent out to attendees earlier. Participants were encouraged to identify it and provide a humorous caption or limerick associated with it. Karen Ellery, Julie McKuras, Ray Riethmeier and the Brusics provided wonderful examples, but the chronicler of the evening neglected to take sufficient notes, so they are lost to our memories. Burt Wolder provided an update of the Frederic Dorr Steele memorial that the Norwegian Explorers helped to fund. The stone has been placed at Steele’s gravesite.

We had a bit of time for general discussion among members, and liberal use was made of the chat feature throughout the evening for great side-conversations and comments.

To close out the evening in the traditional manner, Lindsay Hall read the poem “When I spend a long evening with Holmes.”

The evening was a very fun event, despite being virtual. It was great to see familiar and new faces even if it was not in person. As Monica Schmidt said, “This has been good for the soul.” 🐾

Dinner Toasts



To Mycroft

BY LUCY AND BOB BRUSIC

M is for his many great deductions

Y is for the years he served so well

C is for his crushing sense of logic

R means he’s as round as Nero Wolfe

O is he’s the only sib of Sherlock

F is for the flaming torch of Justice

T is for the toast we raise to Mycroft

A Toast to Wiggins

BY JOHN BERGQUIST

Tonight we toast a person who many may think of as a very minor player in the Canon. We don’t even know his given name. When we hear the name *Wiggins*, we now think of the present-day incarnation: the title chosen by the past three leaders of the Baker Street Irregulars of New York, of which the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota is one of the oldest continuously active scion societies.

But what of the canonical Wiggins? He appears in only the first two chronicles: *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*. Dr. Watson depicts this leader, lieutenant, or spokesman of the original Baker Street irregulars, who sometimes acted as eyes and ears for Holmes, in most unflattering terms.

Wiggins and his fellow irregulars were first described as “half a dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs that ever I clapped eyes on.” The clattering of their steps in the hall and on the stairs in Baker Street elicited “audible expressions of disgust” from Mrs. Hudson. Elsewhere they were called “dirty little scoundrels,” and Wiggins was characterized as a “disreputable little scarecrow.” When reporting to Holmes, Wiggins was said to have “introduced his insignificant and unsavoury person.”

But one can’t always judge a book by its cover. When explaining to Watson why he employs the irregulars, Holmes says that their unprepossessing appearance is an advantage; they can “go everywhere and hear everything” unnoticed. He goes on to say that “all they want is organization.”

Yet, they *did* have organization. When they arrived at Baker Street, Watson writes “there

was some show of discipline among them, despite their tumultuous entry, for they instantly drew up in line and stood facing us with expectant faces.” Getting them to methodically check out every cab yard in London for the cabman Jefferson Hope, or every shipyard along the Thames for Mordecai Smith’s steam launch *Aurora* — over a period of several days — would take a leader with organizational skill and administrative competence. Wiggins must have been an effective CEO to keep this ragtag bunch on task, as evidenced by Holmes’s trust in him, when he deputized him to speak for all the irregulars.

We owe much to Wiggins. Without the Baker Street irregulars, under Wiggins’s effective leadership, Holmes would never have found Jefferson Hope, and Watson would not have been able to record Hope’s tale of treachery and ultimate revenge. Nor would Holmes have known when the steam launch *Aurora* left its shipyard, enabling him to lead a chase down the Thames in a police launch, in one of the most thrilling, evocative passages in the Canon. Because the *Aurora* was overtaken and Jonathan Small captured, Watson was able to record Small’s gripping tale. The resulting two published books, the aforementioned *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, piqued the public’s interest in Holmes, encouraging Watson to document more of his friend’s adventures and emboldening Watson’s literary agent, Arthur Conan Doyle, to submit the new adventures to the *Strand Magazine*, which eagerly began publishing them and brought Holmes to the prominence he has enjoyed ever since. Indeed, without Wiggins and the assistance he and his fellow irregulars gave to Holmes in those two early cases, the Great Detective may have faded into obscurity, and we likely would not be gathered here tonight.

So, please join me in raising your glasses to the original Baker Street irregulars, and to their capable leader — “insignificant and unsavoury” or no — Wiggins!

A Toast to The Woman

BY KAREN ELLERY

Here’s my contribution to keep the show hummin’:
I’ve been asked by our host now to toast to *The Woman*.

No Victorian Violet did Sir Arthur create:
I would say that this lady is quite up to date.

And just how is this gal’s Scandal modern, you ask

(Aside from the man who was wearing a mask)?

Well, this Diva who bravely rebuffed threats and slurs, she

Was, of course, born in the state of NEW Jersey.

She knew her own worth and accepted no dis,
And I’ll mention she ventured at times from straight Cis.

Her wedding was tight, and although there was no vid

Its limited guest list would work now with COVID.

She outwitted the Master and there on the shelf, she

Left him with — what else? Of course, ’twas a selfie.

So, let’s toast her with pride and without censure, yes,

That With-It and Well-Known Adventuress!

Irene Adler!

To Charles Augustus Milverton

BY STEVEN SCHIER

Have you ever considered the VIRTUES of blackmail? Consider this from economist Walter Block:

“What, exactly, is blackmail? Blackmail is the offer of trade. It is the offer to trade something, usually silence, for some other good, usually money.... There is nothing amiss here. All that is happening is that an offer to maintain silence is being made. If the offer is rejected, the blackmailer does no more than exercise his right of free speech.

“The sole difference between a gossip and a blackmailer is that the blackmailer will refrain from speaking — for a price. In a sense, the gossip is much worse than the blackmailer, for the blackmailer has given the blackmailee a chance to silence him.”

Let us be grateful that Charles Augustus Milverton was NOT a gossip. He instead humbly offered his silence for a price. Did

Holmes and Watson prey upon malevolent gossips in the manner that they did upon Milverton? Ultimately Milverton's generous offer of silence was answered with a fatal bullet from an ungrateful potential customer. They all deserved jail for their efforts against Charles. Let us thus raise our glass to that great, unacknowledged humanitarian, Charles Augustus Milverton. 🦋

Producing a Christmas Annual

BY RAY RIETHMEIER



very year around March, Phil Bergem and Ray Riethmeier (hereafter the editorial “we”) send a flurry of emails back and forth to decide on a theme for the next Christmas Annual. We generally have a list of ideas that we’ve considered in prior years, and we tend to add new ones to that list as we think of them. “Sports in the Canon” had been an also-ran for the Annual theme over the previous several years, and we thought that this would be the year to use it.

In the meantime, the pandemic that had started mere weeks before was showing no signs of abating, so we briefly considered whether it would still be an appropriate topic, but Phil suggested that this could end up being the only venue for games and sports that many of us would have in 2020. Ray thought of the title, “Games Are Afoot,” and Phil drafted a tentative call for papers around the theme. Phil commented to Ray about his draft, “It was tricky to come up with something that recognized the current world-situation, but didn’t get too maudlin.”

Ray finalized the official Call for Papers, and it went out to members in Tom Gottwalt’s April email update; the submission deadline was October 2. Contributions started to arrive during the summer, and while the pandemic continued, the Norwegian Explorers leadership started discussing the logistics of the December dinner in the time of COVID. The editorial “we” were convinced that the “show must go on” so far as the Christmas Annual was concerned. The only question would be whether it would be

a printed edition for an in-person dinner, or what else we would do if the dinner ended up being cancelled.

Ultimately, it was decided that the dinner was going virtual, as so many other groups had done with their events. But unlike many of the other events happening online, the Norwegian Explorers still planned to distribute the traditional dinner gift of a physical Christmas Annual. In prior years, attendees of the Norwegian Explorers Annual Dinner in December were the first Sherlockians to get their copies of the Christmas Annual, but then the bulk of the print-run was sent to NY for distribution during the Baker Street Irregulars weekend in January. This year, however, the Norwegian Explorers Board decided that every dues-paying member of the Norwegian Explorers would be sent a copy of the Christmas Annual for 2020, which had never happened before in the history of the publication.

After feverishly (not due to COVID) slaving away on the submissions during October, we sent the files to our printer at the beginning of November with a diminished print-run of 221 copies. When the books were delivered to Ray’s house in mid-November, Phil spent an evening there so the two of them could stuff the envelopes and affix the mailing labels and postage. The attendees of the BSI Dinner and the Gaslight Gala were sent a digital copy of the Christmas Annual this year, with two additional pages inserted in the back: advertisements for purchasing a print copy of the annual (and other remaining back issues) and the conference books produced over the years. We figured that many of the people receiving digital copies might have a bibliophile’s “completist” attitude, and we wanted to provide the opportunity for them to “collect the whole set” without missing the latest issue.

Copies from most years since the first inaugural issue in 2002 remain available. Contact Phil Bergem for details. 🦋



New York Festivities — The Distinguished Speakers Lecture

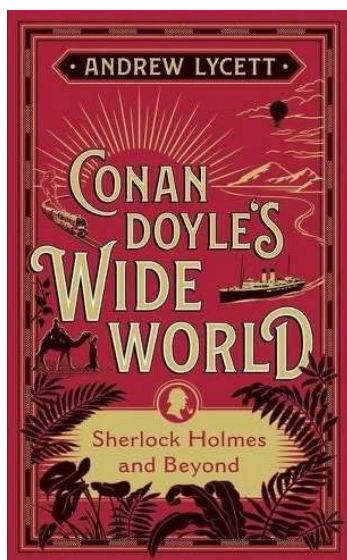
BY PJ DOYLE

As each year debuts, there are myriad traditions that come to the front in our minds: resolutions, promises, and anticipation of good things to come. Sherlockians look forward to celebrating Holmes's birthday with like-minded individuals. Wrapping this annual kick-off in a flurry of activities amid the hustle and bustle of New York City ... but wait. The bleak cocoon world of the pandemic demanded that Sherlockians had to find a new way. And Irregulars across the globe rose to the challenge. Virtual became the dress code for traditional and impromptu gatherings.

The core Baker Street Irregulars "official" events — The Distinguished Speaker Lecture and the BSI Annual Dinner — were planned and implemented smoothly.

The Lecture was held on Thursday, January 7, and was open to all who registered in advance. The event was presented to 475 viewers around the world via Zoom. To enhance the experience, pre-show slides entertained and challenged participants with quizzes. (Though familiar Zoom "chat" feature was disabled due to size of the audience, the Q&A option allowed and encouraged interaction.)

Michael Kean, Wiggins, welcomed guests and provided a history of the lecture series. From its inception in 1998, there have been 22 speakers. Les Klinger then stepped to the screen and introduced Andrew Lycett. A renowned historian/biographer, he has written highly acclaimed biographies of Ian Fleming, Rudyard Kipling, Dylan Thomas, and Arthur Conan Doyle. The latter, *The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes*, was published in 2007 and was hailed as both "comprehensive and authoritative." His latest book, *Conan Doyle's Wide World: Sherlock Holmes and*



Beyond, deals with Doyle's travel writing. Lycett is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the royal Geographical Society, and he lives in North London.

Drawing on his latest book, and overcoming a few technological challenges, Lycett charmed the viewers with a series of Conan Doyle vacation photos, noting that "observing phenomena of all kinds was central to his life." Lycett commented that the author's "remarkable sense of place and magnificent evocations of locales" are evident throughout the Canon.

After sharing photos and observations from Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Egypt, and South Africa, Lycett urged participants to expand their ACD connection by reading or re-reading his underrated poems.

As in previous years, the lecture was a strong beginning to several days of camaraderie and fun.



Baker Street West

BY PHILLIP BERGEM

In late January the Norwegian Explorers typically hold an event called Baker Street West where folks who travelled to New York City for the Birthday festivities relate their experiences to others in the group. The events were held from Thursday January 7th to Sunday January 10th. It also serves the purpose of getting together socially to talk about all sorts of things, Sherlockian and otherwise. This year the event was held on Sunday, January 31st and, in going with the theme of the past 10 months and the New York Weekend itself, it was held as a Zoom meeting, with 34 people participating from around the U.S. and Canada.

Lindsay Hall, as organizer of the event, gave a warm welcome to the attendees and soon after that there was a toast to Sherlock Holmes. First up was John Bergquist to talk about the Distinguished Speakers Lecture, and he gave an outline of the event that Pj Doyle has covered in detail elsewhere on this page.

Next up was Dick Sveum to talk about the part of the Weekend that is normally the Dinner. He mentioned about how this year broke with tradition by being held as a Zoom meeting, and it was the first year with Michael Kean as the new Wiggins. It did have the benefit of having more attendees than usual. In lieu of the normal packet

of handouts and goodies placed at each person's seat there was a digital packet that was sent out to the people who registered. A large portion of this was the Norwegian Explorers *Christmas Annual* in pdf format.

John returned to talk about the presentation of the "Eddies," editorial recognition for new books published by the Baker Street Irregulars Press. Four new books were released in conjunction with the Birthday Weekend. These were *The Staunton Tragedy*, with a reproduction of Conan Doyle's manuscript for "The Missing Three-Quarter and accompanying essays; *Colonels, Corporals and Commissionaires* covering the military elements in the Canon; *Commissionaire* which recounts the life and legacy of Julian Wolff; and "A Quiet Air of Mastery", an appreciation of Michael Whelan.

Next Dick talked about "rules, toasts and rituals" which includes the reading of the "Buy Laws" of the BSI and presentation of the various toasts to *The Woman* and others. Among the toasts presented on the evening, the most memorable was Denny Dobry who sat in his full-sized recreation of the 221B sitting room, dressed as an inebriated Mrs. Hudson, and gave a wonderful presentation ending with a toast to "herself."

Dick carried on to tell the group about the wonderful presentation by Bonnie MacBird, talking about the Mazarin Stone and Baker Street in general. Next the online group was entertained with several songs and piano playing by Henry Boote and his equally talented daughter. Steven Rothman then took to the screen to give an informative history of the BSI. Dick also mentioned the *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* that he edited, titled "The 100-Year Adventure of The Unique Hamlet." It contains an essay by fellow Explorer Julie McKuras.

The BSI session continued with the somber Stand Upon the Terrace after which was the more delightful Birthday Honors. There were ten people Invested, including Explorers Steve Mason ("The Fortescue Scholarship") and Ray Riethmeier ("Morrison, Morrison, and Dodd"). The two shilling awards were handed out and the evening drew to a close with a reading of Starrett's "221B."


Phil Bergem next talked a bit about the Gillette Luncheon and Pj Doyle talked about an evening gathering called "Lost in New York with a Bunch of Sherlockians." Monica Schmidt let the group know what happened at the Gaslight Gala held on Saturday evening. The general consensus was

that, although it wasn't all as fun as gathering in person, it was still fun to gather and meet virtually.

Next up, Julie McKuras told us about the Sherlock Holmes Society of London event which was held the following weekend, on the 16th. The speakers for the evening were Les Klinger and Peter Horrocks. There was also a play based on the Blue Carbuncle that had been adapted by Bonnie MacBird. It is masterfully done as it was filmed under Covid restrictions, and the actors were recorded in separate locations. It can be viewed on YouTube at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-YNhJ_mR24.

It was also announced that Bonnie MacBird's fourth Sherlockian book, *The Three Locks*, will be released on April 1st. Nicholas Meyer will also be releasing a new book in November.

Throughout the evening there were a number of great chat comments and interaction between online members. 



The Shape of Things Holmes

BY BOB BRUSIC



In a recent conversation about Sherlock Holmes a close friend of mine observed: "Have you noticed that Sherlock Holmes has become something of a shape shifter?" When asked to unpack that peculiar observation the speaker responded: "Look at all the ways in which the detective has been presented. I have seen him portrayed as a teenager and as a nonagenarian. I have books on my shelf in which he is presented as a teacher of computer programming as well as a mouse or even an insect, Inspector Mantis by name, who solved cases in Bugland.

"I've read about Holmes in outer space and as one who fought vampires, once being identified as Jack the Ripper. Ugh! He has been depicted as a progenitor of numerous daughters and sons, some of them actually in wedlock. I need hardly mention how he tirelessly fights the good fight in countless burlesques, pastiches, parodies, and farces. It is all too much for me. I expect that any day now this shape shifter will even be cast as a woman, though I

must admit that for some years I have liked Watson as a woman on television.”

Well, my friend, I should say that Holmesian transformation has already taken place. In the summer of 2018 Ken Ludwig turned the corner in his play, “Baskerville, a Sherlock Holmes Mystery,” at Park Square Theater in St. Paul. It was an energetic adaptation of the great Hound novel, in which the roles of Holmes and Watson were played by McKenna Kelly and Sara Richardson respectively and respectably. This cross-gender casting may have already occurred in the wider world of Sherlockiana. But it seems that this was something of a first for the Twin Cities. Ludwig’s play received good reviews. It was a high voltage production that, surprisingly, closely followed the plot line of Conan Doyle’s book. No one seemed to object to casting of the two main characters as women. Once the gender shape shift was in place (within moments), the audience settled back and enjoyed the great detective, his/her loyal companion, and about forty (or was it only three?) characters solving the mystery and slaying the hound who also had a role to play (as character forty-one?).

Such gender shifting of Holmes and Watson also took place in a different venue at America’s oldest professional resident summer theatre, the Peninsula Players Theatre in Door County, Wisconsin. The play was “Miss Holmes” by Christopher Walsh; the title role was ably played by Cassandra Bissel, with Maggie Kettering as Dorothea Watson. The drama’s setting was London, circa 1881, though the scenic design was industrial modern. It was a new case involving a crooked cop, a mysterious master criminal, a dangerous bad woman, and (according to the program) lots of “theatrical blank firing firearms and atmospheric water-based haze to enhance this production.” Once again, the woman playing Holmes was quite capable and

convincing. I think this commendable production might have even satisfied my critical friend.

Beyond these two productions, however, I should report that gender shifting is not necessarily a recent development locally, dramatically speaking. The Twin Cities-based Red-Throated League performed a gender transforming event entitled “The Adventure of the


Separated Savoyards” on June 1, 1991 (!) The program of that event recently surfaced, and it notes that the part of Holmes was being played by Pj Doyle and that of Dr. John Watson by Lucy Brusic. Those of a certain age may recall a sextet singing Savoyard songs linked to a devilishly difficult crossword puzzle. The audience was invited to “Help Holmes and Watson follow musical clues that will bring Gilbert and Sullivan back together again.” The program was in-



tended to restore the riven bards.

The puzzle contained such obscure clues as “Modern name for place where Moriarty’s father was once minister” and “Minnesota reference in Point’s song (Yeoman).” The singing was serviceable and the lead actors, two women, were superb if not memorable. The puzzle was so convoluted that it was assumed no one would solve it. However, that proved to be a false assumption as the redoubtable Ruth Berman, much to everyone’s amazement, solved it handily. So, is my friend right, that Holmes is a shape shifter? By some reckoning, as in the examples noted above, that may be the case. There is a lot of Holmes out there, some of it pretty strained. Yet the three dramas noted above were pretty convincing and enjoyable. Watching the Sherlockian universe bubble up like active yeast in warm bread dough, we can lean back and see the bread continue to rise.

We can never read all the books or see all the plays in which Holmes enacts various roles, such as an insect or an alien in outer space. But there is always room for one more pleasing

variation, such as a woman donning the deer-stalker. The shape may shift but the game goes on apace, aplenty, and afoot. 

My Time at University and in the Military (part 3)

BY JOHN H. WATSON, M.D.
EDITED BY PHILLIP BERGEM



In this issue we conclude the serialization of a long-lost letter written by John H. Watson to his niece, in which he reveals heretofore unknown details of his time in military service...

AFTER SEVERAL HOURS — it must have been some time after noon — the advance baggage and stores were ordered back closer to our position. I honestly could not tell you how long we had been at our grisly task when the noise of the battle changed. The din had diminished and then, after a time, increased appreciably with cries from the ghazis. Someone shouted that the British line had been broken. We continued on with our work but noticed that the baggage handlers were loading and hitching their animals in preparation to move. Shortly there was a rush of cavalry and soldiers moving past us in retreat. We began to pack up supplies and get wounded onto supply wagons when I felt a searing pain in my left shoulder as I was hit with a jezail bullet. The shock of the wound set upon me quickly, and I have only a vague recollection of Murray grabbing a pair of loose horses, throwing me across one, and riding us away from the battle.

A few miles south we stopped and, as I was told later, a surgeon from the Jacob's Rifles²⁵ assisted with stopping the bleeding and some rudimentary patching of my wound. Murray had the foresight to grab bandages and morphine along with a few other meagre supplies. It was the use of morphine in the next few weeks that helped me

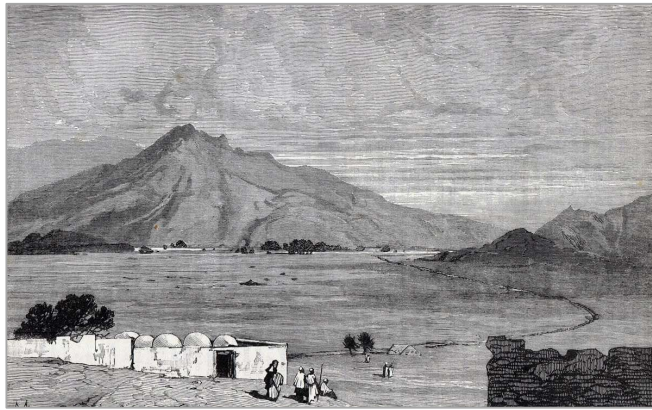
to survive, but it also gave me the understanding and concern for Holmes's cocaine addiction in the future. We continued south, with a mass of other soldiers, to meet the road that ran between Girishk and Candahar. The ghazis apparently had stopped to loot the abandoned supplies and dead, or had considered themselves victorious and disbanded. Whatever the reason, we felt fortunate that we were not pursued.

After we reached the main road, we still had 40 miles to return to Candahar and continued on through the night. We were short of water and food, and that became a primary concern of those within our small group who were able to search for it. The villagers for the most part stayed within their dwellings, but upon a few occasions our group was attacked or shot at. It was during the night that I was hit a second time with a jezail bullet, this time in the thigh. That wound, while shallow and fairly minor, became infected and has caused me more problems over the years than the more serious shoulder wound.

My condition, and that of the several other wounded men in the small group that had banded together, slowed us enough that we became separated from the larger group retreating towards Candahar. Before we reached the ford at the Agrandab river we were pushed to the north by hostile villagers. In an effort to keep safe, we had to continue up river before we found another location to ford. Once across the river we found that the road back to Candahar was already occupied by rebel

fighters, and the difficult realisation was made that our only hope would be to make the 300 mile trek north to Cabul on the same road Murray and I had travelled a month earlier.²⁶

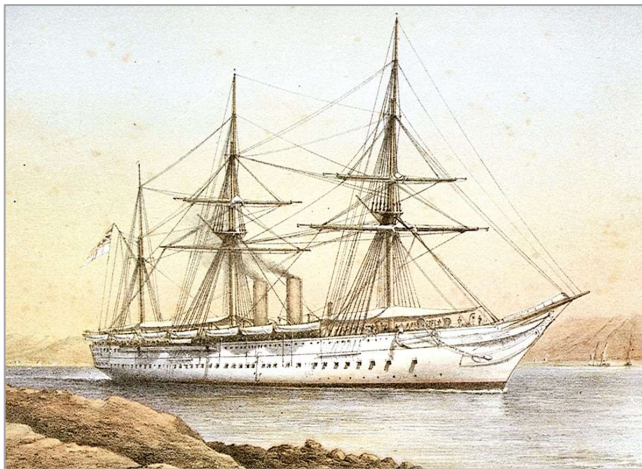
I am not sure how I survived, but without the faithful administrations of Murray and the other surgeon who was in our company, I would not have endured. After about a week we reached a British-held fort and garrison.²⁷ Here we were able to have a short rest, receive fresh rations and water, and exchange our horses. As there was news



Maiwand battlefield sketch [From a sketch by Captain J. M. Slade, R.H.A., *Illustrated London News*, October 30, 1880, p. 424]

of Afghan fighters to the south, the decision was made to continue to the north. After about another ten days, our group met the enormous 10,000-man column of General Roberts's rescue mission to Candahar. A small detachment of a few men was assigned to escort us to Cabul which, with their assistance, we achieved in about another two weeks. After being examined by the medical staff, it was decided that I should be transported to the army hospital at Peshawar. It was at this time that Murray was assigned to a regiment at Cabul, and we separated. I never saw him again, but I owe him my life. I heard that he died shortly after returning to England, but I never found out the cause.

At each stop I was attended to by the medical staff available, in addition to what attention I gave myself daily. The healing had started during the five weeks since receiving my wounds, but I still had considerable recovery time ahead of me. I was able to rest and relax at hospital and was making progress in my recovery when the next calamity hit me. I contracted enteric fever, and I was again at death's door for several weeks.²⁸ The hospital Medical Board determined that I should be returned to England without delay. Along with others who were in similar circumstances, we were transported by wagons to Lahore and made the rest of the journey to Bombay by train. Here we eventually boarded the Troopship *Orontes*, which set sail on October 31st [1880], arriving at Portsmouth on November 25th.²⁹



H.M.S. *Orontes*

The return voyage, following the trying times of the past four months, was heavenly by comparison. I was able to get fresh air and sunshine on the deck, and I had the good fortune to be attended by Surgeon-Major Evatt who was on board.

The ship also carried the 59th Foot,³⁰ returning home after thirteen years in India, Ceylon, and Afghanistan.

Despite the month of recovery on board, it was determined that my health was damaged enough that I was placed on half-pay and sent off in hopes of recovery.³¹ Your parents were abroad, and with no family to rely on, I gravitated towards London, eventually settling down with the half-pay of 6/- per day from the Army,³² and the 5/6 annuity³³ allotted to me after your granddad's death.

After a few meetings with the Medical Board based on my condition, my limited time actually in Military service, and my rough experiences in India and Afghanistan, I was allowed to resign my commission instead of completing the ten years' commissioned service. I had to give up the half-pay, but by this time I was living with Sherlock Holmes at 221B Baker Street, and life was to change for the better.

Endnotes

²⁵ The 30th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.

²⁶ In the various records available I have not been able to find any account of such an expedition.

²⁷ The fort at Khelat-i-Ghilzai.

²⁸ Enteric fever is more commonly known today as typhoid fever. I cannot explain why, in *STUD*, Watson wrote "For months my life was despaired of." As has been pointed out by many Sherlockians, if Watson had taken another few months to recover in India, he could not have caught the *Orontes* to return to England.

²⁹ *The Times*, November 5, 1880 (4d), November 26, 1880 (6c).

As for what happened to the regiments with which Watson served, the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers sailed from Bombay, on the troopship *Malabar*, on November 5th and landed at Portsmouth on December 6th. (*The Times*, November 6, 1880 (6c), December 4, 1880 (6b), December 7, 1880 (10c).) The 66th Berkshire Regiment was in Kandahar during the siege that was lifted on August 31st by the troops that marched from Kabul under General Roberts. They left Kandahar on October 1st and arrived at Karachi five weeks later. The Regiment sailed from Bombay on January 20, 1881, aboard the Troopship *Malabar*, and arrived in Portsmouth on February 17th. (*The Times*, January 21, 1881 (6a), February 18, 1881 (10a).)

³⁰ The 59th (2nd Nottinghamshire) Regiment of Foot.

- ³¹ *Medical Times and Gazette*, December 6, 1879, p. 647, states “TEMPORARY HALF-PAY. A Medical Officer who may become unfit for service in consequence of wounds received in action, or of ill-health contracted in and by the performance of military duty, as certified by a Medical Board, may be granted temporary half-pay, to be renewed on a report of a Medical Board, from time to time, until he shall recover, and until an opportunity shall occur for his re-employment. ... If after remaining for a period of not less than one year on half-pay he shall be reported by a Medical Board to be permanently unfit for further service, he may, provided he shall have been on full pay for a total period of at least five years, be placed upon permanent half-pay.”
- ³² Temporary half-pay was not truly fifty percent of full pay. The same report (p. 647) lists the temporary half-pay for a Medical Officer with less than 5 years’ service to be 6 shillings per day. Elsewhere (p. 645) the report lists the regular pay of a Surgeon to be £200 per year (about 11 shillings per day).
- ³³ “5/6” is five shillings and six pence, or about £100 per year. Watson wrote in *STUD* that he was living with “an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day.” 🐾

New Sherlockian Imprint

BY JEFF FALKINGHAM

The Summer 2020 issue (# 80) of *Explorations* contained an article titled “Self-Publishing Houses, Explorers’ Style.” It chronicled the experiences of several members of the Norwegian Explorers who are involved in self-publishing. Much of the article’s focus was on the art of developing one’s own publishing house logo.

While I regularly enjoy many articles in each issue of *Explorations*, this one particularly intrigued me. Like most independent authors, over the years I’d experienced my share of problems with a variety of publishers. Inspired by the writers and editors in the article I’ve cited, I figured this was a good time for me to try to eliminate some of those problems. After all, due to the pandemic, time was something of which I had plenty!

I wished to create an imprint logo and I received help from Lisa Rasmussen with

FASTSIGNS in Eden Prairie. Working remotely (in this era of social distancing), together we designed the logo you see here.

The logo made its debut in November, when I republished all of my works of historical fiction

that find Sherlock Holmes in Minnesota in the late 1800s: *The County Courthouse Capers* and *In Search of the Source*, both in eBook form, plus the 2-in-1 paperback titled *MURDER in Minnesota! Two Sherlockian Tales*, which includes both of the earlier works. Three more publications are planned for 2021: A collection of essays on Doyle and Holmes was released in January [details provided later in this newsletter – Ed.], a discussion/study guide for classrooms and book clubs in April, and an anthology of short stories in October. Watch for details on my website:

www.cccaper.com. 🐾



A Newbie at the Study Group

BY LINDA WAITE



Although I have been a member of the Norwegian Explorers for many years, I have only recently been attending activities. One of these is the Study Group, which I have participated in for about a year. At first, I was intimidated by the name Study Group, believing I’d have to do research or homework, dust off the files in my Mind Palace, or be expected to speak. Would the group be composed of experts? Would they welcome a Newbie? Would I be grilled on my knowledge of the Canon?

How it works: A story is assigned every month along with a list of study questions. Tom Gottwalt sends out meeting notices on a regular basis. The only “homework” is to read the story before the meeting. There are three alternating moderators for the group.

At my first meeting (pre-COVID), I was warmly welcomed. The meeting typically begins with a brief show & tell. I was fascinated by how many Holmes-related objects there are to discover. I listened to the discussion about the current month’s

story and the digressions and journeys down several paths. It was obvious that many people present were long-time scholars of the Holmes stories — in all incarnations — and knew each other well. I asked questions and gave opinions during the discussion and was listened to. After the story had been thoroughly discussed, we went around the table and told how high (or low) we rated the story and why.

A friend said the Study Group sounded like a book club and I agreed. I'm learning quite a bit about everything Sherlockian, meeting new people, and giving the little gray cells some stimulation. There is no need to be intimidated and, with a new cycle of stories about to begin, this is a great time to check out the Study Group.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Upcoming stories and Study Group dates are:
 March 20th, 2:00 P.M., "The Three Gables"
 April 17th, 2:00 P.M., "The Mazarin Stone"
 May 15th, 2:00 P.M., "The Creeping Man"
 June 19th, 2:00 P.M., Edgar Allan Poe stories.
 All are Zoom events at the regular link (included in Tom's monthly updates). 🐼

Do Geese Have Crops?

BY PHILLIP BERGEM

At the Study Group session this past December the story discussed was, appropriately enough, "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle." Somebody mentioned that a common complaint against the story is that geese do not have crops, as if that would preclude someone from shoving a diamond down a goose's throat. The person pointed out that geese do have gizzards and that it was very reasonable for a gemstone to be stored there.

I had wondered about this point for years but had never investigated it. Les Klinger does cover the matter in his Sherlock Holmes Reference Library (*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1998), appendix to BLUE, pages 178–179), mentioning some of the past commentary. With the

discussion acting as a catalyst, I decided to dig further and present the facts for the readers.

The upper part of a bird's digestive tract consists of the alimentary canal (no "alimentary, my dear Watson" jokes, please), the proventriculus (also known as the glandular stomach), and the gizzard (the ventriculus or muscular stomach). Food enters the proventriculus where secretions, primarily hydrochloric acid and pepsinogen, start the digestive process. The food is passed along to the gizzard where the strong muscles grind the food, necessary because of the lack of teeth to chew food. Some birds will eat small stones or grit that settle in the gizzard where they assist with grinding the food. Food will pass back and forth between the ventriculus and the proventriculus several times before passing along to the rest of the digestive tract.

Some birds (*e.g.*, chickens, turkeys, pigeons, budgerigars) — but not all — also have a crop. This is a thin walled expansion of the alimentary canal where food which is eaten quickly can be stored and released into the glandular stomach at a reasonable rate for digesting. The relative size of the crop varies among bird species.

Most of the literature and online resources state with certainty that geese do not have a crop. But, as with many areas of study in the Sherlockian world, it's not quite that simple. There are several reputable sources that do refer to a crop in geese. These include several sites that are managed by goose owners and a book on goose production (Buckland, Roger and Gérard Guy, *FAO Animal Production and Health Paper – 154 (Goose Production)*, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations, 2002, Chapter 3 "Digestive Physiology", <http://www.fao.org/3/y4359e/y4359e05.htm>). It would appear that even among professionals, there is some uncertainty about the existence of the goose crop.

In the story, the crop of the goose is first mentioned by Commissioner Peterson when he returned with the diamond, then by Holmes as he described the *dissecta membra* to Henry Baker, and finally by James Ryder as he described his actions. While a



professional goose-seller such as Mr. Breckenridge might know that a goose does not have a crop, it is no surprise that three non-professionals in the world of poultry would get it wrong. (Watson is blameless since he simply reported what was told to him.) The lack of a true crop does not make a difference to the story. It would still be possible to push a diamond down the gullet of a goose where it would get into the proventriculus and likely settle into the gizzard, awaiting discovery during preparation for when the goose is cooked.



(Editor's Desk – continued from page 1)

BSI. His investiture is *Morrison, Morrison, and Dodd* (from “The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire”). Heartfelt congratulations to Ray.

I am also thrilled to say that we have a number of new members. In 2020 and 2021 we have had 24 new people join the group, several of them in order to participate in the virtual Study Group meetings. We welcome you all! (If you have any contributions or suggestions for content in this newsletter, we would love to hear it. I have already received some suggestions from one member which will be included in upcoming issues.) As there have been some people who have dropped out, we remain fairly steady with 139 memberships (many of which are for couples).

Switching topics, a new series titled “The Irregulars” is soon to be released on Netflix (March 26th). It appears to be a dark take on the Sherlock Holmes saga, involving the supernatural and violence. Perhaps not for everyone’s tastes, and I feel that is valid if a person does not like it for that reason. However, I have heard that many people are complaining because Watson and several of the Irregulars are played by actors who are not the stereotypical Caucasian men and boys. The use of People of Color in these roles has evidently upset some folks who have expressed their disdain on several Internet platforms. This does not make sense and should be disturbing. The role of Watson has successfully been portrayed over the years by several women (in New York, Tokyo, and Moscow). In animated form, Watson or Watson-like sidekicks have been performed by Porky Pig, Pokey the Horse, puppets, dogs, and a robotic compudroid.


The characters of Holmes and Watson are malleable enough that they can be put into many different situations and still work, so long as the essence of the relationship is retained. This is one of the beautiful things about them. And presenting them in new forms expands the appeal to a broader range of people who, if not initially attracted to a white Victorian-era consulting detective and physician, might be drawn to someone who looks more like them. As Tim Johnson likes to say, the Sherlockian world is a big tent. It can and should fit a wide variety of people and tastes. I do not know if I will like “The Irregulars” as a show, but I welcome showing a Watson who happens to be Black. And, if it should happen to draw a diverse mix of new people to our decidedly non-diverse membership, I heartily welcome it. ~ Phil



Canonical Beer Names (part 1)

ORIGINAL IDEA BY PAUL THOMAS MILLER



At the 2017 Norwegian Explorers Annual Dinner, Tim Reich presented a toast to Mrs. Hudson that focused on beer names. It was funny and well received, and Tim wrote an article covering the subject for the Fall/Winter 2019 (#78) issue of *Explorations*. On Twitter this past January, Paul Thomas Miller (@BaronVonBork), the sole member of The Shingle of Southsea in Portsmouth, England, wondered “whether it would be possible to find a beer for every story in the Canon. And if so, how would I find enough space to display all the cans and bottles?” As images take up less shelf space than bottles, he then proceeded to post pictures of the many appropriate beer and cider bottles/cans and brewery logos he found. (Some will make you think for a moment before realizing the connection to a story.) A few have been added to his original postings to cover 54 of the 60 stories. There are enough that we will have to show them over two issues of *Explorations*. We hope that you enjoy this exercise as much as we did. Cheers! 



Hope Amber Ale
STUD



Agra IPA
SIGN



Adler Bräu
SCAN



Red Head
Red Ale – REDH



Sutherland
IPA – IDEN



Cooee Ginger
Beer – BOSG



Kentish Pip Cider
FIVE



Bitter &
Twisted – TWIS



Goose IPA
BLUE



Serpent Bite
SPEC



Crush
ENGR



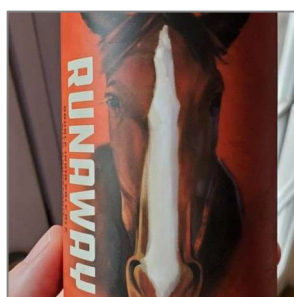
St. Simon
Lager – NOBL



Broken Crown
BERY



Copper Beech
Brewery – COPP



Runaway
IPA – SILV



Runaway
IPA – SILV



One Ear Saison
CARD



Yellowhead
YELL



Pinner
IPA – STOC



Armitage Pale Ale
GLOR



Cavalier Golden
Ale – MUSG



Cavalier Pale
Ale – MUSG



Reigate Ales Brewery
REIG



Mongoose
CROO



Resident Brewing Co.
RESI



Cervaza Diógenes
GREE

Stand Upon the Terrace

Remembering Susan Rice

BY RICHARD SVEUM



In September 28, 2020, we lost Susan Rice to cancer; she was a great friend of the Norwegian Explorers, someone who travelled to almost all of our Minnesota conferences, and we benefited from her presence. She spoke to us as one of the great Sherlockians, as she knew her Canon, was a great writer, and most importantly created with her outgoing personality a love of our diverse Sherlockian family.

I attended my first Gillette Luncheon in 1997 and got to know both Susan and Mickey. She and Mickey Fromkin, her partner of 40 years, were married on November 19, 2011, at the Player's Club in New York City and the next day hosted the ASH Dinner at the Moran's Chelsea Seafood Restaurant.

Susan was from Detroit, where she taught school and nurtured young Sherlockians and attended the Amateur Mendicant Society of Detroit. She relocated to New York City and worked as a travel agent. In 1981 she joined the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes with the investiture "Practical Handbook of Bee Culture with some Observations Upon the Segregation of the Queen." She was among the first women invested into the Baker Street Irregulars in 1991 as "Beeswing" and was awarded her 2 Shilling in 2002.

In my book collection I'm honored to have inscribed copies of her books:

- 1991 *A Compound of Excelsior*, her bee book about the Master's retirement
- 2000 *The Somnambulist and the Detective*, about her beloved Vincent Starrett and Sherlock Holmes

- 2004 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual*, the history of the ASH
- 2013 *The Sage of Santa Fee: Adventures and Public Life of John Bennett Shaw*

Susan told me many times that she was not a book collector. But I have been to her cozy apartment at 125 Washington Place in Greenwich Village. In addition to a comforting cat — she had a lot of books — all of Vincent Starrett's and a whole bookcase of bee books.

This summer, during the pandemic, we worked together on the 2020 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* about her beloved Vincent Starrett and the 100-year adventure of "The Unique Hamlet." So, if you subscribe, you should [have received] your copy and can read her last essay titled "And it is Always 1920."

I will miss her sense of humor, quick wit, sparkling conversation, and friendship.

Mary Manthie's Passing

BY PHILLIP BERGEM



Mary Manthie passed away on January 20, 2021. Many Explorers will fondly remember her as the wife of Wade Manthie who passed away in 2011. They were a very fun couple who enjoyed eating out at area restaurants, traveling together, and partaking in Explorer events.

Mary attended and helped select sites for Fowl Fanciers dinners, evenings where several Explorers would gather at a local restaurant for food, camaraderie, and conversation, and she and Wade hosted the Blue Carbuncle Dinner for several years. She also appeared in many of the early productions of the Red Throated League. Together they helped secure Annual Dinner venue opportunities at the Calhoun Beach Club and the Minneapolis Golf Club. Mary was supportive of Wade in his Explorers activities and was a true joy to know.

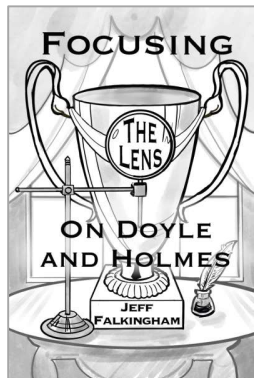
Parting Words and Trifles



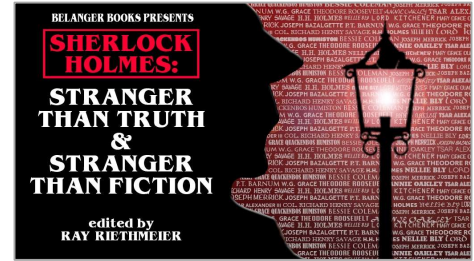
uth Berman wrote a poem, "Watson's Plane," which appeared in the January/February 2021 issue of the *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*. Ruth was kind enough to read the poem at the January Study Group.

- There are two new books published by the BSI Press that are noteworthy for the Explorers connections. One, *The Staunton Tragedy*, is the next release in the BSI Manuscript Series dealing with "The Adventure of the Missing Three-Quarter." John Bergquist did the copyediting, layout and production editing, Mary Ann Bradley assisted him with copyediting, Mike Whelan was editor, and Phil Bergem did the transcription, annotations and provided an essay. The other, *Corporals, Colonels and Commissionaires*, highlights the military elements of the Canon. Ray Riethmeier completed copyediting and John Bergquist did additional copyediting, layout and production editing. Explorers Monica Schmidt, Burt Wolder, Ross Davies and Phil Bergem had contributions in the book. Both books are interesting and highly recommended.

- Jeff Falkingham has published a book titled *Focusing the Lens on Doyle and Holmes*. It contains thirteen essays and reviews, including those that appeared in *Explorations* and the *Christmas Annuals*. The cover art was completed by another Norwegian Explorer, Amanda Downs Champlin. It is available as an eBook and in paper cover from **Amazon.com**.



- Ray Riethmeier has edited a pair of anthologies for Belanger Books — *Sherlock Holmes: Stranger Than Truth* and *Sherlock Holmes: Stranger Than Fiction*, featuring pastiches in which Holmes encounters historical figures and literary characters, respectively. Of particular interest to our local members might be that Ray reached out to Larry Millett, and he is pleased to say that the *Fiction* book will include a Shadwell Rafferty short story set after the *Ice Palace Murders* novel. The two anthologies are going to be published simultaneously, and they will be funded on Kickstarter via a campaign that started on March 8th and ends on March 30: **tinyurl.com/cy3kfdpp**



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- The **Holmes in the Heartland** conference sponsored by the Parallel Case in St. Louis was postponed from last summer. It is now scheduled for July 9–11, 2021. Details can be found at **parallelcasestl.wixsite.com/home/holmes-in-the-heartland**.

- The **Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection** in Toronto is planning a conference to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Collection. It is planned for September 24–26, 2021, although at present it is uncertain if it will be a virtual event or in-person.

- The **International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes** is scheduled to come to the Minnesota History Center in Saint Paul, exhibiting from October 1, 2021 to March 21, 2022. When more details are known, including if there will be an organized Explorers gathering, Tom Gottwalt will send them out in an email notice. 🐾

The Norwegian Explorers

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