



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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Holmes Collections and, more directly, with many individual Explorers. He showed me great kindness and appreciated (and used) many of the research materials that I developed for Arthur Conan Doyle. I was fortunate enough to have lunch with him when I visited the area last Fall. He will be greatly missed by many. ~ Phil 

The Red-Throated League Zoom Performance

BY KAREN ELLERY



n Thursday, May 13th at 7:30 P.M. the Red-Throated League gave our first Zoom performance, presenting "Death Holds the Prompt Book," a Sherlock Holmes radio adventure by Edith Meiser. This script was first broadcast on April 12, 1933, almost exactly 88 years, 1 month previously. While we are looking forward to the eventual return of live performances, the Zoom platform did afford us the pleasure of guest artists John Clemo of Bismark, ND, and David Harnois of Washburn, IA.

The League actors prerecorded the performance from our respective homes and it was shown for the audience linking in through the Zoom site and our Facebook account.

Edith Meiser first brought Sherlock Holmes to the radio in 1930. Over the next 18 years she adapted most of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories for radio and also created many original adventures, such as the one we performed. In 1986, Ms. Meiser donated her collection of Sherlockian manuscripts and related material to the University of Minnesota. The Red-Throated League is proud to work with both the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University

Editor's Desk



e hope that you enjoy this latest issue of *Explorations*. Members continue to have fun participating in the monthly Study Group and the Red-Throated League, both of which are highlighted with articles. Bob Brusic entertains us with some thoughts on brains, and Gary Thaden considers the recent literary output of several Norwegian Explorers. A member asked for a short history of the group, and we are pleased to present it to those who are likewise curious. On a related note, Karen Murdock visited the gravesite of founder, Theodore Blegen, and wrote about her experience. The contributions to these pages by members are greatly appreciated.

On a sadder note, it is with extreme sorrow that I pass along the news of the death of Jon Lellenberg. He passed away unexpectedly on April 24, 2021, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, after a short illness. Jon was a very good friend of the Norwegian Explorers, the Friends of the Sherlock

of Minnesota Libraries and the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota to bring you these wonderful stories.



Edith Meiser

We dedicated our performance to a former member of our company, Mary Manthie. She passed beyond the Reichenbach on January 20, 2021, and we stand together on the terrace to remember her and her contributions to the Red-Throated League.

The cast consisted of Tom Gottwalt as Sherlock Holmes, Peter Cavanaugh as Dr. John Watson, Bill Teeple as Joseph Bell and Sir Hubert, John Clemo as Reginald "Reggie" Musgrave and Constable Jenkins, David Harnois as Dr. Jeffrey, and Karen Ellery as Betty. Music was performed by Morva Klein and Foley effects were by Graham Leathers. The play was directed by Karen Ellery, and video production was by Steve Mason.

The show can be viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/4tDIj1lgJIw>.

More of John and David can be found on their own websites. John's is *TruNorth Theatre* (<https://www.trunorththeatre.org>) and David's is *I Am Lost Without My Boswell* (<https://iam-lostwithoutmyboswell.com>). 🐾



Call for Papers — 2021 Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual



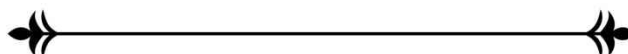
Submissions are being accepted for this year's Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual. This year's theme is **Science and Medicine**. The subjects of science and medicine run throughout the entirety of the Canon, from the mention of Bart's Hospital and Holmes's experiments in the first chapter of *A Study in Scarlet*, to his use of a microscope in the opening sentence of "Shoscombe Old Place," the last Holmes adventure published in *The Strand Magazine*.

Suggested Categories for Submissions (2000 word maximum):

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Article or essay | 5. Joke |
| 2. Poem | 6. Illustration / Artwork |
| 3. Cartoon | 7. Quiz / Puzzle |
| 4. Sherlockian or Doylean review | 8. Pastiche |

Entries must be received no later than **October 1, 2021**.

Please submit electronic versions of papers (Microsoft Word preferred) to: ray@PULPlications.com. You should receive a reply e-mail within two days from one of the editors, Ray Riethmeier or Phil Bergem, acknowledging the successful receipt of your submission. Contact either Ray or Phil if you need more details. 🐾



Study Group — The Creeping Man

BY KAREN MURDOCK



The Explorers Discussion Group zoomed to a meeting on May 15th. Sixteen people participated, mostly Explorers who live in Minnesota, but a few far-flung Sherlockians, including one from France. Steve Miller led the discussion of "The Creeping Man." He showed off his T-shirt and statuettes of the 3 wise monkeys. CREE was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in March 1923.

Sonia Yazmadjian wondered why Watson is so formal, referring to his friend as "Mr. Sherlock Holmes" in the first sentence of this story. Karen Ellery looked up the phrase "Mr. Sherlock Holmes" and found that it occurs 60 times in the Canon, but usually as part of the introduction to a narrative, as it is here. Holmes and Watson did not address each other as "Mister." They called one another by their last names. Karen Murdock pointed out that things were more formal a century ago than they are now. In "The Six Napoleons," for instance, Lestrade consistently calls Sherlock "Mr. Holmes," even though they had known one another and had worked on many cases together over many years at that point.

Watson is rather self-deprecatory in this story. He says Holmes likes to speak aloud in his (Watson's) presence but many of his remarks "would have been as appropriately addressed to his bedstead." Watson comes at once when Holmes wants him — regardless of whether it is convenient for Watson. Steve M. asked, "Is this a sign of an abusive relationship?" Kit Gordon said that there was "real affection" between the two.

Karen M. wondered about the observation Holmes makes about dogs:

A dog reflects the family life. Whoever saw a frisky dog in a gloomy family, or a sad dog in a happy one? Snarling people have snarling dogs, dangerous people have dangerous ones. And their passing moods may reflect the passing moods of others.

Karen wondered if there was any scientific evidence for this. She said she had never seen an unhappy golden retriever in any sort of family; she thought this breed was just naturally ebullient. An enthusiastic discussion of dog personalities ensued. Steve Schier said he has a rescue dog that is “not the smiling sort,” although both he and his wife are quite happy people. Karen E. said she had a lot of experience with rescue animals and she felt that dogs with personality issues are the fault of the original owners. She

said that pit bulls are very people-friendly by nature and only become vicious if they fall into the hands of vicious people. Sonia Yazmadjian said the exception was Chihuahuas, which seem always to be very aggressive. She said Yorkshire terriers are much more common (among small dog breeds) in France, in part because Chihuahuas are very expensive there.

Steve M. asked, “Is this story really a farce or is it a mystery?” All agreed that there were elements of science fiction and fantasy about the story. Steve M. said that Professor Presbury reminded him of Professor Challenger.

Steve S. said there really were experiments with monkey glands in the 1920s. It was rather a fad. Karen E. said that Dorothy Sayers used these experiments as a plot device in “Bellona Club.” Steve M. said the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals shut down the experiments with monkeys.

Karen M. said that, among the late stories in the Canon, this one was original and did not “re-cycle” any of the plot devices Doyle had used in earlier stories. Karen E. said that Holmes does make some good deductions.

Steve S. recounted the Jeremy Brett version of CREE, which added several subplots and characters, which made it more entertaining and inter-

esting than the actual Canonical story. He read part of a Barbara Rusch essay in which she argued that this story had all sorts of interesting elements: pantheism, Darwinism, sexuality, drugs, Gothic horror.

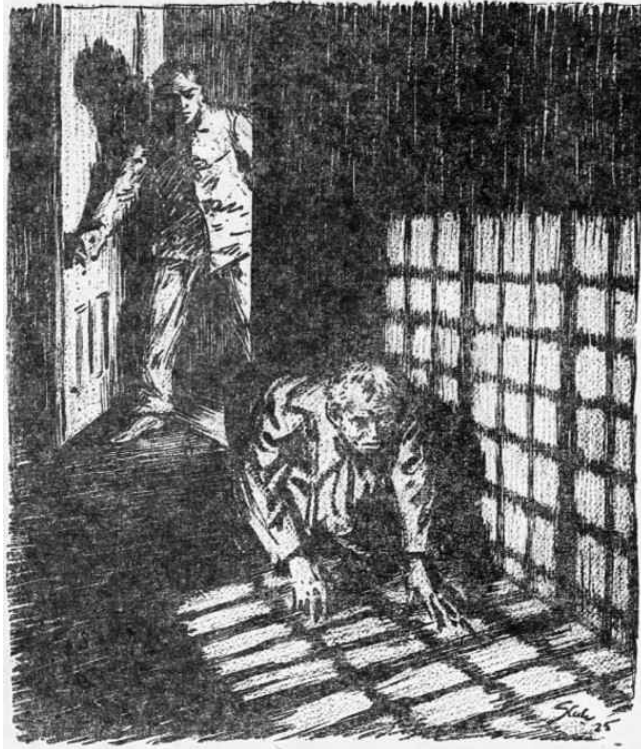
There was general agreement, with several anecdotes, that, when it comes to sex, people are willing to try anything — bear gall bladders, rhinoceros horns, etc., etc. Karen E. raised the issue of ageism; even though Professor Presbury is only 61, he was considered elderly. The idea that he could take something to recover his youth

was “a powerful lure” for him. Steve M. felt that the ending showed “a silly old man getting his comeuppance.”

Steve S. thought the ending was much too abrupt. We don’t know what happens to the characters. Does Presbury recover?

We wondered how the professor got to be rich. Normally being a professor is not the way to wealth. Karen M. said that maybe he wrote textbooks — this is one way a teacher can earn a lot of money. Others suggested that he came from old family wealth or that he had a rich first wife.

Our ratings of the tale (on a scale from 1 to 5) were generally low. Bob Brusic gave it a 4, however, because he said he could use it in teaching an Ethics course, since it raised lots of interesting questions. Karen Titrud said that the animal cruelty in the story dragged the tale down to a 1 or 2 for her. Beverly Proud gave it a 4 because she said parts of it (especially the father-peering-in-the-window scene) were “genuinely scary.” Tammy



Garrison said the issues raised were “cutting-edge at the time.” Steve M. said he thought CREE was “a story with a lot of potential, but it falls apart at the end.”

Karen M. brought up the issue of “Scary Foreigners,” which are extremely common in the Canon. In this case, however, Professor Presbury sought out Lowenstein; the scary foreigner did not try to foist something dangerous on an innocent Englishman. Ruth Berman said that the city of Prague had sinister associations because it was the home of Rabbi Loew, who in the 16th century was said to have created the “Golem,” a sort of Frankenstein monster made out of clay.

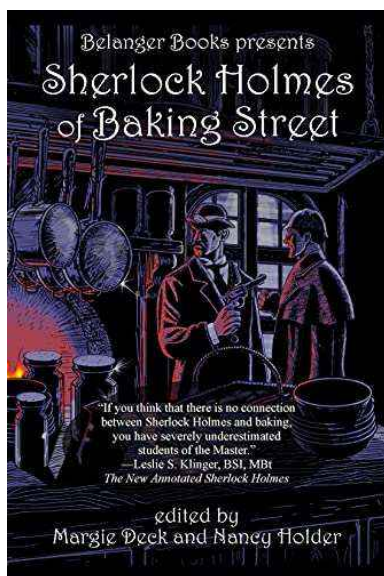
All the geezers in the Explorers ended the discussion by lamenting the decline of book reading by the younger generation (present company excepted, of course). 🐼

A Bibliophile's Dilemma

BY GARY THADEN



As I was sitting in my favorite reading chair, with a bookcase to the right of me, a bookcase to the left of me, a stack of magazines on a side table on my left, and a stack of books on the floor on the right, I was contemplating what to read next. A thick biography of Napoleon, the latest book on the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, the latest Jo Nesbo novel, or one of those Norwegian Explorer books. Ray Riethmeier's editing of *Sherlock Holmes: Stranger Than Truth* (and *Sherlock Holmes: Stranger Than Fiction*), Julie McKuras's chapter in the Reichenbach Irregulars new book *Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and Switzerland: Serious and less Serious Musings!* Maybe Richard Sveum's BSI 2020 Christmas Annual, *The 100-Year Adventure of The Unique Hamlet*. Or John Berquist's tribute in *A Quiet Air of Mastery*. Or Phillip Bergem's excellent



transcriptions and annotations of “The Adventure of Black Peter” for *Deadly Harpoon*. Or Monica Schmidt's essay titled “The Invisible Imperialists: The Role of Military Wives in 19th Century Colonial India” in the BSI publication *Corporals, Colonels and Commissioners*. Or Tim Johnson's and Julie McKuras's contributions on food in *Sherlock Holmes of Baking Street*. Those darn Explorers. They write and write and edit and write and edit and write some more. I could spend all my reading time just keeping up with them. And I still haven't finished the last *Explorers Christmas Annual*. Darn them! 🐼

History of The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota

The following information was taken from *The History of the Norwegian Explorers* (1998) by Julie McKuras and Richard J. Sveum, and *The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota 65th Anniversary: An Updated History and Our Explorations Since Our 50th Anniversary 1999–2013* (2013) written and edited by Julie McKuras, Timothy Reich, and Ray Riethmeier.

* * *



In April, 1947, five prominent University of Minnesota faculty members met for lunch at the Campus Club, located in the Coffman Memorial Union at the University of Minnesota. Having previously discovered their shared devotion to the stories of Sherlock Holmes, they decided the time had come for the formation of a scion society in the Twin Cities. Some of the specifics of that luncheon have been lost over the years, but what remains is the legacy of these men not only in founding the Norwegian Explorers, but in their own accomplishments as well.¹

Those men were:

Wallace Armstrong (1905–1984) received his Bachelor's degree in Chemistry at the University of Texas and his Master's from New York University. He came to the University of Minnesota in 1928 and received his Ph.D. and M.D. He served as an assistant professor, a Professor, and eventually Chairman of the Physiological Chemistry Department.

¹ 1998, p. 1.

Theodore Blegen (1891–1969) received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Minnesota. After teaching high school history in Minnesota and Wisconsin, he served as superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society. He was active in the Norwegian-American Historical Society and was a member of the Torske Klubben. A Guggenheim Fellow to Norway and author of twenty-six books, Blegen was Dean of the Graduate School at the U of M from 1938 to 1960. Lack of conclusive evidence leads us to believe that it was Blegen who originated the name of The Norwegian Explorers for the group.

Bryce L. Crawford, Jr. (1914–2011) graduated from high school when he was fifteen years old. In 1931 he won first place in the National Edison chemistry essay contest and was flown to Menlo Park, NJ, where he met Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. He received his Bachelor's, Master's, and



Ph.D. from Stanford University by the time he was twenty-three. He conducted post-doctorate work at Harvard and taught chemistry at Yale for one year before coming to the University of Minnesota in 1940 as Professor in the Physical Chemistry Department. During

World War II he did research into the field of rocket propellants. Crawford was named a Guggenheim Fellow and engaged in his studies for two years at Cal Tech and Oxford University. He won many prestigious awards in his field and served on a number of committees. He was Chair of the Chemistry Department and Dean of the graduate school from 1960 to 1972.

E. W. ("Mac") McDiarmid (1909–2000) attended Texas Christian University, Emory University, and the University of Chicago Graduate School. He was a librarian at Baylor University and taught at the University of Illinois where he became Assistant Director of the Library School. He was appointed University of Minnesota Librarian and Director of the Library School at the University of Minnesota in



1943. His additional University posts included Dean of the College of Science, Literature and the Arts and Director of the Graduate School Fellowship Office. He spent two years at the University of Concepción in Chile establishing graduate programs, and his "The Sights and Sounds of Chile" was irregularly published in the Minneapolis newspaper. He returned to the library, retiring in 1978, then worked to help build the world's largest Sherlock Holmes Collections.

E. W. Ziebarth (1910–2001) received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and his Master's and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota where he served as an Associate Professor of Speech. In the 1940s and '50s he traveled to Europe, the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and Japan as a foreign correspondent. He was an award-winning news editor and CBS broadcaster as well as a member of the College of Liberal Arts' faculty where he taught international and intercultural communication. He cohosted the series "This I Believe" with Edward R. Murrow and won Peabody Awards in 1948 and 1972 for his documentaries. Ziebarth was Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and interim president of the University.²



After the April luncheon there was a great deal of activity among the five, including letters to Edgar W. Smith and the *Baker Street Journal*. Among these was the announcement of the official name of the group and the choice of the term "Sigerson" for the head of the Explorers, which was held by

Mac, and receiving a list of regional subscribers to the *Journal* who might be interested in joining the new group.

On January 15, 1948, Sigerson McDiarmid mailed an invitation to the first formal meeting, to be held on January 23, and asked recipients of this invitation to pass it along to other interested parties.³ An account of the event appeared in the *BSJ*.

² 2013, p. 9–10.

³ 1998, p. 5.

By the end of the decade the membership of the Norwegian Explorers was growing. Although at that time the Baker Street Irregulars did not allow women members, the Norwegian Explorers welcomed them, as they had decided at the initial luncheon.⁴ Among the earliest members was Twin City Sherlockian, Mrs. Anne Oakins Rosso, who had a piece printed in the *Baker Street Journal* in 1948.

The founding members each had growing professional responsibilities and personal lives, but they still found time for their Sherlockian pursuits and the Explorers group. Irregular meetings of the Norwegian Explorers continued, with new members in attendance. The tradition of the Annual Dinner, held at the Campus Club, came to be the most regular event for the Explorers, featuring canonical toasts and shared fellowship.⁵ Theodore C. Blegen, already an accomplished author, published *The Crowded Box-Room: Sherlock Holmes as a Poet* under the Norwegian Explorers imprint in 1951.

In 1952 a second book by the Norwegian Explorers was published, *Sherlock Holmes: Master Detective*, edited by Blegen and E. W. McDiarmid. Among the contributions was a pastiche by Anne Oakins Rosso who, sadly, died in early 1952 before the book's release.

It was sometime during the early 1950s that Dr. Philip S. Hench (1896–1965) joined the Norwegian Explorers. Dr. Hench, the winner (with two fellow Mayo Clinic associates) of the 1950 Nobel Prize for Medicine, realized that no marker existed at the Reichenbach Falls to identify it as the site of the climactic battle between Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty. Working with The Sherlock Holmes Society of London, Dr. Hench and the Norwegian Explorers decided to erect a plaque. In 1956 Bryce Crawford and fellow Explorer Ray Moore traveled to Switzerland to ascertain the proper placement of the marker at the Falls To raise funds for the plaque the Explorers published a third book, *Exploring Sherlock*

Holmes, in 1957. The plaque was unveiled at the Reichenbach Falls on June 25, 1957, and it bears an inscription written by Bryce C. Crawford. It remains there today [although shifted from its original location] and states:

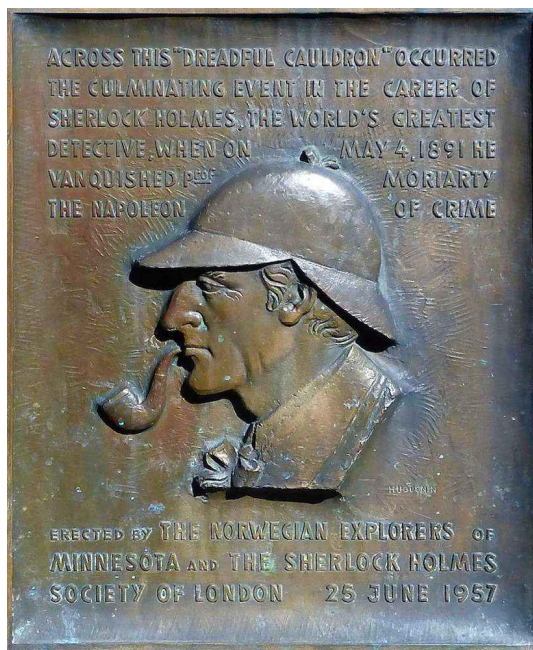
Across this "dreadful cauldron" occurred the culminating event in the career of Sherlock Holmes, the world's greatest detective, when on May 4, 1891 he vanquished Prof. Moriarty, the Napoleon of crime. Erected by the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota and The Sherlock Holmes Society of London. 25 June 1957.⁶

Following this monumental effort, the Explorers became relatively inactive in the 1960s, partly due to increased responsibilities of the founders in their academic careers, or the deaths of Hench and Blegen. The 1970s, however, saw an increase in interest in Sherlock Holmes and in the activities

of the Norwegian Explorers. Part of this was due to the popularity of Nicholas Meyer's *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* published in 1974. Also occurring in 1974 was the purchase of the James C. Iraldi collection of Sherlock Holmes related materials for the University of Minnesota, orchestrated by E. W. McDiarmid and Special Collections Curator Austin McLean.

John Bennett Shaw made his first appearance before an audience of Norwegian Explorers in 1975 when he spoke about "The Cult of Sherlock Holmes." Like McDiarmid, Shaw's name would be firmly attached to the Holmes Collections in years to come.

Cultivating Sherlock Holmes was published by Sumac Press for the Norwegian Explorers in 1978 and marked the 30th anniversary of the group. The book was dedicated to the memory of Theodore Blegen, Thomas Daniels, and Philip S. Hench and contained articles by McDiarmid, Ronald M. Hubbs, Joseph B. Connors, Jack Key, and three others who remain active in the Explorers today:



⁴ 1998, p. 7.

⁵ 1998, p. 8.

⁶ 2013, p. 11.

Ruth Berman, John Bergquist and J. Randolph Cox.

That same year saw the Library's acquisition of the Mary Kahler and Philip S. Hench Collection of Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle. In July of 1979 a Norwegian Explorer meeting was held to dedicate the collection, and an exhibition of materials — with an accompanying pamphlet by Explorer Andrew Malec — was held at the library.⁷ Among the treasures in the Kahler and Hench collection were a holographic manuscript of Conan Doyle's story "The Horror of the Heights" and four (!) copies of the 1887 Beeton's *Christmas Annual* featuring the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet*.

The 1980s saw continued growth of the Norwegian Explorers based on the strength of the members. John Bennett Shaw returned to Minnesota in July 1983 to host a two-day seminar which featured Edith Meiser and highlighted her work on Sherlock Holmes radio broadcasts. The group organized a conference in September 1984, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in Minnesota," co-sponsored by the Norwegian Explorers, the Minneapolis Public Library, the St. Paul Public Library, and the University of Minnesota's Special Collections and Rare Books. This was the first of a series of conferences with which the Explorers have been involved. An increase in membership was aided by the Jeremy Brett series on television.

The growth in the 1980s and accompanying enthusiasm of new members resulted in a broad range of activities for local members. Spring of 1987 saw the first issue of the Explorer's newsletter *Explorations*, edited by Linda Reed (Schacher). Later that same year the Explorers held the first of several Silver Blaze races at Canterbury Downs racetrack. In addition, there were movie events, presentations, and group attendances at Sherlockian plays. The Explorers continued its close relationship with the University of Minnesota Special Collections, and during this time the Library acquired letters, manuscripts, photographs, and original drawings by Frederic Dorr Steele; radio scripts and broadcast recordings from Edith Meiser; and books, periodicals, newspaper columns, manuscripts, and correspondence from Vincent Starrett.⁸

The Red-Throated League was organized by Reverend Robert Brusick and Bill Teeple in 1990. After several years of singing performances at the Luther Northwestern Seminary, they switched to doing live performances of Edith Meiser's original scripts of Sherlock Holmes adventures at the Pavlek Museum of Broadcasting in the suburb St. Louis Park. The first such performance was on June 24, 1995, and continued there through May 27, 2018. Bob stepped down as Director of the Red-Throated League in late 2018. The group continues under the leadership of Karen Ellery, with performances having shifted to the Andersen Library (when not otherwise affected by the Covid pandemic).

The Norwegian Explorers remained closely tied with the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the U of M. In 1995 Austin McLean retired as Curator of the Special Collections, and Jamie Hubbs was hired as a part-time Collection Specialist for the Sherlock Holmes Collections.⁹ In 1992 Jamie had begun hosting the monthly study group, which is still popular and continues with different Study Group leaders nearly three decades later.

The October 13–15 [1995] Conference, "The Detective and the Collector," dedicated to the collection of the late John Bennett Shaw, was put on by the University of Minnesota, with the assistance of the Norwegian Explorers.¹⁰ This was to recognize that the University had acquired Shaw's monumental collection of Sherlock Holmes materials. The choice of Minnesota for his materials was based on the acquisition and curatorship of past collections and resulted in the largest collection of such materials in the world. It was with great joy when, on April 8, 2000, a number of Explorers attended the dedication of the Elmer L. Andersen Library located on the West Bank of the U of M. The Sherlock Holmes Collections was moved to a dedicated area in the underground storage vaults. The year previous, Tim Johnson started in his position as Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections on July 1, 1999. Later, following a significant bequest from the Allen Mackler estate and formation of an endowed Chair, his position became the Curator of Special Collections and Rare Books and the E. W. McDiarmid Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections.

⁷ 2013, p. 12.

⁸ 1998, p. 22.

⁹ 1998, p. 25.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

One of the many things that contribute to the good exposure of the Norwegian Explorers is the Explorers' *Christmas Annual*. It started in 2002 with an idea by then-president Julie McKuras.¹¹ John Bergquist volunteered to edit it, which he did until 2009. Tim Reich, Ray Riethmeier, and Phil Bergem have carried on editing it since then. The Annual provides wonderful recognition for the Explorers because it consistently has high quality content, and because it is provided to attendees of the BSI Dinner and the Gaslight Gala held in New York each January.

We are approaching the 65th Anniversary of the group's founding, and the group remains strong due to the quality of its membership and active leadership. We look forward to many more decades of this wonderful group.

* * *

The position of "Sigerson" was retired following Mac's lengthy tenure. The terms of the subsequent presidents each begin in December with the elections held during the Annual meetings.

E. W. McDiarmid, "Sigerson" 1948–1986. Presidents: Dr. C. Paul Martin, 1986–1989; Pj Doyle, 1989–1991; Bruce Southworth, 1991–1994; Allen Mackler, 1994–1997; Julie McKuras, 1997–2006; Gary Thaden, 2006–2017; Tom Gottwalt, 2017 to present.

Conferences

The Norwegian Explorers have garnered a deserved good reputation for hosting fun and informative conferences.

- The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in Minnesota: An International Conference — September 28–29, 1984
- Victorian Criminal Classes: Rogues, Rascals and Ruffians — June 11–13, 1993
- The Detective and the Collector — October 13–15, 1995
- Founders' Footprints — August 7–9, 1998
- 2001: A Sherlockian Odyssey — June 29 through July 1, 2001
- A River Runs by It: Holmes and Doyle in Minnesota — June 11–13, 2004
- Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas — July 6–8, 2007
- The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes — August 6–8, 2010

- Sherlock Holmes through Time and Space — August 9–11, 2013
- The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes — June 17–19, 2016
- Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences — August 8–11, 2019



Finding a Founding Father: Theodore Blegen

BY KAREN MURDOCK

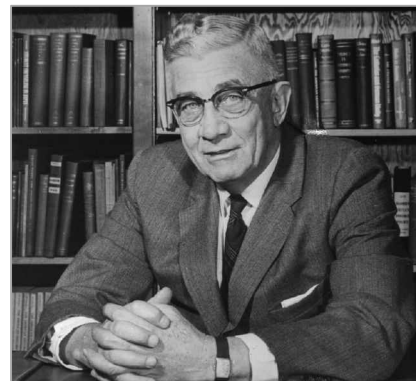


Photo credit: Forest History Center

A long winter and an *extremely* long year of staying home had left me restless to get out of town and go somewhere — anywhere! When the first day of May arrived and my second Covid shot kicked in, I came up with the idea of visiting the graves of some of the Founding Fathers of the Norwegian Explorers.

The first "Father" I thought of was Theodore Blegen. When I was in grad school at the U of M I used to take and to teach classes in Blegen Hall. (He is among the very few Sherlockians prominent enough to have had buildings named after them.) I own and have read his one-volume history of the state of Minnesota¹².

Theodore Christian Blegen (1891–1969) was a historian and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota. He was one of the founders of The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota. He was the co-editor, with E. W. McDiarmid, of two anthologies of Sherlockian essays put out by The Norwegian Explorers, *Sherlock Holmes: Master Detective* (1952), which is on the "Shaw 100" list, and

¹¹ 2013, p. 16.

¹² *Minnesota: A History of the State*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

Exploring Sherlock Holmes (1957). Blegen was the author of *The Crowded Box-Room: Sherlock Holmes as Poet* (1951), which examines the great detective as a man of imagination, using striking figures of speech drawn from Holmes's great variety of interests.

Fortunately, he had an unusual name. So when, using the "Find a Grave" website, I found a "Theodore Blegen" buried in Cottage Grove Cemetery, I was pretty sure this was *our* Theodore Blegen.

Cottage Grove was the perfect distance for an afternoon jaunt — just past the built-up urban fringe and into the countryside, about a 25-minute drive from my home in Minneapolis. I drove down, found Blegen, and paid my respects to him and his wife. The cemetery is isolated and peaceful. I recommend this little outing to my fellow Explorers. Bring a picnic.




Blegen and his wife rest beneath a cedar tree.

For those of you with GPS systems in your car, the address of the Cottage Grove Cemetery is 10981 70th Street South, Cottage Grove. Plug in the address and do what the GPS lady tells you to do.

For those without a GPS, follow these directions:

From Minneapolis, get on Interstate 94 heading east. Go past downtown Saint Paul. Take Exit 244 and get onto U.S. Highway 10, heading SOUTH. Drive 7.6 miles. Take Exit 127 onto County Highway 22 — Summit Avenue. At the top of the exit ramp, turn LEFT and get onto Route 22, heading east. Drive 5.6 miles east on Route 22. The Cottage Grove Cemetery is on the right (south) side of the road.

Take the first (west) entrance to the cemetery. Drive about 60 yards into the cemetery (past the first cross street, but not so far as the second), pull off the road, and park on the grass. Blegen and his wife, Clara, are buried beneath a cedar tree on the right (west) side of the road, about seven yards from the road, between gravestones for Cockriel and Carnes. 



Hi, Ted! Nice to meet you! I used to teach classes in your hall!

Brains Are for Thinking... and Then Some

BY ROBERT BRUSIC

"Watson, you must use your brain!"

It is not at all certain that Holmes ever issued this edict to his loyal but less disciplined roommate. However, it is certain that he used his own gray matter quite deliberately. Surely that was apparent when Holmes coiled himself up to puff and ponder a "three pipe problem." We can readily see that the man of action is also supremely a man of cogitation, one who uses his powerful brain as well as his energetic body.

Proof of that condition is illustrated in Dr. Mortimer's effusive observation upon first meeting the detective in the opening scene of *Hound of the Baskervilles*. "I had hardly expected," Mortimer bubbled, "so dolichocephalic a skull or such well-marked supra-orbital development." Dr. Mortimer was so impressed with Holmes's parietal fissured skull (doubtless housing a brain to go with it) that he coveted that organ for his own collection.

Elsewhere, the size of Holmes's thinking apparatus is noted in a kind of backhanded and venomous swipe by Professor Moriarty. The malicious

professor (who himself has a prodigious dome) comments — as an insult no doubt — on his first encounter with his nemesis in “The Final Problem”: “You have less frontal development than I should have expected.” Nice shot, but in this context, it is a no-brainer.

We are truly relieved that Sherlock Holmes won the Brain War. Elsewhere in the canon there is a footnote or two to this exercise. In the “Adventure of the Empty House” Colonel Sebastian Moran had (so he thought) successfully dispatched Holmes with a well-placed shot from his trusty air gun. Instead, it was a wax bust Moran assassinated, “plumb in the middle of the back of the head and smack through the brain,” so Holmes summarized. And once again we deduce that the detective had a use for his brain beyond thinking.

A seasonal observation regarding the brain appears in the “The Blue Carbuncle.” At the outset of the story Holmes is having a bit of fun by coaxing Watson to deduce clues from an old shabby hat. “But you are joking,” jibed Watson. “What can you gather from this old battered felt hat?” Quite a bit, according to the detective, including the insight that the owner of the hat was an intellectual. How so, the baffled doctor challenged his friend. For answer Holmes clapped the hat upon his head. It came right over the forehead and settled on the bridge of his nose. “It is a question of cubic capacity,” said he. “A man with so large a brain must have something in it.”

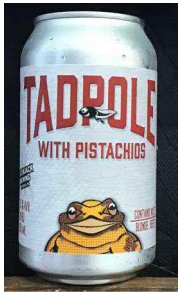
Most people reading this hat trick today are likely to dismiss it as a bit of Victorian humor. On the other hand, there is this to consider: While reading *Long River Winding: Life, Love, and Death along the Connecticut [River]*, Jim Bissland makes a Holmes-like observation. He tells a story about Daniel Webster, “that voice and his imposing head (which) had given Webster a giant’s image.” Indeed, Webster’s hat size was bigger than the average man’s. An autopsy revealed an unusually large brain — almost sixty-four ounces compared to the average of fifty ounces (p. 212).

Mortimer, Moriarty, Baker, Moran, Webster and, of course, Holmes, all seem to agree: Brains are for thinking... and then some. 🐼

Canonical Beer Names (part 2)

ORIGINAL IDEA BY PAUL THOMAS MILLER

In the last issue (Winter 2021) we included images of beer and cider cans or bottles with names that suggest canonical Sherlock Holmes stories. The idea originated with a tweet by Paul Thomas Miller (@BaronVonBork) of Portsmouth, England. Here are the remainder of the images in the set. 🐼



Tadpole
NAVA



Moriarty Ale
FINA



Black Dog
Ale – HOUN



Colonel Lager
EMPT



Secret Space
NORW



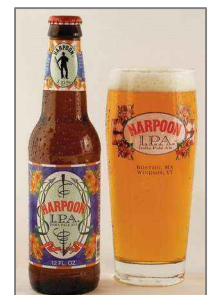
Dancing
Man Wheat
Beer
DANC

Fat Tire
Amber Ale
SOLI



Harpoon
IPA
BLAC

Priory
Pale Ale
PRIO





Blackmail
Stout – CHAS



Napoleon Complex
IPA – SIXN



Cheater Hops
3STU



Chain Smoker
GOLD



Pompey Ale
MISS



Vox Populi
ABBE



San Lucas
SECO



Talk Birdy to Me
VALL



Tiger Lager
WIST



Red Circle
Brewing – REDC



Yellow Submarine
BRUC



Nail in the
Coffin – LADY



Devil's Foot Ginger
Beer – DEVI



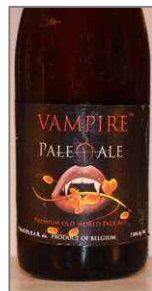
Spy Wine
Cooler – LAST



Blanche de
Namur – BLAN



Gem Amber
Ale – MAZA



Vampire Pale
Ale – SUSS



Three Ryes
Men – 3GAR



Thor's Equinox
THOR



Lion's Mane
LION



Long Black
Veil – VEIL

Book Review — *The Rise and Fall of an Eighties Sherlockian*

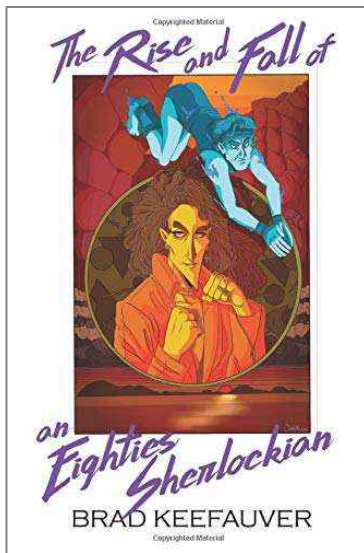
BY PHILLIP BERGEM

Brad Keefauver has written a wonderful book, *The Rise and Fall of an Eighties Sherlockian*. Brad has a deep passion for all things Sherlockian and he explains his early roots and how it grew and manifested itself. The eighties predate my own involvement in the Sherlockian world, so this was a great insight into the time and happenings. I recognized a number of people mentioned, but there were many more that I enjoyed learning about.

He brings us along through each year with interesting anecdotes and remembrances centered around Peoria, Illinois, and the vicinity. We learn of the various projects he worked on, groups he was involved with, and people he came to know. Of particular interest to me was his friendship with Pj Doyle and Linda Reed and his experiences with the Norwegian Explorers.

I can't say it better than the blurb on the back of the book: "Offering the sort of details that only another Sherlock Holmes fan would love, Brad Keefauver tells the tale of his own Sherlockian eighties, while hoping to figure out just what those years meant to both him and his fellow Sherlockians."

In case you can't tell, I highly recommend this book. I hope that he continues with covering future decades. 🐾



Parting Words and Trifles



ary Thaden previously identified a number of recent books with contributions by Norwegian Explorers, any of which would be a good addition to your bookshelf. In addition, there are a few other items that we would like to highlight.

- We know that some avid Sherlockians/Holmesians like to blur the lines between the writings of Watson and religious tomes. Paul Thomas Miller of The Shingle of Southsea in Portsmouth, England, has taken it to a novel and interesting next step. As he writes, "the intention of this project was to provide a system whereby specific sentences in The Canon could be referenced easily, modelled on the chapter and verse system of the Christian Bible." He has taken the entire Canon and numbered the chapters and sentences. "Using this method, the first sentence of the second chapter of *A Study in Scarlet* may be given as simply 'STUD 2:1' instead of having to write out the whole sentence: 'We met next day as he had arranged, and inspected the rooms at No. 221B, Baker Street, of which he had spoken at our meeting.'" The results of his work can be downloaded at chapterandverseholmes.co.uk or purchased very inexpensively at Amazon.com.

- Scott Monty and Burt Wolder have been bringing us incredible episodes in their podcast, *I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere*, for many years. Recently they invited John Bergquist and Phil Bergem for an interview about the latest BSI Manuscript Series publication *The Staunton Tragedy*. You can find the episode at:

www.ihearofsherlock.com/2021/05/episode-217-staunton-tragedy.html

- The **30th Twin Cities Antiquarian Book Fair** will be at Schoenecker Arena, University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Ave, St. Paul. Times: 3:00 – 7:00 P.M. on Friday, July 9th and 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. on Saturday, July 10th. 🐾

The Norwegian Explorers

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