



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

In Minnesota we are in the midst of a peculiar winter, with some incredibly cold temperatures and, more recently, some very warm ones. This is the time of year, and issue of *Explorations*, when we reflect on the traditional winter events of Minnesotan Sherlockians: our Annual Dinner, travel by some members to New York for the BSI Weekend, and our Baker Street West gathering where those members tell others of their experiences. All of these, and more, are covered in the pages of this newsletter. I thank Erica Fair, Dick Sveum, Julie McKuras, and Tom Gottwalt for their articles about their New York experiences.

Special thanks go out to Karen Murdock for several articles. She presents us with one more interesting article about speech patterns in the Canon, strange happenings when a story is translated into a different language and then back into

English, her ever-popular coverage of a Study Group meeting, and she teamed up with Madisonian Max Magee on a whimsical article about particular eyewear. Paul Reiners returns to write more about the *Sherlock Holmes* Eternity Comics, and there are contributions by Gary Thaden, Melissa Aho, and Jeff Falkingham. I appreciate all of the writing contributions.

Remember, if you ever wish to share your Sherlockian experiences or thoughts, I'd love to hear from you. Topics could be a trip, meeting, book review, pastiche, a review of the new television show *Watson*; any topic at all is welcome. ~ Phil 

Annual Dinner – 2024

BY PHIL BERGEM



As is traditional for the Norwegian Explorers, we gathered on the first Thursday of December (which was the 5th this year) at the Minneapolis Golf Club for fun and conviviality. As an added bonus for the evening, the weather cooperated, so attending members did not have to drive through a snowstorm or frigid weather to get to the venue. This year we had a total of 57 people who were able to participate.

Things kicked off at 6:30. Members gathered for drinks, and there was a buzz of conversation as people greeted each other and provided updates on recent experiences. Spots at the tables were selected and the Reverend Bob Brusich provided an invocation for the evening. Following that, guests went to select their food from the buffet table, the typical choices of salad, shepherd's pie, and fish and chips.

As the eating wound down, it was time for the evening's toasts, organized by Erica Fair. She introduced each of the toast makers in turn; Karen Ellery saluted Mrs. Hudson, Julie McKuras

toasted Beryl Stapleton, Bob Sharfman read a poem, Soren Eversoll acknowledged Baron Gruner, and Max Magee provided a toast to Violet and James, sung to the tune of “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

Following the toasts, we had the Annual Business Meeting. Tom Gottwalt provided a summary of the group’s year, Phil Bergem gave a brief Treasurer’s report, and the slate of candidates of officers was announced. A voice vote elected them into office. Board members are: Tom Gottwalt (President), Melissa Aho (Vice-President), Phil Bergem (Treasurer), Mike Eckman (Secretary) and At Large members are John Bergquist, Bob Brusica, Erica Fair, Tim Johnson, Ray Riethmeier, and Dick Sveum. Past Presidents are also Board members and these people are Gary Thaden, Julie McKuras, Brice Southworth, Pj Doyle, and C. Paul Martin.

After the election, there was an opportunity to present a donation to the Sherlock Holmes Collections at Andersen Library. With the success of last year’s conference, the group had sufficient funds to make a donation of \$2,210 to the Collections, which was received by Tim Johnson.



*Tom Gottwalt, Tim Johnson, and Phil Bergem
[You can become a Friend of the Sherlock Holmes
Collections by making a donation at
<http://give.umn.edu/giveto/sherlock>]*


Each attendee at the dinner received a copy of the 2024 *Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual*. The theme for this year was “The Collection Mania” and it was edited by Ray Riethmeier and Phil Bergem. Each year there are Sigerson Awards for people who contribute articles, poems, or puzzles with certificates and clever titles all cleverly produced by Julie McKuras. This year’s recipients and awards are:

- “Reichenbach Falls: It is, indeed, a fearful place” – artwork – Amanda Downs – The “Oasis of Art” Award (SIGN)
- “Collecting and Speculating with Some Examples from the Canon” – Michael V. Eckman – “The Mere Feeling of Possession” Award (SIGN)
- “Five Orange Chips” – Jeff Falkingham – “The Discovery of the Criminal” Award (ABBE)
- “Final Problem/Empty House: What Really Happened?” – Bob Sharfman – The “High Matters of State” Award (BRUC)
- “A Feline Fixation” – Elaine Coppola – The “Narrow and Concentrated Habits” Award (CREE)
- “Show me the Books: Sherlock Holmes Collections!” – Melissa Aho – The “Distinct Success” Award (REIG)
- “The Collection Mania of Sherlock” – poem – Art Hogenson – The “Very Clever Man” Award (MUSG)
- “Three Postscripts: Hornung/Doyle, Eliminating the Impossible, and Casing the Identity” – Ruth Berman – The “Keen Observance of Detail” Award (RESI)
- “My Collection of Friends is a Useful One” – Michael V. Eckman – “The Sight of a Friendly Face” Award (STUD)
- “The Caiman Treasure” – Christopher Atkinson – “The Clue Which Would Lead Me to the Truth” Award (MUSG)
- “The Riven Bards and the Story of the Red Throated League” – Lucy, Robert, and Adam Brusica – “The Great and Sombre Stage” Award (BRUC)
- “In Mint Condition” – Brenda Rossini – The “Here was a Case of Ancient Coins” Award (3GAR)
- “A Nightmare for Sherlockiana Collectors” – Donald and Patricia Izban – “The Absolute Truth of the Matter” Award (FINA)
- “Collecting T.S. Blakeney’s Sherlock Holmes: Fact or Fiction” – Bruce Harris – The “Little Interests in Life” Award (3GAR)
- “Trivial Collections” – Michael V. Eckman – The “What an Extraordinary Assortment” Award (REIG)
- “221bizarro:d1SS” – poem – Max Magee – The “Comic Resignation” Award (REIG)
- “The Case of the Missing Curator” – Julie McKuras – The “Puzzled Many an Expert” Award (STUD)
- “Drug Mania’: Addiction and Narcotics in the Canon” – Erica Fair – The “Its Influence is Physically a Bad One” Award (SIGN)

- “Here in My Museum” – Rob Nunn – “The Nucleus of a National Collection” Award (3GAR)
- “The Adventure of the First Folio” – Paul Reiners – The “Collector of Obscure Volumes” Award (FINA)
- “Sherlock Holmes, The Collection” – poem – David Forest Hitchcock – The “Close and Confidential Friends” Award (WIST)
- “Sidelights on Collecting Frederic Dorr Steele” – Andrew Malec – The “Art in the Blood” Award, (GREE)
- “Twilight at the Copper Beeches” – artwork – Philip H. Swiggum – The “Such a Hound as Mortal Eyes Have Ever Seen” Award (HOUN)

Next came the somber reflection of members who have passed beyond the Reichenbach. Following that was our keynote speaker, Larry Millett, who gave a wonderfully entertaining talk on how he wrote *Sherlock Holmes and the Red Demon*. (He was also willing to sign copies of his books. A representative from SubText Books in St. Paul had a table with many of Larry’s books available for purchase.)

Bob and Lucy Brusic had, once again, provided an illustration from one of the Canonical stories, and people were encouraged to identify the story, and come up with a humorous caption or limerick about it. Several of the members were brave enough to read out what they had come up with.

The evening concluded with a reading by Melissa Aho of William Schweickert’s poem “A Long Evening with Holmes.” The attendees left the event full of good cheer after a fun evening together. 

“I Came to Find a Friend”: A Newcomer at the BSI Weekend

BY ERICA FAIR



hen I attended my first triennial conference in July, one of the first things people always asked was whether I would be going to New York. At first, I politely demurred. “Manhattan in January?” I thought, “I can eat bagels and freeze to death at home for free!” Over time, though, I came around to the idea. I had been to New York once before in 2015 for a tourist’s trip, but had never attended the BSI weekend itself, and with the combined forces of a

Type A personality and Monica Schmidt’s online scheduling grid, I registered for every available event on the days they opened. I had a wonderful time, just like the community promised, and I can’t wait for next year!

Wednesday – I’m pleased to report that I encountered a number of familiar Explorers at the weekend, beginning at the airport with Gary Thaden (who would be invested on Friday as “Augusto Barelli”). We carpooled on arrival and got settled at the Westin in time for the **ASH Dinner** at Joyce Public House, where I sat with Ira Matetsky and Ann Lewis, discussing everything from presidential libraries to the Marx Brothers. Several attendees described the evening as a family reunion, and there were joyous greetings and lively conversations all night. We also shared the first of many nightcaps at **Rosie Dunn’s**, that great cesspool into which all the late-night Sherlockians are irresistibly drained (and refilled!). It was wonderful to be back among friends.

Thursday – The **Christopher Morley Walk** was very casual, but we had a fantastic guide in the energetic and knowledgeable Jim Cox, who would be invested the following day as “Coxon.” We toured the city for three hours, including a stop at the New York Public Library for a special exhibition that includes a Gutenberg Bible, a copy of the Bill of Rights, and some of Charles Dickens’ unique writing tools, such as a taxidermied cat’s paw on a letter opener (perhaps the inspiration for VEIL?). We also saw the Woolworth’s Building, New York City Hall, and the Algonquin Hotel, where our group had a photo taken by a slightly baffled concierge.

We were delayed in getting to **McSorley’s**, so I caught up with others nearby at The Wren for the inaugural meeting of the Bowery Ruffians, a new scion toasting canonical villains, headed by Matt Hall. The Wren was an excellent choice for several reasons, including close proximity to McSorley’s, a wide availability of NA options for the low- or non-drinker, and plenty of space given the time of day. While there, I fell into chatting with the leader of Barcelona’s Circulo Holmes group and was honored to receive a pin and tote bag from him. Muchas gracias!

The BSI Lecture that evening featured Graham Moore, and according to attendees, it was a fascinating presentation that drew unique parallels between Holmes and John Maynard Keynes. However, I cannot personally vouch for this, as I



Sherlockians in the Algonquin Hotel lobby

cut class to attend “The Play That Goes Wrong” at New World Stages (I couldn’t spend four nights in Manhattan and *not* see live theater). Sitting in the third row, I laughed until I cried at a stellar performance. For all I know, the lecture attendees may have done the same, but they too have their diplomatic secrets.

Friday – The morning was unscheduled, and as a lifelong early riser, I took the opportunity to enjoy the balmy weather and walk 3.5 miles to **The Mysterious Bookshop**. I arrived ten minutes before opening, and Otto Penzler himself took pity on me and let me in early. I was delighted to step inside and see the library of my dreams, with an entire wall of just Holmes, floor to ceiling, complete with a rolling ladder. I marveled at all the options until my eyes reached the very top shelf and hit upon Bert Coules’ *221 BBC*, which I had been seeking for several months. Before I knew what I was doing, I had pulled the ladder over and scrambled up to claim my precious find. Standing at the top of the ladder, treasure in hand, looking out over the rest of the shelves on a quiet sunny Friday, this was quite possibly my favorite moment of the whole weekend. But the Bookshop had an even greater surprise in store for me. Penzler opened the basement vault that day to allow visitors, and I was the first one down. Sitting on the shelf alongside many rarer finds and first editions of treasured classics, I was startled to find a 2022 Christmas Annual by a little group called the Norwegian Explorers. Congratulations NEX, we’re in the Mysterious Bookshop!

On the way out, Art Taylor assisted me in getting the right subway to the **Gillette Luncheon** at Connolly’s. Although we were crammed in tight at the venue, the presence of assigned tables helped

encourage mingling. I was fortunate indeed to be seated up front with Hal Glatzer, Bob Sharfman, and the event’s hostess, Shana Carter (to be invested that very evening as “Carter”). This also gave me a front row seat to the entertainment, which included a very funny skit, as well as a special award for Julie McKuras. There could not be a more deserving recipient, for her mentorship and guidance of younger Sherlockians like me. Congratulations, Julie!

The Gaslight Gala that evening was a chance to spend some time with newer friends and a lovely excuse to get dressed up and dapper. Though the architecture of Annie Moore’s limited some of the festivities, the company and food were fantastic, and I took second place in the canonical quiz, winning a beautiful ceramic hotplate. After the gala, a special connection helped smuggle us into the BSI’s afterparty at the Yale Club, where we shared a drink with older members and toasted the new investees. The interior of the Yale Club is as pristine and debonair as it gets, but the room was filled with nothing but warmth and joy, and it was such a pleasure to join in even briefly. The sense of fun, community, and sheer excitement was incredible, and it became clear in that moment why this weekend was so important to so many. I wish it could have lasted all night.

Saturday – I knew that the **Dealers’ Room** would be open for nearly three hours, but I figured I’d just pop in at the start, do a loop, and return to my room. Yeah, guess how that plan went? Correct, I spent the entire three hours browsing the wares, chatting with old and new friends, and juggling two increasingly hefty shopping bags, along with cash, checks, cards, and PayPal transfers (this is why they advise to double your budget — not only are there surprise discoveries, but good luck keeping a tally in so many different accounts). Along with books, crafts, and fan memorabilia, I also picked up three historical artifacts from Chuck Kovacic: a Campbell’s shag tin, a 1920s hypodermic syringe, and a 1890s truncheon. Despite my lifelong love of history, I had rarely been in a financial position to own artifacts before, and Chuck’s playful showmanship added a lot of fun to the overall experience. Somehow,

before I knew it, time was up and I was racing to pack my treasures and get back to the Yale Club for lunch.

The BSI Luncheon was one of my absolute favorite times at the weekend. We were allowed to self-seat, and I found myself at a wonderfully lively table that included Curtis Armstrong, Lee Shackelford, and Tim Greer. A traffic jam at the buffet also gave me a chance to speak with Mike McSwigin, and everyone seemed to be in fine spirits. The programming included a “Year in Verse,” as well as the incomparable Peter Blau’s auctioning of several items. Having had the great wisdom to pre-spend all my funds at the dealers’ room, I abstained from bidding and instead raided the dessert table for some of the finest chocolates I have ever tasted.

My evening concluded with **Lost in New York with a Bunch of Sherlockians**, hosted by Jerry and Chrys Kegley. It’s another seated dinner, but this one had a fantastic energy and fast pace that kept things exciting. True to the name, I got lost on the way to The Playwright, but luckily arrived just in time. One of the special elements about this event was that every single person wins a door prize over the course of the night, so toasts and quizzes were interspersed with a continuous raffle. The event also had a unique and poignant guestbook — a copy of the *Adventures* was passed around the room, and everyone was asked to sign a page. I have a special affinity for TWIS, and opened to that story. The perfect line leapt out at me: “I came to find a friend.” I underlined it and signed the page with the only words I could possibly offer: “Thank you for everything.”

Sunday – After leaving my luggage with a hotel clerk so surly it was almost comical, I headed to the Long Room for the **ASH Brunch**, perhaps the most freeform and casual of all the events. It was really just a revolving door as people grabbed a plate or coffee before taking off, but for those who could linger a moment, it was great to connect one last time. There were tears, smiles, pledges to keep in touch, and plenty of business card swappage, as I said farewell to a vibrant community in a beautiful city.

All told, I had an absolutely fantastic time seeing the sights, meeting new Sherlockians, and getting to learn more about the BSI and its history. Every single person I met was kind and friendly, and I had a phenomenal time being in such a literary city with this community. My inbox and

messages haven’t stopped since, and I can’t wait to go back and revisit with so many new friends next year. The next BSI dinner will be January 9, 2026, and I’ve already started a countdown! 🐾

My First Sherlock Holmes New York City Experience

BY TOM GOTTWALT



hough my wife, Maria, and I have been to New York City many times, we’ve never been to the Sherlock Holmes Birthday Weekend. This may come as a surprise to some because I’ve been a Norwegian Explorer for decades and have been President for over seven years. By way of clarification, the events span far more than a weekend and often don’t necessarily coincide with Sherlock Holmes’s January 6 birthday. Such was the case this year with official events beginning Wednesday January 15 and concluding Sunday January 19. As a first timer, I was very much looking forward to the trip.

Tuesday – We arrived a day early and took in a Broadway show (“Left on Tenth”) Tuesday evening. This was preceded by an enjoyable dinner at Gayle’s Broadway Rose, a restaurant where the servers double as performers singing all manner of Broadway show tunes. It was a great way to kick off our time in the Big Apple.

Wednesday – We began our Sherlockian experiences with about eight others at a wonderful Wednesday morning breakfast at the **Yale Club** hosted by Bob Sharfman. Thank you, Bob! It was a great way to see old friends and meet new ones. It also gave us our first taste of the hospitality and camaraderie we would experience the rest of our time in New York.

After breakfast, I spent two to three hours at the New York Public Library, one of my favorite haunts. On one of my previous visits, I saw the six Shakespeare First Folios held by the library. On this trip only one was on display along with 22 other items highlighted in the “Treasures” exhibit. They included a Gutenberg Bible, copy of the Bill of Rights, Charles Dickens’ desk and chair, and the actual Winnie-the-Pooh stuffed animals.

Wednesday afternoon we attended “A Musicale in Mrs. Hudson’s Parlor” at the **Salmagundi Club’s Coffee House**. This took the form of a birthday celebration for Sherlock Holmes but, due

to scheduling conflicts and important cases, Holmes himself was not in attendance. Scripted and directed by Hal Glatzer, the standing-room-only event consisted of a series of period songs performed by a talented cast.

The **Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes (“ASH”) Dinner** took place Wednesday evening at the Joyce Public House. The place was overrun with Sherlockians and their guests, many having not seen each other in some time. It was thus a lively evening with opportunities to rekindle old connections and to meet new Sherlockians.

I was particularly pleased to see so many Norwegian Explorers in attendance. Not only did that make it easy for us to feel comfortable with old friends, it also more easily facilitated introductions to new ones. I may be biased, but I believe that, other than Los Angeles and the New York area, there were more Norwegian Explorers in attendance than from any other scion society. They consisted of:

John and Inez Bergquist
Mike Eckman
Karen Ellery
Erica Fair
Tom and Maria Gottwalt
Jeffrey Hatcher
Julie and Mike McKuras
Mike Miller
Dick Sveum and Jennifer Olson
Gary and Andy Thaden

After the ASH Dinner we decamped to **Rosie Dunn’s Victorian Pub**, the official nightcap location for the week. It was the first of many evenings I would spend there. As usual, it was another opportunity to meet new friends over a pint or two.

As the evening drew to a satisfying close, I realized I’d made one of two rookie mistakes as a first-time attendee to these events. I

ran out of business cards to hand out to my new friends and acquaintances. I’d brought what I thought was an adequate supply. However, I’d burned through my entire inventory on the first day and still had four days to go. I’ll need to bring the entire box on my next trip.

Thursday – Thursday morning, I joined the **Christopher Morley Walk** through some old haunts of Christopher Morley’s. As founder of the Baker Street Irregulars, Christopher Morley is held in high regard by Sherlockians far and wide. Led by Jim Cox, we walked a bit but as the cold settled in, we decided to take a detour to the New York Public Library. Since I’d just been there, I was able to point out some highlights to my fellow walkers while we all enjoyed a warmup. Sadly, many of Morley’s haunts are no longer around, but Jim still found sights of interest to point out to us. The official walk concluded with a trip to the fascinating Woolworth Building, known to have been a favorite of Morley’s. We learned much about the architectural elements, construction techniques, and other anecdotes from the building’s knowledgeable property manager.

During our walk, I also realized a second rookie mistake I’d made. I forgot a hat. The temperatures were much warmer than our typical Minnesota winters, but still in the 20s and 30s. People think we Minnesotans are hardy and used to the cold, but we don’t spend much time outside under normal circumstances unless we’re really dressed for it and are participating in outdoor activities. In New York City, on the other hand, we

walked a lot and spent extended periods outside, so a hat would have been much appreciated. I made a “note to self” for next time.

After our cold walk and a couple of subway rides to and from the Woolworth building, we made our way to **McSorley’s Old Ale House**, the oldest bar in New



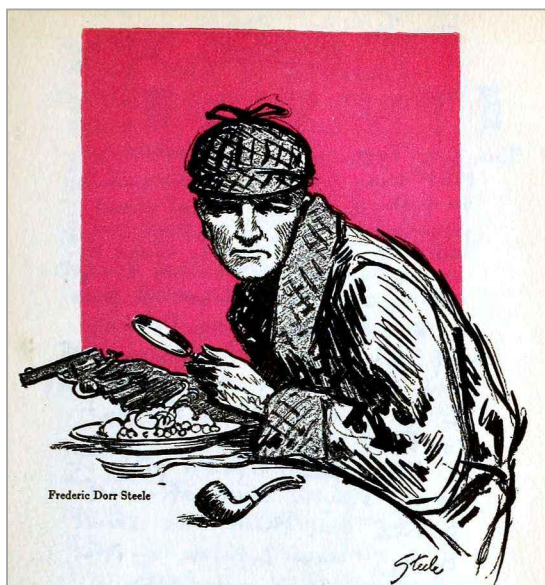
*Minnesota Explorers at the BSI Dinner.
Dick Sveum, Gary Thaden, Jeffrey Hatcher, Julie McKuras,
Mike Eckman, John Bergquist.*

York City, for a well-deserved lunch.

Thursday evening was The **BSI Distinguished Speaker Lecture**, held at the beautiful New York Bar Association building. Graham Moore, author of “The Sherlockian” and screenwriter for the movie “Imitation Game,” gave a compelling talk drawing parallels and comparisons between Sherlock Holmes and John Maynard Keynes. In the course of the lecture, the audience learned about economics, World War II wartime thinking, and much about John Maynard Keynes’ personality, ego, and other attributes.

Friday – In the morning I attended the Zoom **Annual Meeting of The Literary Agents**, a Doylean Society and learned a great deal more about Doyle than I already knew. The session specifically focused on Doyle’s fascination with, support of, and defense of the Spiritualist movement at great personal and reputational cost.

Lunchtime took us to Connolly’s Pub & Restaurant for the **Gillette Luncheon**, named in honor of William Gillette who portrayed Holmes on stage for many years. I thought the ASH Dinner was crowded, but this event had us even more tightly packed. Once again, I enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting many new ones. The highlight of the luncheon for me and for many others was the honoring of Julie McKuras with the Susan Rice Mentorship Award. The Susan Rice Mentorship Award was established in 2022 to recognize the activities of a member of the Sherlock Holmes community who has been a mentor to others, in the spirit of Susan Rice. Only three others have received the award. They include Francine Kitts, Evy Herzog, and Peter Blau. I still can recall vividly when I attended my first Minnesota Sherlock Holmes event, not sure if I even belonged there. Julie made a point of personally welcoming me to that event and enfold me into the local Sherlockian scene. Since that wonderful beginning she has continued to support and mentor me and many others. She perfectly exemplifies the qualities intended to be celebrated and recognized by this award, and it is richly deserved.



The Gillette Luncheon went long, so I was barely able to make it to the **Grolier Club** for the exhibit of “Imaginary Books: Lost, Unwritten, and Fictive Books Found Only in Other Books.” How surprising it was to find these nonexistent and mythical books that can’t or don’t exist, miraculously on display. Particularly rewarding for me was discovering *The Polyphonic Motets of Lassus* in a beautifully hand-worked leather cover with the author’s name “Sherlock Holmes” embossed into the fine leather. Also on display at the Grolier was a magnificent exhibit on Mark Twain featuring his life and literary career.

After the wondrous trip to the Grolier, it was on to Annie Moore’s Bar and Restaurant for the **Gaslight Gala**. While the BSI members and invited guests attended the **BSI Annual Dinner**, we once again crowded in with other Sherlockians to enjoy food, fun, and frivolity. The evening included toasts, a nice buffet, a literary presentation, a quiz (I did poorly), door prizes, and a closing song sung by all. Bad jokes were sprinkled throughout

the evening.

Then it was on to Annie Moore’s once more to await our BSI friends joining us from their dinner. Before they arrived, however, we’d already learned of the newest BSI investitures, including our own Norwegian Explorer Gary Thaden as “Augusto Barelli.” This was another personal highlight for me as I served as Vice President during Gary’s lengthy tenure as President and, like Julie McKuras, he is a longtime Sherlockian mentor to me.

Another highlight for me was eating late-night pizza with Max Magee as we walked back to our hotel, pizza slices in hand dripping grease as we went. After a solo return trip to Rosie Dunn’s to retrieve my credit card, I got back to the hotel just as the clocks turned 2:21. It doesn’t get more Sherlockian than that.

Saturday – After the grand events of the past few days, Saturday began slowly with a stroll through the **Merchants’ Room** at the hotel where I purchased a couple of books in the BSI Manuscript Series.

Due to some late minute cancellations and serendipitous timing, Maria and I were able to attend the **BSI Luncheon** at the Yale Club. This was a delightful event with excellent food and camaraderie. There was an auction by Peter Blau to raise funds for the Watson Society, recognition of all “The Women” in attendance, and the annual recitation of (mostly) Sherlockian events of the past year.

Saturday evening, Maria and I had dinner with the Thadens and then attended a performance of “Chicago” at the Ambassador Theatre on Broadway.

I wasn’t early enough making my reservation and so missed out on the **Lost in New York with a Bunch of Sherlockians** event, so I’ll have to catch that one next time.

Sunday – The final Sherlockian event of the trip was the Sunday morning **ASH Brunch** at The Long Room, a beautifully decorated Irish Pub with barrel-vaulted ceilings and lots of bookshelves lining the walls. There was no formal agenda, but it was a great chance to say goodbye to old and new friends, make plans for our next connections, and thank the many people who helped make each of the many events so memorable. Unfortunately, probably due to so much communication in so many close quarters, many of us by this time had sniffles, coughs, sore throats, or worse. However, all eventually recovered and are likely looking forward to the next Sherlockian event, which for me will be the April 2025 Canonical Conclave of Scion Societies in Indianapolis.

Maria and I capped off our trip with a tour of the Tenement Museum on Sunday afternoon and returned home to Minnesota on Monday making it a six-day trip for us. I’m looking forward to returning in 2026. 🐾



Susan Rice Mentorship Award *Honoree is Julie McKuras*

BY DICK SVEUM

The Susan Rice Mentorship Award was established in 2022 by the Baker Street Irregulars to recognize the activities of a member of the Sherlock Holmes community who has been a mentor to others, in the spirit of Susan Rice. This year's honoree, an-

nounced on January 17, 2025, at the William Gillette Luncheon, was Julie McKuras, BSI (“The Dutchess of Devonshire”).

The award recognizes the spirit of mentoring and the joy of shared experience. It also encourages aspiring Sherlockians to keep the memory of Susan Rice and Sherlock Holmes alive. The award was presented by Ashley Polasek who quoted from the nominations submitted to the selection committee:

“Julie McKuras embodies so many of those qualities that made Susan an exemplar of mentorship: the Midwestern friendliness, the welcoming smile, the generosity, the readiness to encourage Sherlockians new and old.”

“Julie’s activities in BSI and her home scion, the Norwegian Explorers, are legion, but it is her personal warmth that truly makes her stand out. I can’t imagine that anyone, having met Julie, would hesitate to plunge into the Sherlockian community, knowing that there was at least one friend there.”

“Julie McKuras is the most fun-loving, generous, and inclusive person I know. She is active and productive and leads by example as well as helping others in their Sherlockian activities.”

“Julie is open and friendly to those new to Sherlock Holmes. In our Sherlockian community, with its current diversity and past elitism, Julie is welcoming and eager to assist all to feel at home in the worldwide network of Sherlock Holmes.”

The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota are proud of our past-President Julie McKuras on this special honor. 🐾



The Susan Rice *Mentorship Award*

BY JULIE MCKURAS



It was a great honor to receive the Susan Rice Award at the Gillette Luncheon on January 18, 2025. Knowing that Susan along with Mickey Fromkin organized and ran the luncheon for many years made it a perfect place for this. To look out at those who loved Susan was a very emotional moment.

Those who had the privilege to count Susan as a friend, either as a student or a member of the Sherlockian community, know this award is a reminder of the power of her mentorship, passion, and generosity. Susan was a force of nature who exemplified Holmes’s statement that “To a great

mind, nothing is little” and reflected her ability to make whoever she was talking to feel important, that their ideas mattered and were worth exploring.



Julie McKuras and Curtis Armstrong.
Photo by Mike McKuras.

As the 4th recipient of this award, it's humbling to join the extraordinary group of past recipients. I would hope that all of us will, in some small part and in our own ways, try to carry on what Susan accomplished by just being like Susan with her joy, curiosity, and mentorship. 🐾

“Accomplishing Candahar in Protection”: Translating the Canon into English

BY KAREN MURDOCK



eaders of this newsletter — which is published in the English language — will be puzzled by the title of this article. Were not the Sherlock Holmes stories originally written in English? Surely there is no need for a translation for English language readers!

But the Canon was written long before the wild and wonderful day of electronic communications dawned. When books become mere collections of electronic blips, strange things can happen to the words that comprise those books.

A Kindle Fire is a wonderful way to carry hundreds of books around with you wherever you go. Readers with old eyes can enlarge the print size to whatever is comfortable. “Checking out” library books no longer involves taking a trip to the library. You can borrow the e-book while sitting at

your computer, sipping a mug of coffee, and wearing your pajamas, bathrobe, and bunny slippers. Best of all, many books are available for free or, if on Amazon.com, for a very modest price.

So it was that I recently downloaded some of the Sherlock Holmes books to my brand-new Kindle. I did not feel the need to “Look Inside” the book (an option you are given for Kindle books at Amazon.com). I knew, or thought I knew, what I was getting.

Sherlock Holmes himself would probably have warned me not to make assumptions.

One of the cheap books from an unnamed publisher I downloaded was the first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*. All Sherlockians know the first paragraph of this story, narrated by Dr. John H. Watson:

In the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course prescribed for surgeons in the army. Having completed my studies there, I was duly attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as Assistant Surgeon. The regiment was stationed in India at the time, and before I could join it, the second Afghan war had broken out. On landing at Bombay, I learned that my corps had advanced through the passes, and was already deep in the enemy's country. I followed, however, with many other officers who were in the same situation as myself, and succeeded in reaching Candahar in safety, where I found my regiment, and at once entered upon my new duties.

That is certainly what I expected to read on my Kindle. Instead, in the cheap Kindle edition I downloaded, this paragraph leads off the book:

In the yr 1878 I took my diploma of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to undergo the direction prescribed for surgeons in the military. Having completed my research there, I became duly connected to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as Assistant Surgeon. The regiment changed into stationed in India at the time, and earlier than I could join it, the second one Afghan struggle had damaged out. On touch-down at Bombay, I found out that my corps had advanced via the passes and became already deep inside the enemy's us of a. I accompanied, but, with many other officers who have

been within the same state of affairs as myself, and succeeded in accomplishing Candahar in protection, where I determined my regiment, and immediately entered upon my new obligations.

The whole book is like this. It gives the impression that it was translated into English from some foreign language, and that is probably exactly what happened. It is *close* to Doyle's original — some sentences are exactly the same as in the original — and yet it is thoroughly wrong, sometimes humorously so. There is little difference in meaning in "duties" and "obligations" or "degree" and "diploma." More of a gap between "research" and "studies." And "touchdown" (which is what an airplane does) sounds bizarre when applied to the landing of a ship at a dock. "Broken" may mean "damaged" when applied to, say, a Kindle book reader, but when wars erupt, they do not "damage out." The "US of A" is a country, but not the one Watson came to. And certainly "accomplishing Candahar in protection" is a weirdly stilted way of saying "reaching Candahar in safety."

The listings under the "Kindle book" division of Amazon.com change so frequently that I hesitate to give a citation of which editions may have these weird "translations into English." For *A Study in Scarlet*, this flawed edition can be found on about the 10th page of results when you search for "A Study in Scarlet" in "Kindle books." The edition has an Army green cover with a patterned overlay and the words "ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE" and "A STUDY IN SCARLET" in yellow on the cover. Click on the "See Inside" feature before you buy the book. I wish I had done so. 🐾



Blegen in Minnesota History

BY GARY THADEN



ne of the founders of the Norwegian Explorers was featured in a recent article of *Minnesota History*. Dr. Theodore Blegen is one of three individuals discussed in the Minnesota Historical Society's Winter 2024–25 issue: "Turning Point: The First Professional Historians at MNHS".

The article goes on to outline Solan Buck and Grace Lee Nute's careers at the Minnesota Historical Society before talking about Dr. Blegen's contribution to MHS. As the title suggests, these three individuals were the first professional historians to lead the MHS. When the Historical Society

started in 1849 the profession of Historian was not commonplace. The early Directors of MHS were all amateurs; gifted, but still amateurs.

Dr. Blegen began his association with MHS as a summer research assistant in 1915. He went on to edit MHS's publications and eventually was appointed as assistant superintendent, acting superintendent, and finally superintendent in 1931. During the Great Depression, MHS worked with many of the New Deal programs to identify, collect, and preserve newspapers, oral histories, and local, state, and federal historical records. Despite leading MHS as superintendent, Dr. Blegen wrote a high school history textbook and conducted original research on Norwegian migration to Minnesota.

Theodore Blegen resigned from MHS in 1939 and took a year sabbatical to conduct historical research in Norway. He then assumed duties as a full-time professor at the University of Minnesota.

In 1947, five University of Minnesota faculty members met at the Campus Club in the Coffman Memorial Union (Wallace Armstrong, Bryce Crawford, E. W. McDiarmid, E. W. Ziebarth, and Theodore Blegen) and agreed to form The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota. The first meeting was on January 23, 1948, at the Covered Wagon Café in Minneapolis.

Dr. Blegen retired from the University in 1960 and returned to MHS as a research fellow. He died in 1969.

The four-page article puts Dr. Blegen's work at the Minnesota Historical Society in context with the other three MHS leaders as professional historians, and their influence as a turning point in MHS history. 🐾




Dr. Theodore C. Blegen



Baker Street West at Brit's Pub

BY MELISSA AHO

 beautiful February 2, 2025, brought out 27 Norwegian Explorers and guests to Brit's Pub in downtown Minneapolis for the annual Baker Street West celebrating the Master's birthday. Melissa Aho hosted and organized the event and provided welcoming remarks.

After food and beverages were ordered, we heard from the Norwegian Explorers who attended the Baker Street Irregulars' (BSI) New York City Weekend festivities. Erica Fair spoke about attending for the first time and mentioned some of the unique items she had purchased. Tom Gottwalt also spoke about being a first-time attendee.



Erica Fair talking about the New York festivities


John Bergquist told the gathering about attending the event, and Inez Bergquist talked about *The Woman Dinner* that she and Jennifer Olson had attended. Gary Thaden spoke about receiving his BSI Investiture as Augusto Barelli. Congratulations, Gary!

Dick Sveum informed us about attending the Sherlock Holmes Society of London's Annual Dinner which was held in the Members' Dining Room at the House of Commons in London and then attending the BSI Weekend a few days later! We also learned that Jennifer Olson is working on organizing the oral history of women who have been recognized as *the women* of BSI.

Karen Ellery gave a report about the Tea Brokers of Mincing Lane gathering in New York. The conversation and food were excellent, and we will see you all next year! 🐾

Memorable Starts: Anaphora

BY KAREN MURDOCK

 epetition of words within a sentence is exceedingly common in the Canon. Classical rhetoric distinguishes among different forms of this device, depending upon where the repeated words fall in the sentence or phrase. If a word (or words) is (are) repeated at the beginning of several successive verses, clauses, poetic lines, or sentences the figure is known as ANAPHORA (uh NAFF uh ruh).

The voice of the Lord is powerful; **the voice of the Lord** is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

(Psalms 29:4–5, Revised Standard Version)

First in war, **first in** peace, **first in** the hearts of his countrymen.

(Henry “Light-Horse Harry” Lee, eulogy for George Washington, in the House of Representatives, December 26, 1799)

Stolen sweets are always sweeter,
Stolen kisses much completer,
Stolen looks are nice in chapels,
Stolen, stolen, be your apples.

(Leigh Hunt, “Song of Fairies Robbing an Orchard,” *The Tatler*, September 8, 1830)

The aging aren't only the old; **the aging** are all of us.

(Alexandra Robbin, *Aging: A New Look*, 1982)

As with all word repetition, anaphora serves the purpose of calling attention to one or more words. Anaphora elevates those passages in which it appears above the commonplace.

Some anaphora (like the four examples given above) is put in by an author with deliberate intention. However, sometimes word repetition “just happens” and is incidental rather than intentional. In a passage in which a person is telling his or her story, for example, several sentences in succession are bound to start with the word “I.”

NEVILLE ST. CLAIR:

I wrote my articles and thought little more of the matter until, some time later, **I** backed a bill for a friend and had a writ served upon me for 25

pounds. **I** was at my wit's end where to get the money, but a sudden idea came to me. **I** begged a fortnight's grace from the creditor. (TWIS, 243)

HATTIE DORAN:

I wonder I didn't drop. **I** know that everything was turning round, and the words of the clergyman were just like the buzz of a bee in my ear. **I** didn't know what to do. Should I stop the service and make a scene in the church? **I** glanced at him again, and he seemed to know what I was thinking. (NOBL, 298)

JIM BROWNER:

I got past it and got one in with my stick that crushed his head like an egg. **I** would have spared her, perhaps, for all my madness, but she threw her arms round him, crying out to him, and calling him "Alec." **I** struck again, and she lay stretched beside him. **I** was like a wild beast then that had tasted blood. (CARD, 900)

Because of its repetitive nature, anaphora can have a simplifying effect. A very simple form of anaphora is often used in books for children just learning how to read ("Look up, Baby. Look up and see Dick."). Lestrade assumes the tone of an exasperated first grade teacher explaining something to a not-very-bright pupil in "The Noble Bachelor," when he shows Holmes the wet wedding dress he has found and says:

"In the dress is a pocket. **In the** pocket is a card-case. **In the** card-case is a note." (NOBL, 295)

Lestrade is trying to convey to Holmes his opinion that the case is as simple as 1, 2, 3, and he uses the device of anaphora to emphasize this simplicity.

Anaphora can have the effect of a spelling out of a list. Holmes appears to be lining up the clues to the case in his mind in "The Musgrave Ritual" when pondering the disappearance of Rachel Howells.

She was of Welsh blood, fiery and passionate. **She had** been terribly excited immediately after [Brunton's] disappearance. **She had** flung into the lake a bag. (MUSG, 392)

As with all figures of word repetition, the closer together the repeated words fall, the easier they are to recognize as a figure of speech. With anaphora, this implies short sentences or short clauses.

"What papers? **What** sundial?" (FIVE, 222)

"You can hang me, or **you can** leave me alone." (CARD, 898)

"There is material here. **There is** scope...." (BRUC, 920)

"Don't speak! **Don't** move!" (DYIN, 938)

"For years I have loved her. **For years** she has loved me." (DEVI, 968)

"Shall we take you, or **shall we** have the stone?" (MAZA, 1019)

"She is ill, but **she is** quite rational." (SUSS, 1042)

The most anaphora-prone character in the Canon is Alice Turner in "The Boscombe Valley Mystery," who bumbles out four examples of this figure in a third of a page.

"Oh, Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" she cried [...] **"I** am so glad that you have come. **I** have driven down to tell you so. **I know** that James didn't do it. **I know** it, and I want you to start upon your work knowing it, too." [...] **"But you have** read the evidence. **You have** formed some conclusion? **Do you not** see some loophole, some flaw? **Do you not** yourself think that he is innocent?" (BOSC, 208)

Anaphora is very common in the Canon — few pages lack it. See if you can identify the stories from which these Baker's dozen examples of anaphora are drawn. No story is used more than once. Answers are on a separate page in this issue. Choose your answers from these tales:

DYIN DANC HOUN IDEN
LADY NAVA REDC RETI SIGN
SPEC STUD THOR WIST

1. "He was running, Watson, **running** desperately, **running** for his life, **running** until he burst his heart and fell dead upon his face."

2. **"Hence** those vows of fidelity enacted upon a Testament, and **hence** also the allusions...."

3. **"She is** the most harmless, and often the most useful of mortals, but **she is** the inevitable inciter of crime in others. **She is** helpless. **She is** migratory. **She** has sufficient means to take her from country to country and from hotel to hotel. **She is** lost, as often as not, in a maze of obscure pensions and boarding-houses. **She is** a stray chicken in a world of foxes."

4. **It was** part of their fiendish system to punish those whom they feared or hated by injuring not only their own persons but those whom they loved, and **it was** the knowledge of this which hung as a terror....

5. **"The foreign** host, **the foreign** foot-man, **the foreign** cook, all had vanished in the night!"
6. **By** a man's fingernails, **by** his coat-sleeve, **by** his boots, **by** his trouser-knees, **by** the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, **by** his expression, **by** his shirt-cuffs — **by** each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed.
7. **"Most** singular!" said the distant voice. **"Most** remarkable!"
8. **"Give me** problems, **give me** work, **give me** the most abstruse cryptogram...."
9. **"She hated me**, Mr. Holmes. **She hated me** with all the fervour of her tropical nature."
10. **"Sometimes** I have thought that it was merely the wild talk of delirium, **sometimes** that it may have referred to some band of people...."
11. **"What do you know**, pray, of Tapanuli fever? **What do you know** of the black Formosa corruption?"
12. **"Do you think he** is hopeful? **Do you think he** expects to make a success of it?"
13. **"Don't tell me that she** is in this? **Don't tell me that she** helped to set a trap for me?"

Answers are on page 16. 🐾

The Meiser/Giacoa Comic Strip Adaptations – Part 2

BY PAUL REINERS



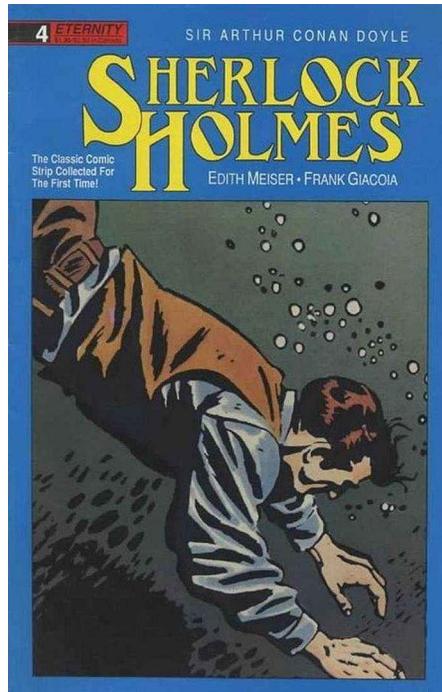
Paul Reiners' column on the 1980s comic book releases of Sherlock Holmes comic strips by Edith Meiser (writer) and Frank Giacoia (artist) continues. These appeared in newspapers throughout the country in the 1950s ~ Ed.

Issue: *Sherlock Holmes Eternity Comics* #4

Release Date: September 1988

Stories:

- "The Disappearance of the Canadian Heiress" (part 2 of 2) continues the abduction case of a



Canadian heiress after her introduction to British high society.

◦ Comic strip dates: July 5, 1954 – July 25, 1954

• "The Haunting of Pendennick Castle" (part 1 of 2).

◦ Comic strip dates: July 25, 1954 – August 15, 1954.

- This storyline is a gothic tale about an old, haunted castle. Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, written mainly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reflected the rationality of the main character and his times. However, Edith Meiser's stories have the spooky atmosphere of an older, more superstitious England, such as in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

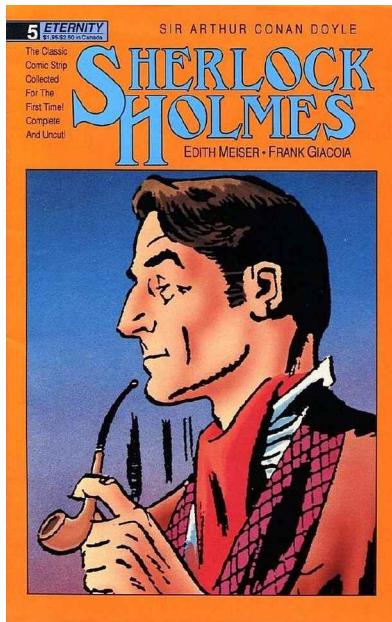
Issue: *Sherlock Holmes Eternity Comics* #5

Release Date: October 1988

Stories:

- "The Haunting of Pendennick Castle" (part 2 of 2). The continuation of the gothic tale started in the previous issue.
 - Comic strip dates: August 16, 1954 – September 19, 1954
- "The Return of the Black Plague" (Part 1 of 2)
 - Comic strip dates: September 20, 1954 – September 26, 1954
 - This features the introduction of Professor Moriarty and Colonel





Moran to the comic strip. However, it's not an adaptation of "The Final Problem" or "The Adventure of the Empty House" (although it contains an element of the latter). Instead, it's an original story about Moriarty seeking revenge on the world.

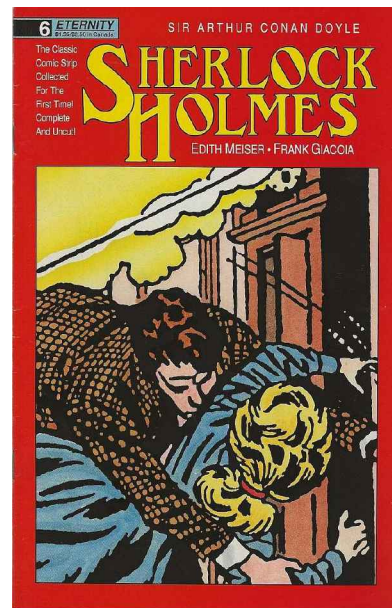
Issue: *Sherlock Holmes Eternity*

Comics #6

Release Date: November 1988

Stories:

- "The Return of the Black Plague" (Part 2 of 2)
 - The comic strip ran from September 27, 1954, to October 31, 1954. It continues the tale that started in the previous issue.
 - This story is the highlight of the first six issues. Meiser crafts a beautifully plotted original story (featuring Doyle's invention, Moriarty). Its historical details of the Black Death in Edinburgh (and how to survive if a castle is about to collapse on you) and its extreme creepiness give me the same chills I got when reading *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as an 11-year-old. Not all details




are consistent with the Canon, but that's not the point. It's a riveting story.

- "The Secrets of the Great Orlando" (part 1 of 2)

◦ This comic strip ran from November 1, 1954, to November 7, 1954.

◦ Holmes and Watson find themselves at

the Paris Exhibition, where they spend their last pound traveling to the top of the Eiffel Tower. Watson worries about how they'll return to London with no pocket money, while Holmes reassures Watson that he can pick up some quick cash as a magician at the Moulin Rouge.

- This story seems (at least from the first part) that it may have partly inspired Robert Lee Hall's novel *Exit Sherlock Holmes* (which is well worth reading). 

Pince-Nez and Moose

BY MAX MAGEE AND KAREN MURDOCK

The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez" is the only Sherlock Holmes story named after something that can be considered both a medical device and a form of jewelry. Pince-nez is (are?) eyeglasses that are worn on the bridge of the nose and do not include "temples" (supports which loop over the ears).

Our ambiguity about the verb in that previous sentence raises the question: Is "pince-nez" singular or plural?

Pince-nez appear(s) in several other Sherlock Holmes stories before its starring role in GOLD.

In IDEN, Sherlock Holmes observes:

... the dint of **a** pince-nez at either side of her [Mary Sutherland's] nose.

The word "a" indicates that, in this early story, Holmes regards pince-nez as singular.

In FIVE, a late-night visitor to 221B Baker Street speaks:

“I owe you an apology,” he [John Openshaw] said, raising his golden pince-nez to his eyes.

In this sentence, the word “pince-nez” could be either singular or plural.

In the eponymous adventure, GOLD, the pince-nez starts out as singular.

From his pocket Stanley Hopkins drew a small paper packet. He unfolded it and disclosed a golden pince-nez, with two broken ends of black silk cord dangling from the end of **it**.

The pince-nez is here an “it” rather than a “them.”

Not too much later in the story, however, the pince-nez is referred to as glasses, and they have now become plural

Sherlock Holmes took **the glasses** into his hand, and examined **them** with the utmost attention and interest. He held **them** on his nose, endeavoured to read through **them**, went to the window and stared up the street with **them**, looked at **them** most minutely in the full light of the lamp

Other references to the eyewear in question in GOLD continue the plural pattern.

“It would be difficult to name any articles which afford a finer field for inference than **a pair of glasses**”

“Unfortunately for her, she had lost **her glasses** in the scuffle, and as she was extremely shortsighted she was really helpless without **them**.”

“It hinged from the outset upon the pince-nez. But for the fortunate chance of the dying man having seized **these**, I am not sure that we could ever have reached our solution. It was clear to me, from the strength of **the glasses**, that the wearer must have been very blind and helpless when deprived of **them**.”

The answer to the question “Are pince-nez singular or plural?” seems to be “They are both.”

Several online dictionaries maintain that the word “pince-nez” is both singular and the plural. (More common nouns for which this is the case are “deer” and “moose.”) However, the pronunciation of pince-nez changes depending upon whether it is singular (“-ney”) or plural (“-neyz”). So, then, both are correct:

The pince-nez is golden in color
and

The pince-nez are golden in color

Can anything more definite be grasped from delving into the origin of the noun?

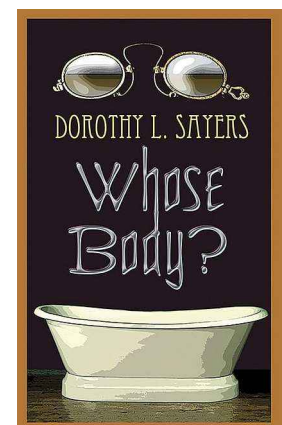
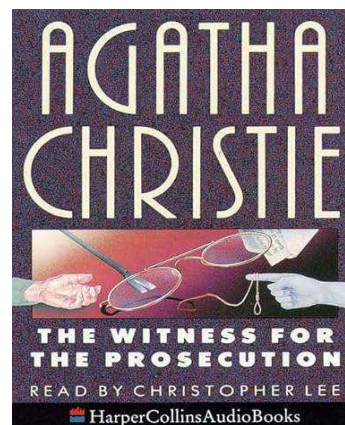
Since the noun comes from a French phrase meaning “nose-pinch glasses,” when it is shortened to “nose-pinch” would it stay plural in English? If we say this noun is singular, then does it go the “attorney-general” plural route? (The plural of “attorney-general” is “attorneys-general,” not “attorney-generals.”) So, is the plural of “nose-pinch” to be thought of as “noses-pinch”? French, the origin language of this intriguing noun, uses a masculine singular “son” to refer to pince-nez, as in

ajuster son pince-nez

So perhaps Watson was simply reverting to the direct translation when he made “pince-nez” singular in “The Golden Pince-Nez.” We never specifically learn that Watson spoke or understood French, but he likely would have learned it in his medical studies. Doyle spoke and wrote fluent French, as did his greatest creation, Sherlock Holmes.

Pince-nez are important in the Dorothy Sayers book *Whose Body?* (1923), in which a dead body wearing *only* pince-nez glasses is found in a bathtub. *Whose Body?* was the first Sayers book to feature the amateur detective Lord Peter Wimsey. The glasses often play a prominent role in the cover illustration for the book (along with the bathtub).

A pince-nez also plays a role in the Agatha Christie short story “The Witness for the Prosecution” (1925), which later was turned into a 3-act play (1953) which was/is so compelling that it is still entertaining audiences to this day. It is the habit of the solicitor for the defense, taking off and



polishing his pince-nez, which gives him insight into the thoroughly unreliable witness he is cross-examining.

Mr. Mayherne was practical, not emotional. He coughed again, took off his pince-nez, polished them carefully, and replaced them on his nose.

The word “them” indicates that, to Christie, the word “pince-nez” is plural.

So... if a herd of moose is wearing pince-nez is this singular or plural?? 🦌



ANSWERS TO THE ANAPHORA QUIZ ARE ON PAGES 12 & 13. (Page numbers from the Doubleday Canon)

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. HOUN, 684 | 8. SIGN, 89–90 |
| 2. IDEN, 200 | 9. THOR, 1066 |
| 3. LADY, 942–3 | 10. SPEC, 262 |
| 4. REDC, 912 | 11. DYIN, 934 |
| 5. WIST, 873 | 12. NAVA, 464 |
| 6. STUD, 23 | 13. DANC, 529 |
| 7. RETI, 1118 | |

Discussion of “The Missing Three-Quarter”

BY KAREN MURDOCK

Twenty-three people (mostly Norwegian Explorers) met on Zoom for a discussion of “The Missing Three-Quarter” on Saturday, February 15. Steve Schier led the group in its streaming romp on Zoom.

Dick Sveum said he is going to India next week to participate in a Sherlockian field trip with the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. His name for the week will be Dr. Grimesby Roylott. (His fellow Explorers were too polite to point out that when Dr. Roylott was practicing medicine in India “he

beat his native butler to death and narrowly escaped a capital sentence” and that “he suffered a long term of imprisonment.”) Places the tour will take him include Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, and the former Calcutta (now Kolkata). In honor of Valentine’s Day, David Hitchcock read a poem about giving blood, “From the Heart.” Karen Ellery showed off a miniature bedroom of Sherlock Holmes (based on DYIN). She announced that today was the birthday of the scion she founded, The Tea Brokers of Mincing Lane.

MISS was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in August 1904. It has a small cast of characters. The first Oxford-Cambridge rugby game was held in 1872. Tom Smith questioned Holmes’s ignorance of rugby — merely by growing up in England, Tom thought, Holmes should have known *something* about the game. Sandy Kozinn thought that “he must have watched his school team” even if he did not play himself. Karen E. said that although she has watched American football games, she knows nothing of the sport. Steve S. thought that MISS would have been “a richer story” if Watson (who *had* played rugby) had contributed some of his knowledge of the game. Mary Loving said that any fan of any sport can relate to the catastrophe of the star player on the team one roots for going missing just before the crucial game of the season.

Steve S. thought that the greatest line of MISS (and one of the greatest lines of the entire Canon) was said by Cyril Overton to Sherlock Holmes: “Why, Mr. Holmes, I thought you knew things.” Steve went on to say that the crimes suggested in this story — blackmail, kidnapping, shady sports bettors influencing a match — were just red herrings meant to lead the reader astray. No crime actually occurred in MISS, but there was still “mystery and artful detection.”

It was pointed out that, although dogs play an important part in this and other Canonical stories (CREE, SIGN, SILV, SHOS, COPP), there are no important cats in the Canon (unless one counts such members of the cat family as tigers and lions).

Steve S. asked if the police could have made a difference if they had been brought into the case. The consensus was that the police would have revealed Godfrey Staunton’s secret marriage. Dick S. said that it was illegal at the time of the story for Cambridge undergraduates to be married.

Robin Rowles (from Essex, England) said that he played “flanker” fifty years ago — this enabled him to stay out of the “ruck.” Steve S. said that he identified with Moorhouse, the first reserve for Cambridge, who, Overton said, “can’t sprint for nuts.”

Steve Miller said that Dr. Leslie Armstrong was able to fool Holmes and that Holmes “respects people who beat him.” Dick S. said that the second president of The Norwegian Explorers, C. Paul Martin, was invested in the BSI as “Dr. Leslie Armstrong.” Karen Titrud pointed out that, no matter how skilled a doctor Armstrong was, there was no cure for tuberculosis at the time of the tale.

Steve S. thought it odd that Godfrey could be secretly married and nobody who knew him knew anything about it. Sandy K. said that one of her college roommates was married and kept it quiet for a considerable period of time. Cyril Overton never suspected anything because Godfrey always showed up at rugby matches.

Elaine Lintzenich said this was one of a considerable number of cases for which Sherlock Holmes did not get paid, although he did solve the case of what became of the missing sports star.

Steve S. was dubious of the “quick reconciliation” between Holmes and Leslie Armstrong at the end of the tale. He thought that in reality this rapprochement would have taken longer, but the Literary Agent had reached his word limit for a Holmes short story and just stopped writing. Steve thought that Holmes made the right decision in not involving the police in this affair.

Steve M. said that in most cases private detectives are not involved in matters of crime but rather in looking for missing persons and trailing unfaithful spouses. Elaine wondered if Holmes ever took on any divorce work. Erica Fair pointed to the Dundas separation case (mentioned in IDEN).

On a scale of 1 to 5, members of the Baker Street Irregulars rated MISS as a “1,” making it

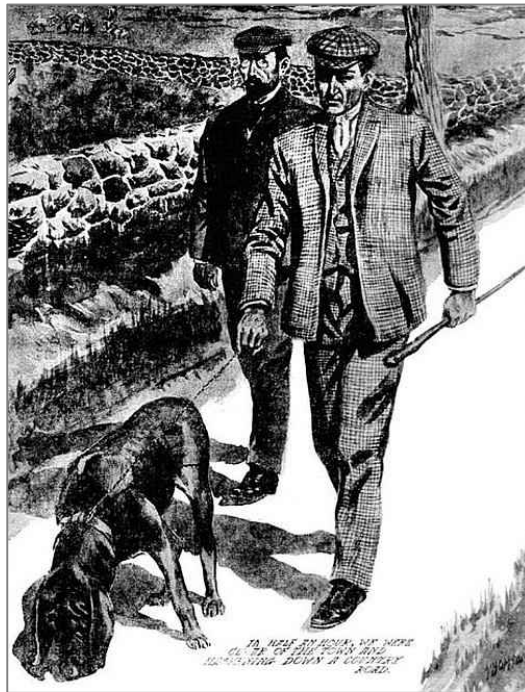


Illustration by R. Thomson for The San Francisco Call. Courtesy of www.arthur-conan-doyle.com

one of the worst stories in the Canon. Members of The Norwegian Explorers were more generous, with most voting MISS at around a “3.” The story was praised for its surprise ending, the role of Pompey, its “well outlined” characters, the compassion shown by Sherlock Holmes, and the good reconciliation scene. It was criticized for the limited role played by Watson, its abrupt ending, and the fact that there was no real antagonist. Our discussion leader, Steve Schier, said that “our conversation has elevated” the story in his eyes and that this was a common occurrence with Explorers’ discussions.

A last-minute complication prevented Jeff Falkingham

from taking part in February’s Study Group session, but he did have a few reflections on “The Missing Three-Quarter.” ~ Ed.

Betting on a Hunch (and a Drag Hound)

BY JEFF FALKINGHAM

In “The Missing Three-Quarter” Sherlock Holmes ignores his own maxim about theorizing before one has data. Upon learning that a star player on the Trinity College of Cambridge rugby team has gone missing, just prior to the team’s big match against Oxford, the Great Detective proposes a theory: Perhaps *bettors* have kidnapped the player in order to influence the outcome of the game?

We later learn that Godfrey Staunton was *not* kidnapped after all. Still, the validity of Holmes’s initial (rather knee-jerk) reaction may be worth further examination.

Records show that in 1900 there were over 300 legally registered betting shops in London alone. Some were in posh private clubs, but most were located in working-class neighborhoods.

Horse racing was the most popular sport among bettors. Other racing sports (auto, bike,

boat, dog, foot) were popular as well — along with billiards, boxing, cricket, and various forms of football (Australian rules, rugby, soccer). There also were at least a dozen other sporting events, from archery to lawn tennis to wrestling, on which you could legally place a bet.

One caveat: These activities all involved *professional* athletes. At the time this story was set, bets on college and amateur sports were *not* accepted by legally registered betting offices. Keen observers will note that in MISS, we are talking about a match between two *college* teams, playing at the *amateur* level — which Sherlock himself called “the best and soundest thing in England.”

However, as Holmes further notes, “A good deal of *outside* betting goes on among the public” in such cases. He was well aware that, beyond the 300 legally registered betting offices, one could likely find an eager (unregistered) bookie on almost every street corner, in every alleyway, or every neighborhood pub.

So maybe Sherlock’s original hunch wasn’t so wild after all?

In the end, the Great Detective placed *his* bet on the tracking skills of Pompey, “the pride of the local drag hounds.” One might say Holmes won this wager “by a nose?” 🐾

Parting Words and Trifles

- 221B Con is taking place in Atlanta on April 11–13, and the Midwest BSI Canonical Conclave of Scion Societies is being held on April 26 in Indianapolis. Several Explorers are attending both events. More information about 221B Con can be found at **www.221bcon.com**. Information about the Canonical Conclave is at **<https://tinyurl.com/BSIMWConclave25>**.

- Ray Riethmeier has compiled and edited *Sherlock Holmes: 5-Minute Mysteries*, written by Kel Richards. It will be published by Belanger Books, with crowdfunding through Kickstarter expected to begin at the end of March or in early April. Stay tuned for further details.
- The February 13th issue of *Rochester Magazine* had an article about Philip S. Hench called “Hench & Holmes.” Hench was a doctor at the Mayo Clinic and was part of the team that discovered the hormone cortisone. He collected a sizable collection of Sherlock Holmes materials that was acquired by the University of Minnesota in 1978.
- Melissa Aho is working to develop a Wikipedia entry for the Norwegian Explorers. Gary Thaden and Kerry McCartney are providing assistance.
- Copies of the Conference Exhibit catalog, *A Festive Fifty*, can be ordered from the University using the link below. The cost per catalog is \$30.00 plus tax and shipping.
<https://z.umn.edu/HolmesCatalog>.
- Copies of the most recent Norwegian Explorers *Christmas Annual*, “The Collection Mania,” can be obtained from Phil Bergem (pgbergem@gmail.com). Issues from many previous years are also still available.
- The theme of the next Explorers *Christmas Annual* will be “Holmes in Motion.” More details will be available in an upcoming monthly notice from Tom.
- In April, the Study Group session will be hosted by Steve Miller and will discuss “The Naval Treaty.”
- The Red Throated League will return to the Pavek Museum on Saturday, May 10th. (The Study Group leaders are progressing through the Canon in alphabetical order during this round.) 🐾

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