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with particular regard for the Victorian era
in honor of all things

# Sherlockian

*Editor: Beth Austin*

*Volume 2*

"The Tracing of a Family Mannerism"
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"And Mademoiselle's address?" he asked.
"Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood."
Holmes took note of it, "One other question, "said he.
"Was the photograph a cabinet?"
"It was."
"Then, good night your Majesty."

— *A Scandal in Bohemia*

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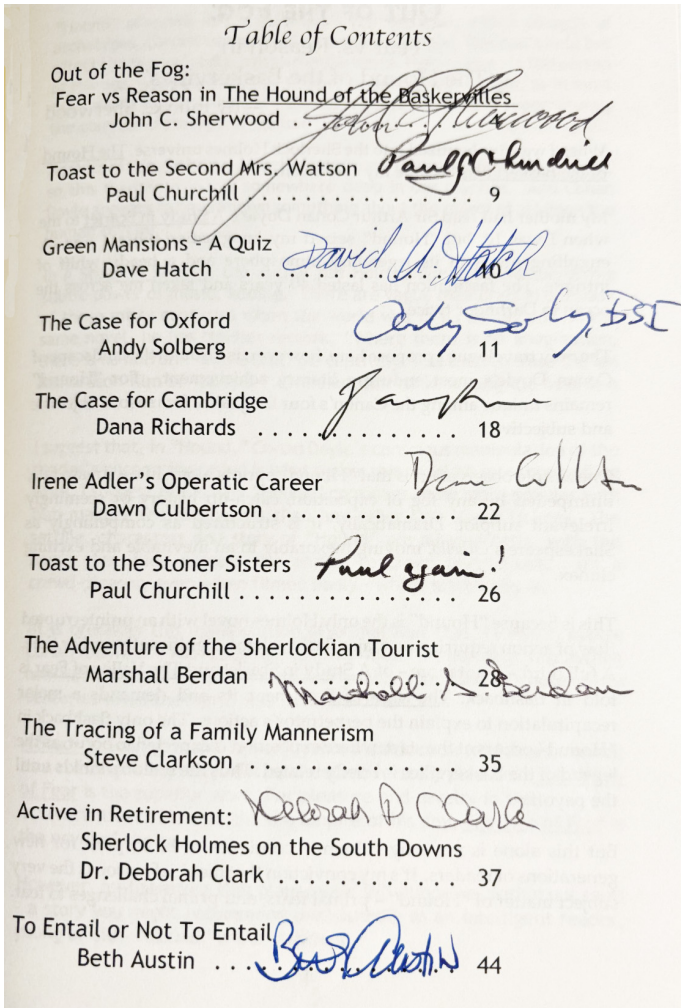

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# Out of the Fog:
# Fear vs. Reason in "The Hound of the Baskervilles"

– John C. Sherwood

When I was fire-baptized into the Sherlock Holmes universe, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* became my catechism.

My mother had read Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* to me when I was 10, but "Hound" seized my imagination when I was 14, engulfing me with its legendary atmosphere and a heady whiff of intrigue. The fascination has lasted 40 years and taken me across the ocean to Dartmoor twice.

The only travelogue I propose here, however, is through the landscape of Conan Doyle's most enduring literary achievement. For "Hound" remains unique among the Canon's four long tales, for reasons objective and subjective.

One simple observation is that "Hound" sprints along like a dream tale, unimpeded by any fog of exposition, catch-up history or seemingly irrelevant subplot. Dramatically, it is structured as compellingly as Shakespeare's *Othello*, moving inexorably to an inevitable and exciting climax.

This is because "Hound" is the only Holmes novel with an uninterrupted flow of action requiring no major flashback to a significantly earlier time. A full third – if not more – of *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Valley of Fear* is told in flashback. *The Sign of Four* near its end demands a major recapitulation to explain the perpetrator's actions. The only flashback in "Hound" occurs at the start, where exposition is expected to occur, as the legend of the Baskervilles is briefly related. Thus the buildup builds until the payoff.

But this alone is not why "Hound" continues to be in print for new generations of readers. It's my conviction that the chief reason is the very subject matter of "Hound" – primal fears, and primal challenges to fear.

"Hound" concerns itself, consciously or otherwise, with a struggle of archetypes, carried out symbolically and with vigor. This can't help but affect the reader's subconscious experience. Pure reason, in the person of Holmes, appears to go toe-to-toe not simply with illogic, as in most tales about Holmes, but with the utterly irrational – the supernatural, the counter-archetype of reason.

Matters of superstition and belief permeate the core of human thought, so this theme resonates somewhere deep in our psyches. And Conan Doyle appears to have known something about the effect of art upon the human psyche.

In *A Study in Scarlet*, the author has Holmes speak to Watson of the subtle power of music, adding, "There are vague memories in our souls of those misty centuries when the world was in its childhood." In the same novel, he has Holmes remark, "Where there is no imagination, there is no horror" – a line that, perceptively, was used to close the Ian Richardson film of "Hound," a version that ranks among the best of a bad lot.

I suggest that, in "Hound," Conan Doyle's conscious manipulation of the reader's unconscious mind is what makes this novel his most compelling work. I suggest this is why "Hound" continues to be more popular with film makers and dramatists than any other tale about Holmes. The setting, characters and story of "Hound" are all cinematic, with the bonus that they possess the ability to creep people out. It's a crowd-pleaser, even when filmed badly – which it typically is.

(It is precisely this manipulation of primal fear that, likewise, makes Conan Doyle's "The Lost World" his most perpetually fascinating non-Holmes tale – a story that unarguably rises out of those misty centuries when the world was in its childhood.)

*A Study in Scarlet* is still the enjoyable introduction to Holmes, as well as a reasonable mystery. For pure detective-story pleasure, *The Valley of Fear* is the superior work. For pleasure and revelry in the eccentricities of Holmes and the Empire of his day, *The Sign of Four* is the novel of choice.

However, for literature that plays music in a minor key within our souls – a story you might recommend unabashedly to an intelligent reader, young or old – "Hound" is the standout.

Only two other canonical tales possess a similar feel of superstition. The Sussex *Vampire* tries to lure the reader to believe a fiend might stalk Sussex, and *The Blanched Soldier* hints that the disembodied spirit of a man may linger at his old home. And yet, "Vampire" possesses little atmosphere, and Watson's telling is bland and uninvolved, overshadowed by Holmes's uncharacteristically dull presence. "Soldier" is related in the terse and logical style in which Conan Doyle imagined Holmes would write.

The result: Neither tale captures the reader on an emotional level. They are not stories any Canon-savvy person would recommend to a reader who has yet to discover the joys of Sherlockiana.

The "missing Holmes" aspect of "Hound" is a masterful literary stroke on the part of Conan Doyle. If the unemotional, masterful Holmes were persistently present, this atmosphere would dissipate. Indeed, there would be little threat. But this is not to claim that "Hound" is a masterful tale of mystery and the supernatural, despite its reputation over the past century.

After all, the piquant, murderous demon turns out to be simply, well, a dog. As J.R.R. Tolkien was disappointed with *Macbeth* because the trees of Burnham Wood didn't really uproot and walk to Dunsinane, some readers – including my 14-year-old inner child – are disappointed that the hoped-for hell-hound is no match for prosaic bullets. Subsequently, I suspect, these critics turn their attention to other flaws.

Such flaws are ready to be found, for "Hound" doesn't stand up well to a detached examination. Legend to the contrary, the mires of Dartmoor aren't that deep and gypsies rarely roamed there, if ever. No manor could have been maintained in so inhospitable an agricultural environment, let alone a great house for three centuries. Holmes would have a hard time finding shelter in one of the prehistoric huts, which actually survive as foundations only.

Even the plot bears problems: The multiplicity of black-bearded men turns out to be a contrivance to create a series of red herrings. Stapleton's fate remains unknown, the likely legal success of his heinous plan questioned even by Holmes. And, for my part, Beryl gets off far too easily for my taste, after having possibly played Lady to Stapleton's Macbeth for so long.

I tread close to the border of blasphemy. After all, similar criticisms can be leveled against, say, *The Speckled Band,* which is full of contrivances, particularly its nonexistent swamp adder. But here's a marvel: *The Speckled Band* happens to be the most dramatic, compelling and memorable of the shorter tales.

Apparently we don't read *The Speckled Band* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to gain insight into Holmes, to understand the use of animals as weapons or to enjoy the interplay of logic versus evil. We read them for tense drama and imaginative excitement, because they strike vibrating chords of fear and revulsion in our unconscious minds.

Conan Doyle knew about these chords, and often succeeded in playing them, even when writing about a character that embodied the concepts of logic and fearlessness. In short, he stretched little truths into looming tall tales, and lowered the reader's own defenses, to make danger and horror seemingly more real, convincing and imminent.

Certainly, we readers love Holmes because he is the master of reason. That's why we admire *The Sign of Four* and *The Valley of Fear* and so much of what we treasure in the Canon. But at heart we're all ruled by our emotions, and our emotions drive our senses of pleasure, enjoyment and wonder.

So we read, and re-read, *The Speckled Band* – and especially *The Hound of the Baskervilles* – because they speak compellingly and unforgettably to our deep, unknown selves. They conjure fanged images and snarling notions that have been lying in the shadows of human memory, beyond the firelight, since those misty centuries when our species was new.

It doesn't matter that our rational natures tell us it's all a tall tale. Once conjured, these ancient demons stalk quietly into our dreams and startle us awake. They leave us sitting up in our beds, staring at the dark, seeking answers and reassurance. And they remind us that – despite our powers of observation and reason – there are still great mysteries that surround and inhabit us.

# Toast to the Second Mrs. Watson

- Paul G. Churchill

First Presented at the Meeting of the Six Napoleons of Baltimore
21 April 2004, A.U.C. 2757

Here's to the second of John's many wives,
To whomever she is, in our mem'ry she thrives!

One of the problems that drive us all mad
Is the question of how many wives Watson had!

Some say that three women shared Watson's name
But it's all done in jest as we play the great game.

Was there a wife number one in the States,
In a play set in 'Frisco, as Baring-Gould states?

Did Mary Morstan come second in life
To the widower Watson who needed a wife?

Mary had not yet laid claim to his heart
When the doctor and Sherlock were living apart.

Here was a man whose department was dames
But his wife had the gall to call poor hubby James!

Was it just selfish, or was it more bold – ?
He deserted his friend for a wife so we're told!

No one has named who that woman might be:
Was it somebody else's or wife number three?

Who was the wife with whom Watson would dwell?
The chronologists twist all the data to hell!

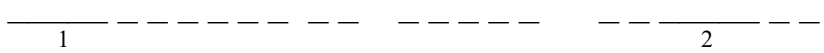
Here's to the name in erasable ink
On a license well worn; she's whomever you think!!

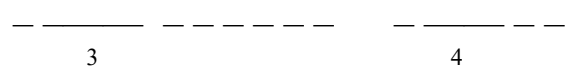
# Green Mansions

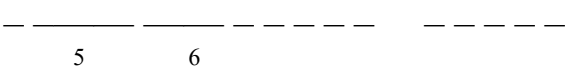
– Dave Hatch

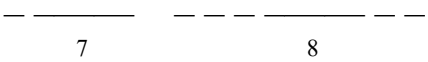
Holmes once said he needed problems, including the most abstruse cryptogram, to keep him from boredom. He also wrote a monograph on ciphers. But, the answers to eight simple questions will reveal the one code he broke most handily.

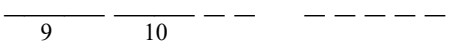
1. Where Holmes investigated the murder of John Douglas:



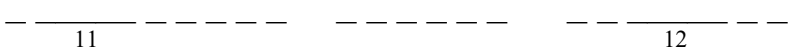
2. Where Mycroft hung out: 

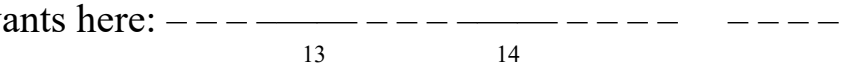
3. Home of Major Sholto: 

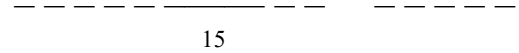
4. *The* Woman's place: 

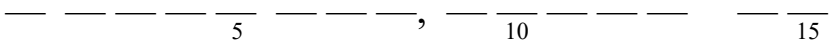
5. Estate of J. Neil Gibson: 

6. Where the men danced for Hilton and Elsie Cubitt:



7. The Barrymores were servants here: 

8. Aloysius Garcia rented this: 



Answers on page 46

# The Case for Oxford

– Andrew Solberg, BSI[1]

Last year, I was volunteered to participate in a debate of whether Holmes went to Oxford or Cambridge. At that time, I really had no particular opinion as to where he went. As I recall, we flipped a coin to see who would take which side. This particular issue has been the subject of constant religious debate among the Sherlockian community for nearly a hundred years, and being rather agnostic in my religious dealings, I have always opted to abstain from taking sides. However, my research has led me to a very strong conviction. Sherlock Holmes undoubtedly went to Oxford.

I would like to focus on the seven stories which provide Canonical evidence (the best type) to which university Holmes attended. They are *The Gloria Scott, The Musgrave Ritual, The Missing Three-Quarter, The Three Students, The Naval Treaty, The Creeping Man,* and *The Red Headed League.*

*The Gloria Scott*

Within the long history of Sherlockian scholarship regarding which university Holmes attended, the primary clue is the curious incident of what the dog did in the daytime. That is, much of the argument focuses on the fact that in *The Gloria Scott,* Victor Trevor's dog bit Holmes on the ankle while Holmes "went down to chapel" sometime during "the two years the [Holmes] was at college." These quotes are as important as they are vague. What exactly does "went down to chapel" tell us about where Holmes was living? Does the reference to two years mean that Holmes only was at the University for two years? There are as many adherents to these religious issues as there are interpretations.

Percy Metcalf wrote that when "a University man says 'at college,' he means his length of residence at the particular college of the university concerned."[2] During the first two years at Oxford, students were required to live at college, while at Cambridge, only upperclassmen were allowed to live there. We know that only freshmen at both Oxford and Cambridge had the type of "long vacation" that Holmes had in this adventure. Therefore, Holmes's wording implies that Holmes was going to Oxford.

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[1] Special thanks go to Beth Austin who first volunteered me for a debate on this subject and, feeling rather guilty as a result, then provided me with printouts of related articles.

[2] Metcalfe, Percy, "Holmes's University Career – a Reassessment," *Sherlock Holmes Journal,* Winter, 1972, pp. 125-130.

In her book, *Unpopular Opinions*, the mystery writer Dorothy Sayers states that the fact that Holmes was bitten by another student's dog means that Holmes must have gone to Cambridge, as dogs were not allowed on the Oxford campus.[3] However, this has been substantially debunked by Nicholas Utechin[4] and Roger Lancelyn Green,[5] who demonstrated that the outlawing of dogs was only started in the term following May, 1871, and that there were dogs up until nearly 1875. W.S. Bristowe, a Cambridge man who believed that Holmes went to Oxford, further writes that to his knowledge, dogs were prohibited at both universities, but that didn't stop students from having dogs (or even pigs). Bristowe speculates that one of the reasons that Trevor befriended Holmes was because he was grateful that Holmes did not report Trevor's dog to the authorities.[6]

T. S. Blakeney (arguing for Cambridge) noted that the story never actually says that Holmes was within the college gates, anyway, and that he may have been bitten on his way to chapel in the town.[7] I agree with Blakeney on this point. These points seem to make the entire argument about dogs non-defining and moot.

### *The Musgrave Ritual*

Holmes's references to his school in MUSG clearly refer to later years than his GLOR references. Whereas in GLOR Holmes was friendless (except for Trevor), in MUSG, we learn that "...during my last years at the university, there was a good deal of talk there about myself and my methods." Don't forget that it was in GLOR that Old Man Trevor suggested to Holmes that he use his special gifts for more than a hobby.

Outside of the reference to the "last years at the university," there is actually little real evidence in MUSG that helps us out. However, it has led some researchers to speculate that Holmes went to different schools for the first two and last two or three years.

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[3] Sayers, Dorothy L, *Unpopular Opinions*. Victor Gollancz: London, 1946.

[4] Utechin, Nicholas, *Sherlock Holmes at Oxford*. Robert Dugdale: Oxford, 1985.

[5] Green, Roger Lancelyn, "At the University, " *Sherlock Holmes Journal,* Winter, 1972, pp. 123-125.

[6] Bristowe, W. S., "Oxford or Cambridge?" *Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Spring, 1959, pp. 75-76.

[7] Blakeney, T. S., *Sherlock Holmes. Fact or Fiction*. Murray: London, 1932.

*The Missing Three-Quarter*

It seems that Watson had an aversion to telling us where Holmes did go to schools. However, it appears that he did not feel that he had to be so oblique in telling us where Holmes did *not* go.

In MISS, we know where the story is occurring. Watson specifically says that Overton is from Cambridge. I find this the most convincing of all of the evidence. Overton did not know Holmes. Nor did Holmes know of Overton. Overton was told to seek Holmes out by Stanley Hopkins, a member of the "official force." One would think that by the time that MISS occurred, Holmes would be a well-known alumnus. It also seems to me that Holmes might know the faculty of his alma mater. In all of Holmes's conversations with either Overton or Armstrong, there is no hint that Holmes ever went to Cambridge.

Further, Holmes was totally unfamiliar with Cambridge. He didn't know about the late train to Cambridge. Since we know from GLOR that Holmes already had rooms in London when he went to college, one would think that Holmes would be familiar with the train schedules to Cambridge, had he gone there. In addition, Holmes was neither familiar with the topography of Cambridge, nor the distances between buildings and villages in this story. He cannot follow Armstrong without being seen because he does not know where to hide. Also, when traveling with Watson, to Trumpington, Holmes says, "This *should* be the village Trumpington." (emphasis added) If he had gone to Cambridge, he would surely know that
it *was* the village of Trumpington.

Lastly, Holmes says of Cambridge, "We are stranded and friendless in this inhospitable town, which we cannot leave without abandoning our case." As Gavin Brend has pointed out, this sounds more like the disparagement of Cambridge by an Oxfordian than the nostalgic memories of a Cambridgian.[8]

*The Naval Treaty*

In *The Naval Treaty,* we have indirect evidence that Holmes did not go to Cambridge. We know that Percy Phelps did. However, did he contact Holmes directly as a fellow alumnus and request his help? No! Instead, Phelps contacted Watson, who used to "chevy him about the playground and hit him over the shins with a wicket" when they were in grade school together. Despite their rather unfriendly school days, Phelps wrote to Watson and begged him to bring Holmes along. When given Phelps's letter, Holmes responds, "It doesn't tell us very much, does it?" This is from a man who could tell a man's profession from a walking stick. One would think that Phelps might have appealed to Holmes's sense of helping a fellow alumnus. Again, there is no evidence that Holmes had a Cambridge connection.

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[8] Brend, Gavin, *My Dear Holmes*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd: London, 1951.

## *The Three Students*

This story provides the most complex evidence, and it has been argued that it makes the case for both Oxford *and* Cambridge. First of all, Watson said that they were spending some weeks in one of the "great university towns" while Holmes was doing research on early English charters. Advocates on both sides have presented evidence to show that the research could have been done at their favorite university.

Hilton Soames was "an acquaintance." Watson said, "*I* always knew him to be..." It does not say how they knew him, unlike in other stories where Watson speaks of knowing people from past cases. This could imply that they knew him from previous research at the school, he knew him socially, or Holmes knew him because he went to school there. Holmes also showed familiarity with the stationers in town, which may imply knowledge from previous visits to the school, may have been from the weeks he had just spent doing research on this visit, or may be from his student days. It is just not clear, and any theorizing on these points is just speculation.

But one thing is clear. Holmes was reluctant to help Soames when Soames sought his help, which does not reflect nostalgic loyalty to his old school.

Soames said to Holmes, "You are aware, Mr. Holmes, that our college doors are double." That could give a clue, if it were not the case that classroom doors were double at both Oxford and Cambridge.[9]

However, there is evidence that the case occurred at Cambridge. The student Gilchrest used a dark blue pencil. Dark blue was the color of Cambridge. Further, the case turns on Holmes noticing some specific clay both on Soames's desk and on the bottom of one of the student's shoes. Some fabulous research by Jacques Barzon first showed that this kind of clay was unique (at that time) to Cambridge.[10] This gives more credence to the argument that the adventure took place in Cambridge.

While I believe that this adventure did take place at Cambridge, it does not mean that Holmes went to college there. For example, Holmes refers to a courtyard as a "quadrangle." At Cambridge, the courtyards were always "courts," but at Oxford they were "quadrangles." Holmes never refers to it as a "court" (but uses the more generic word "courtyard"), and he does refer to it as a "quadrangle," something a Cambridgian would never do,

[9] Metcalfe, Percy, "Holmes's University Career – a Reassessment," op cit.

[10] Barzun, Jacques, "A Few Trifling Paragraphs," *Baker Street Journal,* 21:4, December 1971, Pg. 225.

but an Oxfordian might do to annoy a Cambridgian. This suggests that Holmes, himself, went to Oxford.

*The Creeping Man*

This case occurs in the intriguingly named town of Camford, clearly a mix of Cambridge and Oxford. Watson describes the town as such:

> ... a smart hansom swept us past a row of ancient colleges and, finally turning into a tree-lined drive, pulled up at the door of a charming house, girt round with lawns and covered with purple wisteria."

Further Holmes says:

> Well, well, we have made a beginning. I should not expect any fresh developments until next Tuesday. In the meantime we can only keep in touch with friend Bennettand enjoy the amenities of this charming town.

These are not quite the same hostile descriptions that Holmes gave of Cambridge in MISS. However, adherents to the school of Cambridge say that this physical description could only mean that the adventure took place in Cambridge,[11] where the ancient colleges can be seen in a row on St. John's Street, Trinity Street, and King's Parade. However, Nicholas Utechin shows that there is also a row of ancient colleges on Turl Street in Oxford.[12] Further, in this adventure Holmes states:

> There is, if I remember right, an inn called the Checquers where the port used to be above mediocrity and the linen was above reproach. I think, Watson, that our lot for the next few days might lie in less pleasant places.

Nicholas Utechin points out that there was still a Chequers in North Oxford (where he says Professor Presbury would undoubtedly have lived) as recently as 1985.[13]

The evidence here points to the adventure taking place in Oxford, and Holmes shows significant nostalgia for the place.

*The Red-Headed League*

While this story does not bear direct evidence to where Holmes went to school, it does offer curious indirect evidence. Holmes knew that John Clay went to Oxford. Holmes said:

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[11] Hall, Trevor, *Sherlock Holmes – Ten Literary Studies*. Gerald Duckworth & Co.1969.

[12] Utechin, Nicholas, op cit.

[13] Utechin, Nicholas, op cit.

> John Clay, the murderer, thief, smasher, and forger. He's a young man, Mr. Merryweather, but he is at the head of his profession, and I would rather have my bracelets on him than on any criminal in London. He's a remarkable man, is young John Clay. His grandfather was a royal duke, and he himself has been to Eton and Oxford. His brain is as cunning as his fingers, and though we meet signs of him at every turn, we never know where to find the man himself. He'll crack a crib in Scotland one week, and be raising money to build an orphanage in Cornwall the next. I've been on his track for years and have never set eyes on him yet.

It almost sounds like Holmes has some twisted pride in the achievements of a fellow alumnus of the same university to which he went. While I admit that this is not the strongest evidence that I offer, compare that to all the other impersonal ways that I have shown Holmes to react to Cambridge, its students, its faculty, and its alumni.

### *Other Issues*

There have been other issues which Sherlockian analysts have pursued in these religious arguments. For example, Nicholas Utechin noted that there was a Holmes Scholarship available at Oxford. There were Holmeses and Musgraves listed as students at two of the schools.

One argument is that if Holmes wanted to study chemistry, as he may well have on entering the university, he would surely have chosen Cambridge, which had the stronger chemistry department.[14] However, others counter that Oxford had a respectable chemistry department, and Holmes may have chosen to study with a specific faculty there.[15] My own opinion on this point (albeit as much speculation as anyone else's opinion on this topic, but based on a constructionist reading of the Canon) is that Holmes was unhappy with the chemistry department where he was studying, evidenced by his spending much of his long vacation in GLOR at his London rooms working on his own, doing organic chemistry experiments that, apparently, he could not do at school. If this is true, and if Cambridge had the stronger chemistry department, then this evidence points to Holmes attending Oxford.

Frankly, I find none of these side arguments to be compelling. What I find compelling is the canonical evidence as I have presented it above. Clearly, Holmes had neither familiarity nor affection for Cambridge. Ergo, he went to Oxford.

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[14] Hall, Trevor, *Sherlock Holmes – Ten Literary Studies*, op cit.

[15] Moss, Robert A., "Sherlock Holmes's College At Oxford," *Baker Street Journal,* 29:1, March, 1979, pp: 25-27.

# The Case for Cambridge

– Dana Richards

Andrew Solberg has given the case for Holmes having attended Oxford. In this debate it is my turn to argue that my esteemed colleague is, well, wrong. In fact, Andrew's article gives a good survey of the textual clues and I will not repeat them here, except as they reinforce my claim that Holmes went to Cambridge.

This debate is long-standing and does, indeed, have a religious flavor. As in religious debates, great issues hang on a single Canonical passage, and unhelpful passages are deemed irrelevant. The source of the problem is that Watson did not deign to mention Holmes's alma mater. As Holmes famously states in BOSC "circumstantial evidence is a very tricky thing [which] may seem to point very straight to one thing, but if you shift your point of view a little, you may find it pointing in an equally uncompromising manner to something entirely different."

The difficulty in this debate is deeper than the quality of the evidence. At the beginning of 3STU Watson clearly states, "It will be obvious that any details which would help the reader exactly to identify the college or the criminal would be injudicious and offensive." Further in CREE the use of "Camford" clearly points to a desire to disguise the university. How far did Watson go to conceal? What facts did Watson unwittingly let slip through? What facts did he intentionally change? There are no answers to these questions that will satisfy anyone.

Hence I will not further debate biting dogs, oaken double doors, being *at* college, going *down* to the university, the name of the inn (Chequers), and *quadrangles* versus *courts*. I only mention that in all these cases I can cite expert opinion that favors Cambridge. One such example is sufficient. In the Sidney Paget illustration for GLOR, in the Strand Magazine, Holmes is shown lounging in his straw hat with a decidedly light colored hatband. Of course, since Cambridge athletes wore light blue (to Oxford's dark blue) this is evidence for the Cambridgians. There is no evidence that Holmes was an athlete at University, but in GLOR there is a reference to boxing and fencing to counter the objection. Few commentators can match the *chutzpah* of the Oxonian Geoffrey Stavert when he states that the hatband was light colored because it was bleached out during chemical experiments!

Instead, I give a few broader reasons in favor Cambridge.

"*This inhospitable town*."

In MISS we get a unambiguous reference to Cambridge. There is still the possibility, to protect Overton's privacy, that this rugby player did not hail from Cambridge, but let's assume it is as written. The chief difficulty presented by this story is Holmes's remark to Watson, "here we are, stranded and friendless, in this inhospitable town." Harsh words, it would seem, for an alumnus.

First, it must be remarked that the words have the ring of idle banter. Such an epithet was natural at the time. After all, Holmes and Watson had just been evicted from Dr. Armstrong's home after being upbraided in a most disagreeable way. Since this was the first thing they had done in Cambridge it is natural to react to their unpleasant experience in that fashion.

Second, there may be deeper waters in this remark. It seems likely that Holmes's university career was a rocky one. In GLOR we are told that, "[Victor Trevor] was the only friend I made during the two years I was at college." This indicates a short college career. (In MUSG, the reference to "my last years at the university" is equivocal.) Of most interest is Watson's remark in STUD that Holmes did not "appear to have pursued any course of reading which might fit him for a degree in science or any other recognized portal which would give him an entrance into the learned world."

It is generally held that Holmes did not graduate from any university, and I believe the text supports that view. In fact I would agree with those that think he was pursuing his "desultory studies" at the University of London when Watson met him. Why did Holmes leave a prestigious university town? We know, from GLOR, that he said, "I was never a very sociable fellow, Watson, always rather fond of moping in my rooms and working out my own little methods of thought, so that I never mixed much with the men of my year." It seems plausible that over time Holmes's interest in his "own little methods" came to supplant his required studies; that his professors and tutors were guiding him towards useless knowledge. In STUD Holmes reveals his antipathy:

> "You see," he explained, "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skillful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment,

and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent."

In this passage, I think, Holmes inadvertently reveals his dissatisfaction with the university. Did he leave quietly or did he make it make it known that the status quo was stifling and misguided? In short, did he make the town too hot to hold him? Perhaps. After all, Watson's silence on this whole question could be a favor to Holmes. I think he found Cambridge to be inhospitable.

"*He appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge.*"

Oxford and Cambridge were not equal in reputation in all academic disciplines. That Holmes was interested in the study of science is undeniable (even if Watson's assessment of his ignorance of the humanities was exaggerated). Actually both of the great universities were not in the forefront of science. Their reputations were built on older professions (religion, law and medicine) and other universities, starting in 1851, took up the practical matters of science and engineering education, at places like the University of London and the red-brick universities. However the ancient universities were catching up.

Cambridge had long been the dominant university in mathematics and it was natural that it should stay ahead of Oxford in the growing emphasis in the sciences. It is really inconceivable that Holmes would have pursued science at Oxford; Sayers, Brend, and other commentators have come to the same conclusion. Sayers goes further to argue that at Cambridge, Holmes worked for his Tripos in Natural Science ("the probability of [this Tripos is] so very much stronger that it almost amounts to a violent presumption of fact.") This point was carried to the conclusion that Holmes would have been at Sidney Sussex College, by Sayers and others; see Chorley's book.

"*Three little pyramids of black, doughy clay.*"

The university that is the site of the scandal in the 3STU has been debated fiercely. Watson left few clues as a result of his desire to disguise the college. Details have been used as circumstantial evidence to point to one town and then turned to point just as well to the other town. There is one major exception to this: the clue of the pyramids of clay. The case hinged on Holmes going to the athletic grounds where he "saw that tenacious black clay [was] used in the jumping-pit." Bristowe, in 1956, settled the issue rather decisively when he spoke to C. B. Fry, who was the long jumper for Oxford in the early 1890s: "I could well remember jumping into this putty-like mud at Cambridge but could not recall seeing anything similar at Oxford."

Why is this relevant? It has been thought that university of 3STU is the one Holmes attended. In this story Holmes is familiar with faculty, the library, and the local stationers.

(Even though he was studying charters and Oxford's Bodleian Library has the better collection, Cambridge is also used for the study of charters.)

For these three main reasons, plus a myriad of minor reasons, I think that we must conclude that Holmes attended college at Cambridge.

## References:

In addition to the references in Andrew Solberg's paper, I used these references (the first contains copies of the seminal papers):

*A Study in Dark Blue: Sherlock Holmes and Oxford*. Margaret Bird (Ed), Sherlock Holmes Society of London, 1988.

*The Light is Dark Enough*. Jonathan McCafferty (Ed), Sherlock Holmes Society of London, 1989.

R. J. Chorley, *Sherlock Holmes at Sidney Sussex College*, privately published, 1997.

# Irene Adler's Operatic Career

– D. C. Culbertson

There has been a lot of writing-not to mention a lot of verbal debate – about Irene Adler. Among other things, this "well-known adventuress," as the King of Bohemia referred to her, has been rumored to be the lawful wife of Sherlock Holmes and the mother of Nero Wolfe. But one aspect of Ms Adler's life has been largely overlooked: her operatic career. Where did she sing, and what does the choice of venue say about her talent? What roles might she have sung?

Let us begin, first, with the rather sketchy information provided about her in the story *A Scandal in Bohemia* which takes place in 1888, from Holmes's index. She was born in New Jersey in 1858. She was a prima donna at La Scala and the Imperial Opera of Warsaw and was a contralto. She had retired from the stage prior to the beginning of the story and was living in London, where she still gave occasional concerts.

One might wonder why Holmes's index does not indicate Adler's singing anywhere in the U.S. But at this time the U.S. ranked far behind Europe in the quality of its music schools and opera companies, and it was not unusual for young American musicians, especially those with outstanding ability, to study and perform abroad.

It certainly says a great deal about Adler's talent that the first record we have of her singing is at the Teatro alia Scala, better known as La Scala, in Milan. Built in the late 18th century, La Scala was known as one of only five theaters in Italy that gave performances all year round and, according to *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera*, "was the scene of important premieres by every notable Italian composer of the nineteenth century" such as Giuseppe Verdi, Gaetano Donizetti, and Vincenzo Bellini as well as lesser lights like Arrigo Boito and Amilcare Ponchielli. In addition, by the time Adler started her career there, it was one of the few theaters in Italy to have electric lights, a major improvement over the more common – and more dangerous – gas lighting. However, two composers who would have a major impact on late 19th century Italian opera were not yet active; *Scandal* takes place two years before Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana and five years before Puccini's first major success, Manon Lescaut.

As to Warsaw, as Joanna and Catherina Polatynska point out in their 2000 article "A Few Words About Theatres in Warsaw," there was no "Imperial Opera of Warsaw" at the time when Irene sang there – presumably during the 1882-83 season, when she also met the King. In fact, only two theaters were open: the Warsaw Governmental Theatre (which the Poles knew as "The National Theatre" or "The Grand Theatre") and Rozmaitosci Theatre. Only

tragedies and dramas were performed at Rozmaitosci and the Warsaw Governmental Theatre included stages for drama, ballet and opera; the latter must have been where Irene sang.

This theater was a very important one in Polish cultural life. As the Polatynskas say in their article, "premieres of many dramas and operas were performed there. Famous foreign artists visited the Warsaw Governmental Theatre quite frequently. In the year 1885 the Meiningen Theatre, the illustrious German group of 19th century, played there." Sarah Bernhardt was also among its roster of distinguished performers. Also, as *The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera* points out, "the kingdom of Poland had the oldest operatic tradition of east-central Europe, with important Italian connections which go back to the seventeenth century."

It is curious – and another tribute to her talent – that Adler was considered a prima donna at Warsaw, because this designation is almost always bestowed on sopranos, for whom nearly all leading female parts in opera are written. And Adler was a contralto, a designation given only to very low-voiced female singers. Clearly, she not only had, as Holmes said, "a face a man might die for," but a voice to die for as well.

As a contralto, Adler would almost never have enjoyed the privilege of being the leading lady. In opera, mezzo-sopranos, altos, and contraltos generally play a poor second fiddle to the sopranos, relegated to playing the parts of the heroine's best friend, nursemaids, servants, and older women. For Adler, this would probably include Adalgisa (Norma's best friend), Amneris (Aida's rival), Azucena (the old gypsy fortuneteller in *Il Trovatore)* and Maddalena (the heroine's maid in *Rigoletto*). There's a good chance she may have sung one or more of these roles in Poland as well, considering the Polish opera's strong Italian connections.

The only respite from these parts – and the chance to play more of a leading role – for a low-voice female singer came with the so-called "trouser roles," where she would play the part of a young man, and these were often a lot of fun, involving lots of action, physical comedy, or the chance to play a leading part. Adler, being slight of build and low of voice, was ideally suited for such roles, and one can't help thinking that she played them with relish. (Remember her saying, "Male costume is nothing new to me," and frequently wearing men's clothes in everyday life for the freedom it gave her.) These probably included the lead role in Gluck's *Orfee,* Urbain in Meyerbeer's Les *Huguenots,* Assaces in Rossin's *Semiramide,* and Moffio Oricio in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia,* which had been performed regularly at La Scala since 1834, but is relatively little-known today.

The most curious question about Irene Adler's career is why a person with such apparent talent and promise retired from the operatic stage at so young an age. (She was already retired at age 30, when Scandal begins, and low-voiced singers can easily continue their careers into their 60s.) The Canon is silent on that question, so one can only speculate.

It is possible that her liaison with the King of Bohemia made her a pariah in the operatic community, but considering the generally relaxed moral standards among singers and actors at that time, that isn't too likely. It is much more likely, taking into account her early death, that it was for health-related reasons. Being an opera singer is enormously demanding physically, and this was a time when most opera houses were lit by gas, certainly none were air-conditioned, and many were inadequately heated, and these factors must have made performing in them taxing for anyone whose health was rather fragile. We can only be glad that Adler's talent was obviously recognized and appreciated by her contemporaries, however fleeting her time in the spotlight.

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Warrack, Guy. *Sherlock Holmes and Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947)

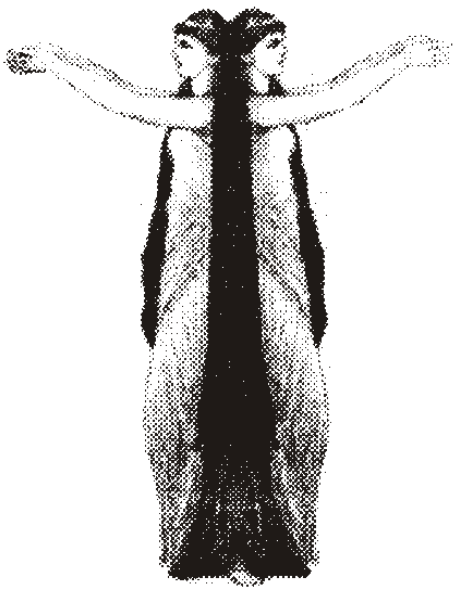
# A Toast to the Stoner Sisters

– Paul G. Churchill

First Presented at the Meeting of the Speckled Band of Boston 14 May 2004

Let us offer a toast to the ill-fated twins
Who would suffer great pain for their stepfather's sins;
To poor Julia Stoner against whom he raged
For the trifling crime of becoming engaged;
And to Helen, her sister, who barely survived
All the sinister plans that old Roylott contrived!
They had lost their dear father when they were but two,
And they missed the old gen'ral whom they never knew.
When their mother remarried that very same year,
It was all for the best; they had nothing to fear.
It was said that their stepfather had been in gaol;
He had beaten his butler to death went the tale!
Grimesby Roylott came back to his homeland so dear
With two girls and a wife and a thousand a year.
They were back in Olde England and then, right on cue,
It was Mom's turn to die, on the railway, near Crewe.
The old doctor gave up on his medical plan,
And they went to the Saxon estate, Stoke Moran.
The estate down in Surrey they say once was grand,
With a manor house, riches, and acres of land!
But the place had now fallen into disrepair;
It was heavily mortgaged for Roylott, the heir.
Then one Christmas our Julia went to her aunt's,
Up in Harrow in Middlesex where, just perchance,
She was swept off her feet by a half-pay Marine,
And her forthcoming marriage made life look so green.
But the loss of her income led Roylott to scheme,
So he plotted a deed that would shatter her dream.
First he added a vent and a rope with no wire,
Then he bolted her bed to the floor near the fire.

In a fortnight the time came to do what was planned;
First she screamed, then she gasped out the words, “Speckled Band!”
By the time Helen came back to be by her side,
It was over and Julia fainted and died.
Now two years had gone by since poor Julia passed,
And the time for poor Helen was coming up fast;
On her beau, Percy Armitage, Helen now leans,
Second son of a Crane Water man of some means;
But with eyes all averted he couldn’t keep pace,
So then Helen remembered the Farintosh case,
How an opal tiara was found and returned
By a London detective named Holmes, so she learned.
Now our Helen was smart and so sought Holmes’s aid,
And we all know just how the adventure was played:
Grimesby Roylott stopped by after Helen had left;
After calling Holmes names, with a strength that was deft,
He then grabbed up a poker and bent it awry,
But our hero untangled it, then winked his eye.
Afternoon saw the pair head to Surrey by train;
From the Crown they then went with revolver and cane.
The detective arrived with a plan up his sleeve:
That night Helen would open the shutters and leave.
Holmes and Watson were there when the hissing began,
And now Roylott was foiled by his own wicked plan!
Let us drink to the sisters, one dead, one alive:
May the mem’ry of what they endured long survive!!
One last word for the doctor whose death came to pass:
We can all here agree, he’s a snake in the grass!!!



# The Adventure of the Sherlockian Tourist

– Marshall S. Berdan

At the not-so-tender age of 150, the nearly immortal Sherlock Holmes still draws supporters and supplicants to London's Baker Street.

Sherlock Holmes, the world's first – and still most famous – consulting detective, has certainly fallen upon hard times. I catch sight of him, replete in his trademark tweed Inverness overcoat and deerstalker cap, his calabash pipe in one hand, while the other hands out business cards to whomever he deduces might be tourists as they emerge from the Baker Street underground station (subway) en route to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum.

Needless-to-say, he's not very happy about it. He is, after all, the world's most instantly recognized fictional character. And in his salad days, the troubled, harassed and just plain confused beat a hasty path to his eminently respectable door – not to Madame Tussaud's, who was just starting to make a vaguely unsavory name for herself with her grotesque wax effigies.

But then, he does look remarkably well for a man who just turned 150 – for as the devotees of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's immortal superstar sleuth have collectively deduced, he was born on January 6th, 1854, in Yorkshire's West Riding.

Nor have the years done much to dim his stellar reputation. Sales of his chronicled cases continue to be brisk, thanks in large part to the ten-year run (1984-94) of the Granada TV series, starring the late Jeremy Brett, that proved to be one of PBS's all-time biggest hits. And in 1993, no less a scholarly institution than Oxford University (which naturally 'claims' Holmes as an alumnus) issued a nine-volume annotated version of the 60 adventures, which are known affectionately – and affectedly – to Sherlockians as "the Canon."

So it's hardly surprising that fans of the great detective come from all over the world just to trod the very same streets that Holmes and his colleague and biographer, Dr. John H. Watson, once plied in horse-drawn hansom cabs. And thanks to Doyle – who once had a medical consulting practice of his own in nearby Devonshire Place – and preferred to use actual place names, they have little trouble doing so.

The late Elizabethan (that's Elizabeth II, of course) world of Sherlock Holmes is centered along what is now the northern reaches of Baker Street, but which in Holmes's day was known as Upper Baker Street. The reason for this is elementary: during the Battle of Britain, most of Holmes's own Portman Square neighborhood (the exact location of the "original" 221B is a matter of ongoing scholarly debate, but most have concluded that it was on the

west side of Baker Street somewhere between George and Dorset Streets) was reduced to rubble by German bombers. After the war, it was rebuilt with functional, box-like office complexes, an architectural metamorphosis that has been augmented by the only slightly less destructive powers of late 20th-century commercialism. As a result, the only stretch of the now 'extended' Baker Street to retain much of its original Victorian flavor are the two blocks between Marylebone Road and Regent's Park.

Not that Holmes or Watson would recognize much of it either these days now that Starbucks, McDonalds, KFC, and Blockbuster Video have moved into the street-level storefronts of the rows of four-story Georgian townhouses. And though the identity of their new next-door neighbors, Elvisly Yours and the London Beatles Shop, would be a total mystery, they would find themselves right at home outside the straight-laced, brown brick edifice at what is officially 239 Baker Street. That is because according to the blue oval Historic House Association plaque imbedded between the floor-length second-story windows, they actually did live here from 1881-1904.

However dubious the house's Canonical credentials, there is no doubting its present role and significance. For well over a decade now, this has been the Sherlock Holmes Museum and the weighty anchor of the contemporary capered commercial trade.

A long-standing American Sherlockian myself, I pause to admire what I consider to be the remarkably authentic narrow, black-wooden doorway, complete with a gold-stenciled "221 B"on the semi-circular fanlight window. But I am soon shunted aside by a carload of Japanese tourists who, with Nikons a'flashing, take turns posing in front of it.

The sound and light mini-spectacle draws mixed reviews: my amusement, for I know that the Japanese are particularly avid Sherlockians, and the obvious disgust of a passer-by who opines to his companion that "it's all just a commercial gimmick."

Inside, one of the Japanese has already donned a blue wool "Bobby" outfit and is posing in front of the coat rack from which another Inverness cape is hanging. I pay my £6 entrance fee and proceed upward into Holmes and Watson's inner sanctum. It's exactly 17 steps up (the test by which Holmes once proved to Watson that he saw but did not observe). I'm impressed. At the top of the stairs is the even more impressive recreation of their well-referenced front sitting room, the alpha and omega of their frequent forays into the sordid underbelly of Victorian society. Amid the meticulous clutter, I discern many of the famous furnishings: the Persian slipper in which Holmes kept his tobacco, the violin case in which he kept his bargain-basement Stradivarius, and the jack-knife with which he impaled incoming mail.

In front of the fairly convincing imitation coal fire, another Japanese tourist parks herself in the red-velvet armchair and dons the deerstalker while her daughter records the moment

on film. A very youthful looking Mrs. Hudson, Holmes's "long-suffering landlady," (the white apron is a tip-off) watches passively from the settee, presumably to see that no latter-day clients take any liberties while her celebrated lodgers are momentarily out.

But there's more – not only both Holmes's and Watson's bedrooms, whose existence is only mentioned in passing in the stories, but at the very top of the stairs, their water closet, which, not surprisingly considering that theirs was the Victorian age, is never mentioned at all. And considering that this was indeed a boarding house throughout the Victorian age, the feeling of authenticity is, well, authentic.

Back downstairs in the gift shop I investigate the many Sherlockian souvenirs offered for sale, eventually settling on a quotation-inscribed tie that should prove to be an effective conversation piece at the next gathering of my American Sherlockian societies.

Across Baker Street is the Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company whose upstairs contains an exhibit of many of the props actually used in the Granada TV series. Downstairs is another mind-boggling array of Sherlockiana including chess sets, figurines, original artwork, and lots and lots of books – including many first and rare editions.

With the theme from the Granada series droning on atmospherically in the background, I chat with manager Stewart Quentin Holmes, a journalist and actor who really does live on Baker Street. Naturally, he is also sartorially accurate, though he readily admits to having changed his name – legally, of course.

On this part of 21st century Baker Street, the name to be sporting is still definitely "Holmes." Next door is Croque Monsieur "a positively French coffee house and sandwich bar" that nonetheless features some brightly-colored, fanciful scenes from the adventures, including a black Holmes. Next door to that is a laundry service that facetiously bills itself as "dry cleaners to Sherlock Holmes."

Across the street at what is now numbers 215-229 stands the massive granite headquarters of the Abbey National pic (what the British call a "building society", but what we would call a savings and loan), whose corner display window contains a diorama of Baker Street in Holmes's day. Since 1932, this is where mail addressed to 221B Baker Street has been delivered. After just ignoring it for years, the bankers of Baker Street finally saw the public relations error of their ways and designated an official "Secretary to Sherlock Holmes" to respond.

In the late 1980s, I had heard Tony Harries, the then office-holder, speak to a group of Washington, D.C. Sherlockians about the wide and varied correspondence that constituted his daily labor. Much of it was humorous and entertaining, he explained, but much of it was

also pathetic and touching, submitted by vexed and desperate people from all over the world who had turned to Sherlock Holmes simply because they had no place else to turn.

Alas, my attempt to drop in on the current office-holder, Gug Kyriacou, comes to naught. The polite – and obviously well-practiced – receptionist informs me that he is away on what is no doubt a well-deserved holiday. To 'console' me, she offers me a handful of postcards depicting the opening scene from "The Valley of Fear."

By now it's time for lunch, so I head over to Sherlock's Bar and Grill at The Sherlock Holmes Hotel for some upscale Italian fare. During Holmes's day this building housed the Bedford College for Women, so its Canonical connections are somewhat suspect. To make matters worse, it recently ditched its cozy, traditional English layout in favor of minimalist wide-open public spaces and staff attired exclusively in black. But I doubt if Queen Victoria, who herself wore nothing but black after the death of her husband in 1861, would have been amused.

At precisely 2:30, I spot Holmes, the hawker, picking up his sandwich board and heading back up Baker Street. But his conspicuous presence there remains, thanks to the slightly larger than life bronze statue erected by Abbey National – with help from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London – in September of 1999. Obviously subscribing to the conceit that this is truly a man who needs no introduction, the pedestal simply reads "The Great Detective."

The idea for a statute commemorating Baker Street's most celebrated resident was first broached in 1927 by G.K. Chesterton, author of the Father Brown mystery stories, just as the last of Doyle's original Holmes stories were appearing in *The Strand Magazine*. By then Holmes had already proven capable of drawing tourists, and Chesterton merely sought to capitalize upon it. It would be another 70 years before a bank could finally compound that interest into reality.

By then, however, Holmes's popularity had grown geometrically as well as geographically. When it was belatedly realized that thousands of overseas tourists would want to be photographed standing in front of it, the positioning of the statue was reversed so that they would not be standing in the service road – with traffic coming unexpectedly from the left.

I make my way to Charing Cross via the rather unromantic – but chronologically accurate – London Underground as the Baker Street Station dates from the 1860s. Today the Bakerloo Line platform walls are covered with silhouettes of the classic Holmes profile, done cleverly enough in dark pixels that upon inspection turn out to be smaller versions of the same silhouette. (The platforms of the Jubilee Line are adorned with a series of 6×4-foot murals depicting various Canonical scenes.)

From there it's a short stroll down narrow Craven Passage to the former Northumberland Hotel where the newly arrived Sir Henry's boots kept disappearing at the outset of *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* the most well-known and well-loved of all the Holmes adventures. Since 1958 this small architectural jewel has been The Sherlock Holmes Pub and as such, the original London mecca-*cum*-watering hole of late 20th-century Sherlockian enthusiasts. Downstairs in the fully functional public bar, patrons can slake both their thirst and curiosity by examining the contents of the several glass display cases – many of which are on permanent loan from Doyle's estate – all under the bleary-eyed gaze of a decidedly mangy, green-at-the-jowls hound.

Upstairs in the restaurant, those hungering for a little more substance have a choice of starters (appetizers) and entrees named after the stories and characters that run the gamut from Sherlock's Own Favorite (sirloin of Scottish beef) to Inspector Lestrade's Favorite (shepherd's pie) – no doubt a reflection of the divergence in the wages of uncovering sin between the private investigator and the Scotland Yard detectives. But the *real piece de resistance* is served under – or rather behind – glass: the original recreated Baker Street sitting room from the London Exhibit of 1951.

Over a pint of Sherlock Holmes Fine Ale, I pore over the still fascinating exhibit while a family of Iranians decides on their just desserts. I have been coming here since 1978 and have never failed to encounter fellow Sherlockians with their own remarkable tales to tell. Back downstairs I do my best to talk Sherlockian shop with a couple from Paris, while trying my best to ignore the continuously playing videos of the 1940s' Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce series that blare out from two recently-installed and very un-Victorian mounted TVs.

The next afternoon, I take the family (alas, my passion for Holmes has neither rubbed off nor been passed on genetically) to Simpson's-in-the-Strand – an elegant, wood-paneled carvery that dates back to 1828 and is mentioned three times in the Canon. Upstairs in the Regency-style 'Simply Simpson's' room, we linger over generous, served-at-your-table, portions of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding while keeping a watchful eye for suspicious characters in the busy thoroughfare below.

That night is drizzly with just a hint of those famous pea-soup fogs – now mercifully a thing of the past as a result of the virtual elimination of coal-burning stoves. While my family remains safe from the elements, I respond to that most irresistible of all Sherlockian summonses – "the game is afoot" by taking to the soggy streets, armed only with a copy of "The Sherlock Holmes Walk", a do-it-yourself guidebook whose cover depicts a shadowy Holmes who appears to be toting a Thompson sub-machine gun.

For the next two hours, I take in such significant and still extant Sherlockian sites as The Café Royal (outside of which Holmes was assaulted in *The Illustrious Client*), the Lyceum Theatre (where Watson meets the mysterious client who will soon become his first wife), and

the Langham Hotel (where Doyle contracted to write *The Sign of Four* for £100) and where the Doyle Suite now goes for over £800 a night!

On my way back to my own decidedly less sumptuous digs, I become disoriented in the mist, and soon find myself in a deserted alley somewhere behind Berkeley Square. The perfect setting for a murder, I muse not completely disinterestedly. But before my imagination can run completely amuck, two Bobbies in their trademark conical helmets, their night sticks dangling from their belt, round the comer and pass through the feeble halo of a street lamp. Even Holmes, whose own opinion of the official police force was a low one, would have been impressed. I'm just relieved.

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## In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes

SHERLOCKIAN SITES: The Sherlock Holmes Museum, 239 Baker Street, NW1 6XE, tel: 011-44-20-7935-8866, **www.sherlockholmesmuseum.com**, admission: £6; The Sherlock Holmes Memorabilia Company, 230 Baker Street NW1 5RT, tel: 011-44-20 7486-1426, **www.sherlockholmes1.com**, admission to exhibits: £3.

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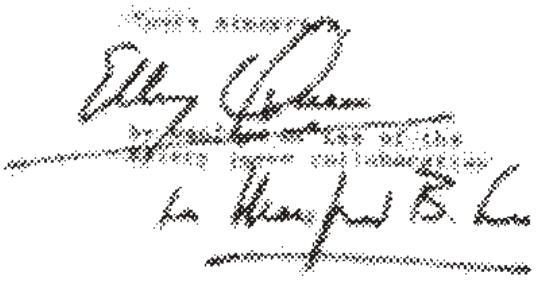
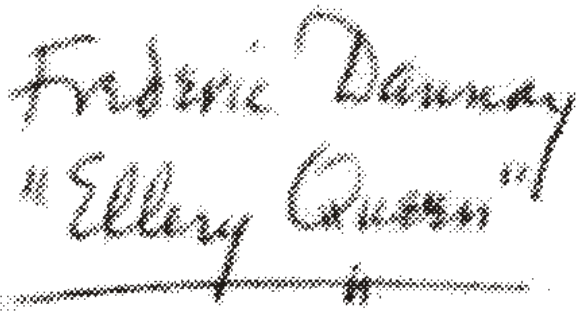
# The Tracing of a Family Mannerism

– Steve Clarkson

Most mystery fans know that the famed mystery writer "Ellery Queen" was actually two persons: Frederic Dannay (BSI, "The Dying Detective") and his cousin Manfred Lee. Only Dannay was a Sherlock Holmes aficionado, though – a holdover from his sickly childhood when he first read *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. As a rule, it was Dannay who hatched the plots for "Ellery Queen's" mysteries, and Lee who actually wrote the stories. As co-authors of many famous mystery books, Dannay and Lee both autographed copies of their books as "Ellery Queen." I have one such book: a copy of *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes* autographed to Edwin S. Friendly, the General Manager of the *New York Sun* newspaper, by "Ellery Queen." I wondered which "half of Queen had actually done the autograph and set about finding out. I wrote to Otto Penzler of the Mysterious Bookstore, who said it was most likely Manfred Lee's handwriting. Famed bookseller Peter Stern said the same thing, and so did Peter Blau (BSI, "Black Peter") who owns a number of books autographed in his presence by Dannay.

But I wanted to find a "litmus test," if one was possible, that would enable anyone to differentiate between Dannay's "Ellery Queen" and Lee's "Ellery Queen." So I wrote to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin, which has a substantial collection of Dannay's writings. A most helpful intern named Elizabeth Garver wrote back, giving me the address of an Internet web site[1] which had "Ellery Queen" signatures by both men. The signatures are herewith reproduced:





An examination of the two signatures shows that in Dannay's "Ellery Queen" the two "e's" in "Queen" are Greek-e's, while those in Lee's signature are cursive. Peter Blau, who knows for certain that all his "Ellery Queen" signatures were written by Dannay, confirms this difference. (The lower case "e" in "Ellery" is cursive in both signatures.)

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[1] http://neptune.spaceports.com/~queen/Whodunit_1.html - NOTE - This URL no longer exists. It has been changed to **http://queen.spaceports.com/Whodunit_1.html** - Les

But, as Holmes once remarked, there is a deeper, subtler influence to be noted. In *The Reigate Puzzle*, Holmes observed that not one but two people had written alternating words in a note used to lure William Kirwan to his death. Among the differences in the writing he noted that the ringleader used Greek-e's while the other culprit – the older one – used cursive e's. From this he also deduced, "There is something in common between these hands. They belong to men who are blood-relatives.

I have no doubt at all that a family mannerism can be traced in these two specimens of writing." Now, here's the twist: Manfred Lee, who was about 9 months older than his cousin Frederic Dannay, used cursive e's in his Queen signature. Might Dannay – the "ringleader" who had conceived the "Ellery Queen" plots – have remembered REIG and used Greek-e's? We'll never know, of course, but it's fun to think that he did.

# Active in Retirement: Sherlock Holmes on the South Downs

– Dr. Deborah Clark

It is clear from the Canon[1] that Sherlock Holmes like many of us was thinking of retirement long before he actually took the plunge. There are hints as early as 1889 where he stated in *The Naval Treaty:* "I have been tempted of late to look at the problems furnished by nature rather than the superficial ones society furnishes." By the time of *The Final Problem* (1891), he is considering it more seriously, but not until he has freed society from that Napoleon of Crime, Professor James Moriarty. He tells Watson: "If I could beat that man, I should feel that my own career had reached its summit and I should be prepared to turn to some more placid line in life." At the time Holmes make this statement, he was only 37 years old!

However, as we know, Holmes returned to active practice after dealing with Moriarty and taking a three year hiatus during which most of the world thought him dead. Aside from the fact that he was almost constantly on the move and hiding from agents of Moriarty who were out for revenge, Holmes must have realized at some point during this time that he was not quite ready for full retirement. It did not take long after his return for him to start thinking about it again though, because he speaks of taking up the study of nature, bees in particular, as a hobby in *The Adventure of the Second Stain* (1894 or 1896, depending on whose chronology you prefer[2]) and in 1897, only 3 years after his return to active practice, during *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange,* he mentioned to Watson his plans to write a text book on the Whole Art of Detection during his 'declining years.'

In any event, shortly after *The Adventure of the Creeping Man* in 1903, Watson tells us (in his introduction to *Second Stain)* that Holmes took himself to Sussex to study and was devoting himself to bee farming on the Downs. Later on, in the preface of *His Last Bow,* Watson gives us a few more specifics. He says that Holmes has a small farm about 5 miles from Eastbourne where his time is divided between philosophy and agriculture.

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1 William S. Baring-Gould, ed., *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1967. All references to stories in the Canon refer to this source.

2 Ernest Bloomfield Zeisler, *Baker Street Chronology*. New York City: Magico, 1983. On page 153 of his comprehensive overview of the chronology of the Canon, Zeisler notes that Bell dates this story at 1894; June Thomson, *Holmes and Watson: A Study in Friendship*. London: Constable, 1995, p. 277 puts this story in 1896. Other scholars have varying opinions.

For a man fond of privacy, the Sussex Downs, near the Channel was ideal – not that far from London, with a good train connection to Victoria Station, but rural and undeveloped enough to make it difficult to be found. Indeed, the exact location of this farm has never been definitively identified to this day![3]

By this time, Holmes was adamant that his retirement would be a permanent one, and he certainly had no financial need to take cases! His payments from the grateful governments of Scandinavia and France would have no doubt been well invested, and though it is clear that he had many offers, he was persuaded to look into only two cases of which we have records.

The first of these occurred in 1907, when a crime occurred virtually on his own doorstep. A neighbor of Holmes's, Fitzroy McPherson, science master at a nearby private school or coaching establishment called "The Gables" literally fell dead at Holmes's feet following an early morning swim. Apparently as a result of scourging from a cat o'nine tails. His last words were, "the lion's mane." With circumstances like that facing him, how could Holmes refuse? Holmes admitted all his senses were aroused, and once again, "the Game is Afoot!" Holmes willingly assisted the local police in investigating this crime, although it took him a week to realize the importance of McPherson's last words and find the book in his attic which contained the information needed to solve it. This is a far cry from the brilliant London detective, who said he kept all relevant information pigeonholed in his brain-attic. Since it had been four years since his last official case, it has been suggested that Holmes's skills had rusted over time from lack of use.[4]

But, if he was not investigating crime over the intervening years, what had Holmes been doing? We know from *Lion's Mane* that he had taken up swimming and photography to the extent that he developed his own prints (which would have been no problem for a trained chemist.) Presumably he still pursued his chemical researches and continued to perform experiments, as well.

And, since his attic on the South Downs was full of books (and most likely his case files and Commonplace Books as well), one can assume he was still a voracious and omnivorous reader. Daily newspapers and books on his latest area of research or interest could easily be sent down via train from London. And of course, he studied his bees – with much the same ardor as he once studied the criminal classes in London.

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[3] Thompson, p. 232.

[4] Ibid, p. 237.

Surprisingly perhaps for a man known to be extremely private and "unsociable" in London, Holmes also visited his neighbors. He was known, and clearly respected, by the residents and constabulary of the nearby village. And, it would appear that headmaster Harold Stackhust, science master Fitzroy McPherson, and some of the other masters at The Gables also helped fill the void left by Watson when Holmes moved to Sussex.

Life was pleasant and predictable. Holmes was troubled only by periodic bouts of rheumatism... until early 1912 when Holmes found both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister in his sitting room, imploring him to "lay his remarkable combination of intellectual and practical activity at the disposal of the Government." The German war was approaching and his talents were sorely needed by the Crown.

Still susceptible to flattery and always the patriot, Holmes acquiesced and as related in *His Last Bow*. He traveled to Chicago, then Buffalo, and then Skibbareen, Ireland, establishing his cover and infiltrating Baron Von Bork's spy ring as Altamont, a disaffected and bitter Irish-American who fed disinformation to the enemy while arranging for the covert capture of at least 5 enemy agents.

Presumably during the years between *Lion's Mane* and *His Last Bow*, Holmes wrote and published his *magnum opus. The Practical Handbook of Bee Culture, with some observations upon the Segregation of the Queen*, the slim volume he gave to Von Bork instead of the copied British signals and codes.

After that evening in 1914, when Holmes and Watson stood on the terrace together, we hear no more of Holmes's adventures directly. Although Watson continued to publish earlier cases until 1927, neither Holmes nor Watson wrote another word for publication.

That is not to say that we have no further information about them however, though the reliability of sources varies greatly. There have been rumors that prior to his work documented in *His Last Bow,* Holmes worked as a spy for the British government[5] and may have been involved with the handing over of the Zimmerman not proposing a German-Mexican-Japanese alliance against a neutral US, which had the effect of pushing the US in to the first World War.[6]

Whether this is true or not, Holmes certainly had the credentials to be a government agent. He had successfully and discreetly worked to solve problems for his own government as well as the governments of Scandinavia and France during his active practice. And during

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[5] Ibid, p. 252.

[6] Ibid, p. 246.

the Hiatus, recorded by Watson after his return in *The Empty House,* Holmes passed through the Sudan and had a conversation with the Khalifa, the results of which he reported back to the Foreign Office. It has also been suggested by more than one author that he and Mycroft both worked in that capacity and served as advisors to the War Office during World War I.[7]

It was shortly after *His Last Bow* that Holmes is said to have taken on an apprentice; a brash, brilliant 15 year old English-American girl who comes upon him on the Downs and eventually becomes his partner. . . and later, his wife.[8] Together they have undertaken cases for private individuals and the government in places as divers as Wales, Israel, and India. The reliability of these events is somewhat suspect, coming as they do from a trunk of papers and other memorabilia anonymously mailed to a Laurie King, a California writer, who has edited and published them. To date, Mr. Holmes has neither verified nor denied these events. Respected author Julian Symons has related a tale of Holmes meeting and assisting a young Agatha Christie during his retirement.[9] Cay Van Ash edited and published papers indicating the Holmes fought with Nayland Smith and Dr. Petrie against Fu Manchu.[10] Some even say he helped fight the Nazis in World War II. Several of these have even been made into movies: *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*,[11] (both starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce) and the *Mask of the Red Death* [12] starring Peter Cushing and John Mills come readily to mind.

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[7] Ibid, p. 261.

[8] Laurie R. King, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994: and *A Monstrous Regiment of Women*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

[9] Julian Symons, *Great Detectives – Seven Original Investigations*, New York:, Harry N. Abrams, 1981.

[10] Cay Van Ash, *Ten Years Beyond Baker Street*. New York: Harper and Row, 1984.

[11] *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror,* Universal Studios, 1942 and *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon,* Universal Studios, 1942.

[12] *Mask of Red Death,* 1984.

Holmes has been said to have survived the Titanic;[13] journeyed to Victoria Falls and helped solve a crime with the help of Marconi;[14] investigated the assassinations of muckraker David Graham Phillips[15] and John F. Kennedy;[16] and helped Teddy Roosevelt with the problems in Tammany Hall.[17] He is even supposed to have tackled Martians (from *The War of the Worlds*).[18] More recently, he is supposed to have helped the United Network Command for Law Enforcement, better known as UNCLE, defeat the residual minions of Moriarty's criminal organization, known as THRUSH (Technical Hierarchy for the Removal of Undesirables and Subjugation of Humanity.)[19]

So. How is this possible? Even if Holmes lived until the beginning of World War II he would have been in his late 80s. Holmes's own autobiographies are no help. Both *I. Sherlock Holmes*[20] edited by Michael Harrison and *Sherlock Holmes. My Life and Crimes*[21] edited by Michael Hardwick end with the incident at Reichenbach. However, William S. Baring-Gould's biography, *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*,[22] suggests Holmes died in 1957; while June Thomson's *Holmes and Watson*[23] suggests he died sometime in the 1930s. Most Sherlockians believe that Holmes cannot be dead because his obituary has

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13 William Seil, *Sherlock Holmes and the Titanic Tragedy*. London: Breese, 1996; and Dean Wesley Smith, *Two Roads, No Choices* in Mike Resnick and Martin Greenberg, ed., *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit*. New York: Daw Books, 1995, pp. 146-163.

14 *Sherlock Holmes and the Incident at Victoria Falls, 1991,* starring Christopher Lee and Patrick MacNee.

15 Daniel D. Victor, *The Seventh Bullet*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

16 Edmund Aubrey, *Sherlock Holmes in Dallas*. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co. 1980.

17 H. Paul Jeffers. The Adventure of the Stalwart Companions. London: Cassell, 1978.

18 Manly Wade and Wade Wellman, *Sherlock Holmes and the War of the Worlds*. New York: Warner Books, 1975.

19 David McDaniel, *The Man from UNCLE #4 /The Dagger Affair*. New York: Avon, 1965, and *The Man from UNCLE #13 /The Rainbow Affair*. New York: Avon, 1967.

20 Michael Harrison, ed., *Sherlock Holmes. My Life and Crimes*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977.

21 Michael Hardwick. Ed., *I. Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Doubleday, 1984.

22 William S. Baring-Gould, *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*. New York: Popular Library, 1963.

23 Thomson, p. 265.

never appeared in the *Times* of London[24] and surely one would have been printed for someone of his stature! Look at the coverage his supposed 'death' generated in 1891![25] In fact, there are extent obituaries of Holmes, one of the better being a 1948 article called *The Passing of Sherlock Holmes* by E.V. Knox.[26] This should not come as a surprise however; we know newspapers commonly have 'preliminary drafts' of obituaries of famous people at the ready. Look how quickly obituaries appeared when Bob Hope and Ronald Regan died!

June Thomson suggests that Holmes's own last request for privacy resulted in no information regarding his death or funeral being given to the public. Perhaps it was also the result of the government's fear that there would be an unhealthy rise in activity among the criminal classes should his death be announced![27]

Others have suggested that Holmes had himself cryogenically frozen and awakened in this century.[28] Still others have suggested Holmes had his consciousness placed in a computer.[29]

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[24] When I was in London, I was reprimanded by a resident for referring to their paper as "The Times of London". While other newspapers are named "The New York Times", "The Times of India", "The Times of Israel", "The Seattle Times", "The Times of Trenton", and even "The Times of Northwest Indiana", the paper published in England, the oldest, is simply "The Times" - Les

[25] B. Martin Dakin, *A Sherlock Holmes Commentary*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972, p. 138. The only comment I have ever seen in print supporting the long held belief that some Londoners wore black armbands to mourn Holmes's death at Reichenbach. Alas, this too is unsubstantiated.

[26] E.V. Knox, *The Passing of Sherlock Holmes,* in James Edward Holroyd. ed..Seventeen Steps to 221B. New York: Otto Penzler Books, 1994, pp. 82-89. (Originally published by G. Allen and Unwin, London, 1967.)

[27] Thomson, p. 265.

[28] *Sherlock Holmes Returns* (also known as *1994 Baker Street),* made for TV movie, 1993, with Anthony Higgins as Holmes and Deborah Farentino as his "Watson." *The Return of Sherlock Holmes,* made for TV movie, 1986, with Michael Pennington as Holmes and Margaret Colin as Watson's descendent. *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century,* 1999 children's cartoon service by DiC, supplier of educational programs for local television stations.

[29] Jack Nimershein, *Moriarty by Modem,* pp. 287-302 and Ralph Roberts, *Adventure of the Illegal Alien,* pp. 328-333 in Mike Resnick and Martin Greenberg, ed., *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit*. New York: Daw Books, 1995.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the first Metropolitan Police National Computer system established in 1987 is called HOLMES (Home Office Large Major Enquiry System).[30] However, a number of authors have suggested[31] that Holmes discovered the secret for extending life through his work with the bees, in particular the segregation of the Queen. The secret is Royal Jelly, which extends the life of the Queen Bee far longer than that of the worker bee. It is said that Holmes used this to extend his life and to stay productive well into this century. . .and some say the next. There are some reports from those who apparently practice channeling or have secretly discovered time travel that Holmes exists and is still practicing in the 23rd century.[32]

And there is some evidence from that time to suggest that in the ensuing years Holmes fathered a child, whose progeny has become quite famous in recent years for his logical deductions. In the 1991 *Star Trek* movie *The Undiscovered Country*[33] the Vulcan Science Officer, Mr. Spock, commented that "an ancestor of mine maintained that whenever you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remain, however improbable, must be true." Can there be any doubt as the identity of the ancestor? One author has even suggested that Holmes is Vulcan, which would explain his long life.[34]

At any rate, we will not be able to finally resolve the matter until irrefutable proof is available or until Mr. Holmes himself enlightens us. Until then, I give you this; since 1932, the Abbey Bank[35] whose address is 221B Baker Street, has employed a secretary to

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30 Alan Tamen, *Examining the Evidence – Sherlock Holmes and Forensic Science,* in David Stuart Davies, ed., *Sherlock,* issue 51 (2002) pp. 3-5.

31 Leah A. Zeides, *A Study in Sussex,* in Mike Resnick and Martin Greenberg, ed., *Sherlock Holmes in Orbit*. New York: Daw Books, 1995, pp. 184-190, and Frank Ramierex, *Mellisakrator,* in Signe Landon, Ed., *The Holmesian Federation*. 1987, pp. 38-44.

32 *Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century,* 1999 children's cartoon series.

33 *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. 1991 http://www.tvtome.com/tvtome/servlet/Guidepageservlet/showid-633epid-25862. Accessed 10/15/03.

34 Priscilla Pollner, *Holmes was a Vulcan,* in Signe Landon, Ed., *The Holmesian Federation*. 1987, pp. 22-29 and Poul Anderson, *The Archetypical Holmes* in *Baker Street Journal,* new series, XVIII, 1968, pp. 139-143

35 *Abbey and Sherlock Holmes*. http://www.abbeynational.comm/homem/group-info/groupinfohistory/group-infor-historysherlock.htm. Accessed 10/8/03.

answer letters to Holmes. I suggest to you that Sherlock Holmes can never die .....those who believe in him won't let him!

A slightly abbreviated version of this paper was originally presented at the 24th Annual Saturday with Sherlock Holmes, held on November 8, 2003, at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland.

# To Entail or Not to Entail

– Beth Austin

What is an entail and why do we care? To answer the second question first, I'm not at all sure that we do care. But the entail (emphasis on the first syllable en -tail) quite often plays a part in literature and murder mysteries. So then it is quite likely that readers such as ourselves might want to know "just what the dickens *is* an entail."

In very simple terms it is a legal means which was developed to keep large landed estates in one piece upon the death of the master. The entailment seeks to limit the inheritance of property to a specific line of heirs in such a way that it can never be legally transferred. Already the mystery writer's twisted mind starts clanking and cranking and she starts rubbing her hands together in glee. "A new plot twist. Ooooo! Tell me more!"

On that fateful day in 1066 when Duke William of Normandy crossed the channel and started calling himself King William of England, he also declared himself absolute owner (not just ruler but *owner)* of the entire country. All previous forms of land law were tossed aside and William became the ultimate land lord. He then set about distributing huge portions of the land to his supporters a reward for their hard work and well support. He did not give the land out-right of course. These supporters became *tenants-in-chief* of the king – meaning they held the rights to the income from the land and that right had been given to them directly from the king.[1]

Now, these huge portions of land were much too large for one man to manage (think of something the size of Rhode Island), so the tenants-in-chief (these are your garden variety dukes and earls) would sub-let some of his tenancy to his own supporters who would sublet to their supporters and so on and so on. Next thing you know, it's the feudal system with everybody owning part of everyone else's profits from the land. This process, called subinfeudation, was abolished in the 13th century so that only the king could grant tenurial relationships. Tenurial means the act, manner, or right of holding property and in British law specifically means the person possessing the land holds it from a superior, ultimately from the crown. So the tenants instead of creating sub-tenants, began to grant *estates* to their supporters.

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[1] Tompson, Richard S. *Island of Law: A Legal History of the British Isles*. Peter Lang: New York, 2000. Page 5.

The term estate here means a "package of rights over land, and responsibilities accompanying those rights."[2]

Estates were granted with all sorts of different terms and for all sorts of reasons. For example terms of the "estate for life" stated that the owner, call him Nigel, could not leave his estate to anyone: upon poor Nigel's demise the estate would revert back to the grantor. A more desirable term was the "Fee Simple" which allowed the owner, call him Clive, to leave all his estate to his heirs according to standard rules of inheritance. Under the terms of the Fee Simple, Clive had the right to the profits from the land but also had the right to sell the estate. The choice that Clive's heirs were faced with was 'Do I sell the estate and live a rich and happy life for myself or do I keep the estate and maintain a modest support for the entire family?' Selling the estate out of the family and leaving future generations, not to mention siblings, quite literally out in the cold was an undesirable outcome for the family. The masters began to look for the means to prevent the estate from leaving the family.

The masters began using phrases like, "I grant to my son and the heirs of his body..." Kevin Boone in his essay, *A Brief History of English Land Law*, tells us, "in 1285 influential landowners persuaded Parliament to enact the statue *De Donis Conditionalibus."* This enactment forced courts to recognize that expressions like 'to the heirs of the body in a grant of land limited to' the inheritance of land direct lineal descendants. Such an estate became known as *a fee tail* or *entail*, from the French, *tailler,* to cut. When an estate was granted in fee tail, the grantor retained a *reversion,* that is, a right to recover the estate at some (unspecified) future date if the owner died without descendants.[3]

In other words estates were granted with a limited time warrantee. They could expire. The terms of the estate could specify that without a male heir, the estate would pass back to the grantor. In order to prevent the reversion the master who entailed the estate usually would specify that the heir be male. When there were no sons the "collateral" heir would appear. That is the nephew who would inherit before the daughter.

Ah, enter the novelist, the short story writer, the murder mystery specialist. New and wonderful motives for crime; crimes the heart, crimes of passion, crimes of vengeance. Greed. The mother of all motives.

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[2] Boone, Kevin. "A Brief History of English Land Law" www.kevinboone.com/land_law.html, Accessed August 10, 2004. NOTE - The URL has since been changed to **http://www.kevinboone.net/history_of_land_law.html** - Les

[3] Ibid.

Jane Austen used it to great effect in *Pride and Prejudice*, in *Persuasion* and in *Sense and Sensibility*. Considering she only wrote six novels, I consider it significant that the entail played a part in three of them. For me the significance is that the entail was not unusual but was more the standard of the day for large landowners. The conflict comes when the estate cannot remain in the direct family but must pass to a collateral heir – in *Pride and Prejudice* that heir is the unctuous Mr. Collins to the exclusion of the five Bennett daughters. *In Sense and Sensibility* the cad is not the heir (the heroines' half-brother), but his wife. The heir in *Persuasion* is a nephew who does not respect the head of his family.

John Galt wrote a novel titled *The Entail* in 1822. The story centers around a Scottish family, an elopement, a father's retribution in setting up an entail to disinherit the runaway, the father's death and the inheritance of a younger, less capable son before the father has a chance to make it right. Aside from the nearly impenetrable Scottish accent the story is one of heartbreak and remorse.

> 'Come in,' said Claud to her – 'come in – I hae something to say to you anent thir bairns – Something maun be done for them and their mother; and I would fain tak counsel wi' you concerning't. Bell Fatherlans is o' oure frush a heart to thole wi' the dinging and fyke o' our house, or I would tak them a hame to Grippy; but ye maun devise some method wi' her to mak their loss as light in worldly circumstances as my means will alloo; and whatsoever you and her 'gree upon Mr. Keelevin will see executed baith by deed and paction.'[4]

Try 364 pages *of that.* This was my first experience with a novel that had endnotes to help the reader understand the English language. Quite enlightening. George Eliot mentions an entail in *Middlemarch*. And Nathaniel Hawthorn mentions it in *Grandfather's Chair.* It's everywhere.

Dorothy L. Sayers's creation Lord Peter Wimsey, Golden Age amateur detective, married [commoner Harriet Vane] in *Busman's Honeymoon*. Quite soon after the wedding Lord Peter and his bride are discussing children and whether either wants any. Lady Wimsey starts the conversation:

> '. . . whatever it is you look forward to – would *you* like children?'
>
> She had been amused by the conflict in his self-conscious face. 'Egotistical idiot that I am,' he had said finally, 'yes. Yes. I should. Heaven knows why. Why does one? To prove one can do it? For the fun of boasting about 'my boy at Eton'? Or because –?'

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[4] Galt, John. *The Entail*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1984 (originally published 1822) Page 154.

'Peter! When Mr. Murbles drew up that monstrous great long will for you, after we were engaged – '

'Oh, Harriet!'

'How did you leave your property? I mean, the real estate?'

'All right,' he said with a groan, 'the murder's out. Entailed – I admit it. But Murbles expects that every man – damn it, don't laugh like that. I couldn't argue the point with Murbles – and *every* contingency was provided for.'[5]

This was the 1930's for heaven sakes. By that time weren't most estates painfully short of income? Maybe because the Wimsey estates was entailed, it was still flush. That's something to consider.

And then we come to the mystery and Conan Doyle. Doyle used the entail twice in his tales. He mentions an entail very casually in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The term is not explained in any way and so indicates that Conan Doyle believed his reader would understand what it meant and would not require the usual device of Dr. Watson saying, "Huh?" Dr. Mortimer, in detailing who stands to gain by the death of Sir Charles, explains about the saintly James Desmond, "He would be the heir to the estate because that is entailed. He would also be the heir to the money unless it were willed otherwise by the present owner, who can, of course, do what he likes with it."[6] There is not another word about the entail. It is not quite clear to me how Stapleton planned to get around the sainted Desmond and the entail but that's another paper.

Conan Doyle used the device of the entail again in *The Adventure of the Priory School.* And, again Conan Doyle does not explain in any way what an entail is aside from its being the motive for the crimes of James Wilder, illegitimate son of the Duke of Holderness. The Duke says,

I answer that there was a great deal which was unreasoning and fanatical in the hatred which he [James Wilder] bore my heir. In his view he should himself have been heir to all my estates, and he deeply resented those social laws which made it impossible. At the same time, he had a definite motive also. He was eager that I should break the entail, and he was of opinion that it lay in my power to do so. He intended to make a bargain with me – to restore Arthur if I would break the entail, and so make it possible for the estate to be left to him by will.[7]

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[5] Sayers, Dorothy L. *Busman's Honeymoon*. Harper Paperbacks: New York. 1937. Page 35

[6] Conan Doyle, Arthur. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*. Doubleday: New York. 1930. Page 695.

[7] Ibid. Page 557.

No explanation of what an entail is or what it might *entail* to break the entail. And here's a novel thought, the entail could be broken!

From April of 1998 through June 1999 there was a long, interesting, and informative discussion of entails on the Jane Austen ListServ discussing the fine points of inheritance law with regard to the entail. John Hopfner pointed out that the entail was obsolete by Austen's day and in fact was obsolete about 200 years before Austen wrote her novels. So it was certainly out of date by the time Conan Doyle was writing. By obsolete Hopfner meant, "in the sense of 'unenforceable at law,'.. the courts wouldn't let a multigenerational entail stand if it were challenged." [8] And if that were true then why was the entail such a problem? Wait for it. Because the term entail was interchangeable with the strict settlement by Conan Doyle and Austen's time.

According to Elaine Spring in her work *Law, Land, and Family* the strict settlement was built around a combination of a life estate and an entail[9] and gradually the term for such an arrangement became known as an entail, even though it was very different from the fee simple and easily broken entail. That Mr. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice* could not break his entail indicates that inheritance of Longboum was actually a strict settlement not a simple entailment which Mr. Bennett could have broken easily by Austen's time. In Conan Doyle's tale about the Duke of Holderness, we don't really know whether the Duke could have broken the entail but it is quite likely that he couldn't. Remember he said, "[James Wilder] was eager that I should break the entail, and he was of opinion that it lay in my power to do so." That would seem to indicate that the young man was mistaken and that it was not in the Duke's power to break it. Greed. A powerful motivator.

You may have noticed that I have avoided entirely the discussion about what the entail meant to women. I have just cause for such avoidance. While I believe that women should have equal rights and opportunities with men, I don't believe that ranting about past injustices serves any purpose. The best we can do is be aware of the unbalanced past and make adjustments to correct the present and future. But believe me, the discussion about the unequal inheritance laws concerning heiresses is just as interesting and full of motive for drama as the male driven entail.

For me, understanding the historical detail in a story always improves my enjoyment of the story. If I don't know what the characters are "on about" I feel lost and disconnected

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[8] Hopfner, John. AUSTEN-L Jane Austen List <AUSTEN-L@LISTS.MCGILL.CA> Mon, 26 Apr 1999 11:32:05 -0400. *Land Sakes* Content-Type: text/plain. Cited with permission.

[9] Spring, Eileen. *Law. Land & Family: Aristocratic Inheritance in England. 1300 to 1800.* University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, NC. 1993. Pages 32-33.

to the story. So now we know a little bit more about the entail, what it really meant to the greedy, the disinherited, and the spare heirs.

## ANSWERS TO *GREEN MANSIONS* PUZZLE

1. Birlstone Manor House
2. Diogenes Club
3. Pondicherry Lodge
4. Briony Lodge
5. Thor Place
6. Ridling Thorpe Manor
7. Baskerville Hall
8. Wisteria Lodge

Extra Credit: Building,  Think VR

# Contributors

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**Paul Churchill** is a semi-retired Latin teacher in Howard County. He is one of the three original co-founders of Watson's Tin Box. He has illustrated many Sherlockian books and prides himself on his forgery skills in collecting relics from the Holmes saga. He likes long walks on the beach, quiet drives through the slums, and gentle breezes through his diminishing hair.

**Dave Hatch** in real life has reached the summit of his aspirations by becoming and remaining a government bureaucrat. He has maintained a lifelong interest in Sherlockian matters. The first "grown-up" book he bought, while in sixth grade, was the complete SH. He was Gasogene X of Watson's Tin Box.

**Andy Solberg**, BSI, Gasogene VIII, enjoys writing Sherlockian analysis and verse. He is a frequent contributor to the *Baker Street Journal* and was the co-winner of the BSJ's Money-Montgomery Award for 2004. After attending many Sherlockian societies' dinners, he considers the monthly Tin Box dinners his home.

**Dana Richards** is a professor of computer science at George Mason University, is a member of many Sherlockian societies beyond the Baltimore area and has published on many aspects of the Canon (in the *Baker Street Journal, Sherlock Holmes Review, Baker Street Miscellenea, Canadian Holmes,* among several others.) He currently writes a puzzle column for the *Holmes and Watson Report.*

**D.C. Culbertson** is Arts and Entertainment Editor of the Baltimore newspaper, *OUTIoud,* and is a freelance writer for local and national publications. She is a professional Renaissance lutenist and president of the Society for Early Music of Northern Maryland (the Baltimore-area chapter of the American Recorder Society), a caller of English country dancing, and a member of the Maryland State Arts Council's Arts in Communities committee. She became a Sherlock Holmes aficionado while reading "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" in sixth grade.

**Marshall Berdan** is a long-standing contributor to both the Higher and Lower Criticisms via a series of scholarly submissions that itself extends over three separate continents. As a result of his recent relocation to Weston, CT, he is now a member in even better standing of Watson's Tin Box, The Six Napoleons of Baltimore, and The Red Circle of Washington.

**Steve Clarkson** lives in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, is a 34 year member of the Baker Street Irregulars (Morse Hudson) and is the son of a Two-Shilling BSI. He helped to found Watson's Tin Box and belongs to The Six Napoleons of Baltimore. He is Listowner/Member of the Hounds of the Internet and author of two Sherlockian books: *The Sherlockian Star Chamber* (1996) and *The Canonical Compendium* (1999). He collects first editions and magazine first appearances of Doyle's works and wonders where to display them all.

**Dr. Deborah Clark**, native of Maryland's beautiful Eastern Shore, works at the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick MD as Director of Pupil Personnel Services (which is about as glamorous as it sounds). She is a past Gasogene of Watson's Tin Box and regularly attends the Denizens of the Bar of Gold. She is a member but a Very Irregular attendee of The Red Circle of Washington, The Carlton Club of Baltimore and the White Rose Irregulars and the Brooks of Carlisle (PA). She was recently published in *Violets and Vitriol* compiled and edited by S. E. Dahlinger, and periodically presents at "A Day with Sherlock Holmes" at the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore.

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**Composition Art**

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