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Watson's Tin Box

IRENE'S CABINET

Results of the Literary and Artistic Aspirations
of the Membership in the form or essays, poetry,
and art with particular regard for the Victorian era
in honor or all things

Sherlockian

Editor: Beth Austin
Volume 9
2011

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"And Mademoiselle's address?" he asked.
"Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood."
Holmes took a note of it. "One other question," said he.
"Was the photograph a cabinet?"
It was.
"Then, goodnight, your Majesty."
– *A Scandal in Bohemia*

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QUEEN VICTORIA ASSASSINATED!

– Debbie Clark

As any student of history knows, Queen Victoria of England ruled the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for over 63 years – still the longest reign of any female monarch in history so it is obvious that she was *not* assassinated. However, she did survive at least 8 attempts on her life, the first occurring in 1840 when she was newly married and also pregnant with her first child. An 18-year old man named Edward Oxford attempted to shoot her while she was riding in a carriage with her husband, Prince Albert, along the Mall in London en route to visit her mother. The Prince Albert described the event in his diary:

> We had hardly proceeded a hundred yards from the Palace when I noticed, on the footpath on my side, a little mean-looking man holding something toward us; and before I could distinguish what it was, a shot was fired, which almost stunned us both, it was so loud and barely six paces from us. Victoria had just turned to the left to look at a horse and could not therefore understand why her ears were ringing, as from its being so near she could hardly distinguish that it proceeded from a shot having been fired. The horses started and the carriage stopped. I seized Victoria's hands and asked if the fright had not shaken her, but she laughed at the thing. I then looked again at the man, who was still standing in the same place his arms crossed, and a pistol in each hand. His attitude was so affected and theatrical it quite amused me. Suddenly he again pointed his pistol and fired a second time. This time Victoria saw the shot and stooped quickly, drawn down by me. The many people who stood around us and the man, and were at first petrified with fright on seeing what had happened now rushed upon him. I called to the postilion to go on and we arrived safely at Aunt Kent's.[1]

Oxford was quickly subdued, subsequently tried for high treason: a crime punishable by death, but was acquitted on grounds of insanity. Oxford was "detained at her majesty's pleasure" for 25 years in Royal Bethlehem Hospital (Bedlam), after which he was deported to Australia where he died in 1900.

The reasons for this attack are not clear. Some speculate that Oxford only wanted notoriety; others suggest that the attack was connected with a Chartist conspiracy; others connect the plot to supporters of the heir presumptive, the King of Hanover.

In any event, the attack significantly increased Victoria's popularity after a series of minor palace scandals involving ladies in waiting, and their possible influence on Victoria. Then

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[1] **http://blackcountrybugle.co.uk/News/Attempt-on-Queen-Victorias-life-by-Birmingham-lad-2.htm**

on May 29, 1842, again while riding in her carriage, this time in St James Park, John Francis was seen aiming a pistol at Victoria, but did not fire.

A trap was set to catch him in the act so the next day the queen followed the same route albeit traveling somewhat faster and with a larger escort. Francis did shoot at her, but was captured by plain clothes policemen almost immediately. He, too, was convicted of high treason and sentenced to death, but two days before the sentence was to be carried out, his sentence was commuted to transportation to Australia for life.

On July 3rd of the same year, a man known as John William Bean also fired on the queen, and although the pistol was loaded only with paper and tobacco, his crime was still punishable by death. Believing death to be too harsh a sentence for such a crime Prince Albert urged Parliament to pass The Treason Act, 1842 reducing the crime from high treason to a misdemeanor, stating that anyone "aiming a firearm at the queen, striking her, throwing any object at her, and producing any firearm or other dangerous weapon in her presence with the intent of alarming her, were made punishable by seven years imprisonment and flogging."[2] As a result, Bean was only sentenced to 18 months in jail. (No floggings have ever been carried out for violating this act.)

In 1849 a similar attack occurred while Victoria was riding in London. A disgruntled and out-of-work Irishman, William Hamilton, fired a powder-filled pistol at the queen's carriage as she passed Constitution Hill. Happily, as there was no bullet, there was no injury. Hamilton pled guilty and he was given the maximum sentence: seven years transportation. However, Victoria was injured when she was assaulted on May 27, 1850 by Robert Pate, an ex-army captain. He struck her with a cane, crushing her bonnet, hitting her in the face, and causing bruising and "a wound upon her Majesty the scar of which she still carries." Pate defense was a plea of insanity which he failed to prove and he too was sentenced to seven years' transportation.

In 1872, a 17-year old Irish youth, Arthur O'Connor (great-nephew of Irish MP Feargus O'Connor) rushed at Victoria as she was dismounting her carriage. He had a gun in one hand and a petition to free Irish prisoners in the other. The gun was not loaded and it is thought he only wanted to alarm the queen so she would accept the petition, but her devoted Scottish servant John Brown, who was beside the queen, knocked O'Connor to the ground before she could even see the pistol. Brown received a gold medal for his bravery; O'Connor was sentenced to penal transportation and to corporal punishment although Victoria remitted the flogging.

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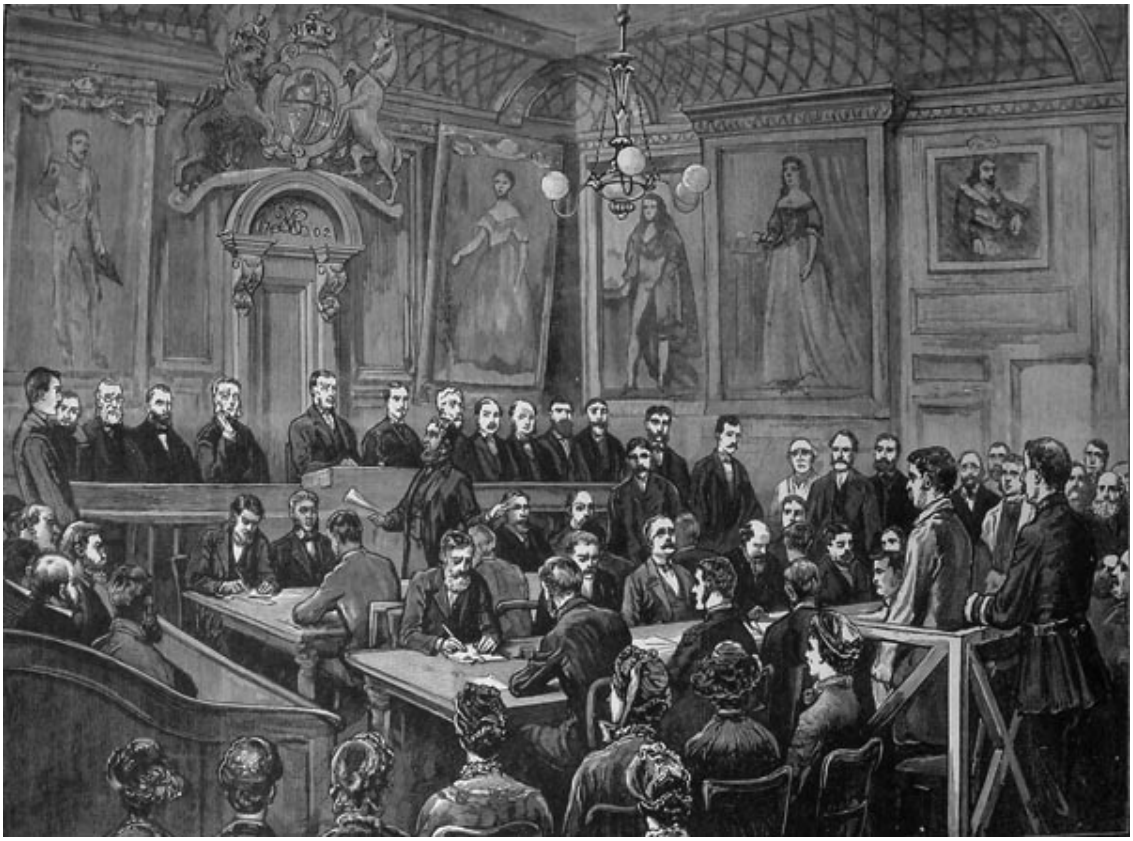
[2] **http://www.makara.us/04mdr/01writing/03tg/bios/Victoria_q.htm#bio**

On March 2, 1882, as Victoria's carriage left Windsor railway station, an unhappy self-styled poet named Roderick Maclean shot at the queen in her carriage because she had apparently refused to accept one of his poems.[3] MacLean missed and two boys from nearby Eton College beat him with umbrellas until a policeman took him away. Maclean was tried and after a five minute deliberation, the jury found him not guilty by reason of insanity, a sentence which outraged Victoria since he was clearly guilty of shooting at her. The law was later changed to allow a verdict of "guilty, but insane." McLean spent the rest of his life in Broadmoor Asylum, Berkshire where he died in 1921.



http://theroyalwindsorforum.yuku.com/topic/1228#.TisqgmHYRSk

This last attack inspired William Topaz McGonagall, long acknowledged as one of the worst poets in British history, to write a lengthy poem on the "Attempted Assassination of the Queen" which includes the following verse:

> Maclean must be a madman,
> Which is obvious to be seen,
> Or else he wouldn't have tried to shoot
> Our most beloved Queen.[4]

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[3] According to the January 15, 1889 issue of *The New York Times.*

[4] **http://tinyurl.com/nkuc488**

That is a summary of the eight known assassination attempts on Queen Victoria's life, but there was one more planned that was intended not only to assassinate Victoria but most of her cabinet as well.

The Irish anarchists known as Fenians had planned and executed a number of bombings in London during the Fenian Dynamite Campaign of 1867-1885. During that time they succeeded in bombing a number of important sites: New Prison in Clerkenwell, Scotland Yard, London Bridge, the House of Commons, the Tower of London and the London underground.

In 1887 the British Empire celebrated Victoria's fiftieth year of accession with a Golden Jubilee. On June 20 of that year, a lavish banquet was attended by fifty European heads of state. The next day, a service of thanksgiving was to be held in Westminster Abbey with the queen and half her cabinet as well as distinguished guests in attendance. Unbeknownst to the queen, Irish Nationalists had planned to blow up the Abbey with the queen and her guests inside. This became known as the Jubilee Plot.

The plot was uncovered and thwarted primarily due to a run of bad luck on the Nationalist's side. A delay in public transport caused the would-be assassins to arrive too late to hide their dynamite; police were on high alert since Fenian anarchists had bombed a number of public sites in the not too distant past; and a nosy landlady reported her suspicions about her Irish lodgers. All but one of the perpetrators were apprehended (that one escaped to America) and the service went off without a hitch, as did the huge procession through London the following day, which Mark Twain noted "stretched to the limit of sight in both directions."

It seems clear that most of the attacks on the queen's person were made by disturbed young men wanting fame or notoriety, while O'Connor and those involved in the Jubilee plot wanted to make a statement about the Irish Question. Given Victoria's long reign it is remarkable that more attempts were not made and that none were successful – only one wounding and certainly not assassination, especially since she had very little security and rode the streets of her Kingdom in an open carriage. In each instance, after an attack upon the queen, there was a huge outpouring of loyalty and support from the public, so that Victoria later wrote to her daughter that it was "worth being shot at – to see how much one is loved." [5]

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[5] Hibbert, Christopher (2000) *Queen Victoria: A Personal History*. London: HarperCollins, ISBN 0-00-638843-4, pg 427.

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Another Medical Minute, Circa 1895
To Brandy

– April Curnow

Not the gin of the slum
Nor the docksider's rum,
It's highly respectable: brandy.

A drink most restorative,
Nothing pejorative
In a delectable brandy.

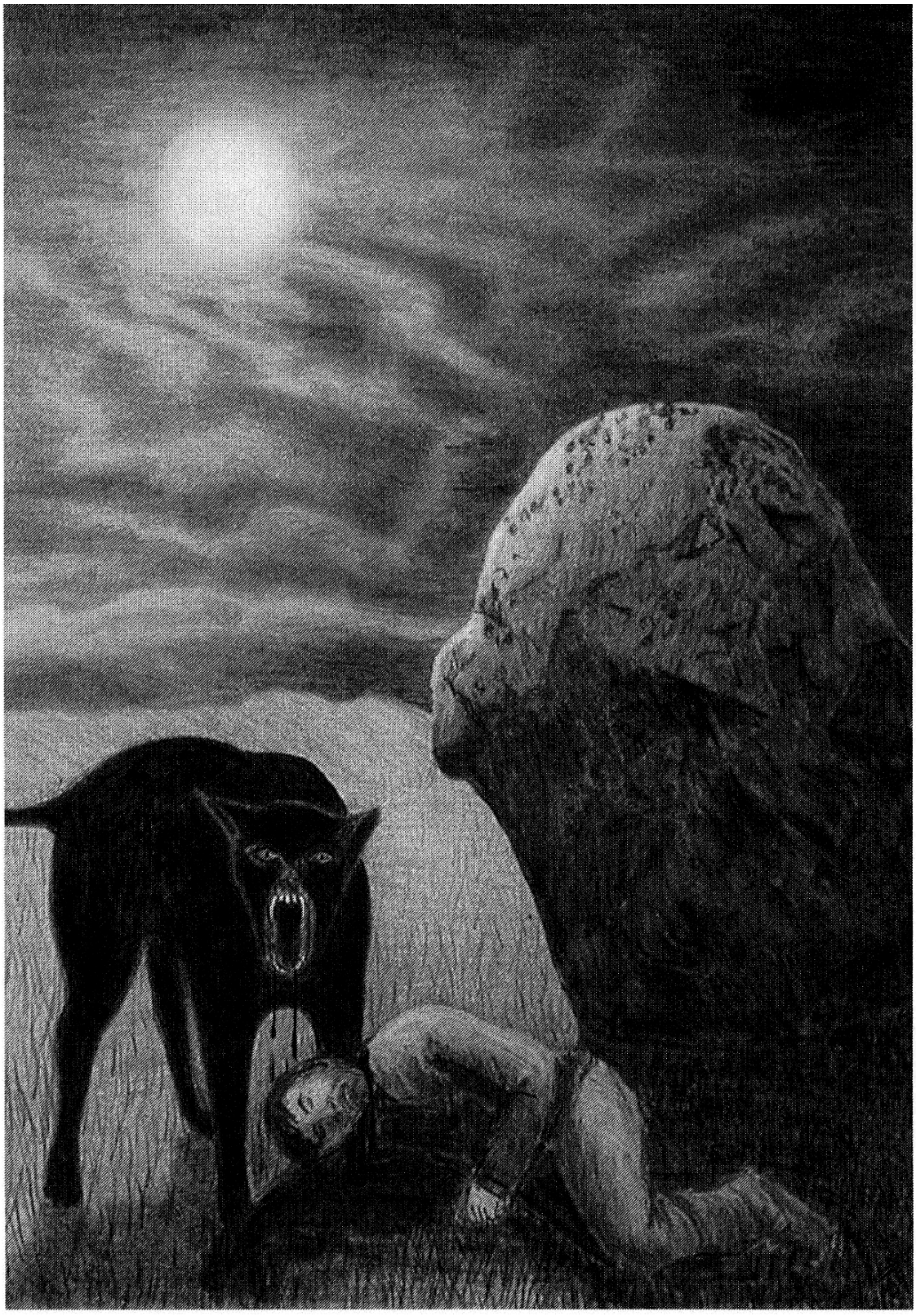
So let's drink to brandy! It's really quite handy
For treating the faint and the weak and the ill.
It revives the dulled senses at modest expense
And it's far more relaxing than taking a pill.

A medicinal tot will just hit the spot.
Administer one shot, or possibly two.
Any doctor of worth keeps a flask of the stuff
In his little black bag. No mere tonic will do.

So let's drink again! Fortifier of men
And ladies with vapours and delicate souls
Most in need of support. If you haven't got port
Or claret on the sideboard, try brandy.

Legend of the Hound

– J. Irene Ludwig



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Tin Box Souvenirs

– Evelyn Herzog, ASH, BSI

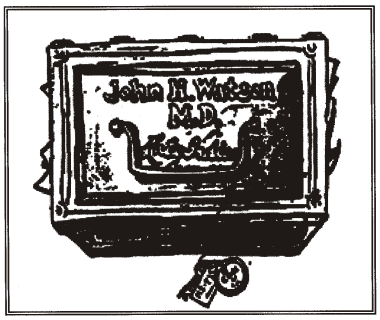
Sherlockians have long indulged in mental salivation over the untold Canonical tales hidden among the papers stored in Watson's tin dispatch box. We dream of Holmes's tantalizing unrecorded cases mentioned in the Canon and envision others even more *outre*. Occasionally, we remember to acknowledge Watson's devotion to his friend in preserving these papers.

However, we don't generally consider that there may be other contents in that precious box. After all, it dated from Watson's army days and stayed with him throughout an accomplished and adventurous life. At the very least the dispatch box once held documents pertaining to Watson's military life and possibly accumulated material concerning his family, education, and civilian career. Much may yet be written about what we might find of these.

It is another sort of memento that engages my mind today – the possibility that tokens of romance may also lie hidden within Watson's tin box. The charming awkwardness of Watson's courtship of Mary Morstan demonstrates his ingenuousness; we may agree, he was no Casanova. Still, we need not dispute his claim of "an experience of women which extends over many nations and three separate continents." Romance may blossom without coming into full bloom. Watson may indeed have spent time with various women in his younger years, in relationships which never materialized into true love and yet which held happy memories.

What souvenirs might there be, carefully wrapped and secured under lock and key? Theatre stubs and programs, a pressed rose, the ribbon from a box of candy might well have been preserved. Would we find more personal items – a lace-edged handkerchief, a lock of chestnut hair, perhaps even a photographic dual portrait from a seaside photographer's booth? We do not know – we are at liberty to speculate.

It is not only the untold tales of Sherlock Holmes, hidden within that tin dispatch box, that we long to read. Much of John Watson's heart may also be concealed there. If only we could know its tales!



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Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's First Published Story: *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley*

– Fred Glueckstein

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's illustrious literary career gave us the Sherlock Holmes novels, Sherlock Holmes short story collections. Professor Challenger stories, plays, pamphlets, fiction, verse, and works on war, the army, and spiritualism. Although he had a love of books from an early age, Conan Doyle's belief in himself as a writer only began while attending medical school at Edinburgh University.

In those years, he accepted assistantships with practicing doctors in order to gain medical experience and earn money, which as a poor young man he needed for his upkeep and to send home to his mother. At the age of nineteen, Conan Doyle's third assistantship was with a well-known physician in Aston (now part of Birmingham, but then a separate town) named Dr. Hoare. He treated Conan Doyle more like a son than a medical assistant. In his 1924 autobiography, *Adventures and Memories,* Conan Doyle writes, "The work, however, was hard and incessant, and the pay very small [two pounds a month]." Since Dr. Hoare dispensed his own medicine, Conan Doyle's work as a dispensing assistant involved long lists of prescriptions to make up every day. He remembered that dispensing one hundred bottles in an evening was common.

When he returned for a second time to work for Dr. Hoare in 1879, his medical knowledge had grown, so he was able to work on childbirth and severe cases in the general practice, as well as again dispensing medicine. "It was in this year that I first learned that shillings might be earned in other ways than by filling phials [small bottles]. Some friend remarked to me that my letters were very vivid and surely I could write some things to sell," Conan Doyle remembered. "I may say that the general aspiration towards literature was tremendously strong upon me, and that my mind was reaching out in what seemed an aimless way in all sorts of directions."

At that time, Conan Doyle used the two pence he allowed for lunch to purchase books from a barrel at a second-hand bookshop, where he picked works by Swift, Addison, Pope, Temple, and Gordon. "Anyone observing my actions and tastes would have said that so strong a spring would certainly overflow, but for my own part I never dreamed I could myself produce decent prose, and the remark of my friend, who was by no means given to flattery, took me greatly by surprise," Conan Doyle recalled. "I sat down, however, and wrote a little adventure story which I called *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley."*

The story opens:

> *Do I know why Tom Donahue is called "Lucky Tom"? Yes, I do; and that is more than one in ten of those who call him so can say. I have knocked about a deal in my time, and seen some strange sights, but none stranger than the way in which Tom gained that sobriquet, and his fortune with it. For I was with him at the time. Tell it? Oh, certainly; but it is a longish story and a very strange one; so fill your glass again and light another cigar, while I try to reel it off. Yes, a very strange one; beats some fairy stories I have heard; but it's true, sir, every word of it. There are men alive at Cape Colony now who'll remember it and confirm what I say. Many a time has the tale been told round the fire in Boers' cabins from Orange state to Griqualand; yes, and out in the bush and at the diamond-fields too.*

The narrator, Jack Turnbull, goes on to tell the reader that Tom Donahue and he were forced to end their studies for the bar in England due to lack of finances, and decided to travel to Cape Colony to make their fortune. After separating and trying their hands at many things without success, they meet again three years later in the bush country. After about a month doing odd jobs with no change in either one's fortune, Donahue is particularly disconsolate one night. He is down about the ill luck he had in a country he detests, and with no more money than when he had arrived. With the wind howling and heavy rain pounding their hut, they have an unexpected visitor, Dick Wharton.

As Dick Wharton warms himself at the fire, he tells Jack and Tom a fantastic story. That night he had to go after a cow that had strayed down Sasassa Valley, where the natives, based on legend, would not go in the dark for fear of ghosts. When asked what he saw, Dick, who was nervous and upset from his experience, told them that about half down the valley he saw a cliff in a ravine. Suddenly, he witnessed a strange and shocking reddish light burst from the rock and then disappear.

Tom, who was excited about the news, asked Dick to promise that he wouldn't tell anyone what he saw. The next night, Tom and Jack went to the Sasassa Valley. The story continues with an account of what they saw, comprising a fantastic and twisting tale about the mystery, and leading to a surprising outcome that changed their lives.

Conan Doyle sent his story to *Chambers's Journal,* which was started by William Chambers in 1832 as the *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal.* It originally included topics on history, religion, language, and science. In 1854, the title was changed to *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Arts* and later to *Chambers's Journal.* It was produced in Edinburgh until late into the 1850s, when the author James Payn took over as editor, and the production of the journal was moved to London. Serialized fiction from major authors

became one of the journal's major attractions following Payn's arrival, in March 1865, Thomas Hardy's first short story was published by Payn.

Payn read *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley* and liked it. "To my great joy and surprise it was accepted by *Chambers' Journal,* and I received three guineas," Conan Doyle wrote. (The story was published on September 6, 1879.) Later that month, his first non-fiction work, *Gelseminum as a Poison,* was published in the *British Medical Journal.*

Following the publication of *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley,* Conan Doyle continued to write fictional short stories, which were printed in various publications including *London Society, All the Year Round, Temple Bar, The Boy's Own Paper,* and *Cornhill.* His first attempt at what he called a "connected narrative" was a book titled *Girdlestone.* The work was not accepted for publication, and he recognized it was too reminiscent of the work of others. However, he felt "capable of something fresher and crisper and more workmanlike," and moved to the genre of detective plots, which led to the creation of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

Conan Doyle knew his book, *A Study in Scarlet,* was good and the best he could make it, "but when my little Holmes book began also to do the circular tour [rejected and returned] I was hurt, for I knew it deserved a better fate," he wrote.

Subsequently, he sent it to Ward, Lock & Co, who according to Conan Doyle "made a specialty of cheap and often sensational literature." *A Study in Scarlet* was published a year later and became Beeton's Xmas Annual of 1887. In the years that followed, Sherlock Holmes became a great success. All told, between 1886 and 1927, he wrote four novels and fifty-six short stories that featured Holmes.

We should remember, however, that Conan Doyle's literary journey began with the publication of *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley.* He understood at the time of its publication what his first success meant. He wrote in his autobiography, "It mattered not that other attempts failed. I had done it once and I cheered myself by the thought that I could do it again." There can be no doubt that *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley* began Conan Doyle's belief in himself as a writer and resulted in his personal persistence, despite disappointments, that led to the ultimate publication of Sherlock Holmes.

Chair à Canon

– Andrew Solberg, ASH, BSI

A Worldwide Sherlockian Community

A few years ago in, 2005 to be specific, I wrote an article in *Irene's Cabinet* about a trip that I made to Paris and my dinner with French Sherlockians. As you might expect, there are Sherlockians all around the world.

Sherlockian Willis G. Frick of San Clemente, CA has had the Sherlocktron website for many years that, among other great resources, lists the active Sherlockian societies around the world (with contact information for each). Frick currently has information on 263 active Sherlockian groups worldwide. Of these, 186 are in the United States. Here is the count of the international Sherlockian societies by country:

Country	# of Societies	Country	# of Societies
Australia	5	New Zealand	1
Belgium	1	Portugal	1
Canada	13	Russia	1
Czech Republic	1	Spain	2
Denmark	6	Sweden	4
France	3	Switzerland	2
Germany	1	United Kingdom	15
India	1	England	12
Iraq (U.S. Embassy)	1	North Ireland	1
Israel	1	Scotland	1
Italy	2	Wales	1
Japan	15	U.S.A.	186
Kyzgyzstan	1	**Total**	**263**

Yes, that is correct, Japan has more Sherlockian societies than does England. However, Frick's list does not appear to be complete. The web site Sherlockian Who's Who (**(http://www.sh-whoswho.com/index.php** maintained by the *La Société Sherlock Holmes de France* also lists one active group in China ("Chinese Holmesian" with at least seven members) and one in Brazil (*Clube do Estegossauro*).

The 186 societies in the United States are distributed in 41 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

State	Number	State	Number	State	Number
AK	1	LA	1	OK	1
AL	3	MA	5	OR	2
AR	2	MD	6	PA	9
AZ	2	MI	6	RI	1
CA	23	MN	3	SC	4
CO	1	MO	5	SD	1
CT	3	NC	1	TN	5
DC	1	NE	1	TX	6
FL	9	NH	2	UT	2
GA	2	NJ	3	VA	2
IA	3	NM	1	VT	2
IL	25	NV	1	WA	3
IN	2	NY	20	WI	5
KY	1	OH	9	WV	1

Sherlockians in Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming must live a lonely existence.

The BSI has been publishing an International Series that includes a history of the Sherlockian communities in various countries (Italy, Japan, Scandinavia, and Australia) and some of the best Sherlockian writings from them. It is a wonderful series, which always has some surprises, and I highly recommend it. Much of what follows is taken from this series. At the 2002 BSI Dinner, I had the pleasure of sitting next to and meeting a remarkable young fellow named Gianluca Salvatori. Gianluca is a former president of the larger of the two Italian Sherlockian societies, Uno Studio in Holmes. He lived just outside of Florence, and he implored me to visit his wonderful city. It killed me to tell him that we had just visited Florence the previous August. Sigh. Uno Studio in Holmes held its first meeting in 1987. In 2000, the society held a conference in Milan and Florence themed on Holmes's journey to Italy in 1891. In 2002, it held a conference in Sesto Fiorentino celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first Italian edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (you know, that story where a poor dog was much maligned). During the conference, a bust of Holmes was unveiled that was offered by the Sesto Fiorentino City Council. The 2004 conference was held in Naples and was dedicated to *The Adventure of the Red Circle,* and a plaque was dedicated commemorating Conan Doyle's trip to Naples. In 2007, they celebrated the Studio's 20th anniversary with attendees from the UK, Japan, France, the US, and Switzerland. The 2008 conference was held in Rome, with a leading Italian detective and the

only Italian actor to have portrayed Sherlock Holmes in attendance. They publish their own magazine, *Sherlock Magazine,* which can also be found on the internet at **www.sherlockmagazine.it** .

I don't quite remember the year that I met Mattias Bostrom. There was this fellow who was attending the festivities in NYC, and, well, he looked rather lost. I started a conversation with him and was delighted to learn that he was from Sweden. My wife's father was the first child born in the US to Swedish parents, and we have visited Sweden many times (one time, purchasing a first edition of the Swedish version of HOUN). Mattias and I have become friends since our first meeting. Mattias is creating a new translation of the Canon.

The Swedes published the first Swedish translation of *A Study in Scarlet* in 1891. In 1893, they started publishing Swedish translations of the short stories. They started publishing Swedish parodies of Holmes in 1908!

One of the first Swedish Societies, The Solitary Cyclists of Sweden, was founded in 1963, consisting of authors who had written about Holmes in Swedish newspapers and magazines since the 1940s. The Baskerville Hall Club of Sweden was founded by two high school students in 1979, now has eighty members, and publishes a magazine called *The Moor*. The Swedish Sherlock Holmes web page can be found at **www.sherlockholmes.se** . There are also other Sherlockian societies in Ystad (The Fierce Badgers in Ystad) and in Uppsala (Doctor Mortimer's Correspondents).

Many readers may know Bill Barnes from the Hounds of the Internet. For years. Bill published *The Hounds Collection,* a compilation of contributions from members of the online listserv. Bill, along with Doug Elliott, are the leaders of the Australian Sherlockian community.

Australians were introduced to Holmes usually about a month after the English, as the *Strand* published a "colonial edition." In 1904, the world's first organized group of Sherlockians was formed in Australia, as a group of miners spelled out the word "LAKESIDE" (the name of their mine) by photographing themselves in Dancing Men positions and mailing the photo to Conan Doyle. The photo was then published in the *Strand Magazine.*

There were a couple of organized Sherlockian groups in the 1940s and 1950s, but it was not until 1978 and the founding of The Sherlock Holmes Society of Australia that the concept really took off. After that, Sherlockian societies were formed in all parts of Australia. However the SHSA is still the oldest and longest running society in the country (though now incorporated as part of The Sydney Passengers). The Sydney Passengers has published *The Passengers' Log,* a journal published three times a year, since 1997.

The first translation of a Sherlock Holmes story into Japanese *(The Man with the Twisted Lip,* translated as "Kojiki Doraku" or "Beggar as a Hobby") appeared in 1894, followed by *A Study in Scarlet* and the Adventures in 1899. In many of these stories, the setting was changed to Japan and the characters were all Japanese. Watson was translated into Wada Shin-ichi and Holmes was Omuro. It wasn't until the 1920s that literal translations appeared.

In 1948, a group of Japanese, American, and Australian Sherlockians formed The Baritsu Chapter, the first Sherlockian society in Japan. Members included the Japanese Prime Minister and the Undersecretary to the Minister of Finance. The Japan Sherlock Holmes Club was formed in 1977 and now has over 1,000 members and is the largest of the fifteen active Sherlockian groups in Japan. In fact, it is the largest single group in the world!

So, no matter where your travels take you, look for Sherlockian books in either antiquarian or new bookstores, and you will likely be able to find them. And don't be surprised if you find a few Sherlockians, as well.

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Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest

2011 Clarkson Prize Winning Essay

This year, Watson's Tin Box is celebrating its seventh annual Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest for seventh graders in Howard County, Maryland. The Tin Box partnered once again with Howard County Library and Howard County Public Schools. Participating students were asked to read the *Adventure of the Speckled Band* and write essays. Participation is one hundred percent voluntary, and Howard County Library made participation possible for home schooled, private school, and public school students whose teachers chose not participate. Watson's Tin Box is very grateful to its partners for making this contest such a success. Every year we survey the teachers to find out how many of them used the *Speckled Band* as part of their curriculum as a result of the contest. This year, we reached approximately 260 children. That means over the last seven years the contest has reached more than 2,200 students.

Each year, the Tin Box awards First, Second, and Third Place Prizes to the top three essays. The First Place winner in the contest is awarded *The Clarkson Prize,* named after Tin Box co-founder Steve Clarkson, BSI, who was a mentor to so many young Sherlockians. Steve started a Sherlock Holmes literary society for young people in the late 1960s before the advent of email. The young Sherlockians would distribute their analyses of the Sherlock Holmes stories to each other in real envelopes. It included members from across the country. Steve continued his mentoring of young Sherlockians until he passed away in 2004.

First Prize – The Clarkson Prize
Emily Doss
Grade 7
Age 13
Bonnie Branch Middle School
Teacher: Ms. Taylor

Second Prize
Charlotte Bickhart
Grade 7
Age 13
Lake Elkhorn Middle School
Teacher: Ms. Valentine

Third Prize
Aniruddha Rao
Grade 7
Age 12
Burleigh Manor Middle School
Entered via Howard County Public Library

A hearty congratulations for a job well done goes to all three winners. The Clarkson Prize winning essay is published in *Irene's Cabinet* – with the winner's approval. It is with great

pride that we publish this year's Clarkson Prize winning essay on the *Speckled Band.* Ms. Doss can be proud to be a young published author.

"The Adventure of the Speckled Band"

– Emily Doss

It is fantastic. It is unusual. What could it be? It is one of Sherlock Holmes's cases. Most of his cases include odd elements or events that are seemingly impossible. *The Adventure of The Speckled Band* fits this context in very many ways. A few oddities include the awkward behavior of Dr. Roylott, the mysterious death of Julia, and the location where the deaths occurred.

The behavior of Dr. Roylott around the time of Julia's death is just one of the many quirks contained in this story. An example of this odd behavior is that Dr. Roylott chose to keep exotic animals on the premises of Stoke-Moran. These animals included a baboon, a cheetah, and unbeknownst to the Stoner twins, an Indian swamp adder. Dr. Roylott keeps the snake in his possession and uses the snake to dispatch his young stepdaughters so he would not have to bequeath them a dowry. The cheetah and the baboon do not appear to serve a specific purpose in the story, but were probably used for security or to browbeat others that were on Stoke-Moran. A second example is the queer behavior that Dr. Roylott exhibited after moving to Stoke-Moran. On page nine, Helen Stoner says, "Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbors ..., he shut himself up in the house and seldom came out save to indulge in vicious quarrels.

A series of disgraceful brawls took place ... he is a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in anger." From the way that Helen Stoner was talking, the reader can infer that this is not how the doctor usually conducts himself. These events occurred after, and only after, Dr. Roylott's move into Stoke-Moran. Since Dr. Roylott has no reason to exhibit this strange behavior that the reader knows of at the beginning of the story, this is highly unusual.

A second oddity is the freakishness and the undoubtedly preposterous death of the engaged Julia. There was no evidence of a struggle or poisoning when Julia was examined after death. There was also no way that anyone could gain access to her bedchambers. The symptoms that Julia had were described by Helen Stoner on page 12, " her figure swaying to and fro like that of a drunkard ... She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, and her limbs were dreadfully convulsed ... she was unconscious ..." None of these are all symptoms of the same disease, and there was no poison in Julia's system at the time of the toxicology testing. This only leaves the reader and the characters in the story, with the exception of

Dr. Roylott, few precious clues as to how the engaged Julia could have been eradicated. It is highly unusual to find absolutely no evidence for the cause of death.

A third example of the oddities contained within *The Adventure of The Speckled Band* is the room in which Dr. Roylott tried to exterminate both of his step-daughters. The furniture arrangement within the room was extremely peculiar. On page 11, Helen Stoner states that the doors were locked from the outside, so there was no way in to anyone from the outside and one would definitely not be able to get out of the room and into another's without being noticed or heard by someone. Later, on page 23, Holmes finds the phony bell pull that has been inserted into the vent. The bell pull was not attached to anything, so when pulled, would have unquestionably no result. Later, on page 27, Holmes tells Watson that the bed was bolted to the floor so it could not be moved and so a portion of the bell pull was always touching the bed. There was no way of opening the shutters on the outside of the room once they had been bolted, either. This creates a bit of a locked room murder. No way in, no way out, one dead body with no cause of death. The only way that anything could have gotten in or out once Julia had bolted everything was the vent, which led into Dr. Roylott's room. The reader can then infer that whatever killed Julia and frightened her so much must have entered the premises of her room by utilizing the gaps in the vent. What could have fit through the vent?

As stated previously, there were many odd and puzzling anomalies that took place during the plot of *The Adventure of The Speckled Band*. These include the queer behaviors exhibited by Dr. Roylott, the dispatching of Julia, and the arrangement of the furniture within Julia's bedroom. All of these factors lead to the death of a young woman in a seemingly impossible situation. As it has been explained in this paper, the fantastic and the unusual are usually the deadliest.

ANCIENT BRITAIN COMICS
The Big Push
HOLMES AND WATSON DISCUSS HOW THEY SHOULD MARKET THE CANON TO A YOUNGER AUDIENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY! ...
THE DUO RETURN FROM A VISIT TO THE LITERARY AGENT ...
HAS DOYLE CONVINCED YOU, TOO, TO SEEK A BIGGER SLICE OF A FAR LARGER PIE?
YES! 'THE STRAND' DIDN'T REACH EVERY HOME! PLUS, THE THEATRE IS DYING ...
... AND OUR RADIO BROADCASTS WERE AIMED ONLY AT FAMILIES THAT COULD STOMACH THAT 'SWELL' WINE!
WE SHOULD SUPPORT A MASS-MEDIA ADAPTATION WITH MORE YOUTH APPEAL!
MORE SEX, DRUGS AND MUSIC, YOU MEAN! IF NO ONE CAN READ BETWEEN THE LINES THESE DAYS, SO BE IT! LET'S GLANCE AT DOYLE'S LIST OF OFFERS!
FIRST UP, A FILM PITCH FROM MR. SPIELBERG ...
ACCORDING TO THIS PREMISE, WATSON, WE MET BEFORE YOU JOINED YOUR REGIMENT, BACK WHEN I HAD A HEAD OF HAIR ...
"... BUT I'M NOT SURE THIS NOTION HAS ENOUGH HAIR ON ITS CHEST TO SUSTAIN A FRANCHISE ..."
STAND UP, KID!
JEESH! I'M NOT DOING THIS AGAIN!
"... AND I'M EVEN MORE DOUBTFUL OF THIS NEXT IDEA, THAT MR. BAKER CAN CONVINCE HIS YOUNG 'DR. WHO' FANS TO RIDE HIS TARDIS INTO A STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAIT OF US!"
YOU'RE RIGHT!
WHO'S THE DOCTOR HERE!

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The Curious Incident of the Audio-book in the Drive-time

– Russell Wm. Hultgren

Speaking in a *Paris Review* interview in 1958, William Faulkner said about *Don Quixote,* "I read that every year, as some do the Bible." Now, I've read *Don Quixote* a few times – as I have the Bible – and while I may agree with Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, the French literary critic who called *El Quijote* "the Bible of Humanity," I've never had a whole-souled desire to read it every year. And this coming from a Spanish teacher!

The complete Sherlock Holmes canon, however, is another matter. For some time now I've set myself the goal of starting with A *Study in Scarlet* in January and making my way through all the stories to *The Casebook* by the end of December. Like most New Year's resolutions, however, well before midsummer this one has gone by the boards. As a result, I still haven't made it, even though through the years I've managed to read all nine collections at least once, and some several times.

But how can I consider myself a true Sherlockian if I can't even commit to a steady reading of the canon? Heaven forfend that part of the problem lay with the material. I'm sure that all of you, like me, *love* the Mormon digression in a *Study in Scarlet* and everything in the *Casebook.* Right? "The Mazarin Stone," anyone?

To give the Holmes tales their due, however, I have to say that there are long stretches *of El Quijote* that I find crashingly boring, as I do big chunks of the Bible. The temptation and tendency with both books, as with the canon, is to simply skip over these parts, just as most of us do with "Revolution Nine" on the Beatles' *White Album.*

But no. The problem can't be with Conan Doyle's deathless prose. It's got to be me. I plead guilty as charged, but with exigent circumstances.

Like many of you, my time for reading is at a premium. I work two jobs, I commute long distances between them and home, and at home I have a young wife and two small children. I find that most times when I finally sit down to read, five minutes haven't passed before I'm fast asleep.

So what's a struggling, over-programmed, commuting Sherlockian to do to keep the memory of The Master green? "I was still balancing the matter in my mind," as Holmes would say, when I found myself quite by accident in the audiobooks section of a local bookstore several years ago. It was there that I chanced upon the first few volumes of the Naxos AudioBooks *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.* Holding them in my hands, it hit me: I could solve my

canon-reading problem if I added my ears and my commute to my kit of reading tools. In that moment I also realized that I'd already formed some definite opinions about what I wanted in a Sherlock Holmes audiobook.

First of all, it seems I'd resolved – at least for myself – the debate over audiobooks themselves. Some treat audiobooks as the ugly sisters of their ink-and-paper counterparts, and scoff – nay, *snort*! – at the notion that listening to them is anything remotely akin to the act *of real* reading. I've heard that some authors, such as the late J.D. Salinger, absolutely refuse to have their books recorded. In contrast, others, like Stephen King, have embraced and even celebrate the format. I've read that when King was writing his Dark Tower series, for instance, he'd listen to the audiobook of the latest installment before beginning the next one. He says he'd always catch things in the reader's performance that had escaped him while he was writing. *An audiobook taught a writer something he didn't know about his own prose.* And no less a literary titan than the public contrarian Christopher Kitchens has come around. Initially an opponent of the audiobook, he now touts its virtues, and has even served as reader for his last two publications, including the delightful *Hitch-22.* My own view is a very practical one. If I don't read with my ears as well as my eyes, I simply don't get as much reading done. Period.

So, Heck Yeah to the audiobooks for me. That decided, I turned my attention to Sherlock Holmes audiobooks in particular. I realized that I was looking for the complete text of the original Conan Doyle stories, in publication order, narrated by a single reader. This last point seemed especially important. I wasn't interested in a full-cast production with sound effects and a complete soundtrack any more than I wanted adaptations, abridgements, or dramatizations.

My logic ran thus: the Holmes tales as written are first-person narratives. Every voice we hear in the stories – including Holmes's – is really Watson's voice. Watson is telling the story. Every character that enters the narrative utters words that Watson has put into his or her mouth. In contemplating Holmes audiobooks, then, I was in full purist mode. I wanted a single-voice narration that would duplicate for my ears as nearly as possible the experience of reading Holmes in print with my eyes. Frankly, I also wanted to improve upon the experience, if possible, to help me get through all the stories on an annual basis.

While the audiobooks in my hands were far from being a complete set of the canon, they seemed to promise all this. There were, however, two problems.

The first had to do with sequencing. The three volumes I held, which I think were the only ones available at the time, had track listings that confused me. Take Volume I for instance.. It contains four of the short stories, in this order: "The Speckled Band," "The Stock-broker's Clerk," "The Copper Beeches," and "The Red-headed League." *"Hmmmm"* I thought.

There's no *way* this sequencing comes anywhere *close* to the original publication order. I mean, "The Stock-broker's Clerk" is part of the *Memoirs,* for crying out loud! *This is going to be a problem.* The Purist Inside Me hissed.

Volume I was also the source of my second concern, which I considered to be even graver. For while the packaging of Volumes II and III trumpeted them as unabridged productions, on the back of Volume I, in very small print, I read words that caused my heart to clench: "Abridged by Heather Godwin." *What's going on here?* I thought. *Are these stories unabridged or not?* Had not Volumes II and III also been available for purchase that day, I may have walked away from the series without a backward glance. Notwithstanding these concerns, I took the plunge and bought all three volumes.

I'm very glad I did.

It quickly became clear to me that undergirding and overarching everything about the project is David Timson, the British actor, director, writer, and teacher who's made over a thousand broadcasts for BBC Radio and has appeared with many leading British classical actors in a career spanning nearly four decades.

It was Timson who developed the recorded personae of Holmes and Watson for Naxos, endowing them with individual verbal traits that include aging their sound over the course of the series, from their 20s to their 60s. He also developed separate voices for the more than 200 characters with speaking parts in the canon. It's an impressive achievement, although his American characters all sound remarkably similar to me. More importantly, it was Timson who wove the spell of the true story-teller throughout all his readings, artfully mining the text and evoking every nuance of tension, humor, character, very real human emotion, plot, and excitement. He honored his texts by breathing a vibrancy and energy into them that my own previous readings had sorely lacked. His masterful handling of Conan Doyle's words gave me a new appreciation for the lean, muscular power and spare elegance of Sir Arthur's prose. Hooking me by the ears, as it were, Timson drew me more deeply than I had ever been into that magical world "where it is always 1895."

Timson's performance has garnered nearly universal acclaim. He won the Spoken Word Association of Publishers Award for Best Audiobook of 2002 for his reading of *A Study in Scarlet,* and he's twice received the Golden Earphones Award from *Audiofile Magazine* for his Sherlock Holmes readings.

It should come as no surprise, then, that after discovering the series, I spent the next several years prowling through online and brick-and-mortar bookstores, sniffing hungrily for the next installment, which I snapped up as soon as it became available. Over the course of a decade Timson & Co. made it through the entire canon, and crowned their achievement

with a complete box set, which was released in April 2009. This set actually includes 61 stories, the last being a Holmes pastiche written and read by Timson himself.

I reached out to Timson and conducted a transatlantic interview and I learned quite a few things, not the least of which is that recording the entire canon was not the original plan. "The project was conceived," Timson said, "by Nicolas Soames, the managing director of Naxos AudioBooks, in 1997. Initially the first CDs – the 'Adventures of series – were just going to be 'The Best of,' hence the rather random selection of stories, but on its release it became clear that there was a lot of interest and Nicolas and I made a joint decision to record all the stories – though I don't think either of us realised then that it would be a ten-year project!"

When I asked him why the first set of CDs was abridged, he said, "It was the policy of Naxos in 1997 to issue abridged recordings, and so the first release, which was going to be a one-off, was abridged. I had not been involved with the choice of stories or the abridgement of this release. When we agreed to proceed with recording the entire canon, I took over the editorial duties; that is, I selected the stories for each subsequent 3 CD set, prepared the texts, wrote the CD [liner] notes – oh, and read them of course, unabridged! When the Complete Box-set was issued last year, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Conan Doyle's birth, all the previously abridged stories from the first CD set were then released unabridged."

At this point The Purist Inside Me – who's a bit of a curmudgeon, I must admit – just had to ask why the release sequence is so different from the original publication order. Timson answered: "in choosing which stories to include in each set, I decided as far as possible to strike a balance between subject-matter, mood, etc. Often Conan Doyle repeated techniques in his stories and sometimes similar stories followed too closely together in the original chronology. I therefore selected stories to provide a better balance and contrast for the listener."

He also added this, which I find significant: "All the texts for the readings were taken from the original *Strand Magazine* editions, as I felt that this more closely represented the author's original thoughts and intentions. This has led to there being discrepancies between my recordings and the book-editions (particularly in America), where Conan Doyle re-wrote or corrected some parts of the stories."

While I can respect Timson's rationale for breaking from the publication chronology in order to provide "a better balance and contrast for the listener," The Purist Inside Me isn't buying it. When I heard that a complete box set was being released, I thought this would be the perfect opportunity for Naxos to correct what I still perceived as the series' most glaring flaw

– the stories weren't presented in the original publication order! Sadly, it appears that the folks at Naxos didn't share my concern, so there was no re-sequencing.

Undaunted, however, in my quest to listen to the Holmes stories in the order in which they appeared, I developed a worksheet that maps the stories in book-publication order to the corresponding discs in the Naxos box set. I know: Dweeb City. But that's how I roll.

Getting back, though, to my interview with David Timson, we next turned to his contribution to the Naxos *Complete Sherlock Holmes,* a pastiche titled, "*The Adventure of the Wonderful Toy*." I'll admit to you – as I didn't to him – that I wasn't thrilled at first to see it as part of the collection. It seemed monstrously presumptuous on Timson's part to include his own coda to the Sacred Writings. Once I listened to it, though, I was won over. It's a delightful pastiche, one that meets my highest standards for the form, starting with the fact that it's a damned fine story. Besides this, its characterizations of Holmes and Watson are bang-on, it captures Conan Doyle's voice wonderfully, it taught me something I didn't know about Victorian England, and it even includes a very Doylean – but in this case intentional – continuity error. Very clever! Here are Timson's thoughts on his creation: "As we neared the end of the project, it seemed appropriate that I should pay some sort of tribute to Conan Doyle, whose talents I had grown to appreciate considerably during the readings. My appreciation grew further when I tried to attempt to write a pastiche/parody of a Holmes story. I realised his genius at plotting for one thing. I also wanted to link the story to the recording project more directly, which is why I chose to include an early phonograph at the centre of it."

I concluded my interview with two a two-part question: "After ten years of recording and researching the canon, what have you learned about the characters of Holmes and Watson? And have your views changed about Conan Doyle as writer and storyteller?"

Responding to the first part of my query, Timson said, "The relationship between Holmes and Watson is brilliantly charted by Doyle, from their first tentative meeting in *A Study in Scarlet,* where you feel that Watson, in particular, is unsure of Holmes as a friend and flatmate and whether he could live with so eccentric a character, through to Holmes uncharacteristically paying tribute to Watson as the one reliable and fixed point in a changing world in *His Last Bow.* Along the way, we have witnessed their spats with each other, which are often most amusing, and so close does their relationship become that they almost become like an old married couple, so well do they know each other's little habits and ways.

"Modern readers often find this closeness difficult and think that Holmes and Watson were homosexual. The truth is that since Victorian times we have lost a level of male bonding and physicality that was not sexual, but based on deep friendship. It is referred to in dozens of

novels of the time and young men in Victorian London could often be seen strolling arm in arm through the West End without raising any eyebrows!"

"As to Conan Doyle," he continued, "my respect for him as a writer grew considerably after reading the canon. Though he could at times be slap-dash in his detail, the thrust of his storytelling never flags – even the weaker Holmes stories, as in the *Casebook*, never flag in terms of atmosphere and tension. I also came to realise how difficult it is to write a crime story when I wrote my own pastiche of Holmes. Doyle's construction is exemplary and a real lesson in the art of telling a story. It's such a shame he didn't really appreciate his Holmes writing – that was where his talent lay – and not in the frankly dull and unconvincing historical novels he so valued."

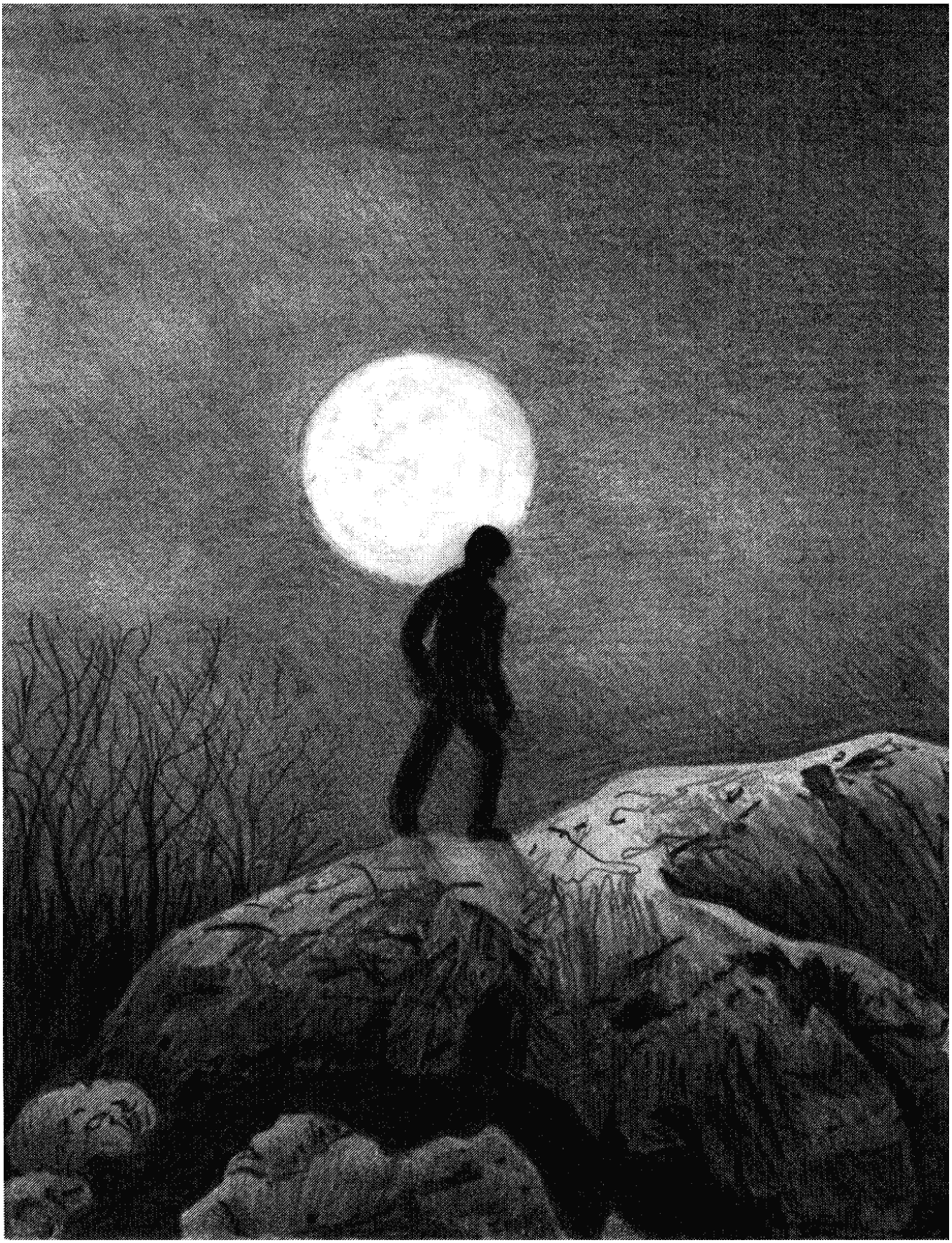
So, after all this, you may ask: "How's that one-year reading plan working out for you?" Pretty well, I think. Casting aside my obsession with publication order, this year I've taken a different tack. I started as always in January with *A Study in Scarlet,* but then I jumped to the end of the saga and read the *Casebook* next. I then went back to *The Sign of Four,* then forward to *His Last Bow* and *The Valley of Fear*, and then back to the *Adventures,* which is where I am now. And I've done all this reading with my ears, not my eyes. What remains is the filet, the prime cut, of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* to savour as I head into the final months of the year, that time when my enthusiasm has most often flagged in the past and I've allowed myself to get diverted from my goal.

One final thought: Jacquelynn Morris, writing on the Watson's Tin Box blog, has said, "I have never seen the Holmes I know from the stories accurately portrayed on the screen. Not Rathbone nor Brett, nor any other incarnation of Holmes, comes close enough to the character Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created and the one I've known since I first read a Sherlock Holmes story. Like Diogenes searching for an honest man, I have searched for an honest Holmes. Neither I nor Diogenes ever found ourselves fulfilled."

I, too, have searched for an honest Holmes. I have yet to see the Holmes I know accurately portrayed in film, not even by Robert Downey Jr., much though I love him in the role. However, I think I may have found myself fulfilled, at least in part. For while I still haven't *seen* my honest Holmes, I believe I *have* heard him, coming from my car speakers as I race around central Maryland, courtesy of David Timson and Naxos AudioBooks.

Sherlock's Imprudence

– J. Irene Ludwig



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The Pressure of Public Opinion
The Campaign to Save Undershaw

– Jacquelynn Morris, ASH
U.S. Representative, Undershaw Preservation Trust

"The pressure of public opinion can do in the town what the law cannot accomplish." – Sherlock Holmes, *The Copper Beeches*

It was an old, tumbledown building in a crazy state of disrepair... the grass-grown drive in front of the blotched and weather-stained door...the whole place was depressing.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once wrote these words about Wisteria Lodge. Now sadly prophetic, these words describe the current state of the home designed by and lived in by Doyle and his family for over ten years, during which time he wrote some of his most memorable work. Not Wisteria Lodge, but Undershaw.

Undershaw came into being after a conversation Doyle had with his friend, novelist Grant Allen. Allen suffered from tuberculosis, the same illness which left Doyle's wife, Louise, an invalid for the last 15 years of her life. Doyle had taken to moving the family about from Switzerland to Egypt to find a climate suitable for Louise's health. This was at a time when wealthy tuberculosis sufferers were encouraged to go to the Swiss Alps for a better chance of survival.

Grant Allen extolled the healthy air of Hindhead, in Surrey, England, of having cured him of tuberculosis. Doyle immediately visited Hindhead, about 40 miles south of London and decided it was his "English Switzerland." Agreeing with Allen's assessment of the climate and surroundings of Hindhead, Doyle purchased a plot of land to have a house built there, planning to move his family and hopefully aid in Louise's rehabilitation.

Undershaw today

Doyle himself drafted the first designs of the house before passing them on to architect and friend Joseph Henry Ball to complete. In his autobiography, *Memories and Adventures,* Doyle describes the house as "a considerable mansion planned upon a large scale." The house was built on a four-acre site, facing south toward woods and the heath. Doyle wanted a comfortable modern house to both entertain and to allow Louise a quiet place to rest. When completed, the substantial gabled red-brick house was approached from a winding drive. From the impressive double-height entrance hall, where there was displayed a collection of swords as well as a stained glass window with the family coat of arms, the house included eleven bedrooms and dressing rooms, a dining room that could seat 30, Doyle's study, a wood-paneled drawing room, a billiard room, substantial servants' quarters, and a power plant to provide electricity to the house. Also on the grounds were a four-room lodge, a stable which held six horses, a coach house, a garage, and a tennis court. With Louise's ill health in mind, doors that hinged both ways were installed per Doyle's instructions, and the house's main staircase was built with shallow steps to allow her to ascend and descend easily.

Sir Arthur named the house "Undershaw," from the word "shaw," meaning a small copse or wood. Doyle writes: "we moved into the new house, which I called Undershaw – a new word, I think, and yet one which described it exactly in good Anglo-Saxon, since it stood under a hanging grove of trees."

Once the Doyle family took up residence in Undershaw they began receiving visitors. At first it was mostly family, but one of their first non-family visitors was Sidney Paget, who had been commissioned by Doyle to paint his portrait. J.M. Barrie, who wrote "Peter Pan," was also a guest at Undershaw, as were both Virginia Woolf and Bram Stoker.

Doyle's children: Mary & Kingsley at Undershaw

Bram Stoker said this about Undershaw:

> *It is so sheltered from cold winds that the architect felt justified in having lots of windows, so that the whole place is full of light. Nevertheless, it is cosy and snug to a remarkable degree and has everywhere that sense of "home" which is so delightful to occupant and stranger alike...*

Stoker describes the view at Undershaw:

> *...an endless sea of greenery, ranges of hills piling up one behind the other, in undulations of varying blue. An expanse which, whether seen from near or far, in unity or detail, simply ravishes the eye with its myriad beauties.*

Undershaw was where Doyle's children, Mary and Kingsley, grew up. It was where Doyle lived when he received the knighthood in 1902. Undershaw was where he learned to drive a motorcar as one of Hindhead's first motorists, and it was the driveway of Undershaw where Doyle was nearly killed when he had his first car crash in 1905.

Undershaw was where Doyle wrote *The Great Boer War,* published in 1900, after his time as a volunteer physician in South Africa during the war. *The Great Boer War* became influential in military reforms, when Doyle suggested use of camouflage and advised against continued use of cavalry swords. He felt that all Englishmen should be marksmen, and he formed the Undershaw Rifle Club where he held bi-weekly training sessions and provided, at his own expense, firearms and ammunition. The rifle club had over 300 members and became an example followed by other communities across England, which served the country well as Englishmen as trained marksmen joined the British Army at the start of the First World War.

It was from Undershaw that Doyle championed the cause of George Edalji, falsely imprisoned for animal mutilation.

At Undershaw Doyle wrote *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* which appeared in *The Strand Magazine* from August 1901 to April 1902. He resurrected Holmes in *The Empty House* at Undershaw in 1903, going on to write the 13 stories of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes.*

It was also at Undershaw where Doyle first considered writing a play about Sherlock Holmes. Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, one of the great figures of the English theatre, was interested in the play but wanted the character of Holmes adapted to his own acting style. Doyle refused. About this he said,

> *Rather than re-write it on lines which would make a different Holmes from my Holmes, I would without the slightest pang put it back in the drawer.*

Although Doyle later allowed actor William Gillette to change Holmes and allow him to be engaged to be married at the end of the play (famously replying to Gillette's telegram "MAY I MARRY HOLMES?", Doyle said, "YOU MAY MARRY HIM OR MURDER HIM OR DO ANYTHING YOU LIKE WITH HIM"), Doyle would not do so himself. Gillette's portrayal of Holmes has become legendary and even iconic, introducing the calabash pipe to our perception of Holmes as Gillette preferred not to block his face with any other style of pipe.

After Louise finally succumbed to illness in 1907, Doyle sold Undershaw and his life went in a different direction with his new wife, Jean Leckie. Undershaw was sold again in 1924, and until 2004 the house was used as a small country hotel and restaurant, when it was once again purchased by a developer. It has languished in neglect in the years since then.

Today, Undershaw stands sorrowfully empty, neglected and vandalized. The three-story red-brick structure forlornly awaits its fate, with its windows boarded up and its yard going weedy, exuding an air of sad neglect at odds with the trim and tidy aspect of the rest of Hindhead. Lead has been pilfered from the roof, graffiti has marred the walls, windows have been broken and water has leaked in nearly every room. Promises by the owner/developer for upkeep of Undershaw have been poorly implemented, forcing the Waverley Borough Council to take some measures to at least secure the building from further damage.

Journalist Robert Hardman wrote about Undershaw's plight in *The Daily Mail* just a year ago:

> *The imposing late Victorian house...is boarded up, dilapidated...How on earth could a nation which has produced the most famous character in modern fiction – inspiring a record 223 films and 400 fan clubs worldwide – simply stand by while his creator's legacy is erased?*

Some of us cannot "simply stand by." In August 2009 the Undershaw Preservation Trust was set up by John Gibson, author of 5 books on Doyle, some with his friend, the late Richard Lancelyn Green. John Gibson is now Director of the Undershaw Preservation Trust and has campaigned for the restoration and preservation of Undershaw for many years, testifying at hearings in defense of Doyle's legacy. After a visit to the property, Gibson reported:

> *It was in a terrible state. I came here once and the front door was wide open with rain pouring through. I reported it to the Council and came back two weeks later and it was still open to the world.*

The owner/developer has proposed several different plans for Undershaw, most rejected by the Waverley Borough Council in Hindhead, but all involving destroying the historic value

of Doyle's home in pursuit of financial gain. The developer's plans include permanently dividing the building into townhomes, building other structures on the property, and converting Doyle's horse stables with their cast iron stalls into a garage.

A very telling comment by Michael Wilson, the developer's architect: "The main house is being put back in the original form but vertically divided. To leave it as a single house doesn't work financially."

In June 2010 Waverley Borough Council, after having rejected numerous redevelopment plans over the years, at last gave in and granted the owners planning permission to carve up the literary, historic house into three flats, with five more homes built on the site.

About this, John Gibson said:

> *It will destroy the whole spirit of the place. You'll have Conan Doyle's drawing room in one house, his dining room in another, and his study in another.*

One member of the Waverley Borough Council, Jim Edwards, cast the only vote against the planning officers' recommendations and took the preservationists' side. Mr. Edwards is quoted as saying "This house has got tremendous historical importance. This is a massive development, and quite unacceptable in my view." Doyle's great-nephew Richard Doyle, said "The family had been trying to come up with ways of buying it, but the price was so high we could not afford it. We just wish there was something we could do."

Actor Stephen Fry is a supporter of Undershaw and had this to say to the Council:

> *As Patron of the Conan Doyle library, as a former youngest member of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, as an admirer of Doyle and his achievements I urge Waverley Borough Council to reconsider what future ages will adjudge a foolish short-sighted and wanton act of vandalism. There is real value in Undershaw. If it is thought about, it can attract new generations of tourists to the area, it can be an enormous source of local pride.*

All is not yet lost. Word is spreading about Undershaw through a concerted effort on the part of the Undershaw Preservation Trust via their website, Facebook page, and volunteer representatives. Writers Julian Barnes and Ian Rankin are backing the campaign. Julian Barnes had this to say:

> *Apart from Thomas Hardy's house, Undershaw is the only writer's house in England in which the writer played a major part in the design. Given Doyle's enduring popularity it would be not just a shame, but a disgrace if it were now to be lost to development.*

Author Alistair Duncan is currently writing a book. *An Entirely New Country – Arthur Conan Doyle, Undershaw and the Resurrection of Sherlock Holmes.* Mr. Duncan says about this book:

> *... The book looks at Conan Doyle's life both locally and nationally during the period that he resided in his Hindhead home...In many respects I use the house as a chronological anchor...*

Anthony Horowitz, creator of "Foyle's War," has been chosen by the Conan Doyle Estate to write a new full length Sherlock Holmes novel which will be published by Orion in September 2011. Mr. Horowitz says about Undershaw:

> *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of one of Britain's greatest literary icons, deserves better than this. I hope the members of Waverly Borough Council will see sense and recognize the importance of preserving this historic house.*

Actor and writer Mark Gatiss, Mycroft in the new "Sherlock" TV series, is now patron and sponsor of the Undershaw Preservation Trust and has been a champion of the cause in recent interviews.

John Gibson has consulted with attorneys to determine whether the planning permission was in fact unlawful. He is working with lawyers who are preparing Judicial Review papers for submission to the Royal Courts of Justice to have the decision overturned.

The vision of the Undershaw Preservation Trust is to see the Undershaw house, stable, and grounds restored to their former glory, eventually becoming a self-supporting Sherlock Holmes/Conan Doyle Museum. Exhibits could be on view in conjunction with the Portsmouth Museum's 50,000-item Doyle collection of John Gibson's late friend, Richard Lancelyn Green. Ideally, the Museum could then become part of a Conan Doyle tour, including visits to his London connections, Portsmouth Museum and his grave in the New Forest's Minstead Churchyard. This would certainly require a significant amount of money which would need to be raised, but fund raising is far in the future. The first priority has to be stopping the proposed development.

Undershaw Preservation Trust now has over 20 representatives in 10 different countries. Our task is to spread the word about Undershaw and rally the Sherlockian troops for support in upcoming projects and fund raising. Fund raising plans at this point include a UPT pin, as well as some items which will be on eBay. An awareness-raising project occurred on

May 14th, 2011, in the UK at the opening of a tunnel in Hindhead; Undershaw supporters attended in Victorian attire and deerstalker hats, handing out flyers about saving Doyle's house.

How can each of you help? If you're on Facebook, find the Undershaw Preservation Trust's Facebook page and join as a fan. Visit the website, **saveundershaw.com**, for updates and to leave your comments. Mention Undershaw to any Sherlockians of your acquaintance and refer them to the website. Write to Waverley Borough Council and implore them to reconsider on behalf of Holmes and Doyle fans around the world.

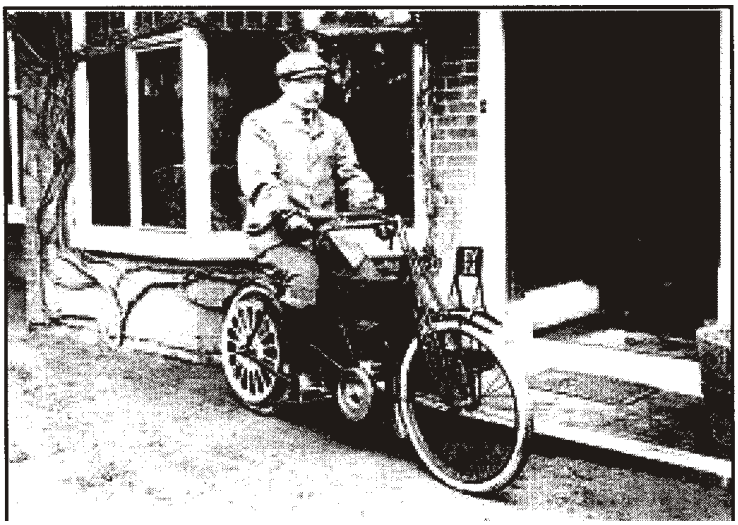
Undershaw Preservation Trust's patron and sponsor. Mark Gatiss:

> *I would like to express my whole-hearted enthusiasm for the campaign to save Undershaw. It seems to me a very sad reflection on our times that the home of one of our greatest and most popular writers should be so neglected and in danger of unsympathetic redevelopment – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle occupied several residences in his prolific and thrilling career, only Undershaw bears the stamp of his massive personality...It's no exaggeration to say that Undershaw was the centre of Doyle's life during perhaps the most fruitful and fascinating phase of his career. It must be saved and take its place among the sensitively preserved residences of this country's other literary giants. This is certainly a three-pipe problem but not, I am convinced, an insoluble one.*

As Sherlock Holmes says in The Copper Beeches,

> *The pressure of public opinion can do in the town what the law cannot accomplish.*

If we believe that Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle belong to all of us – even generations long beyond our own time – then we are charged with making it known that Undershaw must be preserved and restored. We must bring that "pressure of public opinion" to this campaign. The loss of Undershaw is more than a loss for Hindhead; it is a loss for us all.



Doyle on his motorbike at Undershaw

HELP SAVE UNDERSHAW

Send a letter to one or both of the following members of the Waverley Borough Council:

Mary Orton, Chief Executive Waverley Borough Council and/or

Matthew Evans, Chief Planning Officer
Waverley Borough Council
Council Offices
The Burys, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HR, United Kingdom

Sources

"A British Commando: An Interview with Conan Doyle," Captain Philip Trevor; The Strand magazine. Volume XXI, 1901

Teller of Tales, Daniel Stashower, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1999

The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes: The Life and Times of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Andrew Lycett; Free Press, November 2008

The Adventures of Arthur Conan Doyle: A Biography, Russell Miller- Macmillan, 2008

http://www.24dash.com/news/housing/2010-12-17-Home-of-Sherlock-Holmes-creator-at-centre-of-High-Court-challenge

A Toast to “The Woman”

– Deborah Belchis

Tonight we toast a daring dame
An actress, a woman of blackmailing fame!
A Woman who bested our masterful sleuth,
Leaving him looking like an ungainly youth.

To Irene Adler, demure and disarming,
A vision of loveliness, a manner so charming
That few would have predicted how bold and how shrewd
This New Jersey gal would eventually prove.

Swiftly perceiving Sherlock’s dastardly plan,
She tails Sherlock Holmes, dressed as a man.
Listening as he recounts in detail his story
Basking in his anticipated glory.

Oh, Sherlock, what hubris, so arrogant, so blind!
Irene has your number, as soon you will find.
While you’re counting your eggs, she’s counting her chickens,
She’s off to the continent, while your wounds you’re left lickin’.

She’s taken the photo, left hers in its place
And left you standing with mud on your face.
But, ho, a smile plays around Sherlock’s lips,
And to Irene a hat mentally he tips.

“The Woman,” to Sherlock, she will now always be
A fitting epithet for one as clever as he!

Contributing Factors

Beth Austin is a past gasogene of WTB, is the current Torquemada and is the editor and founder *of Irene's Cabinet.* In real life she performs daily as a Network Administrator but prefers, when given the choice, to spend her time amongst her particular friends in the Sherlockian world.

Deborah Belchis, having been surrounded by Sherlock Holmes devotees her whole life, discovered Watson's Tin Box on the internet and quickly joined, resolving to increase her knowledge of this master sleuth. She is thrilled to be a member of the group and looks forward to being transported back to 1895 every month!

Debbie Clark, native of Maryland's beautiful Eastern Shore, is retired from the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, MD and is now teaching and mentoring graduate education students at Goucher College in Towson, MD. She is a long time member and past gasogene of WTB and a Very Irregular attendee of several Mid-Atlantic scion societies. She has appeared previously in *Irene's Cabinet,* has been published in *Violets and Vitriol*, compiled and edited by S. E. Dahlinger, and periodically presents at the annual "Saturday with Sherlock Holmes" in Baltimore.

April Curnow, Gasogene XXI, regards the Tin Box monthly meeting night as an especially bright spot on her calendar. Between Sherlockian gatherings she sings madrigals, paints watercolors, and works in children's services for Howard County Library.

Fred Glueckstein attended New York University. Fred has been published in several equestrian magazines, journals, and newsletters He is a columnist for PhelpsSports.com, a 24/7 all-equestrian sports service. Fred is the author of *The '27 Yankees; Mickey Mantle: Rookie in Pinstripes, Of Men, Women and Horses,* and *Mimi of Novy Bohumin, Czechoslovakia: A Young Woman's Survival of the Holocaust.* Fred and his wife Eileen live on Long Island. They have two children, Brian and Debra.

Evelyn Herzog, ASH, BSI, has a particular devotion to the women of the Sherlockian Canon. Admiring Irene Adler from afar, she feels a closer affinity to Violet Hunter. She is a member of Sherlockian societies throughout the Northeast Corridor (and well beyond), but her home scion is now Watson's Tin Box.

Russell Wm Hultgren is an activist, a poet, and a software technical writer who teaches Spanish and public speaking part-time at Anne Arundel Community College. Whenever time permits, he indulges a habit he's had since the early 70s: slipping through the portals of fellowship, reading, or viewing to that fog-engulfed world where "it is always 1895." He has no Sherlockian credentials to speak of, merely a desire to keep the memory of the Master green. After decades of searching, he finally found his Sherlockian home at Watson's Tin Box.

J. Irene Ludwig is an independent consultant in information technology and a member of several Sherlockian societies in the Washington area. She signs her Sherlockian art with her middle name, Irene.

Jacquelynn Morris, ASH, Gasogene XI & XIX, Tantalus V, is the creator and organizer of the annual Sherlockian event, A Scintillation of Scions, currently in its 4th year and is co-chair of the Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest for 7th grade students in Howard County, MD now in its 8th year. She has been an invited speaker at several Sherlockian events. Jacquelynn maintains that if not for Holmes she would not know some of the best people in the world – her Sherlockian friends.

John C. Sherwood, Gasogene XIV, Michigan native, recently moved to Battle Creek, MI, after 11 years' residence near Philadelphia. He has been a journalist since 1967. He is a perennial contributor to *Irene's Cabinet* as well as to magicians' and skeptics' periodicals. His company, MysteryVisits, has staged plays and interactive mystery events in eight U. S. states and the United Kingdom.

Andrew Solberg, ASH, BSI, Gasogene VIII & XVIII, 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 Morley-Montgomery Award for 2004. After attending many Sherlockian societies' dinners he considers the monthly Tin Box dinner as his home.