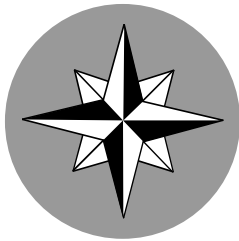




# EXPLORATIONS



## FROM THE PRESIDENT



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2010 has been a great year for Sherlock Holmes, particularly members of the Norwegian Explorers. The 2010 Conference has ended and it was a great success. We had over 100 registrants plus speakers; we were featured in an article in the StarTribune newspaper; and the reviews and feedback have been very positive. Thanks to the Conference Committee (Tom Gottwalt, John Bergquist, Julie McKuras, Philip Bergem, Pj Doyle, Dick Sveum, Tim Johnson, Tim Payne, Tim Reich, Mike Eckman [co-chair], and Gary Thaden [co-chair]); the Elmer L. Andersen Library at the University of Minnesota; and the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections for this huge success. From the financial side, we ended up in the black and may be able to make a contribution to the Collections. Did anybody say 2013?

The study group got off to a roaring start with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in September. Explorer Steve Miller has joined

study group leaders Kristi Iverson and Karen Murdock after the retirement of John Bergquist. October featured “The Adventure of the Empty House,” and in November they discussed “The Norwood Builder.”

“Sherlock Holmes” at the Rochester Civic Theatre: between the time of this writing and its publication, the Explorers will have visited the Rochester Civic Theatre for a performance of “Sherlock Holmes.” The play, written by ACD and William Gillette, features a young woman being saved from the evil clutches of Professor Moriarty.

A trifecta of Sherlock Holmes video:

1. BBC import on PBS. The Twin Cities PBS station is running the 2010 BBC/WGBH series of modern day Sherlock Holmes stories. Benedict Cumberbatch stars as Sherlock Holmes and Martin Freeman as Dr. Watson. The set of three shows has received positive reviews in

(Continued on page 2)

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It sure was exciting to have such a wonderful group of Sherlockians visit the Twin Cities in August for “The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes” conference! It would be difficult to include reviews of every single thing that occurred during the three-day conference, so I apologize if some things are not mentioned, but the reviews in this issue do provide a great feel for what occurred, and I hope you will enjoy them.

This issue also features articles from events that fellow Explorers attended this summer and autumn. It's nice that members

are willing to jot notes and write-up reviews for the readers of *Explorations*. My appreciation goes to the contributors in this issue for their fine work.

I look forward to seeing you all at a future Norwegian Explorers event.

As always, submissions for *Explorations* are welcome. Email them directly to me in plain text or in Word format to: [twinsfan1@earthlink.net](mailto:twinsfan1@earthlink.net)

~Tim Reich

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

(Continued on page 1)

Great Britain. They were shown on Oct. 24 and 31 and Nov. 7.

2. "Tom and Jerry Meets Sherlock Holmes." This animated movie from Warner Brothers features the cartoon characters Tom and Jerry helping Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson solve a jewel heist robbery. Released in August 2010 and available wherever DVDs are sold.
3. The 1960s BBC television series starring Douglas Wilmer is released on U.S. DVD this month. This never before released material includes 13 episodes.

And, I am not even counting Sherlock Holmes 2. Following on the success of the 2009 movie, "Sherlock Holmes", Guy Richie is directing the untitled sequel due to be released in December of next year.

Watch for your notice about the annual dinner at the Minneapolis Golf Club.

"You'll dine with us...." *SIXN*.

~Gary Thaden



One of the many display cases in the beautiful exhibit hall in the Andersen Library. The case is pictured in front of one of the many "spirits" of Sherlock Holmes hung throughout the room.

## HOLMES SIGHTINGS

### TWAIN, HOLMES, DOYLE, GILLETTE, AND THE GIRL WHO PLAYED WITH FIRE

In his *Mark Twain: The Adventures of Samuel Clemens*, Jerome Loving notes that Twain wrote "'A Double-Barreled Detective Story.' A rather bland burlesque of the Sherlock Holmes stories that were then at the height of their popularity." "Arthur Conan Doyle's most successful book in the series, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, was then appearing the *Strand Magazine* prior to its book publication. Doyle may have been a particular target of Twain's displeasure because he had defended the Boer War in a highly publicized pamphlet, for which he would subsequently be knighted." Twain was a vocal anti-imperialist and this was shown in his introduction of Winston S. Churchill in 1900: "Mr. Churchill and I do not agree on the righteousness of the South African War..." In another Twain-Holmes connection, Loving notes that "[William] Gillette had been an actor noted for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes. Twain helped pay for part of his acting education and later helped him with parts, including a role in the Harford production of *The Gilded Age* in 1875." Gillette made a recording of what he remembered Twain's voice to be. We do not have a recording of Twain himself, but others have used Gillette's recording to get an idea of how Twain spoke. The brief recording is available at: <http://www.salwenpr.com/mtspeaks.html>.

In Stieg Larsson's *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, Jerker Holmberg is investigating the murder of Dag Svensson, a bright young journalist who was researching sex trafficking. Since Svensson was a journalist, Holmberg is sure that there should be a computer belonging to him, but he cannot find one. Holmberg thinks, "*The strange thing about the dog is that it did not bark in the night, my dear Watson.*" Holmberg then "made a note that at least one computer was missing."

~Mike Eckman



"Gillette made a recording of what he remembered Twain's voice to be."

## THE JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA AT THE ANDERSEN LIBRARY

On July 10th, the Jane Austen Society, Minnesota Chapter, met at the Andersen Library to hear a talk by Explorers member C. Paul Martin, go on a tour conducted by curator Tim Johnson of the Holmes and Allen Mackler exhibits at the Wilson Library, and enjoy a buffet lunch. The members of JASNA meet the second Saturday of each month. This meeting was also attended by a sprinkling of Explorers.



Norwegian Explorer Dr. Paul Martin, BSI

Dr. Martin's topic was 18th Century Medicine and the Death of Jane Austen. As expected, his talk was enjoyable, stimulating, informative, and authoritative. He illustrated it with slides, among others showing equipment for bleeding the patient ("my wife told me not to bring that one"), and a sample of an early stethoscope, which was not invented in time for Jane Austen, George Washington, or others of her era to benefit. One of the members of the audience asked about the use of laudanum and we learned that, too, was as yet not invented. Dr. Martin said he thinks Jane died of Addison's disease resulting from TB.

~Karen Titrud



## MOVIE NIGHT

### "MY SYMPATHIES ARE WITH THE CRIMINALS"

On Monday, October 25, the Norwegian Explorers convened in the Andersen Library at the University of Minnesota for another movie night. This year was a double feature of one-hour episodes from the 1964-1965 BBC series, *Sherlock Holmes*, starring Douglas Wilmer and Nigel Stock, provided for us by John Bergquist. First, however, was a short business meeting in which Tim Reich requested submissions for the Christmas Annual, Dick Sveum discussed the recent Bouchercon, and Gary Thaden lightheartedly dissembled about the annual dinner in December.

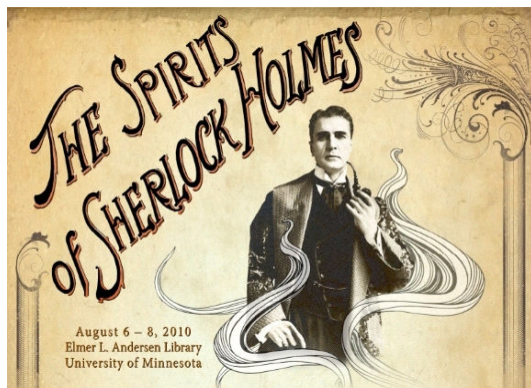
After a brief discussion about the new *Sherlock* series appearing on "Masterpiece Mystery," John Bergquist introduced the program for the evening. We began with a captivating (and occasionally overwrought) rendition of "The Devil's Foot." Attendees seemed generally impressed with the show's fidelity to the source material while amused by some of the low-budget limitations of the production. After a brief intermission, we proceeded to watch "Charles Augustus Milverton," in which the highlight was undoubtedly the surprisingly jovial and smarmy demeanor of the master blackmailer, as portrayed by Barry Jones. I had never imagined him to comport himself in such a pleasant manner, but it seemed entirely appropriate, and it effectively underscored Holmes' feeling of ire for the man. The break-in scene, with Holmes and Watson in evening clothes and silk masks, proved equally amusing and riveting.

Although nearly a score of attendees started the night, I noticed that we lost a few during intermission, and I hope those who had to leave early will be able to see "Charles Augustus Milverton" on their own. It was thoroughly entertaining, and perhaps the most engaging adaptation of the story I have seen.

~Ray Riethmeier



## CONFERENCE REVIEWS



### FRIDAY AFTERNOON AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>

On Friday, August 6, the main conference room at the Elmer L. Andersen Library was full with over one hundred Sherlockians gathered for the 2010 “Spirits of Sherlock Holmes” conference. The clock read 1:15 when Gary Thaden, Norwegian Explorers president and conference co-chair, took the podium. He extended a warm welcome to the assembled group and proceeded on, with tongue firmly in cheek, with an announcement that the Apple Valley SWAT team was descending upon the home of Julie McKuras in search of four 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annuals* that were missing from the Sherlock Holmes Collections. This was in reference to an article in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* the previous day. The article by Bill Ward was written in recognition and as promotion for the conference. The article was generally well written but, in what must have been a mix up of his notes, Ward mentioned “McKuras’ four copies of the penny magazine (*Beeton's Christmas Annual*) where Holmes first appeared.” Thaden’s “news report,” which Julie took in good humor, was picked up by a number of others over the course of the conference and became a running joke. Following this, Mike Eckman, the other conference co-chair, announced the first of the speakers.

Ray Betzner, BSI, Assistant Vice President for University Communications at Temple University in Philadelphia, started off the conference on a firm foundation with a presentation on Vincent Starrett, a subject clearly keeping with the conference theme. He chose Starrett’s poem “221B”, taking us through the poem with wonderful insight, anecdotes and trivia. He covered Starrett’s life and his

relationship with Gray Chandler Briggs. This subject tied in wonderfully with the exhibition developed by Tim Johnson and university staff which had letters between Starrett and Briggs, a copy of “221B” written out by Starrett, and original photos of where Briggs thought 221B Baker Street was actually located. The presentation was very informative and a look at something most Sherlockians are very familiar with, but don’t truly know the depths.

Next up was a panel of representatives or curators of the four leading Sherlockian and Doylean libraries in the world. This included Peggy Perdue of the Toronto Reference Library, Catherine Cooke of the Marylebone Library, Neil McCaw representing the Portsmouth Library (recipient of Richard Lancelyn Green’s collection) and our own Tim Johnson. Neil started off by relating what they experienced after receiving the 405 boxes of Green’s collection in 2005. He went on to tell of the difficulty of connecting the collection to the local environment, the difficulty of cataloging a large collection for a cash-strapped local government and the thrill of providing outreach opportunities and research access.

Catherine continued the presentation with a brief history of the Marylebone Sherlock Holmes Collection and the inroads they have made in developing a good web presence. Peggy highlighted what the TRL is doing regarding library cooperation and public access. They are dealing with upgrades to the library while still managing to provide tours, research opportunities, exhibitions and film presentations. Tim talked about state of Collections including new additions made to on-line accessibility of scanned documents, images and finding aids.

Steve Rothman, editor of the *Baker Street Journal*, next provided an animated and exciting presentation about Christopher Morley and *The Saturday Review of Literature*. The talk, a subject Steve is very knowledgeable and passionate about, covered the early history and relationships between the editor and contributors during the 1920s and the hard times of the 1930s. This period, with Morley at the center but extending to Edgar W. Smith and many others, is important in understanding the development of the Baker Street Irregulars and Sherlockian studies in America. Steve’s talk capped off a wonderful afternoon and a great beginning of the latest conference.

~Phil Bergem

..a look at something most Sherlockians are very familiar with, but don’t truly know the depths.”

### FRIDAY EVENING

The last official event on Friday was the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections annual membership meeting. Along with the standard reports, such as the State of the Collections, a review of the finances, and the confirmation of board members, there were a few other highlights. Tim Johnson relayed his appreciation for help provided with the collections material from both Lucy Brusic and Jessica Abson and we watched as Explorer Soren Eversoll, donate a pipe to the Collections. The highlight of the meeting occurred when Kris Kiesling named Tim Johnson as the first endowed E.W. McDiarmid Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Congratulations to Tim Johnson!

~Tim Reich



Tim Johnson with Kris Kiesling.



**Kris Kiesling named Tim Johnson as the first endowed E.W. McDiarmid Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections.**

### SATURDAY MORNING

**AUGUST 7<sup>TH</sup>**

Saturday morning kicked-off with a daring and comical speech by Gideon Hill, MD, BSI titled, "Vintage and Spirited." Dr. Hill first reviewed Alcoholism as a disease. Then, using evidence and behavior revealed during the stories, he determined that Dr. Watson was an alcoholic. Some reasons cited were Watson's genetic predisposition, cyclical success & failures, and co-dependency. Most of us blushed with laughter at Dr. Hill's suggestion about a possible physical limitation from the disease that Watson appeared obsessed with. The speech was a great ice-breaker for the start of what turned out to be another fun day.



Panelists: Neil McCaw, Tim Johnson, Peggy Perdue, MBt, and Catherine Cooke, BSI, ASH. (Photo by Ray Riethmeier)

Once again we had the pleasure to hear from the library panel of Catherine Cooke, Tim Johnson, Neil McCaw, and Peggy Perdue, who each took the stage to answer questions and talk about the future direction of their library collections. Tim discussed looking at digitizing audio and visual materials to create a media repository for researchers. Peggy said she plans to continue to focus on the two missions for her library: being a resource for scholars and to make Arthur Conan Doyle's material available and fun for people to enjoy. Catherine was next to speak and she talked about IT developments and the possibility of having access to the library catalog via an iPhone in the future. It was also very interesting to hear Catherine talk about the evolution of the ISBN number and the International Standard Text Code (ISTC) so all editions of a book with the same text would have the same ISTC. Neil McCaw was excited about the Richard Lancelyn Green bequest moving to a new home at the Central Library in Portsmouth that will have dedicated study rooms.

Filling in for Russell Merritt, BSI, Julie McKuras presented his speech that reviewed the spirit of Holmes in the silent movie era and highlighted the film festival Russell attended in northern Italy. I think it was also fun to see early portrayals of the Master Detective and it was nice to listen to the background information Russell provided for us as well.

Kudos to Julie for stepping in with short notice and delivering the speech for Russell, who was unable to attend the conference.

Saturday morning finished as attendees made their way to the atrium to pick up lunch and spend more time in the exhibit room. Local author Larry Millett visited during lunch. He brought and signed some of his delightful books featuring Sherlock Holmes set in Minnesota and the Midwest. People enjoyed meeting and speaking with Larry, and it was a pleasure to have him stop by.

~Tim Reich

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Attending a debate between two worthy opponents is a little like watching two top seeded tennis players in a crucial match. The head swivels and swims at the power serve, the rapid volleying back and forth, the equivocal shots that just touch the line – or maybe not. “The Great Game: A Debate Covering the Founding of Sherlockian Scholarship” at *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes* conference provided some dizzying head-spinning action. Richard Sveum, MD, BSI, squared off against Jon Lellenberg, BSI, 2s, to determine whether or not Ronald Knox was the founder of what has come to be known as **The Great Game**.

Sveum served up a fast shot by giving a brief account of Knox’s 1911 and 1912 lecture and essay which were intended to be a satire on German biblical scholarship. From those seminal works, Sveum contended, Sherlockian (aka Holmesian) scholarship grew. He fired a couple of line shots by citing the work of Christopher Morley and Evelyn Waugh. Thus, the good doctor contended, a discipline of canonical criticism was born and has expanded over the last century.

Nonsense, the Morley-Montgomery Award winner Lellenberg shot back in response. While he admitted that he grew up in that faith, Lellenberg confessed to having something of a conversion experience when he examined the evidence. By whacking a series of historical analyses that barely cleared the net, this debater claimed that S.C. Roberts and not Ronald Knox was the progenitor of “The Game,” the former antedating the latter by at least a decade. Then, lobbing a number of shots into the back court,

that is, by citing a series of reputable Sherlockian experts (including Morley – nice shot), Lellenberg religiously concluded that Knox, beloved as he is, was merely a latter day saint, grafted into the tradition at a later date.

Undaunted, Sveum rejoined by putting some top spin on the ball: “Poor Jon, I’m sorry you lost your faith.” Citing the witness of Vincent Starrett, the doctor declared (or perhaps deduced) that it was Knox who was the originator of the cherished scholarship. But Lellenberg fired back with a wicked backhand shot. No scholar of repute, neither Morley, nor Blakeney, not Davis, not even Bell credits Knox as the fountainhead or even mentions him as such. Therefore, Knox could not be the progenitor; someone else must be. Slamming the ball into the forecourt, the holder of the 2 Shilling Award claimed that there is ample evidence to convince him that the trail leads to Roberts and not Knox, a trail we Sherlockians must follow.

Back and forth the game went; some shots landing in the net while others just shaved the back line. Claims and counterclaims had the audience swiveling their heads back and forth. Unlike a tennis match, however, the debate seemed to end in deuce: no one clearly emerged as the winner – except, of course, for the participants, each of whom was convinced that *he* carried the day. In the end, because of time, it was called a tie.

Some saw this contest as the airing of an enduring Holmesian issue. Others sensed that the exercise, while enjoyable, was less like a tennis match and more like a reimagining of the argument as to which came first, the chicken or the egg! In conclusion, rather than declaring a winner and a loser, the conference host, Gary Thaden, said that he was reminded of a Hubert Humphrey saying: “I have friends on this side of the issue and friends on the other side – I’m sticking with my friends!”

Things simmered down in the remaining afternoon presentations. Les Klinger, BSI, 2s, MBt, claimed he was going to do something different. Unlike some of his talks, today he intended to speak about Sherlock Holmes. He did that by quoting Raymond Chandler who didn’t like Holmes. Holmes, Chandler said, was a nondescript figure who had only a few good lines. Then Klinger challenged Chandler’s view



“Claims and counterclaims had the audience swiveling their heads back and forth.”

by citing the criteria that Chandler himself set up.

In *The Simple Art of Murder* Chandler limned the essence of a great detective. “Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective must be a complete man...” Klinger took Chandler at his word and proceeded to show that Holmes *by Chandler’s own criteria* was a man who walked the mean streets of London and was not himself mean. Referring to the Canon, Klinger demonstrated that Holmes was neither tarnished nor afraid. The bulk of Klinger’s presentation demonstrated how Holmes more than measured up to Chandler’s list of expectations. In the end what linked Chandler’s creation and Doyle’s, Klinger concluded, is “the code of honor.” Whatever Holmes may or may not have been, he was, like Philip Marlowe, first, last, and always a man of honor.

The final presentation of the afternoon was a spirited talk by Evelyn Herzog, BSI, ASH. Noting that the overall title of the conference was *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes*, Herzog recounted the history of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes (that is, ASH) as a series of spirited endeavors. She recounted a two decade history of women aficionados who gained access and entry into the once exclusively all-male BSI.

Herzog organized her talk around a series of spirits. Women, even though they demonstrated Holmesian aptitude, needed and displayed a spirit of devotion, a spirit of community, a spirit of outrage, a spirit of mischief, and many more “spirits” before the doors were opened to them. This recounting of spirits was an anecdotal and informative history of ASH from early days at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven to storming and breaching the BSI barriers in New York City in the 1990s. Now that ASH has achieved its objectives, Herzog raised the question whether there is any reason for ASH to continue as a separate entity. As long as there is an Aunt Clara, however, and so long as your reindeer flies upside down, the spirit and reality of ASH will go on.

~Robert Brusica



Photo by Mike McKuras

Julie McKuras, BSI, ASH, Steven Doyle, BSI, 2s, and Sue Vizoskie, BSI, ASH, with the debut of their books: *Sherlockian Heresies* by Léo Sauvage (edited by Julie and Sue) and Steve’s *Sherlock Holmes for Dummies*.

## SATURDAY EVENING

Late Saturday afternoon most of the conference attendees made the short walk to the Wilson library to view “The Sitting Room at 221B Baker Street” permanent exhibit of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. The display features items from the late, Allen Mackler’s, 221B sitting room he had proudly created in his home. We all gathered to learn about Allen’s life. Tim Johnson gave a brief summary of the exhibit and then introduced the first of two speakers. Jon Lellenberg spoke about his friendship with Allen during his years in the Washington D.C. area and how he admired Allen for his musical and culinary knowledge. Dr. Paul Martin told us about Allen’s love of books, bookstores, cats, music, John Wayne, and Sherlock Holmes.

Saturday finished with the banquet held at the Holiday Inn Metrodome. Sherlockians filled the room and lively conversations carried on as dinner was served. Toast were given by Ben Vizoskie (Sherlock Holmes), Tim Payne (Dr. Watson), Bill Mason (Irene Adler), Elyse Locurto (Mrs. Hudson), Andrew Malec (E.W. McDiarmid), and Pj Doyle (Allen Mackler). The evening also featured an auction with Peter Blau taking the microphone as auctioneer and an excellent speech by Brad Keefauver. The banquet capped a very full day of Sherlockian companionship.

~Tim Reich

“This recounting of spirits was an anecdotal and informative history of ASH.”

## SUNDAY MORNING AUGUST 8<sup>TH</sup>

The last sessions of the conference were held on Sunday morning, featuring two tongue-in-cheek yet scholarly presentations and a lively radio drama.

Sticking closely to the theme of the conference, the Norwegian Explorers' own Tim Reich led off with "Guy de Maupassant's 'Le Horla' and the Haunting of Sherlock Holmes." As a possible explanation for the small number of cases recorded by Watson in the time leading up to the Great Hiatus, Tim proposed that Holmes had been adversely affected by a literal haunting! As background, Tim led us through events in Brazil in 1885-6, where an invisible evil spirit called Le Horla was thought to have possessed many individuals, with dire consequences. In 1887, the writer Guy de Maupassant wrote a short story called "Le Horla" based on the supposed events in Brazil, transferring the setting to his native France. Tim then made the leap to suggest that after its evildoing in France, the spirit Le Horla had crossed the channel to England, where it caused the madness of Colonel Warburton and possessed Sherlock – and even Mycroft – Holmes! As fantastic as the premise might be, Tim's sound scholarship and logical exposition made it seem completely plausible.

Next up was Susan Dahlinger, with "Haunting Libraries: In Search of a Guaranteed Medium." In yet another innovative take on the theme of the conference, Susan talked of "haunting" in the sense of visiting frequently, as in visiting reference libraries, which she certainly has done, particularly in researching William Gillette's play "Sherlock Holmes." She praised the Sherlock Holmes Collections along

with several other institutional libraries that have been of great help to her as she works on her book about Gillette and his play. Her talk was illustrated with slides on PowerPoint, with which she playfully pretended to be unfamiliar. Of great interest were many stills from the lost film of the play, shown in the order in which they appeared, giving us the closest approximation of seeing the film itself.



Phil Bergem at the Norwegian Explorers table.

The last official event of the conference was a production of Edith Meiser's 1932 radio drama "The Giant Rat of Sumatra" by The Red-Throated League of the Norwegian Explorers. The performance was dedicated to the late Wayne Swift, BSI (whose investiture was The Giant Rat of Sumatra). This untold tale of Dr. Watson has given rise to many pastiches, the premise of this one being that Moriarty schemed to release Sumatran rats infested with Bubonic Plague into London – and then demand an outrageous ransom before providing the antidote that he had acquired by dastardly means. Needless to say, Holmes foiled Moriarty's nefarious plans.

As a coda to the official events, Barbara Rusch enticed conference attendees to plan for next year's conference in Toronto: *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Study in Scandal*, which will be held October 13-16.

Conference co-chair Gary Thaden then declared the gathering at an end, and attendees reluctantly said their good byes and went their separate ways – until 2013!

~John Bergquist, BSI, 2s



"Susan talked of  
"haunting" in the  
sense of visiting  
frequently, as in  
visiting reference  
libraries"



The Red Throated League in action. Speaking are Bob and Lucy Brusic.

(Photo by Julie McKuras)





**“In the company  
of Explorers on  
this very night.”**

### TOAST TO WATSON

Reach for the well-worn book and find a favorite chair.  
We'll slip into a world that is always there.  
Hear the cobblestones against the horses' hoofs.  
See the clay chimney pots stacked upon the roofs.  
We'll join in adventures with a loyal friend and the master  
As time stands still, and yet - passes faster.  
And so we peer through the dim lamplight of gas  
to catch a glimpse of the duo, as they surely will pass  
through the thick shrouds of fog and into our sight  
in the company of Explorers on this very night.  
Let us toast the whetstone for Holmes' sharp mind,  
the chronicler of a far more captivating time –  
Dr. John H. Watson

~Tim Payne

Norwegian Explorers 2010 Conference  
Spirits of Sherlock Holmes Conference Dinner

### MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

As one of the co-chairs of The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes conference, I want to give thanks to the people who really made the conference a success – those who paid their fees and attended. At the conference we did thank the speakers and the organizing committee, both very important groups. But what if we held a conference and no one came? Therefore, I feel we do need to thank the attendees.

Besides paying the bills, the attendees make all of the Conference Committee meetings worthwhile. Although it is a certain amount of work to select dates, review menus, set schedules, and recruit volunteers, it certainly is a lot of fun to see people enjoying themselves, admiring the exhibits from the Collections, and meeting other Sherlockians.

One of the activities I did enjoy as we prepared for the conference was the publication of the book “The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes.”

The Norwegian Explorers have a history of publications that we should be proud of and I hope that we can continue to improve with future efforts. Being founded at a university by academics, the Explorers should continue with research and publication. After all, with the Collections right at Andersen Library and a curator as able as Tim Johnson, we cannot complain that we are too far from the source material or that the material is difficult to access.

Finally, as those who attended the conference may have noticed, the Explorers are blessed with members who have age and guile, members who have youth and enthusiasm, and members who have age and enthusiasm. As long as the attendees keep coming, we will continue to keep hosting conferences.

~Mike Eckman



## STUDY GROUP MEETING REVIEWS

### *The Final Problem*

**Discussion leader: Kristi Iverson**

**Date: May 15, 2010**

**Location: St. Paul Park Library**

Every once in a long while we have one of those study group sessions where so many people are enthusiastic to comment on the story, or respond to another's comment, that we end up talking over each other in our merriment. *The Final Problem* turned out to be that catalyst for us. With one of our largest groups of the year, and a story that begins with Watson's line, "It is with a heavy heart that I take up my pen to write these the last words in which I shall ever record the singular gifts by which my friend Sherlock Holmes was distinguished," how could the flood gates be held back? I too regretfully found myself once nudging in a comment, while others patiently waited out the jovial fracas. The "death" of Sherlock Holmes might just be too much for most of us study group regulars.

We covered a varied of topics and posed many questions. A few of them are listed here: How would Moriarty be able to track Holmes and Watson so far? Why not send his henchmen for the pursuit instead? Why didn't Holmes and Watson use aliases? Watson never actually sees Moriarty, so did he really exist? Where did the "experts" come from to inspect the foot prints and who were they? (Hunters, trackers, or police?)

We were impressed with Holmes's ability to snap in and out of disguise and we questioned Watson inability to see through it. We also wondered why there is never any further reference of the fire at 221B Baker Street.

In the end, I think one line offered during a more relaxed spot in the discussion, summed up the story nicely. Bob Brusic said, "The story really is a cliffhanger." Touché Bob, Touché.

### *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

**Discussion leader: Karen Murdock**

**Date: September 18, 2010**

**Location: St. Paul Park Library**

On a pleasant Saturday afternoon, ten Explorers made time to come together to discuss one of the most famous cases in the Canon, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

Even though we reread the novel during the summer in preparation for the session, an admission was made that with so many movie adaptations of the story, it's sometimes hard to keep the Canonical story straight. That brought us around to talk about our favorite cinematic interpretations and why.

A comment was made that this story is the most "true" novel of the four long Sherlock Holmes stories. There was no lengthy flashback needed to complete this tale. It also held a Gothic Romance feel with elements like the historic Baskerville Hall, the legend of the hound, and the strange nighttime activity in the Grimpen Mire.

We talked about the terrain and stone circles in and around Dartmoor. How did Holmes so quickly learn his way around the uncommon areas of the moor? And who helped Watson when he said "we" pulled Holmes from the mire?

There was a tongue-in-check suggestion made by Steve Miller that Beryl was even one of the many "Mrs. Watsons."

Of course our conversation turned to The Hound we speculated on the breed of dog, its possible abilities on the moor, and the manner in which it was controlled. How could the legend have lasted so long? Was there a possible lineage of hounds?

The end of our 90 minutes seemed to arrive too soon and Karen Murdock concluded the session with a door-prize drawing where she awarded almost everyone in attendance a prize of their choice.

~Tim Reich



"with so many  
movie  
adaptations of  
the story, it's  
sometimes hard  
to keep the  
Canonical story  
straight."

## STUDY GROUP MEETING REVIEWS

### *Arthur and George*

**Discussion leader: Steve Miller**

**Date: June 19, 2010**

**Location: University Club of St. Paul**



**“It was George’s trial and unjust imprisonment that provided the main plot for this book.”**

On June 19 of 2010, the study group strayed from the Canon in favor of reading a historical/fiction novel based on the parallel lives of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and man who had benefited from his help named George Edalji. The book was titled *Arthur and George* and was written by Julian Barnes. We were able to meet once again in the pleasant surroundings of St Paul’s University Club, thanks to the generosity of John Bergquist. The group was smaller than usual this month, possibly due to the distractions of a Fathers Day weekend and a Minnesota summer.

The group reported that it took a bit more effort to get involved in this book compared to our beloved Canon, but that we were all glad that we had expended the effort in order to gain insights into the life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. We got to know and like George Edalji (pronounced “Aydlji”), and it was George’s trial and unjust imprisonment for animal mutilation that provided the main plot for this book. The Edalji case occupied a key portion of the second half of Conan Doyle’s life and gave Doyle the inspiration to lift himself out of the doldrums he had descended into after the death of his first wife, Touie. The woman who was to become Doyle’s second wife, Jean, supported Doyle’s involvement in the case and thereafter assumed a prominent place in his public life.

We all agreed that Edalji was completely innocent. It appeared that racism was the reason for his conviction. We noted that such prejudice was common in England at the time of Edalji’s trial. We noted and shook our heads at the impossibility of a criminal escaping from a locked room, committing his crimes, and returning to the locked room. We “are” familiar with a criminal gaining entry to a locked room, committing his crimes, and escaping from it, at least in the world of mystery/fiction.

Some of us felt that maybe we learned a bit too much about Doyle’s private sexual life. We noted that the author of *Arthur and George*, Julian Barnes, gleaned his understanding not from interviews with Conan Doyle, nor from letters to Doyle’s family, but from the autobiographical writings of Doyle himself. So, we can be “rather” but not “completely” sure of the accuracy of Barnes’s writings. We do know that Conan Doyle had a great appreciation for chivalry and that it was important to him that Jean Leckie not appear to be his mistress.

The latter part of this book centers around Doyle’s belief and preoccupation with “Spiritism” or as it is now known, “Spiritualism,” which was like a religion to him. He converted Jean to believing in Spiritism, just as he did. When Conan Doyle died, the family did not mourn; they chose to honor him and his beliefs with a séance rather than with a funeral. George Edalji was able to honor and say thanks to Doyle, by attending this public séance.

At the end of the book, we were able to know that George Edalji had been partially pardoned by the British Government, that Doyle had established Edalji’s innocence in world opinion, that Doyle had exposed the actual mutilator, and that the writer of the harassing letters had been prosecuted. Doyle went on to prove the innocence of several other victims of British justice. For this, he holds a strong position in world opinion. He was not perfect, but about as good as a man can be.

~Charles Clifford



## STUDY GROUP MEETING REVIEWS

### *The Empty House*

**Discussion leader: Kristi Iverson**

**Date: October 16, 2010**

**Location: Karen Ellery's house**

#### **"YOU KNOW HE'S COMING BACK"**

A lucky 13 members of The Norwegian Explorers met at Karen Ellery's house to discuss *The Adventure of the Empty House*. Karen's house was decked in and out with Halloween decorations and "Calabash blend" tea was served along with mini muffins, cookies, and Halloween candy. Kristi Iverson led the lively discussion.

Of the sudden and dramatic reappearance of Sherlock Holmes in EMPT, Mary Loving said that this would not have been as unexpected to a modern audience as it was to Doyle's readers (who would have read this story just 107 years ago—EMPT was first published in October 1903). Anyone who has watched soap operas for the past 30 years, Mary observed, knows that "if a character dies and a body's not found, you know he's coming back."

Among precedents for the resurrection of a character thought to be dead, Karen E. said, succinctly, "Well, there was Christ!" Steve Miller said that author Ian Fleming killed off his character James Bond, but, like Doyle, found that a great character will not stay dead, and Bond was later resurrected.

Some Explorers wondered why Watson never noticed that, in three years, Holmes's rooms were never rented to anybody else. Didn't Watson ever visit Mrs. Hudson? Pj thought that Mycroft never cleared out Sherlock's rooms because he seldom left his own quarters and just did not want to be bothered. Arlene Kase thought that Mrs. Hudson was probably in on the secret that Sherlock was still alive, but she could not tell Watson because "Watson was a gabber—he could not keep things to himself!" Mary L. thought that Mrs. Hudson did not know that Sherlock was alive, but, while dusting the suite at 221B for three years, she probably

thought to herself, "This is very strange, but the money's good!"

Soren Eversoll asked if there was a consensus among Sherlockians on the age of Mrs. Hudson. She is usually portrayed on screen as middle-aged to elderly, but there is no Canonical evidence for this.


It was found that none of the Explorers present knew how to play whist, the game Ronald Adair played at the Bagatelle card club. Arlene said that whist was very popular in the United States at the same time it was popular in Britain and was often played by characters in the "Betsy-Tacy" books by Maud Hart Lovelace (set in Mankato).

Arlene wondered why there were so many villains in the Canon whose last name started with the letter M ("My collection of M's is a fine one," observed Sherlock Holmes). I (a lifelong "M") said that there just happened to be a lot of last names that start with M and that a name starting with "Mur" was usually the last "M" name of many "M"s to be called in, say, a class list.

Steve wondered about the motive for Adair's murder. He observed that Moran should not really care about his winnings at cards if he has taken over Moriarty's great money-making criminal organization. He also noted that EMPT is one of the only few "locked room" mysteries in the Canon. He also said that Holmes's remark to Lestrade ("Three undetected murders in one year won't do") implies that the three unsolved murders were committed by Moran, since Scotland Yard could be counted on to solve "ordinary" murders.

Mary observed that, with Sherlock Holmes gone for three years, 221B Baker Street was also an "empty house."

~Karen Murdock, ASH

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The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc.  
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*“My professional charges are upon a fixed scale. I do not vary them save when I remit them altogether.”*

**2011 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE AND DIRECTORY LISTING**

Dear Explorers,

Our scion society has always followed the dictum of the Master and adheres to a single annual charge for expenses. For 2011 single membership is \$15.00, and family membership is \$20.00. We also accept, and *encourage*, your contribution of additional amounts. This membership fee entitles you to all meetings and a subscription to *Explorations*, the newsletter of The Norwegian Explorers.

The Norwegian Explorers is a non-profit organization incorporated under Minnesota’s Non-Profit Corporation Act Chapter 317. Thus, dues and contributions may be tax deductible. Please make your check payable to “The Norwegian Explorers” and return it with this form (or a copy of this form) to this address:

**Gary Thaden, 2301 Aldrich Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55405**

Please join us for another interesting year.

Canonically Yours,  
Gary Thaden,  
President,  
The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota

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Are you interested in joining or remaining in the monthly study group? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Can this information be included in a future directory for members? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

*“You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson...”*  
*“The Adventure of the Empty House”*

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