



The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, Inc.
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The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota June 2025 Notice

Times noted are U.S. Central Time

THERE WILL BE NO JULY OR AUGUST NOTICES DURING OUR SUMMER HIATUS

Study Group

Saturday June 21 at 2:00 p.m.

Mary Loving will lead the group in our Noncanonical Detour through two stories by Arthur Conan Doyle: **"The Black Doctor"** and **"The Jew's Breastplate."** See the end of this Notice for discussion questions to ponder. Both stories are in *Tales of Terror and Mystery* and in other collections. *Tales of Terror and Mystery* is free on Project Gutenberg at the following link: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/537. Another source is the Kindle version of *The Complete Works of Arthur Conan Doyle*, available for \$3.25 on Amazon. We continue to gather via Zoom, primarily to accommodate participants from around the country and around the world. Please forward to any interested Sherlockian friends and colleagues who may not be Norwegian Explorers.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8282233034?pwd=RGNFYW9venRacUFYVkhzNnNJV2tPQT09>

Meeting ID: 828 223 3034

Passcode: 878937

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 828 223 3034

Passcode: 878937

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8282233034?pwd=RGNFYW9venRacUFYVkhzNnNJV2tPQT09>

Upcoming Dates and Stories

The group normally meets on the third Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m. We're following the Jay Finley Christ four-letter abbreviations of the tales in alphabetic order. After our summer hiatus, we'll resume September 20 with **NORW**.

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"The Adventure of the Empty House"

Conferences, Meetings, and Gatherings:

The **Torists International S.S.** will hold their Summer 2025 meeting on June 28, 2025. Our own **Erica Fair** will be the featured speaker on the topic of medicine in the Canon. In her talk, entitled **Bad Medicine: Dangerous Doctors and Toxic Treatments in Watson's World**, Erica will discuss the Victorian medical landscape with a special focus on popular medications and disease theories that were later found to be ineffective or even dangerous. For instance, did you know that cocaine was often prescribed for morphine addiction, and that radium was a celebrity-endorsed health tonic for over a decade? Find out what other anomalies would have been part of Watson's routine practice.

The meeting will take place Saturday June 28, 2025, at The Great Escape Restaurant, 9540 West Irving Park Road, Schiller Park, Illinois starting with a social time at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$40 and will include a family-style dinner and coffee, iced tea and soft drinks. There will also be a cash bar. Payment can be made via PayPal to toristintss@gmail.com (remember to use "friends and family," or pay the additional fee of \$2) or send a check payable to Torist International SS to 9003 Lincolnwood Dr, Evanston IL 60203. The Torists have also announced that the 66th running of the Chicago Silver Blaze will take place on June 29, 2025.

These two events combine to make for a great reason to visit the Chicago area and make a weekend of it.

Minnesota Antiquarian Book Fair July 12

This year's Book Fair will take place Saturday July 12th, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the North End Event Center at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Note the location change from last year and that it is only a one-day event, not two days as it was in the past. More details and advance ticket sale opportunities are available at the following link: <https://minnesotaantiquarianbookfair.wordpress.com/about/>

Sherlockian LEGO Whimsy

The perfect gift for your young or budding Sherlockian relatives or friends. Or for your favorite collector who already has everything. Melissa Aho alerted me to this exclusive item from Barnes and Noble described as follows:

Recreate the mystique of Victorian London with the LEGO Icons Sherlock Holmes: Book Nook (10351) bookshelf décor kit. Fans of classic detective novels can recreate the iconic literary gumshoe's residence, down to the smallest details. This DIY kit includes 5 minifigures: the astute Sherlock Holmes, his loyal companion Dr Watson, the enigmatic Irene Adler, the cunning Professor Moriarty and Baker Street newcomer, Paige. Once your build is complete, slide the book nook between your favorite novels to create a window into the adventures awaiting on Baker Street. Or open it to discover a bookstore with a revolving display window, a shadowy terraced residence with a sliding front door, mysteries and clues, and a detailed recreation of Sherlock Holmes' 221B apartment complete with a cozy fireplace, clue board and his beloved violin. Contains 1,359 pieces.

Price is \$129.99. See the following link for more information:

https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/lego-icons-sherlock-holmes-book-nook-10351-lego-systems-inc/1147390598;jsessionid=945C708B310A1A4B729A2C12DC6218A7.prodny_store02-atgap12?ean=0673419407489

Christmas Annual – Call for Papers – September 5 Submission Deadline – “Holmes in Motion”

Ray Riethmeier and Phil Bergem are once again compiling and editing the Norwegian Explorers Christmas Annual and are requesting content for inclusion in this year's publication. It is distributed each year to attendees of the Norwegian Explorers Annual Dinner in December, and additional copies are made available to interested Sherlockians around the world.

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This year's theme will be **"Holmes in Motion."** Transportation plays a significant role in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Travel by train to adventures away from London is an iconic scene for our heroes, as are rides in hansom cabs, or going out for a stroll. The stories also involve a fair number of ships, bicycles, and even the Underground, which — though seldom mentioned — was readily available. Another way we find Holmes in motion is through performance, be it on stage, television, or motion pictures. The Christmas Annual for this year will explore a wide avenue of possible topics derived from locomotion in the sixty Canonical tales, or presentations on stage and screen. We are looking for articles, pastiches, poems, puzzles, or artwork exploring anything from a specific way Holmes or Watson may have travelled, something about transportation in the Victorian era in general, or the way we remember the characters from performances over the years. However Holmes manages to move us, we want you to share it!

The submission deadline is September 5. Use the submission form accompanying this Notice. The form should also be available on the Norwegian Explorers website.

Theater & Performance

Irene Adler: The Only Woman to Outsmart Sherlock Holmes - August 26 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Opera Prima Donna, Adventuress, Actress. Irene Adler was the only woman to outsmart Sherlock Holmes. Hear her story in this captivating portrayal and learn why she left such a lasting impression on the world's greatest detective.

Hosted by the Winnetka-Northfield Illinois Public Library District, this free virtual performance is available via Zoom, though registration is required. Find details and registration information at the following link:

<https://www.wnpld.org/event/irene-adler-only-woman-outsmart-sherlock-holmes-26987>

"The Butler Did It" World Premiere at Park Square Theatre July 17 - August 16, 2026

One of American Theatre's most in-demand playwrights is back at Park Square.

Jeffrey Hatcher's original mystery, *The Butler Did It*, follows a school for butlers that caters to the fabulously rich. A perfectly planned murder. And a perfectly pulled off theft. The butler did it, but which? And how? And why?

Norwegian Explorers Book and Other Efforts

Ray Riethmeier has edited and penned the afterword for **"Sherlock Holmes: 5-Minute Mysteries"** by **Kel Richards**. It contains fifty 'you-solve-it' puzzlers of the fair-play tradition, with an emphasis on Christian faith. These Sherlockian brain teasers were written in the early 2000s and thought lost for over twenty years, but now an improbable bit of digital archeology brings them to print for the first time (a story shared in Ray's afterword). The Kickstarter campaign was successful so stay tuned for opportunities to purchase the book when it becomes available.

Please send details about any books you're authoring, editing, publishing, etc. to me and I'll include the relevant information in the next Notice.

Explorations

Our print publication, currently edited by Phil Bergem, is published irregularly three times a year. We are always looking for materials to publish. Any article or material you wish to contribute will be appreciated. Please let Phil know at pgbergem@gmail.com if you'd like to contribute an article.

Movies and Television:

"Sherlock & Daughter" aired in the U.S. on the CW network April 16. Find more information about the show and other Sherlockian television possibilities at the following link:

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<https://search.app/hWFnVHJRJmmPcYWm6>

The “**Sherlock Holmes: Mare of the Night**” movie is a horrifyingly fresh look at the iconic detective that delves into his worst nightmares that haunt him about one case he could never solve. It was released in limited theaters in Texas in January and it’s now going on the road to many different cities and theaters. Sadly, no Minnesota cities are on the list. I’ve attached the website link below that shows the cities it’s going to and the ones in which it has already played. A link to the film’s trailer is included below as well.

Movie Website: <https://www.sherlockholmesmareofthenight.com/get-tickets>

Movie Trailer: <https://youtu.be/6-bXuyqLoeY?si=mD94EjMgsZuP6N7m>

“Watson,” premiered January 26 on ABC. The series’ events take place six months after the death of the titular character's friend and partner Sherlock Holmes at the hands of Moriarty. The show stars Morris Chestnut as Dr. John Watson, who resumes his medical career as the head of a clinic dedicated to treating rare disorders. Watson's old life isn't done with him, though - Moriarty and Watson are set to write their own chapter of a story that has fascinated audiences for more than a century. Watson is a medical show with a strong investigative spine, featuring a modern version of one of history's greatest detectives as he turns his attention from solving crimes to solving medical mysteries.

Additional movie and television activity continues to percolate in many areas, nearly too many to mention. As some of those items come into focus, I’ll attempt to note specific developments as they become available.

Podcasts & Other

“The Jeremy Brett Sherlock Holmes Podcast”

Steve Schier alerted me to this podcast opportunity many of you may already be aware of. Devoted to revisiting and honoring what many consider to be the world's greatest portrayal of the world's greatest detective, it encompasses 50 episodes created from 2019 through 2025. Here’s the link:

<https://www.podbean.com/podcast-detail/qyfhk-829a5/The-Jeremy-Brett-Sherlock-Holmes-Podcast>

Please send details about any new podcasts or other Sherlockian items of interest and I’ll include the relevant information in the next Notice.

Norwegian Explorers Wikipedia Entry

Melissa Aho has bravely agreed to attempt to create a Norwegian Explorers Wikipedia entry, modeled on the format of the Baker Street Irregulars Wikipedia entry. With the help of Gary Thaden and Kerry McCartney, she has begun to make some progress. Stay tuned for a future link to the finished product.

Christmas Annuals

For the collecting completists, extra copies of most out-of-print Annuals are available for a small fee. Contact Phil Bergem at pgbergem@gmail.com if you want a copy.

Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections – Membership Opportunity

The University of Minnesota Libraries houses the world’s largest collection of Sherlock Holmes related materials and is supported by the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Many Explorers are already members of this organization which, along with the University Libraries and the Norwegian Explorers, hosts our triennial conferences and other events. If you’re not already a member, please consider joining to support its ongoing work of collecting, cataloging, and exhibiting the collection’s materials for the public and private researchers. A basic annual membership is only \$30. You can learn more and join at the following link: <https://www.lib.umn.edu/collections/special/holmes/become-friend-holmes>.

Lapel Pins

Please let Tom Gottwalt know if you wish to purchase one. **Cost is \$15** in person, \$20 if mailed.

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Baker Street Irregulars Email Updates Available Free

The BSI has suspended its News from the BSI emails and is NOT currently sending any news updates. However, you can still sign up on the BSI website and you will get messages in the future when the BSI reactivates News from the BSI via email. Until that time, you can always get news updates via RSS.

Request for News & Event Information

If you know of upcoming events, publications, or news of interest to Explorers please send it my way and I'll publish it in the next monthly Notice.

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Study Group Discussion Questions:

Mary Loving will lead the group in a discussion of two noncanonical stories by Arthur Conan Doyle: **“The Black Doctor”** and **“The Jew’s Breastplate”** via a Zoom gathering. See discussion questions below.

The Black Doctor

1. The secret or surprise twin is a common soap opera trope. Was Conan Doyle the first to use it in a mystery?
2. Why did Dr. Lana give up so easily after he received the letter from Ernest? He had established his career, was well regarded by his neighbors and patients, and was about to get married. Why did he feel he had no defense against whatever trouble his brother might cause?
3. According to Dr. Lana's testimony, Ernest brought on his own death through agitation to the point where his diseased heart gave out. The bruises were allegedly caused by Ernest getting into a fight earlier that day. Do we accept that as the truth or is it just a convenient explanation? After all, Lana had to escape to England due to his brother's horrible treatment of him. Ernest's appearance in England was upending Lana's peaceful life and plans. Would we think less of him had he decided to take matters into his own hands?
4. Lana testified he didn't think anyone would assume he had been murdered, despite the fact he had swapped clothes with dead Ernest. Isn't that a bit naive?
5. Although Ernest, by his death, still managed to create a scandal for Lana and put Arthur Morton in jeopardy, in the end Lana kept his reputation and his bride. Do we agree that is a fit ending to this tale?
6. Imagine this story had been written as part of the Holmesian Canon. Would this mystery have been a fit one for Holmes to investigate? How would we rearrange the plot if Arthur Morton had become Holmes' client?
7. Conan Doyle published this during his own hiatus between “The Final Problem” and “The Hound of the Baskervilles.” Do we think this might have been a story he originally planned for Holmes?

The Jew's Breastplate

1. How would an artifact with such religious importance as the ancient breastplate of the Jewish high priest end up in an English museum that is not the British Museum (other than the usual colonialist looting)?
2. With such valuable collections, why does the Belmore only have one night watchman who makes his rounds only once every three hours? The watchman said he made four rounds the night the breastplate was first tampered with. How long is his shift?
3. Mortimer and Jackson easily deduce the note warning about the security of the collection has the same handwriting as that of Professor Andreas. Why did Andreas not just sign the note instead of trying to be anonymous?
4. Instead of risking capture by taking the time to try to pry out the gemstones, why didn't the thief just take the whole plate? Surely the gold mounting is also valuable, and they could then pry out the stones in the privacy of their own space. Why did the thief give up, especially considering the watchman saw and heard nothing?

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5. How many times in movies have we seen someone use a hidden doorway disguised as a mummy case? Could it be this now cliched spooky entrance idea was invented by Conan Doyle?
6. From their hiding place over the museum's hall, Mortimer and Jackson watch in shock and outrage while Andreas desecrates the Jewish relic. After hearing Andreas' explanation, why didn't he just take them into his confidence in the first place?
7. Speaking of Andreas' explanation, why did he ever think it was a good idea to give his future son-in-law unescorted free access to such valuable collections? Was this a common behavior of museum curators at the time? Once he realized Wilson's true motives, why didn't Andreas involve the police? Or contact a consulting detective? Do we believe Wilson is truly repentant and redeemable?
8. Since Andreas had to restore the real stones to the damaged breastplate in stages why, after the first discovery of tampering, did the diamond expert not notice that only the first row of stones were genuine?
9. Speaking of consulting detectives, do you think this story would have made a good Holmes story? Playwright Edith Meiser seemed to think so as she wrote a 1934 radio-play titled, "The Jewish Breastplate," for which the manuscript is included as part of the papers she donated to the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota.

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