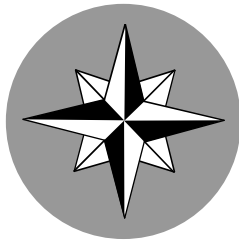




# EXPLORATIONS



## From the President



### Inside this issue:

Recent Meetings	2
Annual Dinner	3
Footprints of the Hound	4
Schedule of Events	5
Larry Millett	6
Birthday Weekend	7
Study Group	9
Pig's Eye Hound	12

2002 has started out well for the Norwegian Explorers. The birthday weekend in New York was a productive occasion for our society. I'd like to extend congratulations to three members of the Explorers who are part of the Class of 2002 of the Baker Street Irregulars; Dick Sveum ("Dr. Hill Barton"), Pat Accardo of Ossining, NY ("Gorgiano of the Red Circle"), and Robert Schultz of South Burlington, VT. ("The Gloria Scott"). Also, John Bergquist attended his first Baker Street Irregulars dinner.

With this issue of *Explorations*, we have a change in editors. I'd like to thank Lisa Horton for her years of service to the Norwegian Explorers in editing our newslet-



Norwegian Explorers President Julie McKuras at the dedication of Sherlock Holmes Walk in Toronto (see page 4).

ter. John Bergquist has taken over as editor and I know we all wish him well in his new venture.

Since our last issue of the newsletter, we have welcomed several new members. Gabe Bernsten, Barry Cosens and Bob Schultz are the newest Explorers. It was a pleasure to have our most senior Norwegian Explorer, Bryce Crawford, as well as our newest member,

Barry Cosens, join us at the Annual Dinner last December. Paul Martin, M.D., former President of the Explorers, gave an entertaining slide presentation and discussion at the dinner. Other events that evening were the presentation of the Sigerson Awards and the traditional toasts and quizzes (see page 3).

(Continued on page 2)

## WELCOME TO THE REDESIGNED EXPLORATIONS

We hope you like the new look of *Explorations*. Besides the updated appearance, we hope to add new features of interest while keeping up the features you have come to enjoy.

This first issue of 2002 reviews recent Explorer and Study Group happen-

ings and highlights events in the wider Sherlockian world attended by Explorers over the past several months.

I welcome your comments about the new format. Please let me know what you would like to see in future issues. ❖

**John Bergquist, Editor**

## RECENT EXPLORERS' MEETINGS

### SHERLOCKIAN JEOPARDY

Our February 25 meeting saw some stiff competition among the three teams participating in our second annual Sherlockian Jeopardy Marathon. Like the recent winter Olympics, timing was everything and only split seconds separated the teams from proposing the correct questions. We were fortunate to have Joe Eckrich from Fenton,



Doris Skalstad, Karen Murdock, John Bergquist and Gabe Berntsen gloat over their team's final score at Sherlockian Jeopardy.

MO here to participate. The Second Stain, consisting of Gabe Berntsen, John Bergquist, Karen Murdock and Doris Skalstad, took first place with a total of \$13,300. In second place were Phil Bergem, Paul Dieffenbach, Allen Mackler, Bruce Southworth and Gary Thaden, who chose The 5 Orange Pips as their team name.

Taking home the bronze medal were The

Speckled Band of Ruth Berman, Steve Bergquist, Mike Eckman and Joe Eckrich. Dick Sveum led the game with Tim Johnson (not a French judge) acting as the official timing registrar. Dick

also gave a brief presentation about the Baker Street Irregulars and the Buy-Laws, and the experience of receiving his shilling (*see page 7*). It was a good time for questions and answers about this most irregular organization. ❖

**Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI**

### AUTHOR LARRY MILLETT

On the blustery evening of October 25, the Norwegian Explorers were treated to a talk by Twin Cities author Larry Millett, who spoke of his fourth Holmes pastiche set in Minnesota: *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Alliance*. Larry revealed that he had first conceived the story as a vehicle solely for his saloon keeper *cum* detective Shadwell Rafferty, who figured prominently in the earlier Holmes pastiches. However, Larry's publisher, Viking, strongly recommended that Holmes be included in the latest offering, so Larry obliged by rewriting the story, interspersing scenes with Holmes

and Watson to good result. Steve Stilwell of Once Upon a Crime obligingly brought copies of the book for sale, which Larry obligingly signed for purchasers.

*(Some weeks after the Explorers' meeting Explorer Mike Eckman heard Larry speak again at a rather unusual venue. See Mike's report on page 6.)*

After Larry's talk, Allen Mackler played a tape he had made circa 1980 of the late Michael Harrison discussing "The Gaslight Era" in London. ❖ **JB**

### FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Our next meeting will be at 1 pm on April 27, 2002 at the Pavek Museum. A separate flyer will be sent to remind everyone of the Red-Throated League's presentation of "The Illustrious Client". This is an Edith Meiser script and should prove to be very entertaining. The

cast will work hard to transport us back to the Golden Age of radio and we will certainly be in a good setting at the Pavek. There is no charge for this event, and I hope to see many of you on April 27. ❖

**Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI**

Larry Millett's *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Alliance* was first conceived as a solo vehicle for Shadwell Rafferty.

## Explorers' Annual Dinner

Recent Annual Dinners of the Norwegian Explorers have been fun-filled evenings, and this past December 6 was no exception. Beginning at 6:30 PM, Explorers and guests assembled outside the meeting room in the Radisson Metrodome in Minneapolis, where Canonical toasts were offered to "The Woman," Mrs. Hudson, Mycroft, Dr. Watson, and Sherlock Holmes.

As 7:15 approached, and people moved into the main room and chose seats, they were pleased to find the clever programs created by Bob and Lucy Brusic, with appropriate quotations from *The Hound of the Baskervilles* for each event of the evening.

After Bob had led us in a Sherlockian blessing, diners feasted on a Country Buffet Dinner. After dinner, as people enjoyed their dessert and coffee, the evening's program began. Julie McKuras introduced Dr. Paul Martin, who delighted the audience with his presentation "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere." Paul showed the extensive, and sometimes strange, ways that Sherlockian imagery is used in children's' books, films, advertising and many other areas. The image of Holmes has become a cultural archetype.

In a more serious vein, John Bergquist paid tribute to three distinguished Explorers who had fallen from the ranks during the past year in "Here we stand upon the terrace...." In 2001 our scion lost Paul Parker and two of the original six founders of our scion: E.W. Ziebarth and Ray Shove. Fortunately, our lone surviving founder, Bryce Crawford, was very much with us, and John's toast to Bryce was followed by a standing ovation. Bryce responded by speaking to the group spontaneously and eloquently, stating the satisfaction he feels in having helped start something that not only has survived for more than 50 years, but that has thrived and improved.

After a very brief business meeting and re-election of officers, the interactive fun began. Dick Sveum presented a devilishly tricky quiz



on the *Hound* that had been prepared by the late master quizmaster John Bennett Shaw. As the groans died away, Bob Brusic presented the caption contest, with each table attempting to guess the actual caption to an illustration from the Canon and then making up a better one. As more groans died away, Garry Peterson and Michael Miller

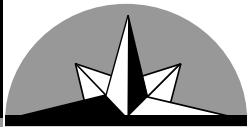
presented their third annual Completely Different Quiz, this time titled the "Loose Canon" Collateral Knowledge Quiz. The last round of groans were somewhat mollified by Garry handing out Victorian-era British coins to the winners.

Julie announced the following winners of the third annual Sigerson Awards:

- Essay – John Bergquist
- Story – Mike Eckman
- Review – Phil Swiggum

When the door prizes had been distributed, tired but happy Explorers made their way home, vowing to study the Canon before next year's dinner. ❖

John Bergquist



Paul Martin delighted the audience with his presentation "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere."

## FOOTPRINTS OF THE HOUND

The weekend of October 18 – 21, the Norwegian Explorers were ably represented at the Footprints of the Hound conference in Toronto. As a matter of fact, our delegation of Paul Martin, Allen Mackler, Julie McKuras, Dick Sveum, John and Inez Bergquist, Tim Johnson, Phil and Karen Bergem, Karen Murdock and Bob and Lucy Brusic was the largest group in attendance other than that from the host Bootmakers of Toronto! The conference was jointly sponsored by the Bootmakers, the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection, the Toronto Public Library and the Arthur Conan Doyle Society to celebrate the centenary of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection in the Toronto Reference Library.

The kickoff was the Thursday evening pre-conference special: A Cinematic Tribute to the Hound, featuring *The Celluloid Hound*, a nicely done collage of the countless movie and television versions of the Hound assembled by New York Sherlockians Paul Singleton and Maribeau Briggs. A screening of the 1939 Rathbone-Bruce *Hound* followed, with erudite commentary by Barbara Roden.

The conference proper opened on Friday morning at the Delta Chelsea hotel. Conference Chair Doug Wrigglesworth welcomed attendees and introduced Chris Redmond and Barbara Rusch, who entertained us with "Tracking the Hound of the Baskervilles for Fun and Profit." Les Klinger followed, speaking on the history of annotating the Canon. No other living Sherlockian knows more about this topic than Les, as he is in the midst of annotating the entire Canon, which is being published as the *Sherlock Holmes Reference Series*. Peter Calamai then related his adventures as a participant in the August Dartmoor odyssey, organized by Philip Weller.

After lunch came perhaps the most scholarly presentation of the conference: Richard Lancelyn Green on the "Origins of the



Hound." Those fortunate enough to have heard Richard speak at the Explorers' conference last summer know that no one is more eminently qualified to speak on the topic of how the *Hound* came to be. Richard examined the literary partnership between Conan Doyle and his friend Fletcher Robinson, concluding that although Robinson suggested the atmosphere and background for the tale, the finished product was entirely Doyle's own. A panel discussion moderated by

Cliff Goldfarb titled "Conan (Doyle) the Collaborator" featured Dick Sveum, Les Klinger and Susan Dahlinger discussing projects in which Doyle worked with another author. Dick spoke on Doyle's collaboration with his friend Grant Allen, in which Doyle finished works begun by Allen that Allen was too ill to complete. Dick prepared a pamphlet on his research that was included in the conference packet.

On Friday evening attendees journeyed to the Toronto Reference Library for a tribute to the late Cameron Hollyer, who was instrumental in building the ACD Collection at the Library. After the moving tribute to Cameron and the dedication of Sherlock Holmes Walk, a one-block street near the Library, came the formal opening of the *Footprints of the Hound* exhibition at the Library. The exhibition featured rare Sherlockian and Doylean books, manuscripts, posters and memorabilia, attractively displayed and annotated. Many items were lent by other institutions and private collectors, including four pages of the *Hound* manuscript brought by Tim Johnson from the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota. After touring the exhibition, attendees could take the elevator up to the ACD Collection, which is housed in a cozy, inviting room made for browsers. Although much smaller than our collection at the University, the Toronto collection is much more accessible. Books and other items cannot be checked out, but they are in plain view on the shelves, and

*(Continued on page 5)*



The delegation from the Norwegian Explorers was the largest group in attendance other than that from the host Bootmakers of Toronto.



"Although much smaller than our collection at the University, the Toronto collection is much more accessible."

## FOOTPRINTS OF THE HOUND (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 4)

anyone is free to use the volumes during hours the library is open. Saturday morning the focus of the conference shifted from Holmes to Doyle and Science Fiction, as Christopher and Barbara Roden spoke on *The Supernatural Fiction of ACD*. Roy Pilot and Doug Elliott followed with a scholarly presentation about the illustrations that Doyle himself helped prepare for *The Lost World*. The original illustrations are now in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library. After a short break, the Featured Speaker of the conference, Sir Christopher Frayling, took the podium and held attendees in his sway. Doyle had visited Dartmoor in the summer of 1901 to soak up atmosphere for what was to become the *Hound*, and Sir Christopher related how he had traced Doyle's footsteps almost a century later. The talk was enlivened with slides and video clips from Sir Christopher's *Nightmare – the Birth of Horror* as shown on the BBC and A&E. (Later, I was fortunate to share a table with Sir Christopher over lunch, and I found him to be a warm, delightful conversationalist. He pointed out that he was wearing the same suit that the BBC had provided him for the *Nightmare* series, and he was proud to say that it still fit!)

No presentations were scheduled for Saturday afternoon – the time was dedicated to "A Taste of Victorian Music Hall Entertainment" and a well-stocked Dealers' Room. Some Explorers, not content with the wares in the Dealers' Room, ventured out to browse through some of Toronto's many fine bookshops. Saturday night dinner was a formal banquet, with many attendees in Victorian dress. Martin Levin, Books Editor of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, was the featured speaker. A highlight was the naming of three new Master Bootmakers: Peter Blau, Warren Randall and Mike Whelan.

The conference wrapped up on Sunday with a brunch and auction. Peter Blau assumed the familiar role of auctioneer, as he



Norwegian Explorer Phil Bergem admires the exhibits in the ACD room at the Toronto Metropolitan Library.

took bids on rare items, with proceeds going to the ACD Collection. The final event, as it was at the Explorers conference last summer, was a performance of an Edith Meiser radio script, in this case her version of – what else – the *Hound*. Explorers had been instrumental to this event, as the script had been borrowed from the Minnesota Collections. ❖

**John Bergquist**

### Schedule of Events

- **April 20**—Sherlock Holmes Study Group discussion of "The Stockbroker's Clerk" at the University Club of Saint Paul. Meet at 2:00 in the library, at the top of the stairs on the second floor (British first floor). Watch for mailer containing details.
- **April 27**—The Red-Throated League's presentation of the Edith Meiser radio script "The Illustrious Client" at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park. Watch for mailer containing details.



## LARRY MILLETT AT LAKEWOOD CEMETERY

When Larry Millett told his coworkers at the St Paul Pioneer Press that he was going to speak at Lakewood Cemetery on January 30, 2002, they joked that his audience would probably be a bit older than usual. There was, however, a good mix of ages for the talk sponsored by the Linden Hills History Study Group. On the group's schedule of events, the talk was listed as featuring "Larry Millett author of *Lost Twin Cities* and historical Sherlock Holmes mysteries." Some would argue that all Sherlock Holmes mysteries are historical.

Since Lakewood is featured in Larry's *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Alliance*, the chapel at Lakewood was an appropriate site for the talk. Larry began by reading the section from the book that found Holmes and Watson in the cemetery looking for the Flour Mill Explosion Memorial. He did admit to adding a name to the memorial in his book, but did not reveal the name to the attendees.

Larry then brought the group back to the present with some observations on the increase in the amount and quality of local history being written. He offered that as we grow older we become more interested in our roots and less in our youthful desire to see the big picture. Also, local history is attractive as it is more understandable, immediate, and accessible. In his opinion, "The most interesting place in the world is the place where you grew up."

Writing about history helped Larry to write fiction. Larry thinks that good fiction is based on specifics. He stated that, "If fiction is based on a grand theory, it is usually awful." Even the non-fiction *Lost Twin Cities* is a sequence of stories about various building and places. Larry wanted to introduce Holmes and Watson to his world and so brought them to Minnesota.

That being said, however, Larry's next book, coming out in October, has Holmes and Watson in several places but not Minnesota. The *Disappearance of Sherlock Holmes* is "a great chase book," according to Larry. He did not say whether Holmes remains disappeared at the end of the book, but he does plan for the fol-

lowing books to feature Shadwell Rafferty, Larry's engaging St. Paul saloonkeeper/detective. "Maybe I should send Rafferty to London just to raise havoc," Larry joked.

The questions and answers after the talk covered a wide range of topics concerning writing and architecture. Larry said that in writing his books he allows the plot to prevail and he does not bend the story to take advantage of some favorite architectural landmarks. He starts with a basic idea, a set of characters, and five or six scenes. As he writes, he constructs other scenes that fit between the initial five or six and the book grows.

Larry's ability to write "historical Sherlock Holmes mysteries" is indicated by a story that he told. In *Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders*, there is a footnote about Rafferty's death in 1928 and his obituary in the newspaper. One reader complained to Larry that he had spent a morning in the library but "still could not find Shadwell Rafferty's obituary." The first Shadwellian? ❖

**Mike Eckman**



**Editor's note:** Mike has more than the typical Sherlockian's interest in the career of Larry Millett: The two attended high school together some thirty years ago. Mike recalls that Larry was a standout writer even then.



"Larry's next book has Holmes and Watson in several places, but not Minnesota."

## 2002 BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

This year I made my sixth trip to New York City for the Birthday Weekend. Each year I have more fun because of all the Sherlockians that I have met and can call friends. This most recent trip turned out to be a special one for me because at the BSI Annual Dinner I made "The Birthday Honours List" and received an irregular shilling and investiture into the Baker Street Irregulars.

The 2002 Weekend followed the pattern of those in previous years. For early birds, the activities start on Wednesday night with the ASH (Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes) Dinner. The ASH Wednesday Dinners actually are the first Wednesday of every month and open to anyone who happens to be in New York City. It is a new tradition for ASH to start and end the weekend with the Wednesday Dinner and the Sunday Brunch.

Thursday morning is the Christopher Morley Walk. This is a guided tour that starts at the Algonquin Hotel at 59 W. 44<sup>th</sup> Street and ends at McSorley's Old Ale House at 15 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Along the way stops are made at all the important Morley sites. Norwegian Explorer Allen Mackler and John Farrell led many past walks. This year it was led by Jim Cox, who published a booklet to commemorate the walk: *Morley in Manhattan 2002*.

Thursday evening is reserved for the BSI Distinguished Speaker at the Williams Club. This year's speaker – the sixth in a series – was BBC radio scriptwriter Bert Coules. The lecture is a ticketed event, and the 6<sup>th</sup> floor lecture room is always crowded and buzzing with Sherlockians greeting each other. As ex-

pected under the circumstances, the head of the BSI, Michael Whelan ("Wiggins"), had trouble



"A beard! A beard! The man has a beard!" — Sherlock Holmes in HOUN

Bearded Norwegian Explorers Dick Sveum, Bruce Southworth, Tim Johnson and John Bergquist at the 2002 Baker Street Irregulars Dinner in New York City, shortly after Dick had received his investiture in the BSI as Dr. Hill Barton.

getting everyone's attention to quiet down, but eventually he was able to introduce the speaker. Mr. Coules discussed his work with the BBC on a nine-year project covering the entire Canon with the same two actors. He reported on his current work of five new "Further Adventures." (See <http://www.bertcoules.co.uk/further.htm>.)

Friday is the big day, with much feasting on the agenda. The first meal is the informal Martha Hudson Breakfast in the Oak Room of the Algonquin Hotel. Sherlockians come and go, serving themselves from a continental buffet after securing a place at one of the small tables. Many drift from table to table to chat. The more substantial noon meal is the William Gillette Memorial Luncheon at Moran's Chelsea Seafood Restaurant at 146 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. This year's Gillette Luncheon was the 49<sup>th</sup>, a tradition originally begun by Clifton Andrew to give out-of-town scion society members a chance to meet and greet each other. Susan Rice has been in charge for the last several years, and she makes sure everyone is welcomed

(Continued on page 8)



"Each year I have more fun because of all the Sherlockians that I have met and can call friends."

## 2002 BIRTHDAY WEEKEND (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 7)*

and given a name tag. After a half hour or so of milling and thronging diners sit at an assigned table to meet new friends. After luncheon comes the entertainment. This year, Susan Dahlinger read a short piece about the set change in William Gillette's play Sherlock Holmes. Andrew Joffe and Paul Singleton did a skit as James Lipton and Sherlock Holmes "Inside the Actors Studio." John Bergquist took some good natured ribbing from Susan Rice and Paul, who claimed that John bears a striking resemblance to James Lipton.

On Friday night, diners attend either the invitation-only BSI Annual Dinner or the open-to-all Baskerville Bash. The Bash is a high-energy fun filled evening at the Manhattan Club. The BSI Annual Dinner is more formal and is held at the Union League Club at 38 E. 37<sup>th</sup> St. The BSI has a long tradition of starting the evening's festivities with a toast to "The Woman" at a cocktail party in the library, then sending her off to eat with other former honorees at a different restaurant, a holdover from the days when the BSI was an all male institution. The actual program at the dinner follows the same format every year. Opening remarks by "Wiggins," then many speakers in three areas: Rules (Constitution and Buy-Laws), Toasts (to Mrs. Hudson, Mycroft, Watson's Second Wife, an Old Irregular and Sherlock Holmes) and Rituals (the Musgrave Ritual). This year instead of one Speaker Irregulars and guests heard four short talks from international Irregulars. The music (sing along) always includes Aunt Clara, and this year was no exception. Bruce Montgomery and Henry Boote brought the crowd to their feet with a patriotic medley. Remembrances (also known as "Stand with me here upon the terrace...", this year paying tribute to the departed Wayne Swift and Poul Anderson) are always moving, then The Birthday Honours List is read, this year adding an amazing ten new members to the rolls of the BSI. The dinner ended as always with a reading of Vincent Starrett's sonnet "221 B." After both dinners were over, many Sherlockians gathered in

the lobby of the Algonquin, where the tradition is to stay up socializing until 2:21 AM.

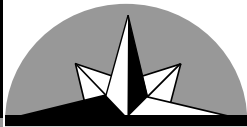
Saturday morning features the Dealer's Room at the Algonquin, where I always manage to spend a lot of money. The BSI Cocktail Reception on Saturday afternoon is held at The National Arts Club at 15 Gramercy Park South. The reception is open to all Sherlockians and features great food and drink followed by a program. Peter Blau conducts an auction to raise money for the John H. Watson Fund, which offers financial assistance to Sherlockians who otherwise might not be able to participate in the weekend festivities.

Sunday there was the second annual brunch at the Baker Street Restaurant, at 1152 First Ave., sponsored by ASH. This is the place where old and new friends reluctantly say goodbye until next year.

Five full days plus travel can be tiring, but the excitement level is high. Of course New York has many other attractions for Sherlockians, my favorites being bookstores (especially Otto Penzler's Mysterious Bookshop) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



**Richard J. Sveum, M.D., BSI**



"The BSI Annual dinner always ends with a reading of Vincent Starrett's sonnet '221 B.'"



# SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP



The Study Group is on its second round through the Canon.

**The Crown Diamond**  
 On October 27th, 2001, the Sherlock Holmes Study Group reviewed two Sir Arthur Conan Doyle works: *The Crown Diamond*, a one-act play, and "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone," a short story. About ten people attended the meeting at the Ridgedale Library. Many thanks would be in order to Jamie Hubbs for organizing the meeting and leading the discussion, as he has for many years. This gathering was notable for featuring a dramatic reading of *The Crown Diamond*, ably performed by volunteers from the Study Group.

Both of the October works are versions of the same story. They involved the disappearance of a large diamond and our favorite detective's efforts in locating and retrieving the stone. The manuscripts are nearly identical. The short story has a second "scene" in which Holmes plays a joke at the expense of a bewildered Lord Cantlemere. Then Holmes celebrates by eating, for the first time in days. The play employs a visual device, a lighted alarm and a lowering of the house lights, which the short story does not mention. A lifelike wax figure of Sherlock Holmes is central to both works. The play's villain is given the name of Colonel Sebastian Moran, but his name is Count Negretto Sylvius in the short story. Of note is the maker of the villain's air gun in both works: "old" Straubenzee. An air gun is also mentioned in another short story, "The Adventure of the Empty House." A Von Herder, "the blind German mechanic," constructed that weapon for Colonel Moran, who also is the villain of that story. This leads many critics to the conclusion that *The Crown Diamond* was actually an early version of the later, "Empty House" story. We do not really know which was created first.



The Study Group resumed monthly meetings in January after a hiatus for the Holidays.

The character of Billy was mentioned first in a William Gillette play, of 1899; he was not created by Conan Doyle. *The Crown Diamond* play was performed in 1921 and disappeared until the manuscript was discovered in a hatbox in 1942. We all liked the term "peached" which described what Ikey Cohen did. The appearance of a gramophone provoked a discussion of the "waxed cylinder" and the "disk" used by some devices. It was noted that these stories were

not narrated, as they usually are, by our friend Dr. Watson. The "Mazarin Diamond," the stone itself, was the subject of the group's scrutiny. *The Crown Diamond* refers to a 77 carat, yellow diamond. The "Mazarin Diamond," mentioned in the short story, is a real stone and is said to be of 55 carats. Some interesting research can be had by searching for references to "Mazarin + diamond" on the Web. Numerous conflicting descriptions abound – are there several yellow "Mazarin" diamonds? At any rate, we have in these works two slightly different versions of one story. They may not be Conan Doyle's greatest works, but we enjoyed them just the same.

**Charles Clifford**



**The Copper Beeches**

On November 17th, 2001, the Sherlock Holmes Study Group met to discuss "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches." This was the twelfth and final short story in the collection *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. It appeared in the *Strand* magazine in June of 1892. Jamie Hubbs introduced the story and started the discussion.

In the opening scene, Sherlock

*(Continued on page 10)*



This year, the Study Group is being led by three different Explorers in rotation.

## SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 9)*

Holmes gently criticizes Dr. Watson's previous literary efforts. He commends Watson for his choice of cases but admonishes him for "attempting to put colour and life into each of your statements, instead of confining yourself to the task of placing upon record that severe reasoning from cause to effect which is really the only notable feature about the thing." Many of us would disagree with Mr. Holmes on this, for we do appreciate the "colour and life" in Watson's tales. Holmes's criticism does give us much insight into his character. We begin to understand what he finds meaningful in his work. Holmes goes on to express boredom with the triviality of that work, then proceeds to accept a case that appears to be very trivial but ends up being somewhat complicated.

The client here is named Violet, a common name in the Holmes adventures. Our detective finds her quite interesting, it seems, but it turns out that he is merely interested in her "problem." Alas, another promising young lady who was not meant to pair up with Holmes. Possibly worth noting is that two of the story's most important characters, Miss Alice Rucastle and Mr. Fowler, are never actually met and never say a word. They are described and then disappear. The author was very efficient in introducing them. A huge, starving mastiff is encountered. Because Watson is compelled to shoot a savage hound that rips out the throats of its victims in another famous story, the group wondered what event in the life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle might have inspired him to cast animal creatures in such unfavorable light. As usual, the group pointed out some inconsistencies and errors in the story, but again they do not get in the way of an enjoyable tale.

Copper colored beech trees may not be very common here in the States. Apparently, the leaves of a British beech turn a copper color. Colors appear quite often in the titles of Sherlock Holmes stories, and they are possibly the stories that come to mind first. Is there a correlation? It was mentioned that the names of characters in many of the adventures were

taken from publications dealing with the sport of cricket. Maybe Violet was a popular name in the Victorian era.

This was a story almost completely lacking in deductive tools. Mr. Holmes failed to solve the problem entirely in his mind, prior to the final confrontation, but even his great mind did need data. "Data! data! data!" and also, "I can't make bricks without clay!" he exclaimed. The Holmesian brain, the ultimate processing machine, shares this problem with today's computers.

At this meeting, the "torch" was passed from Jamie Hubbs, who has hosted these discussions since 1992, to a committee consisting of John Bergquist, Phil Bergem, and Karen Murdock. The next meeting will be in January, when John will lead the discussion of "Silver Blaze."

### Charles Clifford



### Silver Blaze

After a hiatus for the holidays (Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year's, the Master's birthday), the Sherlock Holmes Study Group resumed its monthly meetings beginning January 26. Moving into *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, John Bergquist led the discussion of one of the best-loved tales in the Canon: "Silver Blaze." As an introduction, John reviewed the publication history and probable chronology. Most chronologists agree that the tale took place in Autumn of an unnamed year, most likely 1888, 1889, or 1890.

The tale shows Holmes in a generous mood, admitting his own fallibility, e.g. "I made a blunder, my dear Watson – which is, I am afraid, a more common occurrence than anyone would think who only knew me through your memoirs." Holmes gives Watson credit as a valuable assistant, e.g. "Excellent, Watson, excellent!" The Master even praises Inspector Gregory, a member of the official police force, e.g. "My dear Gregory, you anticipate all my

*(Continued on page 11)*

## SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 10)  
wants.”

The group agreed that Holmes’s calculation of the speed of the train to Exeter by counting the telegraph posts upon the line was not “a simple one” as he claimed. The group also agreed that “Silver Blaze” deserves a place among the best tales in the Canon, even though Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had omitted it from his list of the twelve best Holmes stories. (Our own E.W. McDiarmid and Pj Doyle corrected this injustice by including the story in their *A Baker Street Dozen* in 1987.) Sir Arthur apparently devalued the tale because a critic from a sporting paper had pointed out several factual errors regarding horse racing. In *Memories and Adventures*, ACD wrote that the critic had “explained the penalties that would have come upon anyone concerned if they had acted as I described. Half would have been in jail and the other half warned off the Turf for life. However, *I have never been nervous about details, and one must be masterful sometimes.*” (Emphasis mine.) The propriety of Holmes betting on the race while withholding inside information from his client was discussed, with most agreeing that the Master did not commit a serious breach of ethics. Indeed, if ACD had been more nervous about details, what would we Sherlockians have been able to study, dissect and quibble about for the last 70 years? ❖ **JB**



### The Cardboard Box

On February 16th, the Sherlock Holmes Study Group met at the St. Anthony Park Library, to discuss “The Adventure of the Cardboard Box.” About fifteen Holmes enthusiasts attended the meeting. The balmy weather outside may have been responsible for the fine turnout. Phil Bergem introduced the story and got the discussion started.

This month’s story first appeared in the *Strand*, in February of 1893. It should then have been included in early publications of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. Instead, Arthur Conan Doyle chose to remove “The Cardboard

Box” from that collection, purportedly feeling that it was “too violent” or “too sensational” for the times. The discussion touched on just why Conan Doyle may have felt that way. Most likely he had second thoughts about the frank suggestion of adultery and the harsh punishment meted out by the cuckolded husband. Or, he might have been sensitive to the moral issues concerning the medical use of cadavers. Doyle may also have been self-conscious or family-conscious about his father’s alcoholism and the portrayal of an alcoholic murderer in the story.

The story begins at Baker Street. Dr. Watson was apparently living there at the time, but we had trouble with that fact, based on popularly accepted timelines. Holmes observes Dr. Watson as he goes through a “private” thought process. Holmes breaks in, mid-thought. “‘You are right, Watson,’ said he. ‘It does seem like a preposterous way of settling a dispute.’” The dispute he referred to was America’s Civil War. Watson is very impressed. We thought that Holmes was both “showing off” his talents, and having a bit of fun at Watson’s expense. This “mind-reading” episode appears almost word-for-word, in some book editions of a later-published story, “The Resident Patient.” John Bergquist explained that apparently the sequence was deemed too good to not appear in print, so it was re-used in “The Resident Patient” when that tale was anthologized in the *Memoirs*. “The Cardboard Box” was later included in the anthology *His Last Bow*, with the mind-reading sequence intact, resulting in two tales containing the same sequence.

It was also noted that in this story’s Sidney Paget illustrations Holmes is pictured with a straw hat. The hunting cap from a previous story stayed in our memories, but the straw hat did not. It was revealed in this story that Sherlock Holmes had possessed a Stradivarius violin. We digressed into a discussion of violins and Stradivarius “fakes.” Holmes seems to have taken advantage of the particular pawn broker who sold it to him. One of our leading Norwegian Explorers felt that the violin was much bet-

(Continued on page 12)



“If ACD had been more nervous about details, what would we Sherlockians have been able to study, dissect and quibble about for the last 70 years?”

## SHERLOCK HOLMES STUDY GROUP (CONTINUED)


(Continued from page 11)

ter off in the hands of Mr. Holmes than collecting dust in some pawn shop. We accepted her explanation of our hero's motives.

Mention is probably necessary of the peculiar "sensationalism" referred to earlier. By today's standards, an "in detail" description of two severed ears is not very shocking. In Victorian times, this was not the case. We were forgiving of Dr. Watson for his use of such sensational details and thankful for an enjoyable story. At the end Holmes asks "What is the meaning of it Watson?" He goes on, "What object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an answer as ever." These comments seem more relevant than ever, today. If ever we doubted Holmes' humanity, these statements prove that he was one of us.

Next month's story is "The Adventure of the Yellow Face." ❖

**Charles Clifford**



"If ever we doubted Holmes' humanity, these statements prove that he was one of us."

## PIG'S EYE HOUND

On November 8, a curious group of Norwegian Explorers was treated to a special preview of the Pig's Eye Theatre's production of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The performance was at the Phoenix Theatre, located in the Union Depot in St. Paul. The production, adapted by Randall J. Funk, was surprisingly true to the Canon. Mr. Funk states in the program, "I have been a Holmes fan for many years. I have had few ambitions stronger than the desire to bring a Holmes story to the stage. ... Whether you are an avowed 'Sherlockian,' a relative novice or somewhere in between, I hope you will share the joy and passion these characters and this story brings to so many."

While obviously a shoestring operation, the production managed to convey a sense of substance, with appropriate costumes and lighting and spare, yet effective props. Among the cast, Jeff Altier as Watson and Jared Reise as Stapleton were particularly effective. John Lilleberg as Holmes was a bit "Brettish" for my taste, but if Jeremy Brett is one's image of Holmes, then Lilleberg is your man. As a matter of fact, Funk's program contains the following dedication: "To Jeremy Brett: the whole reason this Sherlock Holmes thing seemed intriguing." ❖

**John Bergquist**



The Norwegian Explorers  
Suite 111  
Elmer L. Andersen Library  
University of Minnesota  
222 21st Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

**John Bergquist**  
**Editor, Explorations**  
3665 Ashbury Road  
Eagan, MN 55122  
Phone: 651-688-6970  
Fax: 651-905-9536  
Email: bergq003@tc.umn.edu

**"You may have  
read of the  
remarkable  
explorations  
of a Norwegian  
named  
Sigerson, but  
I am sure it  
never  
occurred to  
you that you  
were receiving  
news of your  
friend."**