**The Norbury Chronicle**

**newsletter of the Holmesian Studies SIG of American Mensa**

**since '88, Baker Street Irregulars scion since '95**

"Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed." (Mark 4:22)

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The Code

Michael Halm,

So far I have received one copy of the *Norbury Chronicle* No. 13, dated Fall 1993. has the SIG died or am I just being neglected?

Sincerely,

Bill Lumsden

P. S. In your article on "The Clue of the Dusty Hat", you have a number of parenthetical references, such as, "(FINA 1C)" What is the code?

[No, the SIG has not died. We hope that it never does. We started it up again because the previous Sherlock Holmes SIG temporarily lapsed because of lack of interest. It's good that you showed enough interest to write, to ask questions. Thanks.

It seems we could use help getting this newsletter out more frequently. It's not a matter of a lack of material, but our time seems to be more taken up with other things this year, so much that a day free to do the newsletter hasn't made itself available. We will try to discipline ourselves to work on the Chronicle during those times here and there when we do have time.

*Signet* suggested that smaller, more frequent newsletters might be preferable to larger less frequent ones. What do you, subscribers, feel? We feel that to get your money's worth considering the soon-to-be-increase-again postage, we oughtn't decrease the size. We suggest you request back issue reprints.

Now for your second question, Bill. The "code" is an abbreviation system used for the Canon (that's the complete Sherlock Holmes stories originally put out by Arthur Conan Doyle, analogously to the abbreviations used for quoting the Bible.)

Most of the stories are abbreviated simply as the first four letters of the title (neglecting "the" and "the adventure" or "the case of", the first identifying word). The exceptions would be CHAS for "Charles Augustus Milverton", ENGR for "Engineer's Thumb". The three stories beginning with "three" are abbreviated to a "3" and a three-letter abbreviation: 3GAB for "Three Gables", 3GAR for "Three Garridebs" and 3STU for "Three Students".

We propose to extend this system to the deuterocanonical books written by Adrian Conan Doyle, *The Exploits of Sherlock Holmes* and *More Exploits of Sherlock Holmes*. (We have the first and are seeking the second yet.)

They would go: SEVE (The Adventure of the Seven Clocks), HUNT (...the Gold Hunter, since GOLD is already taken by the Golden Pincenez), WAXG (the Wax Gamblers), HIGH (the Highgate Miracle), BARO (the Black Baron), SEAL (the Sealed Room), FOUL (Foulkes Rath), ABBA (the Abbas Ruby), DARK (the Dark Angels), 2WOM (the Two Women), DEPT (the Deptford Horror), and REDW (the Red Widow).

The number following the storey abbreviation indicates the paragraph and the letter after the colon the sentence, rather like the Bible's chapter and verse.

SEVE 15-16, for example, gives us:

"Where is crime, Watson? Where is the weird, outré without which a problem in itself is as sand and dry grass? Have we lost them forever?"

"Hark!" said I. "Surely that was the bell?"

And so the adventure of the seven clocks begins.]

Letters

There has been great speculation over the years of the existence of descendants of the most famous fictional [sic] character, Sherlock Holmes. Evidence concerning the matter has surfaced from a most unlikely source, the world of science fiction.

Within the movie, "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country", following the Klingon trial of Capt. Kirk, Mr. Spock informs the crew of the Enterprise that "an ancestor of mine maintained that if you eliminate the impossible, however improbable, must be the truth." Even the most novice of the Baker Street Irregulars fraternity would recognize the origin of this quote as Chapter 6 of The Sign of the Four [Ed.: That's SIGN 6:17:B to use the code.] and therefore, Spock's ancestor was the beloved Sherlock Holmes.

Is there any logic to this relationship? Perhaps, because Spock's mother, Amanda, was so steeped in a family tradition of logical thinking, she was able to cope with the logic of her Vulcan husband, Sarek, and perhaps it was Amanda's grasp of logical thinking that first attracted Sarek.

Now that the relationship has been established, there remains one question, "Why?" A quick check of the credits for ST:VI:TUC reveals the obvious answer. Director of the movie, and also the director of "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan", is Nicholas Meyer, best known to Holmes aficionados as the author of The Seven Percent Solution and other contemporary Holmes novels. Having worked intimately with both Spock and Holmes, tow of the most well known fictional [and rational] characters of all time, it must have seemed logical to Meyer to establish the relationship.

And so we have another topic for argument and discussion for both the Baker Street Irregulars and the Trekkers. It promises to be a source of great speculation. I look forward to seeing the ultimate product of these interactions, the generation to generation genealogy which links the two fictional [sic] heroes.

John M. Boblick

[Our own theory of Sherlock Holmes' descendants differs from that portrayed in The Seven Percent Solution. In Chronicle 7, page 3, we address the question of "nero Wolfe" being Holmes' son by "Irene Adler".

Considering Holmes' reference to Mycroft and he sharing a grandmother (GREE 4:C) asnd "Irene's" reference to Holmes as an esquire (SCAN 3:27:E), we hypothesized that they were cousins and foster brothers, not blood brothers. In any case, it's well known that "Nero Wolfe" couldn't have fathered any descendants, which ever Vernet grandson was his father.

The best alternative, it seems to us, is the mysterious "Vittoria" (SUSS 6:G), "V. R." (MUSG 1:E), whom we identify with the equally mysterious Florence (EMPT 33:G), sister of Violet Hunter, (COPP 20, 205:E) of the Scandinavian royal family (NOBL 48), yet one of the flying Ricolettis (MUSC 1:E, 6:C) of the Wombwell Circus (VEIL 28:D).

If, however, as is said in "The Adventure of the Extraterrestrial" by Mack Reynolds, Holmes was paid for services rendered to services rendered to extraterrestrials with the *elixir vita* and shared it with Watson in 1925, as is said, in *Time for Sherlock Holmes* by David Dvorkin, the Star Trek novel *Time Trap* and *The Trellisane Confrontation* author, he had many opportunities.

Dvorkin's sketchy future chronology of Holmes' and Watson's adventures continues only to the attempted assassination of Mees IV of Europa AD 2170, sometime before Sybok, Spock's brother, and Amanda Stemple Grayson were born, c. AD 2180, about nine generations to argue and discuss.]

From Tom Rieschick (179 Gold Kettel Dr., Gaithersburg, MD 20878) we have his offer of "Mysterious Prints", which are his original drawings of Holmes (Rathbone and Brett), Sir Arthur and Hercule Poirot at $10 each.

Tom also notes he's a member of the Red Circle of Washington, DC, and Watson's Tin Box of Ellicott City, MD. He also does commissions on any subject preferably from photographs. "I hope you enjoy these prints and would very much like to hear from you or any members of your group," he writes.

From Thomas L. Stix, Jr., we hear of the Watson Fund, a fund donated to by Holmesians to help those who may need assistance in getting to the annual celebration of Holmes' birthday in New York City. (next year the celebrating starts Jan. 5) All contributions should be sent to Tom's address (34 Pierson Ave., Norwood, NJ 07648) and made out to "John H. Watson, M. D."

He also informs us of the Sherlockian cruise next June out of Ft. Lauderdale. lately Tom says the BSI [That's the Baker Street Irregulars.] are updating their list of scions. W will therefore request recognition as such.

Prof. Moriarty

We see that Bradley E. Schaefe has noted the similarities between Prof. Moriarty and Simon Newcomb (1835-1909), American astronomer who helped determine the speed of light, wrote popular works on astronomy and led a secret life.

Porlock's Puzzles

We came across an interesting code in a story by Isaac Asimov recently. In the Union Club Mystery "Cloak and Dagger Duel" a code using "i" and "t" for the "dot" and "dash" of Morse code was interesting, but rather simple. A more interesting one would use more letters of the alphabet, such as, j, e, f, z and even capitals (A, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, T, Z) and punctuation (. ; : ! and ?) F, I and Z would represent double dashes and E a triple dash (i. e., the old symbol for "O"). The double-dash by itself represents "M". "Mike Halm" would then be:

-- .... .- .-.. -- or with nulls "Foxy jipijapa jerkin in a zoo"

The original code's use of actual words makes the text look like it's from a codebook rather than a cipher. The encoder may need a dictionary to find a suitable word, but the decoder does not, sort of, the best of the code and the cipher.

Rats

We came across an article about a giant rat, not in Sumatra, but in Abbeville, France, said to have been nearly a meter long and close to 7 kgs in weight. veterinarian Gérard Delabie killed it with a lethal injection. Also in the same issue, *Onmi* Nov. '91, was another article about giant rat raising in Zaire, cane cutter rats the size of cats, *nkumbi*.

Jeff Jackson, Univ. of Georgia, responded with "Never!", just the sort of reaction Dr. Watson had to deal with, after all it's not as if he were writing fiction. He just changed the names to protect the innocent.

New and Improved Bibliography

From Ronald de Waal we hear of his 3-volume, 1500-page The Universal Sherlock Holmes. They can be ordered from George A. Vanderburgh, P. O. Box 204, Shelburgh, ON L0N 1S0, Canada. It's published by the Metropolitan Reference Library and should be a whortwhile reference in any Holmesian's library, any who can afford the $100-$150 price. Perhaps you could petetion your local library to order one, eh?