 **The Norbury Chronicle**

 **e-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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**Sig News**

**Jim Farino**, **Melissa Cheponis, Alison Carter** and **James MacWhyte** have joined the SIG. Welcome!

**T**he solution to "After 'Sweeney Todd'" puzzle from last issue was "What else would an actor and a doctor have, the cured ham."

**Activity on the Facebook Page**

**Tyler Zahnke**: Hello, this is Tyler! I only read one book in the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle series, The Sign of the Four, back in 2010. I do have a DVD containing some of the old Holmes films (I think there was one called "The Laughing Mummy" or something like that), and I occasionally see the shows "Sherlock" and "Elementary". I love reading Holmesian fanfics, so I started reading the *Norbury Chronicle* on Michael Joseph Halm's website. So, that's my Holmes story.

**Michael Joseph Halm**: Aah, yes, the ["Sherlock Holmes" The Case of the Laughing Mummy (TV Episode 1955)](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0699424/?ref_=ttep_ep6) Ronald Howard and Howard Marion-Crawford make an entertaining pair, even better than perhaps than Basil and Nigel. The interplay between Holmes and Watson is as important as the mystery.

**Sandy Marshall**: Hi Tyler - Are you new to this group/SIG? I also enjoy the TV shows "Sherlock" (why oh why do they only do 3 shows per season????) and "Elementary", and like how they have such a different tone/perspective.

**Tyler**: Yes, I'm new. I'm not even sure about this group. I know Michael Joseph Halm accepted me, but I'm not a Mensa member. I never said I was either. But I am a Holmes fan.

**Sandy**: Glad to meet you!

**Tyler:** So, do we solve mysteries using Holmes-style deduction skills here or do we just write fan fiction about Holmes and Watson?

**Jim Farino**: Greetings Everyone and thank you for including me in your most excellent SIG! My Father instilled the love of SH in me as a boy, but, inexcusably, I have neglected my Holmesian studies for many years. Today, I vow to start rereading the canon from "Study in Scarlet" and intend finishing before Christmas. I look forward to meeting you all and if anyone lives in the Old Bridge, NJ area or is planning on attending an RG in the near future, let me know. I'm buying the first round. Cheers! Hmm… I don't know if I have one favorite. I do like origin/beginning stories, so "Study in Scarlet" might be my favorite, if I was pressed to choose just one. As I read through, I'll keep that in mind. I kept notes on the stories from things my Father told me, IIRC. I'm going to try to dig that old text out of my family's attic one day soon. How about you, Sandy? Also, very nice to meet you!

**Sandy**: Jim - I have tried to read some of the stories (have them all on my Kindle) but I find them quite hard to follow. So I mostly watch the TV shows, and of course am a HUGE fan of the BBC "Sherlock". (It was quite strange to watch Martin Freeman in "Fargo"!

**Jim**: Oh, OK. I haven't really watched too many of the modern Holmes shows/movies. My Father and I did enjoy the BBC series with Jeremy Brett. I'm definitely more of a reader than TV/movie watcher. When I finish my reread of the Canon project, I'll be sure to check out some of those shows you mentioned. Thanks for the info!

**Sandy**: The one worth watching is the BBC "Sherlock". They've had 3 seasons, with only 3 episodes each, so it would be quick to go through. They do an AMAZING job, both story-writing and acting. I've seen an interview with the producers (Steve Moffat who does Dr Who, and the guy who plays Sherlock's brother) and it is clear they have a life-long love of Holmes, and are very true to the original stories. Start with the first episode "A Study in Pink"!

**Mike**: I'm an omnivorous Holmesian and read and/or watch every Holmesian adaptation I can. I too am more of a reader than a watcher, probably because my own imaginings are better than someone else's.

**S**IG member Steve Emecz was at the Guinness Worlds Record attempt for the Undershaw Presevation Trust, on Benedict Cumberbatch's birthday, where 113 people dressed up as Sherlock Holmes with dozens of the world’s press covering the event.

**S**upporters of the day included Sherlockian actors Mark Gatiss, Stephen Fry and Louise Brealey who all donated raffle prizes. Steve read out a statement from Mark Gatiss on the day - Mark is the patron of the Undershaw Preservation Trust.

**M**ark said: “Saving Undershaw has been a three pipe problem but we solved it! Huge thanks to everyone who’s worked so hard to preserve Conan Doyle’s legacy & splendid home. Good luck today. If you look closely you might see Benedict Cumberbatch under one of those deerstalkers or maybe Norris Macwhirter!”

**More Punishments**

**"De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum"** ["There Is No Disputing Taste"] by Robert C. Burr: "The natives got a taste of religion."

**"Death at the Playboy Mansion"** by Tracy Jean Revels, Tracy: "Only Hugh can prevent florist friars."

**"Death in the Afternoon"** by David Galerstein: matador's death "The bull got a hole in Juan."

**"Determination"** by Robert C. Burr: "Leave no tern unstoned."

**"Ding Dong Bell, Watson's in the Well"** by Edward B. Bagley: "[Treat the sick] and leave the well alone."

**"Dinner at Simpson's"** by Robert C. Burr: "[I'm] not one for splitting hares."

**"Don't Be Chicken, Watson"** by Robert C. Burr: "Be brave and bite the pullet."

**"Eggs Benedict"** by James Taggert: "There's no plate like chrome for the hollandaise!"

**"Elixir Vitae Leporidae"** by Robert C. Burr: "[He used] hare restorer."

**"Esmerelda's Revenge"** by Sandy Kozinn: "It's an element tree, my dear Watson."

**"Forbidden Chemistry"** by Robert C. Burr: "He who acetates is lost."

**"Gee!, an Honest Lawyer!"** by David R. McCallister: "Brittania does not waive the rules."

**"Geometry by Moriarty"** by Alan C. Olding: "[They are] the sons of the squaws of the other two hides."

**"Good Girl… Bad Knee"** by Robert C. Burr: "What's a joint like this doing in a nice girl like you."

**"Good Neighbor Policy"** by Philip K. Jones: "[There's] no plaice like Holmes' for the Hollidays."

**The Missing Mallards Mystery**

**H**olmes and Watson stood by observing as Samdup Milas's men brought in the last of Grimeby Roylott's menagerie for return to the Bombay Zoo. The cheetah lumbered along pulled by a single handler, while the wild baboon was carried with some difficulty by four. Milas checked them off of the list as they were caged.

"**T**hat only leaves some of the birds unaccounted for, the *Anas platyrhynchos*, I believe," Holmes commented.

"Uh, yes, the mallards," Milas agreed double checking his list.

"I say I suppose they 'flew the coop', hey, what?" I added, but neither of my companions seemed to appreciate by little jest.

"I wouldn't think so, Watson, none of the other birds are missing. I believe the resolution the 'mystery' here lies in the duck-filled fatty puss."

**New and Old Annotated Sherlock Holmes**

**M**elissa Cheponis wrote: "I am so happy I found this group!!! When I was a kid my dad read tons of Sherlock Holmes to me. I absolutely love him (Sherlock .... and my dad :P). Have any of you checked this out? [*The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*](http://www.amazon.com/The-New-Annotated-Sherlock-Holmes/dp/0393059162) It is one of my favorites!"

**C**omparing my old edition to the new one's EMPT sample on-line, we see that Philip Welker has plausibly identified "Lord Balmoral" as the Prince of Wales, involved in the similar 1890 Baccarat scandal in which William Gordon-Cumming was banned.

**N**oah André Trudeau makes the intriguing suggestion in "The Second Most Dangerous Man in London -- Dangerous to Whom" that Moran intentionally shot at Moriarty and not Holmes, while Ian McQueen identifies Moran as the usurper "Col. James". Did Holmes go to Tibet to lure Moran there and away from London or did he have to flee after having been tracked down to Florence? [We now are investigating the possibility of this Florence being Florence, Alabama, particularly East Florence, which was experiencing an industrial boom of the 1880s and 1890s.]

**A.** Carson Simpson, referencing Charles Bell's Tibet, Past and Present, identifies the lama visited by Holmes as not the 13th Daili Lama Thubten Gyastso or the 9th Panchen Lama Choekyi Nyima. We still favor the 1st Shangri [aka Xianggelila, fka Zongdian] Lama ourselves, Fr. Perrault, kin of Charles Perrault.

**B**rad Kaefauver in "So You Think Coal-Tar Derivatives Are Boring? Not So!" identified them with synthetic perfumes, while Raymond L. Holly in "A Laboratory at Montpelier" put Holmes in the US rather than France. Dana Martin Batory in "Tut, Tut, Sherlock!" puts Holmes in Eqypt as "Abu Tabah" in Sax Rohmer's Tales of Secret Egypt. Harry Halén in "Sherlock Holmes in Russia" makes him "Anaxagoras Gurr".

**F**rom Baring-Gould's earlier annotations ("Dr. Watson and the Great Censorship" by Edgar . Smith) we know that Watson downsized his practice from Paddington back to Kensington after the presumed death of Holmes -- as we believe after a grieving Mary's first of many "rest cures". Lisa McGaw suggested for Holmes's bird book, A History of British Birds by Francis O. Morris, while S. Tupper Bigelow suggests the same title by William Yarrel.

**B**liss Austin in "Two Bibliographical Footnotes" identified The Origin of Tree Worship, with Grant Allen's The Attis of [Caius Valerius] Catallus, [Translated into English Verse] with Dissertations on [the Myth of [Attis, on] the Origin of Tree-Worship, and on the Galliambic metre (1892). David A. Randall interestingly suggested that Holmes was attempting to entrap literary forger Thomas James Wise with these books.

**M**athews who knocked out Holmes's left canine has been identified by Rudolph Elie as Thomas Mathews in "The Battle of Charing Cross". According to the London Times on Jan. 3, 1879 detective James Hand's life was saved during a riot by an unidentified person, obviously Holmes. Both Dr. Jay Weiss ("Holmes As a Patient" and Dr. Jay Weiss ("The Dental Holmes") diagnosed pyorrhea as a contributing factor in the loss of the tooth. The previously mentioned riot involving brass knuckles may have been factor too.

**W**orth repeating verbatim is Rudolf von Esche's biographical notes on Von Herder published in Ralph A. Ashton's "Colonel Moran's Infamous Air Rifle":

"Augustus Heinreich Freidrich Kartiffschale von Herder was born Vienna 1 April 1803. Mother Fräulein Schmutzi Liebelnhastic von Herder. Father: Unknown. Knighted by Friedrich Wilhelm IV (date unknown) for research into problems of using dehydrated water as a propellant in place of gunpowder. (By removing all traces of moisture from water, it could be concentrated into a very small place, when reconstituted, it expanded and forced the bullet from the barrel with explosive energy.) Blinded by acid in 1839 while experimenting with poisoned bullets. Died by gunshot wounds 1 April 1901, believed to have been inflicted by a jealous husband."