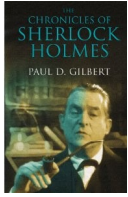




2011

Communication No. 305

The Pleasant Places of Florida



Chronicles of Sherlock Holmes

Softcover, Xlibris Corporation, 2011 by David B. Beckwith

This book is the first collection of Sherlockian tales by the author. Comments are made in the notes that indicate that other books are planned. This volume contains five stories, one short story and four novellas.

The first story is a novella titled *The Case of the Scotched, Soused, & Strung Scotsman*. It is a classic “locked-room” mystery, presented with Holmes and Watson rushing off to Scotland in familiar fashion. The death is assumed to be a suicide and the Inspector in charge leaves much to be desired. The second tale, *Dr. Watson & the Cartomancer*, is a short story that starts with Dr. Watson’s friend, Conan Doyle, asking him to attend a Tarot reading to assess the reader’s accuracy and abilities. Watson is dissatisfied, but cannot explain the results, so he describes the reading to Holmes, some years later. Holmes explains the card reader’s methods to both Watson and the audience.

The Colonial Conspiracy is a novella that presents another “locked room” mystery. In addition, there are coded messages being passed back and forth, Mycroft representing Her Majesty’s Government and Harry Potter, a gardener with “magic fingers for the roses.” As is common in tales of Holmes, things are not what they seem. The locked room is not empty, the coded notes are no mystery and Mycroft cannot affect the Government’s actions.

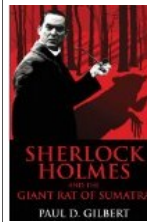
Bertie is a novella that tells of a long-term assignment for Holmes to watch and protect His Majesty Edward VIII during the beginning of his reign. It presents a somewhat unconventional portrait of “the first Gentleman of Europe.” Much of the material is not consistent with the usual Royal portrait and contradicts many of the Government news releases of the times. The author

seems to take his data quite seriously. Perhaps readers should do so as well.

The final novella recounts Holmes and Watson’s effort to apprehend *Saucy Jack*. It is clear that the solution offered is only fiction, but parallels to reality are pointed out with distressing frequency, so one may assume that story is really aimed at a similar but different villain.

This book is readable, with reasonable editing and assumptions. I could find no more than ten or twelve minor errors and the stories were all enjoyable. Let’s hope the author follows up with another volume in the near future.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, May, 2011



Sherlock Holmes and the Giant Rat of Sumatra

Hardcover, Robert Hale, London, 2011 by Paul D. Gilbert

This is the third Sherlockian book by Paul Gilbert and he seems to have hit his stride with this novel. His earlier collections of shorter stories showed ‘growing pains’ as he worked with his writing techniques. In this novel his prose is balanced and well edited and his characters are firmly developed and consistent.

The story begins with the arrival of the *Matilda Briggs*, a steam-powered tea packet from India, which appeared one morning at an unassigned dock in London, two days late and missing all its crewmembers other than a dying cabin boy. Holmes is called to investigate by the Insurers and by Inspector Lestrade. His findings are cryptic at best and require examining both the ship and the cadaver of the cabin boy. To complete the preliminary investigation, Holmes and Watson interview the manager of the shipping line that owns the ship.

As Holmes and Watson return to Baker Street, they find that a new client is awaiting them in their rooms, being fed tea by Mrs. Hudson. He has letters from his famous explorer father and wants Holmes to verify the contents and to find his father. This task turns into a marathon of reading and discussing the letters and the father’s adventures, which have taken him to the Dutch East Indies.

(Cont. on page 2)

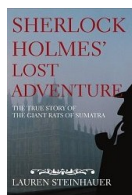


(cont. from page 1) The two cases progress slowly, tangling into one another. The 'cabin boy' is discovered to have been murdered in a most peculiar fashion. The logs and manifests of the ship are missing and the explorer's path seems to be taking him to the same ports as the *Matilda Briggs* left. The journey appears to be as much philosophical as physical and its narration from the letters seems to weigh heavily on the son.

The nature of the Giant Rat and the purpose of the *Matilda Briggs* are eventually uncovered, much to the surprise of all concerned. In the process, Holmes explores the techniques for meditation he learned during his hiatus and Lestrade is given a glimpse of the larger world that surrounds Metropolitan London.

This is a well-written, complex novel. It certainly hangs together and provides glimpses of some extraordinary lives and events. Holmes appears to be softening somewhat as he grows older. His temper fits and biting sarcasm are appearing less frequently and he seems to be growing a true awareness of other people, but only just a bit of one.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, May, 2011



Sherlock Holmes' Lost Adventure
Softcover, iUniverse, Inc., 2004 by Lauren Steinhauer

This book is the first Sherlockian publication I know of by the author. It tells the story of Sherlock Holmes and the giant rats of Sumatra.

This story includes four threads; typewriters are being stolen in London, there have been a series of documents taken from the files of Charles Darwin, children are disappearing in the dock areas of London and the test results of an obscure Austrian abbot, Gregor Mendel, have disappeared. The events that lead to Holmes' involvement in each of these separate lines are a bit complex, even contrived, but they do help move the story forward.

Watson falls in love. Holmes and Watson take a short vacation to the Continent, which is cut off suddenly. They visit Charles Darwin at his request and then they head out for an area near Sumatra by way of the Andaman Islands..

Eventually, they return to London and confront the evil-doer responsible for most of the events. The resolution of the entire situation is complicated and a bit obscure. Several lines are not quite resolved but I do really admire the foremother of a really great bad girl who turns up in the mix.

In summary, the story is interesting and moves right a long. There are holes in the logic and some

of the events are difficult to justify. The editing is well done, with few errors in usage or spelling. I question several of the basic assumptions, but that is a personal thing. The plot holds together, even if it is a bit precarious and the historical characters are very well presented.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, May, 2011

In Search of Doctor Watson

Softcover, MX Publishing, 2010 by Molly Carr



This book is a study of the sources and uses of John H. Watson as presented in the sixty Sherlockian tales written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The author examines the relationship between the characters of Holmes and Watson in a careful fashion to determine why Doyle chose to create Watson as both a foil and a counterpoint for Holmes and how that choice affected the style and development of the stories over the forty years in which they were written. In addition, similar characters in Literature are discussed and analyzed to provide examples of alternative methods and the problems involved in using such figures.

While this seems to be a simple task, it is really anything but simple. The unique nature of Sherlock Holmes as an Archetype of Literature, "The Great Detective," is actually dependent on the methods Doyle used to present him. These methods all come down to using Watson as narrator, question asker, foil and stalking horse. The two personas of Holmes and Watson together allow the author to select the data to be presented to the readers in a very careful fashion. Holmes can maintain his own counsel without revealing answers before the author is ready. In addition, space and time can be devoted to various items of byplay between the two that constitute filler for the stories that would otherwise be rather dry and dull.

In addition to a discussion of the methods Doyle used in writing and the uses he made of Watson, the author needs to discuss the many controversial features of the Sherlockian tales. These include time and dating problems, names of both persons and places, and identification of real events and persons, either included in or excluded from the tales. Most of these discussion items are familiar to (cont. on page 3)



(cont. from page 2) Sherlockians, but are presented here in a comprehensive fashion with analyses of several different approaches and aspects. Total agreement is not really possible, but the author works to untangle the mare's nest and to explain many of the sources of the problems.

Finally, the inspiration for names and places mentioned is examined and several ideas are offered that may help readers to understand what might have been in Doyle's mind at various times. Several surprising triggers are identified and others proposed as real world inspirations for places, persons and events that showed up in the tales.

This is an interesting and well-written summary of the data available about John H. Watson. It covers a lot of territory and does so in a readable and interesting fashion. Experienced Sherlockians will recognize many points of discussion and readers new to "The Grand Game" will find a strong introduction to Sherlockian higher criticism.

Reviewed by: Philip K. Jones, May, 2011

Spring Gathering

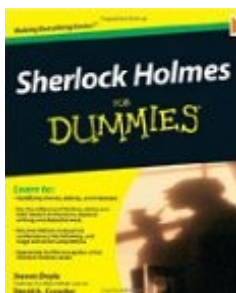
The 2011 Spring Gathering was held at A Corner of England Tea Shop in St. Petersburg. Twenty-one attendees ordered their favorite teas—or perhaps they ordered something they'd never had before. We forgot to ask.

David McCallister presided, handing out his Watson and Mycroft level quizzes (printed elsewhere in this humble publication). A good bit of discussion was generated when the answers were revealed.

Art Walker revealed that, despite the years he has spent adding to his enormous Holmesian collection, his new favorite edition is *Sherlock Holmes for Dummies*. He reports that the book is actually quite accurate and useful.

Mr. McCallister reported on his theory as to the family history of Lady Frances Carfax. And Wanda Dow gave a report on Turkish Baths.

Having filled both stomach and mind, the meeting was adjourned near 2:00 pm.



CALENDAR SHERLOCKIANA 2011

June - Aug. - Miracle Theatre Co. tours U.K. with *The Death of Sherlock Holmes*, a new play by Bill Scott. Check out www.miracletheatre.co.uk

August 13 - A Scintillation of Scions IV, presented by *Watson's Tin Box*, Owen Brown Community Center, Columbia, MD. Contact Scintillation2011@gmail.com

Sept. 18 - *Buchercon Convention*, St. Louis, MO bouchercon2011.com

October 13-16 - A Study in Scandal, Toronto Reference Library, Toronto by *The Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection*, *The Toronto Public Library* and *The Bootmakers of Toronto*. See <http://www.acdfriends.org/sins-rego.htm>

Nov. 3 - *Gasfitters' Ball*, The Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria. South Pasadena Women's Club. Contact Chrys & Jerry Kegley ccobsla@social.rr.com or cfkovacic@aol.com

Nov. 4 - PPOF 35th Annual Fall Gathering. TBA

Nov. 11-13 - *From Gillette to Brett* conference, Indianapolis, IN. See <http://www.wessexpress.com/html/g2b3.html>

December 16 - *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* release date (sequel to *Sherlock Holmes* Downey/Law)

2012

January 11-15 - Sherlock Holmes Birthday Weekend (extended) NY, NY

April 27-29 - MALICE DOMESTIC XXIV

August 31-Sept. 3 - *Sherlock Holmes: Behind the Canonical Screen* Los Angeles, CA.

September 9-16 - *The Sherlock Holmes Society of London Swiss Pilgrimage*, Interlaken & Meiringen, Switzerland.

October 4-7 -- *Bouchercon XLIII*, Cleveland, OH.

The Turkish Bath in Victorian England

A presentation by Wanda Dow at the 35th Annual Spring Gathering of the Pleasant Places of Florida

"But why Turkish?" asked Mr. Sherlock Holmes. "Why the relaxing and expensive Turkish rather than the invigorating home-made article?"

"Because for the last few days I have been feeling rheumatic and old. A Turkish bath is what we call an alternative in medicine—a fresh starting point, a cleanser of the system."

The Turkish bath, or Hamam, is the Turkish variant of a steam bath or sauna, the difference being that the focus is on water, as opposed to ambient steam.

In Western Europe, using the Turkish bath as a method of cleansing the body and providing relaxation was particularly popular during the Victorian era. The process involved is similar to taking a sauna, but in actuality is more closely related to ancient Greek and Roman bathing practices.



Watson would have first relaxed in a room known as the *warm room*, which was heated by a continuous flow of hot, dry air, allowing (cont. on page 4)

← **Coolest to warmest (3 steps up)**



(cont. from page 3) him to perspire freely. He would then move to an even hotter room (the *hot room*) before splashing himself with cold water. After performing a full body wash and receiving a massage, he would have retired to the *cooling room* for a period of relaxation.

Traditionally, the masseurs in the baths (tellak), were young men who helped wash clients by soaping and scrubbing their bodies. They were recruited from the ranks of the non-Muslim nations, such as Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Roma. After the defeat and dismemberment of the Ottoman army in the early 20th century, however, the role of tellak boys was filled by adult attendants.



Turkish baths were introduced to the U.K. by David Urquhart, diplomat and sometime Member of Parliament for Stafford, who wanted to promote them for his own personal and political reasons. In 1850, he wrote a book about his travels in 1848 through Spain and Morocco, called *The Pillars of Hercules*. In it, he described the system of dry hot-air baths used there and in the Ottoman Empire which was nearly the same since Roman times.

In 1856, Richard Barter read the book and worked with Urquhart to construct a bath. The first in the U.K was opened at St. Ann's Hydropathic Establishment near Blarney, County Cork, Ireland. The following year, the first to be built in England since Roman times was opened in Manchester and the idea spread rapidly north. In July 1980, London had it's first Turkish bath at 5 Bell Street, near Marble Arch. During the next 150 years, over 600 baths opened in Britain. Canada, New Zealand and even Brooklyn, NY followed suit. Later, municipal authorities introduced Turkish baths to swimming pool complexes, taking advantage of the fact that water-heating boilers were already on sited. Soon after the influx of Jews from Europe to the East End of London, authorities built six Turkish baths, the last of which, at York Hall was converted in 2007 to a beauty spa.

As of February of 2011, there were still sixteen Turkish baths remaining open in the U. K., and they thrive still in Russian and Finland.

Wikipedia

The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax

Watson Quiz

1. What type of bath does Sherlock think Watson has taken?
2. Where does Sherlock send Watson to begin the investigation?
3. What is Miss Dobney's relationship to Lady Frances?
4. What is Miss Marie Devine's relationship to Lady Frances?
5. What were Lady Frances' principal assets?
6. To what German city did Watson then follow Lady Frances?

7. To what French city did Watson then follow Lady Frances?
8. What hotel did Lady Frances stay in, in Germany?
9. Who was bothering Lady Frances in Switzerland?
10. What was Dr. Shlessinger's profession?
11. In what way did Holmes save Watson from a beating?
12. Where had Philip Green made his money?
13. Where did Philip Green stay in London?
14. Where did Lady Frances stay in London?
15. Who was Dr. Shlessinger, really?
16. How did Dr. Shlessinger hope to make money?
17. Who was Rose Spender?
18. How was Lady Frances to be murdered?
19. What Scotland Yard Detective was on the case?
20. When was the funeral to begin? And when did Holmes arrive to save the day?

Mycroft Quiz

1. Where did Watson buy his shoes?
 2. What gave away Watson's trip to the Turkish Bath?
 3. What peer was a relation to Lady Frances?
 4. Which was Lady Frances' bank?
 5. At what hotel did Lady Frances stay in Lausanne?
 6. Who was/were Watson's informant(s) in Lausanne?
 7. In which city and hotel did Lady Frances meet Dr. Shlessinger?
 8. Why did Marie Devine leave Lady Frances' service?
 9. Who was pursuing Lady Frances?
 10. How was Holmes dressed when he met Mr. Green?
 11. Who made money at Barberton's? Who at Bovington's?
 12. What was Dr. Shlessinger's so-called wife's full name?
 13. How did Holmes make the positive identification of Holy Peters?
 14. Where did Green follow Dr. Shlessinger's wife?
 15. How much does Henry Peters say Lady Frances owes him?
 16. What does Holmes use instead of a warrant?
 17. What bank did Miss Marie Devine cash a cheque at?
 18. What ranks of police officer appear in the adventure?
 19. Who's appearance inspires confidence? Who did excellent work?
 20. From where was Rose Spender obtained?
- Prepared by David McCallister (Answers on page 5)



Front window of
Wilson's
Book
Store, St.
Petersburg,
FL →

Pub sign
↙



He's Everywhere... Twittering? Then check out SHSLBakerStweet to tweet with the Sherlock Holmes Society of London... If you search You Tube for Sherlock Holmes, you get about 22,000 results... Linguaspectrum, a program that teaches English, has a lesson describing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes and the joke *The Adventure of the Starry Night*... There is a Sherlock Holmes pub in Denmark that advertises itself as the "quintessential English Pub." Their site is sherlock-holmes.dk... Melbourne, Australia has The Sherlock Holmes Inn (see right), which serves food as well as drinks. Have a look-see at the sherlock-holmes.com.au... There's a program out there which finds similarities between textual documents called *The Sherlock Plagiarism Detector*... Forget the violin. Holmes has moved to Australia and is now specializing in guitar amps. What? Oh, the owner is DALE Sherlock? Oh. Nevermind....

Watson Level 1. Turkish 2. Lausanne, Switzerland 3. Governess 4. Ladies Maid 5. Silver & diamonds. 6. Baden 7. Montpelier 8. Englisher Hof 9. Hon. Philip Green 10. Missionary in South America 11. He steps in as an ouvrier with a cudgel. 12. At Barberton, South Africa 13. Langham 14. Putney Square 15. Holy Peters 16. Pawning Lady Frances' jewels 17. The old lady in the coffin. 18. Choliform and asphyxiation 19. Lestrade 20. 8AM. 8:10AM.

Mycroft Level 1. Latimer's Oxford Street. 2. Double bow shoe laces 3. Earl of Rutton 4. Sylvester's 5. Hotel National 6. M. Moser & Jules Vibart. 7. Baden—Englischer Hof. 8. She questioned her honesty. 9. Hon. Philip Green. 10. Ouvrier in a blue blouse 11. Green. Peters. 12. Annie Fraser. 13. By his bitten ear in Adelaide. 14. To the coffin-maker, then to No. 36 Poultney Square, Brixton. 15. £200 16. His revolver. 17. Credit Lyonnais at Montpellier. 18. Inspector, Sergeant, constable. 19. Watson. Green. 20. Brixton Workhouse Infirmary.

The Pleasant Places of Florida

(founded in 1972)

Rev. Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. 1972-1977
Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I. 1977 - 1988
Bill Ward, B.S.I. 1988 - 1989
Dr. Benton Wood, B. S.I. 1989 -1996
The Last Court of Appeals 1997 - present

For the Record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, *Master of the House*,
most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

(Master of Ceremonies at

Carl Heifetz, *Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople)*,
(Correspondent)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, *The Papers on the Sundial*,
and Bookkeeping)

(Communications

Mike Bryan, *The Unopened Newspaper*,
Wood Fund)

(The Marshall

Please make note of the issue number on your mailing label. This will be the final issue number of your paper newsletter. Due to increased costs and for ecological reasons, we are phasing out printed newsletters. Please go to our website at <http://ppofl.net> for all club news. All newsletters can be found on the site. Those appearing after your issue number can be printed by you from the site if you prefer a printed newsletter.

The Pleasant Places of Florida

U.S.A.

