



Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S



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obliged to you..."

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"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)

"I am exceedingly obliged to you for your co-operation" ("The Illustrious Client")

by Kris Kiesling and Timothy Johnson



Kris Kiesling

“The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger” opens with these words from Dr. Watson: “When one considers that Mr. Sherlock Holmes was in active practice for twenty-three years, and that during seventeen of these I was allowed to co-operate with him and to keep notes of his doings, it will be clear that I have a mass of material at my command.” Twenty-first century research libraries, it is equally clear, have a mass of material, although how much of it is at their command might be a matter of discussion or debate. Certainly, over the last decade or so, there has been quite a bit of discussion around the topic of uncovering hidden collections. Those discussions have led to concerted actions by research libraries toward streamlining acquisition procedures, “more product and less process” archival arrangement and description processing, increased digitization programs, and other activities that make more materials available to students, faculty, and interested researchers.

While many of these projects and programs have taken place within individual institutions, other cooperative activities between two or more institutions are becoming more apparent. Some of these cooperative ventures are driven by an economy of size while others relate to the interrelationships of collections. An example of the first type might be the Research Collections and Preservation Consortium (ReCAP), an off-site library storage

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“TO STRENGTHEN OUR RESOURCES...” (“The Red-Headed League”)

Cooperation is the key to our future success. Within the Doylean/Sherlockian universe a rich landscape of collections exist, each inviting exploration, and each often looking for ways to strengthen their resource base for future research, publication, and enlightenment into the world of Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes.

We’re extremely thankful to our friends at the Baker Street Irregulars Trust who send us material that fits in with our collecting mission. In the spirit of cooperation, we hope to gather material more appropriate for the BSI Archives and offer it to them in the near future. We would encourage donors who have Baker Street Irregular materials to contact Tom Francis, Chairman of the Trust, for additional information. (E-mail <chair@bsitrust.org>.) Working together we can add to this rich landscape and keep forever green the memory of the Master.

100

YEARS AGO

by Thaddeus Holt

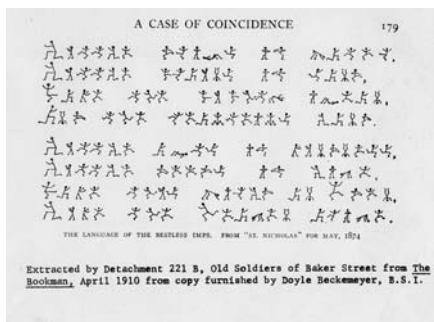
In its issue for April 1910, *The Bookman*, an American magazine (there was a British one of the same name), published a remarkably snide little piece entitled “A Case of Coincidence Relating to Sir A. Conan Doyle,” in which one Lyndon Orr, whose only known claim to fame is as the author of a four-volume potboiler on notable love affairs of history, accused Doyle of un-admitted plagiarism, deliberate rudeness, and outright lying.

In 1904, said Orr, Doyle “tried to repeat the extraordinary success” of earlier Holmes stories by publishing some new stories “for which a heavy price was paid.” One of these stories was “The Adventure of the Dancing Men,” which, sneered Orr, “was considered a fairly good one compared with the other stories in the same book.” The story, of course, deals with Holmes’s solving a cipher in which each letter of the alphabet is represented by a different little stick-figure or “dancing man.” (Technically this is called a simple substitution cipher.) “Some credit,” said Orr, without citing any authority, “was given to Sir A. Conan Doyle for the ingenuity of his cryptogram.”

However, crowed Orr (you can almost hear him saying “Aha!”), an unidentified “eminent surgeon of this city” — presumably New York — had stumbled across an item in an 1874 issue of *St. Nicholas*, a children’s magazine, featuring a cipher called “the Restless Imps,” little stick-figures very similar to the dancing men. The Eminent Surgeon then took it upon himself to write to Doyle, “pointing out to him that his cryptogram was really three decades old and warning him against the pos-

sibility that other aged material might be palmed off on him.”

Now, Mr. Orr’s powers of observation were clearly rudimentary. He said that the cipher in Poe’s *The Gold Bug* “consist[s] of arithmetic numbers,” when in fact it consists of numbers and of punctuation marks. He said that no “ciphers were employed” in “The Dancing Men,” evidently thinking “cipher” meant only “number.” He stated flatly that the restless imps were “precisely the ‘dancing men’ of Sir A. Conan Doyle’s story ... The alphabet has been transposed in most cases, but the ‘dancing men’ are the same.” This is simply not so, as a few seconds’ inspection should have shown; the stick-figures are much the same, but their poses are quite different. Similarly, Mr. Orr seems — or pretended — not to have perceived that the Eminent Surgeon’s letter to Doyle was in fact a sarcastic accusation of plagiarism, a Gotcha! — or, in any case, would probably be read by Doyle as such.



Scan courtesy of the Sherlock Holmes Collections

Doyle clearly so read it and, being Doyle, responded not with the annoyance that he must have felt, but with a light-hearted brushoff, sending to the Eminent Surgeon a postcard that simply said: “Dear Sir: Pure Coincidence. Yours try, A. Conan Doyle.” “This was not a very satisfactory answer when sent to an eminent member of Sir A. Conan Doyle’s own profession,” sniffed Lyndon Orr. “It was curt in tone and was not even provided with sufficient postage ... Naturally, [the Eminent Surgeon] was somewhat incensed. Therefore, he countered on Sir Arthur

by sending him a one-cent postcard” with some crude sarcastic doggerel ending “But having tried all other things to justify your acts, / Im-’pure coincidence’ alone remains — and fits the facts!”

Now, if the Eminent Surgeon had couched his original letter in courteous tones, without doubt he would have received from Doyle an equally polite reply setting forth the true origin of the dancing men as far as he was concerned. The story was first dug out in the early 1950s by the great Sherlockian Gavin Brend, and further fleshed out by the Dutch Sherlockian Cornelius Helling, who got it from the very individual who inspired Doyle.

To begin with, *St. Nicholas* was a New York publication; it seems not to have occurred to the Eminent Surgeon that Doyle was not likely to have seen an American children’s magazine of thirty years before. In fact, evidently unknown to the Eminent Surgeon, if there was any plagiarism it was committed by the British magazine *The Boy’s Own Paper*, which in 1881 reprinted, without acknowledgment, the *St. Nicholas* item substantially verbatim, only changing “Restless Imps” to “Restless Fays.”

It will be recalled that “The Adventure of the Dancing Men” tells of one Hilton Cubitt of Ridling Thorpe Manor in Norfolk, whose wife is threatened by the villain through messages in the dancing men cipher. In the early 1900s Doyle frequently visited his sister Connie and her husband E.W. Hornung, the creator of Raffles, who lived near Cromer on the Norfolk coast. He would stay not far away at the Hill House Hotel in Happisburgh, which was run by a family named Cubitt. One day Mrs. Cubitt asked Doyle to write something in her niece’s autograph album. Some years before, when he was about seven years old, Mrs. Cubitt’s son G.J. Cubitt had written his name and address in the album in “dancing men.” Doyle spotted this

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YEARS AGO

In January 1960, the *Journal of the Kansas Medical Society* published “Arthur Conan Doyle: Doctor and Writer (1859-1930)” written by C. Frederick Kittle, M.D., Kansas City. The article begins, “One hundred years ago – on May 22 to be exact – Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes was born.” The six page article covers the life of Conan Doyle, concluding: “He was a combination of many different entities blended into one: the physician, the sportsman, the champion of the underdog, the historian, the orator and the author.” At that time Dr. Kittle was a member of the Department of Surgery, University of Kansas Medical School, Kansas City, Kansas.

The Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota has a re-printed copy of the article that was sent to Nathan Bengis by Dr. Kittle in 1962. Included was a cover letter, typed on University of Kansas Medical Center stationery, thanking Bengis for his letter to Dr. Kittle. After John Bennett Shaw acquired the article and accompanying correspondence, he affixed his “The Library of John Bennett Shaw, B.S.I.” bookplate to the bottom of the letter. The Kittle to Bengis to Shaw to Minnesota connection is an interesting provenance. Another connection to Minnesota occurred when Dr. Kittle delivered the University of Minnesota Medical School Quarterly Surgical

Seminar, History of Medicine Lecture on December 2, 1964. “Arthur Conan Doyle, Detective – Doctor” (revised and enlarged) was published in April 1965 issue of the *University of Minnesota Medical Bulletin, Official Publication of University of Minnesota Hospitals, Minnesota Medical Foundation and the Minnesota Medical Alumni Association*.

Dr. Kittle admits that he got a lot out of the basic article that he rewrote and changed over the ensuing fifty years. It has appeared, as noted by Ronald DeWaal as “slightly changed” as “The Case of the Versatile A. Conan Doyle” in *The University of Chicago Magazine* in 1969 and as “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – Physician and Detective” in *The Proceedings of the Institute of Medicine of Chicago* in 1981. Not listed in DeWaal is the article, “There’s More to Doyle than Holmes!” that was published in *The Pharos*, the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society’s quarterly journal in 1997. The Caxton Club of Chicago has the article on their website at <http://www.caxtonclub.org/reading/doyle.html>.

While we enjoy the Kittle to Bengis to Shaw to Minnesota connection, there is an equally interesting relationship predating Dr. Kittle’s article. Dr. Logan Clendening (1884-1945) was the founder and chair of the Department of the History and Philosophy of Medicine at the University of Kansas Medical School and is known to us for his Sherlockian writings, and as a “friend and benefactor of Vincent Starrett,” (Jon Lellenberg, “Logan Clendening: Canonizing an Irregular Saint,” *Baker Street Journal*, December 1992). Dr. Ralph H. Major succeeded Clendening as depart-

ment chair and delivered the address, “Logan Clendening” at the 1958 Logan Clendening Lecture in the History and Philosophy of Medicine at the medical school. Major was a mentor of Dr. Kittle at a time Kittle was beginning his interest in Conan Doyle scholarship and building his own collection while serving as a surgery resident at the University of Kansas Medical Center in the mid-1950s. At this time, Dr. Kittle acquired the 19-page handwritten manuscript of “The Romance of Medicine,” written by Arthur Conan Doyle in 1910. It was this manuscript, a lecture about the nature of medicine and his reflection on his experiences as a physician, that Conan Doyle gave at London’s St. Mary’s Hospital Medical School, which sparked Kittle’s collecting passion in Dr. Doyle.

The Kittle Collection of Doyleana was donated to the Newberry Library in Chicago in 2003. To commemorate the establishment of the collection Donald J. Terras, BSI published *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes: Essays and Art on The Doctor and The Detective*. The Newberry Library has the “Biography of a Collector” on their website at <http://www.newberry.org/programs/ACDbio.html>.

Dr. Kittle recently reflected on the fifty years since he published his original article. He still pursues his collecting passion and told me that he continues to acquire and read books about Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes. Like the subject of his article written fifty years ago, we celebrate Dr. Kittle as a doctor and writer. ♥

Richard J. Sveum, MD, BSI

From the President

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections will take place on August 6, 2010 at the Elmer L. Andersen Library. I am pleased to report that the endowed E.W. McDiarmid Curatorship of the Sherlock Holmes Collections will be presented to Timothy J. Johnson by Kris Kiesling, Elmer L. Andersen Director of Archives and

Special Collections and Assistant University Librarian for Special Collections Advancement. The membership meeting will be held on the first day of *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes* international conference and I encourage all Friends to attend both. Our triennial conferences are sponsored by the Friends, the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota and the Special Collections and Rare Books division of the University of

Minnesota Libraries.

I look forward to seeing everyone and personally thanking you for being a Friend. I hope that you will consider making a donation of material, money or volunteering your time. Together we can make the Sherlock Holmes Collections one of the best centers for the study of all things Sherlockian. ♥

Richard J. Sveum, M.D., B.S.I.

An Update from the Collections

On April 1st I had a real treat: I was a guest on Kerri Miller's "Midmorning" show on Minnesota Public Radio. (You'll find the show on MPR's web site; I was on the second hour, 10-11am.) I'm a big fan of public radio. I listen to it when I get up in the morning and it's the last thing I hear when going to bed. I don't always get to hear Kerri's show because it falls in the middle of my work day, but I try to check her program's web page as often as possible.

Earlier on I was contacted by Chris Dall, who helps produce "Midmorning," wondering if I could join the program to talk about Sherlock Holmes, the Collections, and anything else Sherlockian that might come our way. The main guest for this segment of the show was David Grann, a staff writer at the *New Yorker*, who was going to talk about his new book *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes*. I jumped at the chance. The timing was perfect as only two nights earlier I'd watched an interview with David on the "Charlie Rose" show. I was ready to go out and buy the book and the invitation from Chris just sealed the deal. I did have some concerns about appearing on the show with David, because of his article, "Mysterious Circumstances" (also the first chapter in his book), on the death of Richard Lancelyn Green, and how it was received by the Sherlockian community. I won't detail those concerns here, but you'll find them on my blog, "Special & Rare On A Stick." I do want to thank those friends whose advice and guidance I sought in preparing for the program.

Doing a live radio show is always a little unnerving; you don't want to make any missteps or put your foot in your mouth. But in the end there were no worries. I felt well-prepared and Kerri quickly put me at ease. Minnesota Public Radio is a great radio operation and they do things at a high level of excellence. I have to admit to the thrill of seeing some of the behind the scenes operation, and I really enjoyed the time in the control room before going into the studio for my segment of the show. It was a great time and a good conversation. The added bonus for me was the chance to talk more with Kerri after the show was over. We stayed in the studio after the show talking more about Holmes, Doyle, and the U's collection. I hope she has the chance to visit us for a tour. She may bring me back a couple of weeks before our conference for a chance to plug that event and talk more about Holmes. I'm looking forward to the opportunity. My thanks to Kerri, Chris, and the other folks at MPR for the invitation to talk about the Collections and about a great Sherlockian, Richard Lancelyn Green.

Another pleasant event, also in April, was the invitation from the South-central Minnesota Inter-Library Exchange (SMILE) to be their guest speaker on April 15 for National Library Week. The chosen topic for the evening? What else, but Sherlock Holmes.

The theme for the evening was "Sleuthing @ Your Library with Sherlock Holmes" and the event was held in Meyer Hall at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato. I

arrived early to set up and had the chance to meet Orrin Ausen, the library director at Bethany who was setting up items for the silent auction, and to chat with some of the guests. Maybe the biggest delight for me that evening was to reconnect with Dayle Zelenka, executive director of the Traverse des Sioux Library System and the director of SMILE, and his wife Gena. Dayle and I overlapped our careers for a few years together on the library staff at North Park in Chicago.

The evening proceeded from a delightful dinner to a silent auction and then to my presentation. I had a chance to talk about the foundation of the Norwegian Explorers and the Holmes Collections at the University. Along the way I introduced the audience to the wider Sherlockian world, the Baker Street Irregulars, some of the actors who've portrayed Holmes, and Holmes in popular culture. By all accounts the evening was a success, and I'm glad I could do my little bit to help promote libraries and National Library Week. My thanks to Dayle and Orrin for arranging the evening, and my special thanks to Leslie Peterson, assistant to the Dean of the Library at Minnesota State University, for facilitating my visit. Leslie was my initial contact and extremely helpful in all the details related to the evening and my appearance. I hope our paths cross again!

I look forward to seeing many of you at our conference in August. I trust, wherever you are, that you'll have a delightful summer. ♥

Timothy Johnson

Musings

It's always an exciting time when we welcome a new writer to the pages of this newsletter, and with this issue, we welcome two. Kris Kiesling, the Elmer L. Andersen Director of Archives and Special Collections and Assistant University Librarian for Special Collections Advancement, worked with Curator Tim Johnson on our lead article about library cooperation and the future for the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Kris is always an interesting and discerning contributor at our quarterly Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections meetings and we appreciate her insight.

For our 100 Years Ago article, we chose to highlight the 1910 article "A Case of Coincidence Relating to Sir A. Conan Doyle," that case being the code of "The Dancing Men." Reflecting on the need for an author to pen the piece, Jon Lellenberg noted the number of past members of the BSI community with backgrounds in this area. Fletcher Pratt's 1939 book *Secret and Urgent* covered cryptography so extensively that its 1942 second edition was quickly withdrawn from circulation at the War Department's request during World War II. Edward F. Clark, Jr. served in one of the most sensitive parts of U.S. military intelligence at the Pentagon during the war, and Basil Davenport in Army Counterintelligence overseas. There are present-day Sherlockians with similar backgrounds, and one man suggested for our 100 Years Ago by Jon was Thaddeus Holt.

Thad, described by Jon as a "deep-dyed Holmesian," has contributed to the *Baker Street Journal* and is a Master-Copper-Beech-Smith of the Sons of the Copper Beeches. He has been a lawyer for over fifty years and served as the Deputy Under-Secretary of the Army from 1965-1967. Holt's "You Have Been in Afghanistan, I Perceive" appeared in the Winter 1994 *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*. His book *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* came out in 2004, and one reviewer noted that it "deserves a five-cloak rating"

(Joseph C. Goulden in the April 23, 2005 *Washington Times*). In the February 20, 2010 *Wall Street Journal* Nicholas Rankin listed *The Deceivers* as one of the five best books written about British Military Intelligence. He wrote "This scholarly yet entertaining magnum opus is the definitive account of all the stratagems used by the Allies against the Axis in World War II." The Barnes and Noble site synopsis states:

Secret codes, ciphers, strategic misdirection, and more: Deception was one of the most powerful weapons utilized by the Allies in World War II. Here are some of the amazing tricks and leaked misinformation—many revealed for the first time—that helped lure the Axis powers into false, even dangerous, positions. The collection of incredible codes, surreptitious spies, and false battle plans is made all the more enjoyable by Thaddeus Holt's masterful writing, as well as the accompanying photos. His novel-like storytelling includes many illuminating profiles of the war's central figures and the roles they played in specific deceptive operations.

Thaddeus Holt generously agreed to write our 100 Years Ago piece. We believe he was an excellent choice.

Tim Johnson keeps us informed about his busy schedule in his "Update from the Collections." Dick Sveum updates us in his column "From the President," and wrote our 50 Years Ago article about Dr. Fred Kittle's "Arthur Conan Doyle: Doctor and Writer (1859-1930)" and the number of publications in which Dr. Kittle's article has appeared. Dr. Logan Clendening (1884-1945) mentioned in the article was the author of medical books and a newspaper column, a noted bibliophile and Holmesian, and a strong memory at the University of Kansas Medical Center when Dr. Kittle was a resident there ten years after Clendening's death. Dr. Ralph Major described him as "one of the most colorful and picturesque figures from American medicine" (*Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, July 1945, pp. 199-206) and his cited lecture about him is in *Disease*

and Destiny / Logan Clendening (University of Kansas Press, 1958).

The 50 Years Ago column in our December 2009 issue contained an article titled "The Gardner-Shaw Connection." It was written by Dana Richards about Martin Gardner and the appearance of his puzzle "The Mysterious Tracks" in the 1959 *Arrow Book of Brain Teasers*. Mr. Gardner kindly contributed "Remembering John Bennett Shaw" to run with Dana's article. I'm sorry to report that Mr. Gardner passed away May 23rd at the age of 95. Reporting on his death, the Associate Press release noted that Gardner was "known for popularizing recreational mathematics and debunking paranormal claims" and quoted Gardner's son, who described his father as "a renaissance man who built new ideas through words, numbers and puzzles." Gardner's obituary in the May 23 *New York Times* described him as a man "who indulged his own restless curiosity by writing more than 70 books on topics as diverse as magic, philosophy and the nuances of Alice in Wonderland." We are all very appreciative that we had the opportunity to feature him and learn more about his friendship with Shaw.

In his March 3, 1957 column "Books Alive," which ran in the *Chicago Tribune*, Vincent Starrett wrote "Sherlockians will be dazzled by the summer plans of the Norwegian Explorers [of Minnesota], a sci-on society of the Baker Street Irregulars." He was writing about the planned pilgrimage to Reichenbach Falls but we hope his words also apply to the 2010 summer plans. In conjunction with *The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes* conference to be held Aug. 6-8, there will be two wonderful exhibits on display. Visitors will be pleased to see our late friend Allen Mackler's replica of Sherlock Holmes's sitting room at the Wilson Library from June 1 – August 29, and the conference display at the Elmer L. Andersen Library will be available from July 12 – October 15. We look forward to seeing many of our readers this summer. ♥

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

“I am exceedingly obliged”... Continued from Page 1

facility operated jointly between Columbia University, Princeton University, and the New York Public Library. An example of the second type might be the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), an international consortium of university, college, and independent research libraries that acquires and preserves newspapers, journals, documents, archives, and other traditional and digital resources from a global network of sources and makes this material available to students, faculty and other researchers through interlibrary loan and electronic delivery.

The University of Minnesota Libraries is actively engaged in both types of activities. Internally, for example, we have streamlined acquisition processes, allowing us to quickly move books and periodicals out to researchers. Externally, we are now scanning about one million items for the Google Books Project. In Andersen Library, home to our archival and special collections, we continue to digitize portions of our collections for web accessibility, have mounted over 4,000 electronic finding aids for our archival collections, and cooperate with other departments and institutions on exhibits, instruction, collection development, and programming. All of these actions point to the importance of cooperation. Cooperation, both internally and externally, will be a key to our future success.

In January, as part of the Libraries' planning process, James Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University, presented a talk entitled “Defensive Diversification Versus Radical Collaboration: the Strategic Context and Directions for Content and Collection in the Academic Research Library.” That's a long title for a complex subject, but there were a number of important “takeaways” that might guide our future thinking and planning. Neal made a number of assumptions about research libraries, collection development, and collaboration. They were:

- Academic research libraries will continue to develop comprehensive collections in all formats
- Collections will seek to align with university academic priorities and funding realities
- Coordination of collection development across the research library community will remain marginalized
- Academic research libraries will increasingly focus on distinctive and unique collections in service to regional and national scholarly audiences
- Academic research libraries will build innovative bi-lateral and tri-lateral partnerships to expand content access and delivery
- Preservation and archiving of the cultural and scientific record will remain balkanized and episodic
- National and global information policies will not facilitate the deep collection collaboration needed
- Work of collection building will require new approach to professional staffing and organization
- Collections will need to align more intimately with teaching and learning processes
- User communities will create their own tools for discovering, disseminating and managing content
- Academic research libraries will assume expanded roles as new scholarly communication business models are implemented
- More focus will be placed on data capture and analysis to support collection development decisions

To bring this all down to our immediate level of interest, what might the future look like for the Sherlock Holmes Collections in terms of collection development and collaboration? First, a new collection development policy is being drafted for the Holmes Collections that will provide future direction in developing a comprehensive collection. Both the DeWaal bibliography and its supplement will continue to be used as tools in this regard. Second,

the Holmes Collections (like all of our collections) will be guided by the priorities set by the University. For the Libraries, this means greater attention to discovery and delivery services, scholarly communication and publishing, content and collections, electronic education and learning support, and electronic scholarship. For Holmes this will mean making more material available through the Web (through finding aids and our new Media Repository), assuring high preservation standards and treatment of materials, seeking out new opportunities for teaching, research and scholarship, and looking for other avenues of outreach and collaboration.

Within our planning documents, as they apply to content and collections, there is one point that is particularly inviting: “Explore and develop partnerships and collaborations with other institutions and commercial partners in order to better serve users....” This is especially exciting given the network of Doyle and Holmes collections that has developed over the years. And it invites the question “What partnerships and collaborations might be developed and strengthened between Minnesota, The BSI Trust at Harvard, the Doyle Collection at Toronto, the Lancelyn Green Bequest at Portsmouth, the Holmes Collection at Marylebone Library in London, the Kittle Collection at the Newberry Library in Chicago, and other places where Holmes or Doyle materials are found?” Are there ways, building on these strong relationships, that collections or services might be enhanced to better serve the Doylean/Sherlockian communities? Is there expertise among curators, archivists, and other staff that could be shared across the community that might benefit collections and users? Might collection development policies be shared across institutions to gain a better insight into who is collecting what and avoid unnecessary duplication? And what of Friends groups? Are there ways for them to interact in collaborative ways?

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The Adventure of the Media Buzz...

Continued from Page 6

What might collaboration look like within this “irregular” group of scholars, teachers, students and readers?

These and other questions about collaboration will be one of the main items under discussion during our “Spirits of Sherlock Holmes” conference in August. A pre-conference breakfast meeting with representatives from many of the major collections will allow curators, archivists, and associated Friends leadership to begin exploring the topic. The panel discussion during the conference will move the topic further along and allow for additional input. This is an exciting time to work with special materials such as the Holmes Collections. It is our hope that this discussion will provide new insights, ideas, and avenues of discovery for everyone who appreciates Holmes and his creator. At a minimum, we hope this focus and discussion on collaboration will give us clarity and a point from which to move forward. As Holmes observed in “The Adventure of Silver Blaze”: “At least I have got a grip of the essential facts of the case. I shall enumerate them to you, for nothing clears up a case so much as stating it to another person, and I can hardly expect your co-operation if I do not show you the position from which we start.”

Using the Collections

Brian McCuskey is spending many hours in the Sherlock Holmes Collections, surrounded by books and periodicals. A member of the English Department at Utah State University, Brian specializes in Victorian Literature and Literary Theory. He is currently researching Sherlock Holmes and the history of the Baker Street Irregulars. ❧



Tim Johnson and Brian McCuskey

Photo by Julie McKuras

COLLECTIONS

Here are the web addresses for the institutions cited, as listed on the Sherlock Holmes Collections webpage (<http://special.lib.umn.edu/rare/holmes.phtml>).

The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library — http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/uni_spe_conan_doyle.jsp

The Arthur Conan Doyle Lancelyn Green Bequest at Portsmouth — <http://www.conandoylecollection.co.uk/#>

The Baker Street Irregulars Trust, Houghton Library, Harvard University — <http://www.bsitrust.org/>

The Kittle Collection of Doyleana, Newberry Library, Chicago — <http://www.newberry.org/programs/ACD-bio.html>

Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Information Service, London — <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/libraries/special/sherlock/>

The Sub-Librarians Scion of the the Baker Street Irregulars in the American Library Association, list, “Libraries with Sherlock Holmes or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Collections” — <http://elisanonline.com/sublibrarians/libraries.html> ❧



The *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections which seek to promote the activities, interests and needs of the Special Collections and Rare Books Department, University of Minnesota Libraries.

Mail editorial correspondence c/o:

Editor

Julie McKuras
13512 Granada Ave.
Apple Valley, MN 55124
952-431-1934
mike9750@aol.com

Editorial Board

John Bergquist, Timothy Johnson,
Jon Lellenberg, Richard J. Sveum, M.D.



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The University of Minnesota is an Equal
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Acquisitions

Derham Groves sent his publications *Murderous Melbourne* and *There's No Place Like Holmes*.

Barbara McKuras donated a copy of the article “Arthur Conan Doyle, the Scot Who Created Sherlock Holmes,” which ran in the May/June 2010 issue of *The Highlander, The Magazine of Scottish Heritage*.

Among the many newsletters received were the latest issues of *Foolsap Document*, *Canadian Holmes*, *The Moor*, *The Police Gazette*, *The Footprints & Lens of the Ribston-Pippins*, *Communication No. 298*, *The District Messenger*, *Ineffable Twaddle*, *Camden House Journal*, and *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*. ❧

100 Years Ago...Continued from Page 2

and was intrigued at once. According to G.J. Cubitt years later, "The album gave birth to the idea and he left many drawings about, evidently working out his code and messages." And, of course, when he wrote his story Doyle not only used "dancing men" inspired by G.J.'s work, but indirectly credited the Cubitts for their inspiration by borrowing their name for the central characters, and modeling the name of "Ridling Thorpe Manor" on Ridlington and Edingthorpe, way-stations in Norfolk on the way to Happisburgh.

Cubitt pointed out to Helling that he himself "did not invent secret writing." It is most unlikely that he would have seen the American *St. Nicholas*, but it seems wholly plausible that he would have seen the "Restless Fays" in *Boy's Own* and modeled his dancing men on them – and then Doyle modeled his own dancing men on Cubitt's. It is also thoroughly plausible to think that Cubitt did not recall where his seven-year-old self had gotten the idea. In any event, neither Doyle himself nor young Cubitt had any reason to think that their cipher might be derived from an American magazine of thirty years before. So while the dancing men may very well have been rooted ultimately in the restlessimps, there was no way for Doyle to know this; and when the restlessimps were brought to his attention

by the Eminent Surgeon he must indeed have seen it as coincidence. (Cubitt humorously sent to Cornelius Helling an "autograph" composed of stick figures who form letters with the poses of their bodies. These do not much resemble either Doyle's dancing men or the restlessimps/fays, whereas the latter do resemble each other very much. But it is not at all clear that Cubitt's 1950s figures were intended to reflect the dancing men of the old autograph album, nor that after the lapse of more than half a century Cubitt would have remembered in detail the cipher used by him at the age of seven.)

Actually, the restlessimps/fays themselves were not particularly original. Others have noticed in an 1874 encyclopedia of Freemasonry a "tree alphabet" that somewhat resembled them (and the dancing men), and an "alphabet of Hermes" that resembled them more closely; and a cipher composed of "little figures of men" appears in the 1866 edition of the U.S. Army's "Manual of Signals."

In defense of *The Bookman* itself, it must be said that the magazine seems to have regretted giving a platform to Lyndon Orr and the Eminent Surgeon to vent their nastiness. In its July 1910 issue it printed a letter from the American author Carolyn Wells, who wrote "to protest that most objectionable attitude

of reader to author, where the former, gleefully alert, clutches at any chance to cry, 'Now I've caught you!' and rejoices in the author's supposed discomfiture." "To assume for a moment," said she, "that a man who has invented hundreds of original plots for stories would need to appropriate, stealthily and with criminal intent, an idea from a child's magazine, is ludicrous." "As to the 'curt tone' of Sir Arthur's reply to the 'courteous' letter of warning (!) [emphasis and exclamation point in original], if readers knew the number of letters of warning, criticism, flattery, advice and request that such eminent authors as Sir A. Conan Doyle receive, they would wonder that they are answered at all." "An author has no more time to give away to strangers than any other working-man, and it is therefore in a spirit of righteous indignation that I object to the eminent surgeon's objection to the curtness of the message he received. His apparent doubt of its truth is uninteresting." "Also, as an anatomist, he should surely see that the Restless Imps and the Dancing Men, though similar, are not identical."

It seems appropriate to allow Miss Wells, who herself was to publish more than 70 mysteries and 100 other books, to have the last word. ♣

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For any inquiries contact:

Timothy J. Johnson, Curator
612-624-3552 or
johns976@tc.umn.edu

Sherlock Holmes Collections

Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library
University of Minnesota
222 21st Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
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