

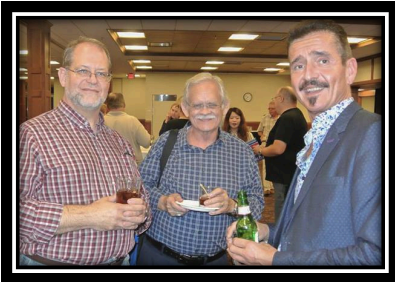


# Plugs & Dottles

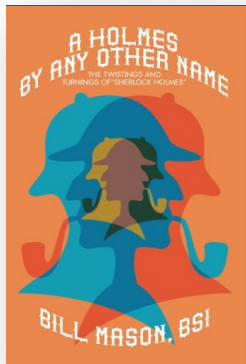
Official Newsletter of the Nashville Scholars  
of the Three Pipe Problem  
4th Quarter OCT-NOV-DEC 2018  
Jim Hawkins & Dean Richardson, Co-Editors

- Established 1979
- Meetings on third Saturday of every month (except Dec.)
- Website: [nashvillescholars.net](http://nashvillescholars.net)
- [Facebook page](#)
- Send comments: [seniorhawk@gmail.com](mailto:seniorhawk@gmail.com) or to [dean.h.richardson@gmail.com](mailto:dean.h.richardson@gmail.com)

The Nashville Scholars scion has been growing recently. In the past year several new members have received their canonical investitures. [See our video](#) with some new faces.



David Marcum, Jim Hawkins, and Charles Prepolec at Gillette to Brett conference.



## Nashville Scholars

40th Anniversary in Four Months -- 19 FEB 2019

“The Nashville Scholars of the Three-Pipe Problem was born a mere 39 years ago on Feb. 19, 1979 and took off quickly due to the enthusiasm of our founder, John Shanks. On Jan. 4, an article with Sherlockian art work by Bob Turner appeared in the *Nashville Tennessean* noting that things were happening all across the nation that week, starting with New York, to celebrate the 125th birthday of Sherlock Holmes on January the sixth.

“At the first meeting on Feb. 19, twenty-six Sherlockians gathered among the pewter and leather of the Cumberland Club and its Old London atmosphere. They had been drawn by a three-inch announcement in the same newspaper. We put our preferred noms (canonical names) and addresses on the register, paid our dues, and received the first newsletter in March.” [Read the full article ([on our website](#)) by charter member, Gael Stahl. The First Quarter (2019) issue of *Plugs and Dottles* will be expanded to cover highlights of the 40 years of our existence.]

Five Nashville Scholars attended the Gillette to Brett V symposium held on the campus of Indiana University the weekend of October 5–7. Jim Hawkins, David Marcum, Bill Mason, Howard Ostrom, and Dean Richardson. Read Dean’s story on the event on page 3. Ostrom had his new publication, *Sherlock Holmes Cyclopedica, Volume 1* for sale, **Sherlock Holmes on Screen 1929-1939**, with hundreds of photos and newspaper clippings filling 92 pages. It was edited by Thierry Saint-Joanis, the man who also manages the [Sherlockian Who’s-Who website](#).

Bill Mason (BSI) publishes a new book!

Sherlock Holmes is one of the most recognizable—and most parodied—names in western literature. Bill Mason, BSI, collects and annotates these parody names, from the first one that appeared in 1891, to the present day. As Mason says in his introduction: One of the great aspects of Sherlock Holmes is the fact that, just as the character himself is subject to endless variation, so is his name. Ellery Queen noted that the name itself “is particularly susceptible to the twistings and mis-shapenings of burlesque minded authors.” Surely, Arthur Conan Doyle, who struggled a little with what he was going to call his detective hero, could not have known just how perfect the name he finally selected—Sherlock Holmes—would be for parody, for rhyme, for the transposing of letters and sounds, for the substitution of suggestive words in the name of a comic character. Mason’s listings are an invaluable resource for the Holmesian scholar, researcher, or for those interested in whiling away a few hours with a delightful and chuckle-inspiring volume. [Order from here](#).



In August we created the **Friends of John Bennett Shaw** Facebook page in an effort to remember and honor the “Johnny Appleseed of Sherlockian Scions.” His library, housed in his home in Santa Fe, was the largest private collection of Sherlockiana and Doyle writings and first editions anywhere. Many young men and women interested in Holmes made their way to see the library and meet John Shaw. As Secretary for the Baker Street Irregulars in the 1970s and ’80s, Shaw had the responsibility of sending replies to anyone writing to the Irregulars. He did not own a computer but typed his letters on an electric Smith-Corona typewriter and averaged 30 letters a month sent all over the world. Mr. Shaw’s investiture in the BSI was “The Hans Sloane of My Age,” a reference to his large collection of volumes about everything Holmesian (as he was fond of saying). He was born in Tulsa, OK, in 1913, attended Notre Dame University, moved to Santa Fe, NM, in 1970, and died at his home in 1994. Please access the [Friends of John Bennett Shaw Facebook page](#).

Featuring Nashville Scholar  
**Thomas Vickstrom.**



Investiture in Nashville Scholars:  
Northumberland.

Occupation: Accountant with  
Nashville’s Hermitage Hotel since  
2003.

Favorite Canonical Stories:  
Red-Headed League, Blue Carbuncle,  
and Man with the Twisted Lip

I was born in Auburn, Massachusetts, and spent a considerable amount of time with family enjoying the outdoors of New England. Hiking and the outdoors continue to be of interest. The hotel business attracted me at an early age as my best friend’s parents happened to own a resort on Cape Cod, where I began summertime work. College education led to an associate degree in Hotel Management at the University of Massachusetts and a bachelor’s degree at Florida International University. Twenty-two years with Sheraton hotels included time spent in Columbus, Ohio; Boston, Massachusetts; Savannah, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Richmond, Virginia; and Nashville. I’ve been with the Hermitage Hotel since 2003, specializing in accounting. Daughter Jamie is a dietician in Alabama, and my wife Wanda is a Nashville native. I especially enjoy ice hockey and studying history.

Featuring Nashville Scholar  
**Victoria Risko Alvarez**



Investiture in Nashville Scholars: VR

Occupation: Professor Emerita,  
Vanderbilt University for 37 years, a  
member of the language, literacy, and  
culture area of the Department of  
Teaching and Learning.

Favorite Canonical Stories:  
Red-Headed League,  
A Scandal in Bohemia

Vicki was the 2011-2012 President of the International Reading Association and a member of IRA’s Board of Directors from 2002 – 2005. A former classroom teacher and reading specialist, Dr. Risko received her B.S. in English and Elementary Education from the University of Pittsburgh, and her M.A. and Ed.D. in Reading Education and Learning Disabilities from West Virginia University.

Vicki’s research focuses on teacher education and professional development, teacher reflection, reading comprehension and meaningful learning, and uses of cases and multimedia environments to enhance learning, especially the learning of diverse and struggling learners.

In November of 2018 Victoria J. Risko, EdD, was inducted into the West Virginia University, College of Education and Human Services Hall of Fame as a Distinguished Alumna.

## From Gillette to Brett V and Back Again

By Dean Richardson

Since 2003 when the first was held, the From Gillette to Brett conference has become an eagerly anticipated event every four years or so for those who enjoy Sherlock Holmes on stage, screen, and radio. Attendees have come to expect a rich variety of speakers and topics along with special screenings of films featuring the Great Detective, and this year did not disappoint. Bill Mason, Jim Hawkins, and I can bear witness to that.

For the third consecutive time, the venue for the conference was the Biddle Hotel on the beautiful Indiana University campus in Bloomington. The opening event once again was a special exhibit on Friday afternoon, October 5, at the Lilly Library on the campus. The library has a remarkable collection of rare books, manuscripts, and related materials, including a Shakespeare folio, first editions of Poe, Hawthorne, et al., letters by Jefferson and Lincoln, John Ford's Oscar for *How Green Was My Valley*, original scripts for *Citizen Kane* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1939), film stills, and a wide variety of other items. In celebration of the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Frankenstein*, the library has a special display of original and early editions of that seminal work and others by Mary Shelly and her parents, William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, as well as rare Victorian works of Gothic horror and the supernatural, and 20th century landmarks in the field such as issues of the pulp magazine *Weird Tales* and books by H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, and others. Surprisingly (at least, to me), there is a letter to Vincent Starrett ("221B," *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*) from Lovecraft, written in the 1920s, praising his mystery and supernatural stories.

Friday evening the IU Cinema on campus showed the delightful comedy *Without a Clue* (1988). Although the print suffered a bit from wear, the audience obviously enjoyed the perfect comic timing and affectionate send-up of the iconic duo, with Watson the true brains of the operation and Holmes actually an actor hired to impersonate the doctor's fictional creation (the conceit of this film). On its thirtieth anniversary the film holds up very well and only makes me dread even more the impending ~~escape~~ release of Will Ferrell's *Holmes and Watson*.

A reception for attendees followed the screening, but I did not make it to that.

Saturday morning began with registration and mobbing of the dealers' room, where many collectibles (books, magazines, comics, posters, jewelry and crafts, but strangely almost no videos) were available for purchase, as well as a display of costumes and other items from Sherlockian theatre and film productions, including *Without a Clue* and the Rathbone series. An autographed program from William Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* was especially notable.

After opening remarks by Steven Doyle and Mark Gagan, organizers of the conference and operators of Wessex Press, the day's program began with a presentation by Nicholas Utechin on the art of Sidney Paget and his influence on stage and screen portrayals of the Great Detective. This was in conjunction with release of Utechin's book collecting all of Paget's art for the Canon, some of it reproduced from the original art. *The Complete Paget Portfolio*, published by Wessex Press, debuted and sold out in the dealers' room before I was even aware of its existence. I hope copies are available again soon.

Ashley Polasek, who "holds a doctorate in the study of Sherlock Holmes on screen" (!), spoke on the ways technology affects adaptation of a literary source. She examined three versions of "The Six Napoleons" (the BBC/Douglas Wilmer [1965], the ITC/Jeremy Brett [1986], and the BBC/Benedict Cumberbatch [2017; retitled "The Six Thatchers"]) and demonstrated how advances in technology progressively expanded the range of portrayal. The large, cumbersome video cameras of the 1960s limited shooting to primarily indoors and long takes, giving the feeling of a stage production. The film cameras used in 1986 liberated shooting setups and locations and increased angles and editing options. *(continued on page 4)*

The digital cameras and range of CGI effects of 2017 distracted from the story. She concluded that the earliest version in many ways was the most faithful because the limitations of technology forced it to rely more heavily on the text.

Next came a real coup: the second showing (after its premier in San Francisco last summer) of the restored (and once thought lost) German silent film *Der Hund von Baskerville* (1929). Steeped in the Expressionism of the time (deep shadows, looming sets, stylized acting), it really brings out the Gothic elements of the source. While not completely intact (a few missing scenes are covered by stills and explanatory intertitles) and changing some character details, it still tells the story well and faithfully. I, for one, was enthralled. The presenter, Glen Miranker, told me that it will be released by Flicker Alley (which also released Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes*) towards the end of this year.

After a lunch break, the program resumed with a video interview by Leslie Klinger with Robert Doherty, creator of and producer and writer for *Elementary*. Over the course of an hour they discussed the origins of the show and Doherty's involvement, the reimagining of the source material, the casting, the story arcs, and the canonical references planted in each episode. A fascinating hour.

Terrance Faherty, a mystery novelist whose latest book is *The True Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, discussed the long partnership of Rathbone and Bruce as Holmes and Watson on the radio throughout the '40s. Then Charles Prepole recounted the production of and Peter Cushing's portrayal in the 1959 Hammer *Hound*.

David Stuart Davies played portions of audio interviews he conducted with Cushing in 1973 and Jeremy Brett in 1994 in which each talked about his feelings about the stories and his approach to interpreting the Great Detective on screen. Unfortunately, the audiocassette quality was poor and portions of each interview were distorted and difficult to understand. Still, it was good to hear what we could.

The final speaker of the day, Jeffrey Hatcher, wrote the screenplay for *Mr. Holmes* (2015). He discussed that, his experiences in theatre, and his newest play, *Holmes and Watson* (unrelated to the looming Will Farrell film), which was being performed in Indianapolis that week. In fact, a special Sunday matinee was offered for attendees as a postscript to the conference. Unfortunately, I could not stay for that.

The conference concluded Saturday night with a showing of the restored Hammer *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959). The packed audience had a rousing good time. It was a fitting end to a weekend of entertainment and enlightenment. I hope there will be another in four years or less. And if it happens, you really should consider attending.



**AN UNWELCOME RETURN**  
**Review: *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (2016)**  
By Bill Mason, BSI

*The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (2016)  
Gooney Film Productions, Released by Alpha Video, 69 minutes  
Produced, written, directed by, and starring Joshua Kennedy

Sherlock Holmes has been depicted in film so often that there is no surprise when any given production might fall short of the mark in atmosphere, characterization, the quality of the acting, production values, writing, cinematography, sound, editing, costuming, or makeup. What makes *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* so remarkable is its ability to fail utterly in every single category.

In a retelling of two of Arthur Conan Doyle's original tales, "The Empty House" and "The Six Napoleons," Joshua Kennedy, who produced, directed and wrote the film and appears himself as Holmes, has delivered what to all appearances is a high school drama club play for a dinner theater attached to the local bowling alley. We are told that *Return* is filmed "in Gooeyscope," apparently another word for a second-rate cell phone camera.

The opening lines of narration ("Sherlock Holmes was dead; this much is certain") are reminiscent of the first words in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* ("Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that"). This is the end of artistic aspirations. After a very brief flashback to the Reichenbach Falls, in which Holmes battles Moriarty (Mark Redfield, in a cameo), the detective makes his return to Baker Street. His unexpected resurrection from the dead causes the fatuous Mrs. Hudson (Amy Zilliax) to faint and Dr. Watson (Bessie Nellis) to knock Holmes down with a fierce punch in the eye.

After explanations are made, Holmes (in dire need of a haircut while wearing sunglasses and a hat belonging on a 1970s-era pimp) and Watson meander around London, finally arriving across the street where they lie in wait for Col. Moran. Holmes congratulates himself on his brilliant creation of a bust in his window at 221B Baker Street (which, from all appearances, is a late 20th Century college dormitory), even though the silhouette resembles Martha Stewart far more than Sherlock Holmes. After Moran shoots the bust (with a blowpipe, rather than an air gun—what a pair of lungs!), he is captured following a struggle with Holmes, even though Moran is twice Holmes's size.

"Months later," with no transition or link to the first half of the film, Holmes is visited by Inspector Lestrade (Jonathan Danziger, in thoroughly distracting cardboard muttonchops that do not even adhere to his face), who comments on the disappearance of the Black Pearl of the Borgias and the seemingly random smashing of miniature busts of Napoleon. Visits to the dealer (in this case, a shop owned by Morse Hudson) and the Burrows Bordello (which calls to mind a set from *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*), the culprit Beppo (Mark Holmes, with no discernable Italian accent) is caught, the pearl is recovered, and the film mercifully ends.

Kennedy is making a career of producing old-fashioned skid row films, such as *Attack of the Octopus People* (2010) and *Slave Girls on the Moon* (2014). Apparently, he fancies himself to be the modern-day successor of Ed Wood, but regrettably does so without possessing a fraction of Wood's "talent." His characterization of Holmes, perhaps intended to be camp, reminds one more of an annoying combination of Barry Goldberg and Doogie Howser than of even a young Sherlock Holmes. (*continued on page 6*)



Nellis as the flat and emotionless Watson, who insists on wearing eyeglasses burdened with a leaden-looking attachment of three magnifying lenses, is surly and contentious and thoroughly unappealing in personality and delivery throughout. In an alarming semi-nude shower scene, she seems to be afflicted with a still-gaping bullet wound in the shoulder. Her chemistry with Holmes is so nonexistent that his veiled suggestion of a sexual relationship (“And now, to bed”) leaves the viewer skeptical at best.

This is a film for completists only. The single virtue of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* might be its ability to lift Matt Frewer from the very bottom of the list of actors in the role of Sherlock Holmes.

(Editor note: You may [view the official trailer here.](#))

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For the first time in his life Billy Fields and his wife Donna will soon be moving from Nashville to rural Tennessee. They will come for visits, but it won't be the same without them around on an “irregular” basis. Thanks for the memories!

	
Otto Penzler with B. Fields	B. Fields at Rockefeller Center
	
With Susan Dahlinger and Gordon Speck	B. Fields with Roger Johnson
	
B. Fields reads Reece Moorehead investiture.	Hawkins and Fields