



Plugs and Dottles

The Nashville Scholars of the Three-Pipe Problem

November 2011

Charter meeting January 1979
Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars
Billy Fields, Chief Investigator
Gael Stahl, Chaplain
Jim Hawkins, Convener
Scholars Home:
<http://www.nashvillescholars.net>

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We encourage and welcome submissions for the newsletter. Send to either editor.

Next Meeting:
Saturday, November 19th at McNamara's Pub
Time: Eat at noon. Meeting to start around 1:00 p.m.
Story: "The Greek Interpreter"
Quizmaster: Dee Raz

Upcoming Meetings:
Saturday, December 10, Noon to 3:00 p.m.
Meet at Derek's for movies "The Blue Carbuncle" (1968) and "The Scarlet Claw" (1944).

Editor's Note

By Kay Blocker

Our story this month is "The Greek Interpreter," in which the world is introduced to Holmes' older (and, as far as we will ever know, only) brother Mycroft. Watson was

perplexed as to why no one seemed to know of Mycroft, thinking, "This was news to me indeed. If there were another man with such singular powers in England, how was it that neither police nor public had heard of him?" Holmes, Watson, and Mycroft meet at Mycroft's Diogenes Club, and Watson offers this description of Mycroft's appearance:

"Heavily built and massive, there was a suggestion of uncouth physical inertia in the figure, but above this unwieldy frame there was perched a head so masterful in its brow, so alert in its steel-gray, deep-set eyes, so firm in its lips, and so subtle in its play of expression, that after the first glance one forgot the gross body and remembered only the dominant mind."



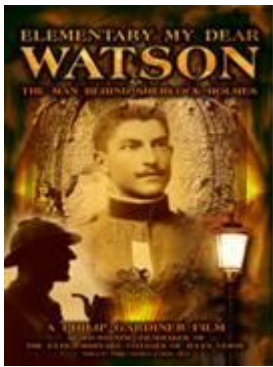
Sidney Paget's drawing captured Mycroft quite well. You can find more information about Paget's drawings at <http://www.bestofsherlock.com/sidney-paget-original-art.htm>.

Just where has Mycroft been all this time? Hey, it's only the 22nd story published (24th if you count the novels, *Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of the Four*), plus it's only two stories away from "The Final Problem" where ACD tried to kill off SH. Mycroft does manage to appear in three more SH stories, "The Final Problem" (1893), "The Empty House" (1903), and "The Bruce-Partington Plans" (1908).

I'm going to say that we outdid ourselves in this newsletter. Dean shares his "Ring of Thoth" quiz from the October meeting and his thoughts on the story. Rachael offers a defense of the 2009 *Sherlock Holmes* movie. And finally, Gael tells us of his friendship with Jack Paget, the nephew of Sidney Paget. *Enjoy!*

Notes on October Meeting

By Kay Blocker



We had a good gathering for the October meeting. During lunch, Jim Hawkins showed clips from the soon-to-be-released DVD, "Elementary, My Dear Watson" by filmmaker Philip Gardiner and author Brian Allen. It focuses on Dr. Watson as the man behind Holmes and is available from Weiner World (<http://www.wienerworld.com/>).

Chief Billy had to leave early so Hawkins took over and started the meeting with a whistle blowing. We went around the room

and gave introductions with our Canonical names.

There was quite a bit of *Show and Tale*. Hawkins passed around his copy of *Longitude* by Dave Sobel. A copy of the November issue of *Guns and Ammo* magazine was passed around (sorry, I couldn't remember who brought it). Jerome had sent an email about this magazine, saying it had an article on the Battle of Maiwand, written by long-time Sherlockian Gary James. The article gets more into the weapons used in the battle, but the author does mention Dr. Watson's part in the battle and gives his own take on his shifting battle wounds. Also in the article is a photograph of the good doctor taken in his later years. Mr. James was a contributor to Leslie Klinger's *Annotated* as an expert on Mr. Holmes' and Dr. Watson's revolvers. Dee Rax told us that *The Murdoch Mysteries* are available on Netflix.

Someone mentioned that there has been a lot of excitement about two new books. *The House of Silk* by Anthony Horowitz (Mulholland) is a new Sherlock Holmes mystery commissioned by the Doyle estate. *On Conan Doyle* by Michael Dirda contains essays, both memoir and appreciation, by this Pulitzer-Prize winning critic and book columnist for the *Washington Post*. As well as the essays on Holmes, Dirda gives us a rare insider's account of the activities and scholarship of The Baker Street Irregulars.

We didn't do much business. Dee Raz volunteered to be quizmaster for November's story, "The Greek Interpreter." Since there is no formal

December meeting, Derek offered to host a movie party on Saturday, December 10th, from noon to 3:00 p.m. There will be a showing of Cushing's "The Blue Carbuncle" (1968) and "The Scarlet Claw" (1944). People can bring snacks.

Quizmaster Dean led us through the discussion of "The Ring of Thoth" with a showing of excerpts from *The Mummy* (1932), pointing out similarities between the movie and the story. The meeting concluded following the quiz.



The Ring of Thoth

A Quiz by Dean Richardson

1. What word best describes John Vansittart Smith's character?
2. In what fields did he excel before focusing on Egyptology?
3. What word best describes his appearance?
4. Whom did he marry?
5. Why did he go to the Louvre?
6. Why did he notice the attendant?
7. Describe the attendant.
8. How did he miss the museum closing time?
9. What did he see when he awoke?
10. Describe the mummy.
11. What does the attendant do then?
12. What does he do with the rings from the exhibit?
13. How does he discover Smith?
14. How does he react to the discovery?
15. Why does he recognize Smith's name?
16. What has happened to the mummy?
17. How does the attendant react?
18. Where does he take Smith?
19. What does Smith see there?
20. Where and when was the attendant, Sosra, born?
21. Who was his father?
22. How has he lived so long?
23. How did he hope to avoid long-term loneliness?
24. What happened to prevent that?

25. Why was Atma reluctant to take the elixir?
 26. How did Atma die?
 27. How did Parmes react?
 28. Why didn't Sosra do the same?
 29. Of what was the ring of Thoth made?
 30. Why did Parmes hide the ring of Thoth?
 31. What happened to Atma's tomb?
 32. What had Sosra done in the centuries since then?
 33. How did he learn of the whereabouts of Atma's mummy, etc.?
 34. How did Sosra become an attendant?
 35. What ultimately happens to Sosra?
8. He fell asleep in a "quiet corner" while taking notes about the papyri he had examined.
 9. The attendant sneaking in with a lamp, taking down a mummy, and unwrapping it.
 10. A perfectly preserved, beautiful woman.
 11. Kisses her lips.
 12. Tests them with something from an earthen pot.
 13. Knocks over pot, spilling the liquid; in cleaning up, he sees Smith.
 14. Says he would have killed him 10 minutes ago; now, Smith should just keep still.
 15. He's read one of Smith's papers; he has a low opinion of it and other modern specialists' work.
 16. Decomposed in the fresh air.
 17. Says it doesn't matter; he's accomplished his goal.
 18. To his sleeping quarters.
 19. Egyptian ornaments and pottery.
 20. Abaris, Egypt, 1600 BC.
 21. Chief priest of Osiris.
 22. Discovered chemical mixture that prolongs life.
 23. Injected a friend, Parmes, to be his companion.
 24. Both fell for Atma, the beautiful daughter of a provincial governor.
 25. She doubted the gods would approve; she wanted to pray about it (Frankenstein theme).
 26. She contracted plague the next day.
 27. Took an antidote he had developed to the elixir so he could die and join her in the afterlife.
 28. Parmes wouldn't share it so he could have Atma to himself.
 29. Platinum.
 30. It contained the antidote.

Answers

1. Ambitious or vain.
2. Zoology, botany, chemistry.
3. Birdlike.
4. A woman specializing in Egyptology.
5. To study its collection for his "magnum opus."
6. He overheard other visitors remarking on the man's unusual appearance, although at first he thought they spoke of himself.
7. Glazed and shiny skin; no pores; many cross-hatched wrinkles; eyes like a snake's, but suggesting power, wisdom, weariness, and despair. (Karloff as Ardath Bey.)

31. Obscured by invading armies and time.
32. Searched for the ring and wandered the earth, waiting for the elixir to wear off.
33. He read of the discovery of the tomb and the removal of artifacts from it; traced them to the Louvre.
34. He convinced the director of the Louvre that he was an expert on Egyptology.
35. Having found the ring, he takes the antidote and dies, holding the mummy.

***Some Notes on
"The Ring of Thoth,"
or "I Want My Mummy"***

by Dean Richardson

Among ACD's supernatural tales are two inspired by Egyptology, or at least Egyptomania: "The Ring of Thoth" (1890) and "Lot No. 249" (1892). They reflect the Western fascination with ancient Egypt that began in the Napoleonic era.

When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, he included among his forces 167 scientists and scholars. While his intentions have been debated (were they for credibility or to indoctrinate the "natives"?), among the results were the discovery of the Rosetta stone and the collecting of artifacts to be shipped back to France. Many of those items, however, were rerouted to England courtesy of the British navy.

Within a few years art and artifacts of ancient Egypt were on display in both the Louvre and the British Museum. They were a revelation to the general public, whose previous perceptions of that culture were largely based on the King James Bible and a few European paintings and

prints. Histories and studies of Egypt began to appear with increasing frequency.

Egyptian style was an influence on nineteenth century art and design. A local example of that impact is the Downtown Presbyterian Church here in Nashville. In 1880 the interior was decorated using Egyptian patterns and images. It is well worth a visit.

This past summer the Tennessee State Museum had an exhibit on Egypt in popular culture, with many items from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries inspired by that interest (furniture, posters, toys, pottery, etc.), as well as reproductions of artifacts and the actual mummy that the Nashville Children's Museum had on display when I was a child (creepy). In October the Frist began an exhibit of authentic Egyptian artifacts on loan from a Memphis (TN) museum.

In literature, the first story in English to reflect the interest was "The Mummy! A Tale of the 22nd Century" by Jane Webb (1827). In this work the mummy is revived via electricity, as is the one in Edgar Allan Poe's "Some Words with a Mummy" (1845). Theophile Gautier's novel *The Romance of the Mummy* (1863) combines a historical setting with a contemporary conclusion in which an archeologist takes the mummy of a queen back to England and falls in love with her as he researches her past.

Another influence (I believe) on Doyle's "Ring" was the legend of the Wandering Jew. The story, originating in thirteenth-century Europe, concerns a Jewish man

who ridiculed Jesus on His way to the cross and so was condemned to walk the earth until the Second Coming. The character wandered through several works of literature in English in the nineteenth century, including Shelley's "Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem" (1813), Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1834), George Macdonald's *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* (1876), and Lew Wallace's *The Prince of India* (1893).

And do we detect in Atma's hesitation about taking the elixir an echo of the other Shelley's *Frankenstein*? (There are things that man was not meant to know.)

In turn, Doyle's Egyptian stories may have been an influence on other tales of mummies that proliferated in turn-of-the-century England, including *Iris, a Mystery* (1896) by Theo Douglas, *The Prince of Gravas* (1898) by Alfred C. Fleckenstein, *An Egyptian Coquette* (1898) by Clive Holland, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) by Bram Stoker, and *The Mummy and Miss Notocris* (1906) by George Griffin.

What surprised me as I first read "The Ring of Thoth" was the number of elements it has in common with the 1931 film *The Mummy*, one of Boris Karloff's best roles. As we saw in our October meeting, Karloff's Ardath Bey strongly resembles the description of Sosra. Several scenes in the movie seem almost lifted from the story, including when Bey is discovered in the museum at night beside his beloved's mummified remains, his telling of his ill-fated love affair, and his decomposing at the climax, much like the princess's mummy in "Thoth." Oh, yes: and Bey attempts to revive the mummy using the "scroll of Thoth," the means of his own revivification at the beginning of the movie. Unlike Sosra, Bey had spent the last several millennia wrapped up in his work.

The use of the scroll could be attributed to Doyle's other Egyptian tale, "Lot No. 429," which we read in October 2004. In that story, an Oxford student keeps a mummy in his room and revives it to do his nefarious bidding by means of a scroll and "dried palmate leaves." When Universal revived (so to speak) the mummy for a series of movies in the 1940s, the scroll of Thoth and "tana leaves" played similar roles.

I can find no direct evidence of these stories' influence on those movies, but I have found that others have also speculated about the connection. It is at least a two-pipe problem, anyway, but don't put those leaves in the pipe.

The Other Side of *Sherlock Holmes* (2009)

by Rachel M. Lundberg

The most common thing I hear about the 2009 *Sherlock Holmes* is that it's "good for what it is." That is to say, it's an entertaining film, but isn't really a "Sherlock Holmes story" as we know it from the canon. It seems to me that the film has been rather ungenerously received by Holmesians, especially when compared to other recent representations of Holmes. Though it is not a canonical adaptation, it still deserves credit as a valid interpretation of the character.

I find it strange that BBC's *Sherlock* has been generally believed to be more faithful to the original stories. I hold that

the two are equal in this respect because they do the same thing: they take the character of Sherlock Holmes and place him in a different type of story. Ritchie's film places Holmes in a blockbusterized version of a traditional mystery, with at least as much action as there is deduction. *Sherlock* transplants him into the present day, where his interactions with the world and with society are substantially changed from how he fits into the Victorian period we are accustomed to seeing him in.

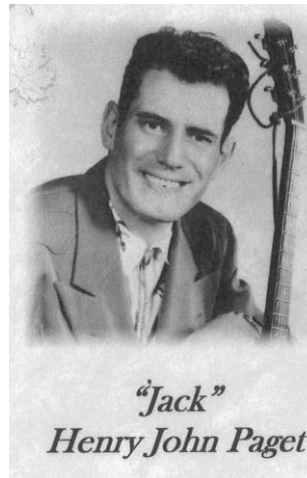
Despite the tweaking of the setting and mode of storytelling, the character remains essentially the same. We see Holmes making use of technology as it is available in the present day; we see him displaying his fighting ability more often in a story where he has more opportunity to do so. The things he does must be different when he is set in a new environment, but there is nothing to really say that this cannot be the character of Doyle's invention.

To me, the changes made by the film and the recent series are equally large, and I see no reason why Ritchie's shift to a more action/adventure-oriented style is any less canonically correct than *Sherlock's* change of time period. It is undeniable that the period Holmes lived in is a large part of what characterizes him and his stories, and we're conscious of this when we watch the BBC series. To describe it to someone, we would not simply call it a Sherlock Holmes show; we would be sure to mention that it takes place in the present. So why do a few fight scenes make us think that the movie is not really "our" Sherlock Holmes, whereas *Sherlock* and many other adaptations that break from Conan Doyle's traditional style get a free pass?

I found *Sherlock Holmes* to be a very enjoyable film and as valid an interpretation as any that departs from the conventions of the canon. I don't just think it's "good for what it is" but is actually good in its own right, without any restrictions. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but I hope that it, and the upcoming *Game of Shadows*, won't be dismissed as un-Holmesian simply because they've been adapted for a wider audience.

*Jack Paget, nephew of Sidney Paget,
died at age 93 in Red Deer, Canada*

by Gael Stahl



In late August of this year of 2011, Philomena Paget, wife of Sidney Paget's nephew Jack Paget, called me. She said Jack had died a year ago and that she was going to sprinkle his ashes that day.

She thought of me and called to ask if I'd like Jack's deerstalker. I said that of course I would but even more would like any texts about Jack, his obituary, his career.

I have a deerstalker and figured Jack's would be as weather-beaten as mine had become over the years, but when it arrived, it was a brown tweed cap that looked brand new. She had bought it for

him on a visit to London in 1986, so he must have kept it in a hat box. She also sent along some photocopies of invaluable material about Jack with some of her notes in the margins.

*Jack's visit to Nashville
in the 1980s or 1990s*

Over the years I've followed Jack's career in bluegrass on many web sites I found online. I wasn't surprised to find how active he was even at an advanced age, as you'll see below. I met him in the late 1980s or early 1990s when he visited Nashville to look up some of his old county-western music buddies, especially his friend Goober with whom he stayed. He got my name from Peter Blau, whom I got to know at many Sherlockian conferences and at New York January weekends when the Baker Street Irregulars celebrate Sherlock Holmes birthday. Once when I was visiting my sister in Washington, DC, we drove over to Blau's Georgetown apartments (one he lived in and an adjoining one he used for his huge Sherlockian collection) to visit and explore his collection.

Jack and I had a great visit out here at our house, and it was an unforgettable day to hear him talk about his uncles, the inimitable *Strand* illustrator Sidney Paget and his artist brother Walter, who modeled Sherlock Holmes for him.

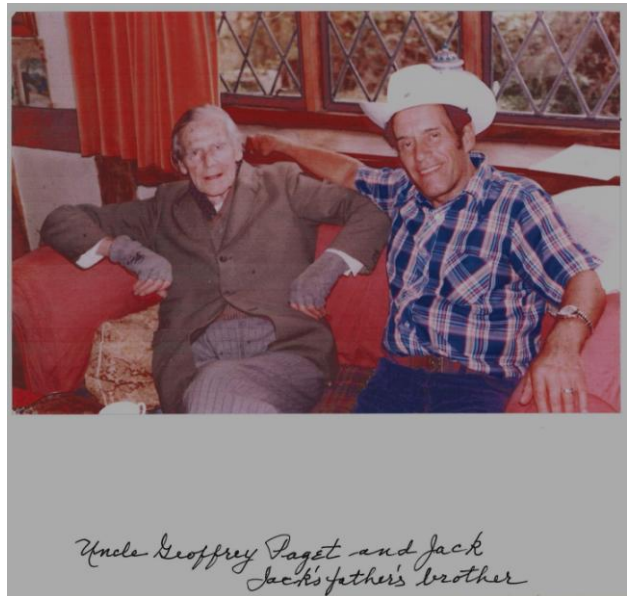
A minute ago I looked up Sidney Paget's siblings online and found that Sidney had at least two artist brothers. Walter Paget was the one whom Doyle and his editor wanted to illustrate the Holmes series because of his good work doing the illustrations for *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island*, the *Arabian Nights*, and *King Solomon's Mines*, and many more. But not remembering Walter's first name, he addressed

it to Mr. Paget, the illustrator. Sidney opened it and took the job. There was a third, older brother who was an artist, Henry Marriott Paget. Among many other assignments, he illustrated Conan Doyle's non-Sherlockian novel, *Micah Clarke*.

Since Jack's full name was Henry John Paget, I have to believe that was Jack's father. John was a popular name among the Paget clan. I don't think Jack ever told me his father's name, though we stayed in contact over the years. My bad for not asking.

Obituary

Henry John "Jack" Paget died last year, August 30, 2010, in Red Deer, Canada, where he and his wife Philomena have lived for many years. He was 93. The next sentence in his obituary is a bit strange: "He loved his wife, his Harley and Cessna 120 (not necessarily in that order)."



*Uncle Geoffrey Paget and Jack
Jack's father's brother*

I have to believe Philomena added that playful parenthesis. I know she picked out his obit photo of him with his guitar in his younger days. She says he'd have appreciated it — "Vanity has no bounds!" The parentheses just begin to indicate his many passionate interests, including people and music. Fixing clocks (the older the better) was what he may have been best known for in Red Deer. He was survived by his devoted wife of 60 years, six months and two weeks, and by his sister Pamela Conroy of British Columbia, and four nieces in British Columbia and Alberta. Preceding him in death were his brother and his brother's wife; son Ian; and his grandniece.

His favorite poem was quoted in the obituary:

LIFE'S CLOCK

*The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just where the hands will stop
At late or early hour.
To lose one's wealth is sad indeed.
To lose one's health is more.
To lose one's soul is such a loss
As no one can restore.
The present only is our own.
Live, love, toil with will,
Place no faith in tomorrow,
For the clock may then be still.*

As Jack had requested, there was no funeral service. Jack's family chose to have a tree planted in his honor in the Parkland Funeral Home and Crematorium Memorial Tree Park in Red Deer County. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Jack's memory were requested for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

Jack's Love for Music

Philomena also sent me a remembrance by Donald Teplyske of Jack entitled "That High Lonesome Sound," from the Waskasoo Bluegrass Music Society, which Jack and Philomena founded in 2000. Jack and Phil were often found sitting down front at Waskasoo concerts. Teplyske wrote of Jack's love for country and bluegrass music and said Jack was a multi-instrumentalist, enlivening Waskasoo jams with his talents on the resonator, banjo, and fiddle. He was an accomplished bassist, and it was on that instrument he found employment on a fill-in basis with Bill Monroe during his time in Nashville in 1957.

Jack liked to tell his music friends stories of the days when he and Philomena were in Nashville and at radio stations across the prairies. It was as Cowboy Jack on DFQC Saskatoon that he impressed his future bride. As Uncle Hiram, he found employment on a traveling Bill Monroe road show. In support of Ray Price he played bass. He counted among his friends Minnie Pearl, Jim Reeves, and Benny Martin, and he traveled the U.S. with Brenda Lee, Pasty Cline, Mel Tillis, the Everly Brothers, and others.

In December 2009, Jack shared his remembrances with Tom Ewing, Bill Monroe's last lead singer. Tom was writing a biography and sought out Jack to flesh out stories from his days with the Father of Bluegrass.

Philomena also sent me a copy of a page from another country music publication that doesn't mention the

music writer's name, but it's a column called "This 'n' That . . ." and remembers several musical personages recently deceased. He says that Jack appeared in a movie with Judy Canova and that he liked country western music, his motorcycle, his plane, his wife, and repairing old clocks. He says that the poem, "Life's Clock," in Jack's obituary is a slight variation from the one the writer's grandmother had framed and hanging in her living room.

Sidney's son John Paget

Philomena also sent a large color photo of Sidney Paget's son the Reverend John Paget with pipe in one hand and a corduroy vest of his father in the other. On the wall behind him is a large Sidney Paget oil painting of great grandfather Robert. Accompanying the color photo is an article about John Paget with the headline: "Sherlock Holmes is going . . . going . . . gone!" The article notes that John has his Uncle Walter's lean aquiline looks, and with a deerstalker on his head and a penetrating stare through a magnifying glass John would bring to life his father's characteristic drawings of Sherlock Holmes.

The article says that the 75-year-old John Paget sold at Sotheby's his father's memorabilia that he used to illustrate the Holmes stories in *Strand* magazine. Rev. John expected to make \$3,800 from the collection but took in \$21,582. He sold a moth-eaten dressing gown, a magnifying glass, a riding crop, and furniture Paget used to model Holmes' possessions. He also sold a drawing of Holmes and Watson next to the body of the hound of the Baskervilles, a head-and-shoulder portrait of Holmes, and a silver cigarette case that was

a wedding present to Sidney Paget from Conan Doyle inscribed "From Sherlock Holmes."

The Three Pipe Problems will toast Jack at upcoming Nashville Scholars meeting

Incredibly, Philomena also sent a check in U.S. dollars so that we could have a meal on Jack but which is being used to buy drinks at our meetings to toast the life and loves of Jack and his great uncles. So the next time you're at the pub, I hope you order up and put on my tab your drink of choice to salute this great man and his fun-loving wife who so misses the man she lived with and traveled with for going on 63 years. To his life and her health!

Finis

November 16, 2011