



Plugs & Dottles

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Jim Hawkins & Dean Richardson, Co-Editors

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- Website:
nashvillescholars.net
- [Facebook page](#)
- Send comments:
seniorhawk@gmail.com



Shannon Carlisle of the
Junior Sherlockian Society

A quote from our interview with
Mattias Boström, on page 2.

"But I of course had one main goal with the book. It was very much on my mind during the spring 2012—to build bridges between new and traditional Sherlockians, to show that we are all part of the same history. That was why I wanted to tell a story that went all the way from the "Beeton's" to the Babes."

The Junior Sherlockian Society

Submitted by Shannon Carlisle

On August 9th, the 221st day of this year, the Beacon Society proudly launched the **Junior Sherlockian Society**. The society invites children and youth to complete Junior Sherlockian Training—an in-depth study of Sherlock Holmes's character traits, observational skills, capacity for critical thought, and inductive and deductive reasoning. During the online training, Junior Sherlockians-in-Training complete the 2-2-1-b tasks, two to explore, two to experience, and one to extend their understanding and appreciation of the great detective. Upon completion of the tasks and submission of "training evidence," a certificate of completion is granted so that they can "b" recognized.

Andrew Solberg encouraged the formation of a Sherlockian society for children and youth, and many other notable Sherlockians assisted in the development of the 2-2-1-b tasks. For example, Junior Sherlockians-in-Training may choose to:

- Be introduced to Sherlock Holmes's creator, "The Grand Game," and Sherlockians by reading "The World of Sherlock Holmes" essay by Francine Kitts.
- Review Sherlock Holmes's resume created by Dr. Marino Alvarez. If Sherlock Holmes had to apply for his position as a consulting detective, what background information, skills, and talents would his resume reveal?
- Read Susan Diamond and Francine Kitts's analysis of the language, imagery, and structure of "221B," by Vincent Starrett, and complete a word search of the most prominent words in the poem.
- Read *Baker Street Elementary* comics by Joe Fay, Steve Mason, and Rusty Mason. The comic strip chronicles Sherlock Holmes and John Watson's adventures if they had attended the same grade school.
- Read "10 Rules for Writing a Sherlockian Pastiche," by children's pastiche writer Derrick Belanger, and then write one of their own.
- Retell "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" using Chris Schweizer's paper dolls to someone who has not had the opportunity to read about "the whimsical, little incident."

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Mattias Boström talks about writing **From Holmes to Sherlock ...**

Q: Are you a writer by trade? Can you give us some background?

A: Actually, writing is just a hobby. I'm working as a production manager for one of Sweden's biggest independent book publishers, which is also the publishing company that published the Swedish original edition of *From Holmes to Sherlock* in 2013. I've been in the publishing business for more than 20 years, and I've always had a huge respect for writers and what they do. For a long time I had no wish at all to become a writer myself; others could do that better than me. The first books I wrote were humorous gift books on different subjects, and then I teamed up with two friends and wrote two books on Swedish popular culture. Simultaneously I started putting together sudoku books. I'm good at making books—and I use that skill in different kinds of projects. But it wasn't until *From Holmes to Sherlock* that I started thinking of myself as a writer (at which time I had already published some twenty other books).

Q: There are many fan clubs associated with literary figures. Why focus on the Holmes phenomenon? Have you been a lifelong fan of Conan Doyle and his literary hero?

A: I started reading Sherlock Holmes when I was ten years old, and six years later I became a Sherlockian, during the centenary year 1987. I loved the quasi-academical side of Sherlockian scholarship—and that in combination with the fact that I loved the stories made it easy for me to become a totally devoted Sherlockian. And the playfulness and friendliness among the Sherlockians made me stay.

Q: Obviously, you've been at this research for years. I can't imagine the countless emails you must have sent to Sherlockians all over the world. It reminds me of the letters from around the world John Bennett Shaw had piled high on his desk in Santa Fe. Was your membership in the Baker Street Irregulars helpful in putting the pieces of this story together?

A: I don't think my membership in the BSI was the most important factor in getting the information I needed, but it was through the BSI that I got to know so many knowledgeable Holmes and Conan Doyle experts, and since they nowadays are my friends, it was quite an easy task corresponding with these friends, searching for the right person with the right knowledge. *From Holmes to Sherlock* is really a team effort—so many Sherlockian friends have helped me, and Steven Rothman (the *Baker Street Journal* editor) and Morgan Malm (Sweden's most knowledgeable Sherlockian) more than anyone else.

(Continued on next page)

It would have been totally impossible to write this book without the help from all these persons. Regarding my research, I actually only spent a year researching and writing the original Swedish version, and then half a year extra to revise the book for the US edition. I had quite little use of the knowledge I had from all my years as a Sherlockian—the facts and stories I needed were so much about persons in the Sherlockian history, and I had read very little about that. So the first thing I did was spend three months just ordering books and searching for articles—often biographical information that had very little to do with Sherlock Holmes.

Q: Were you able to do most of your research from home, or did you travel extensively to get the answers you sought? Surely there were key librarians who gave you priceless information on sources.

A: I only traveled once during my research and that was to Portsmouth, where the late Richard Lancelyn Green's collection is located and available for anyone who wants to study the contents of 900 archive boxes. I had been searching for material about Adrian and Denis Conan Doyle, because that was so important to my story, and Steve Rothman told me that Richard had bought a lot of Adrian/Denis documents on auctions—now to be found in Portsmouth. And what I was able to study there was astonishing: thousands of pages with Conan Doyle estate business documents from 1930 to 1980, and pretty much every single letter Adrian ever wrote to Denis, and much more. That became the core of my book—and very little of it had ever been mentioned in print before.

We already knew so much about Conan Doyle's life, but we knew very little about how everything was interconnected after his death, how the estate was in the center of five decades of Sherlock Holmes productions, ruling over everything—or, at least, that is what they wanted to do. There were so many threads in the Conan Doyle estate story, and I felt, long after the book was published, that the Portsmouth documents weren't enough, and I needed to add further research in other archives—all of which wasn't done until last year, when I prepared the English edition.

Now, with two young daughters in the house, I no longer had any possibility to travel to the archives. Instead I had good help from new and old friends. Uwe Sommerlad visited the German Film Archive in Frankfurt, in order to go through documents regarding *Sherlock Holmes und das Halsband des Todes* (the [1962] film with Christopher Lee as Sherlock Holmes), and Tamar Zeffren went to an archive at the New York Public Library to check the correspondence concerning the 1960s Broadway musical *Baker Street*. It wasn't until I had that research material that I understood how closely the Conan Doyle estate had been working with the Holmes productions of the 1960s, and I also understood the extreme importance of Henry E. Lester, the man who ran most of the estate business.

Other friends, like Dana Cameron and Luke Benjamin Kuhns, went to other archives and libraries and checked important stuff. Furthermore, both in 2012-2013 (for the Swedish edition) and in 2016 (for the revised English edition) Julie McKuras and Tim Johnson helped me on numerous occasions with material in the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota; and Peggy Perdue at the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at Toronto Public Library helped me, too, plus all the help I got from even more archives with questions I had and material I searched for. There is so much archival material out there that almost no one has ever looked at.

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Q. Tell us about the process of translating the book into English.

A. When I originally researched all the sources, I didn't really have an English translation in mind. I translated all the quotes I needed, and I wrote texts in Swedish that would describe the essence of the facts in the sources. When I later was working with an English translator, I had to put together a long document with all the original quotes, and also single words from the sources, so they were used in the same way as in the sources. It wasn't always easy to find all these things again, even if I had kept notes on my sources.

Often, I had worked with three sources simultaneously, maybe picking up one word here and one phrase there and mixing them in Swedish, but in English I had to find the exact original words, especially if I'm describing Conan Doyle's thoughts on a certain subject. This is a book that really should have been written in English from the start, but since it wasn't, I had to avoid a translation of a translation. Fortunately, I paid for the translation myself—usually the foreign publisher takes care of that—which meant that I was in total control of everything and I had plenty of time editing and adding whatever I wanted.

Q. What would you like to see this book accomplish? What would make you really happy going forward after these years of research and hard work?

A. The only thing I really wanted with the English translation of the book was to give my Sherlockian friends—especially those who had helped me writing the book—a chance to read it. I had been talking so much about the book for so long, so it was only fair that I provided a translation. But I of course had one main goal with the book. It was very much on my mind during the spring of 2012—to build bridges between new and traditional Sherlockians, to show that we are all part of the same history. That was why I wanted to tell a story that went all the way from the *Beeton's* to the Babes. At that point I had no idea that my book would include so much previously unknown information. The only thing I knew was that I would tell the same story as many others already had done, but in a new way—the chronological way. It was as simple as that. That way I could show how different persons had influenced each other—e.g., how a play influenced a radio show. In other general nonfiction books on Holmes, plays and radio shows were always separated in different chapters, so you could never understand how they were connected.

(Jim Hawkins is most grateful to Mattias Boström for this interview.)



(Junior Sherlockian article continued from p. 1.)

- Read issues of *Baker Street Elementary's* "The Life and Times in Victorian London," by **Joe Fay**, **Liese Sherwood-Fabre**, **Rusty Mason**, and **Steve Mason**, to learn more about 19th century England.

Encourage children and youth to participate in the training. A promotional poster and bookmarks may be accessed at JuniorSherlockian.com/resources. Also, plan to join the Junior Sherlockian Society's Facebook page at Facebook.com/JuniorSherlockian. The page was developed to connect and resource friends of the Junior Sherlockian Society.

Two Nashville Scholars presented highly original papers at the September meeting. Space does not permit full publication, but please follow these links to those presentations by

Dr. Marino Alvarez:

[The Socio-Economic Status of Clients Who Visit 221B](#)

and

Thomas Vickstrom:

[Horse and Carriage Days in Sherlock Holmes Times.](#)

AT OUR NEXT NASHVILLE SCHOLARS MEETING

The Spirit Is Willing: Doyle's Fantastic Stories

by Dean Richardson

"No ghosts need apply." — Sherlock Holmes, "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire"

Arthur Conan Doyle was first and foremost a great storyteller, and he loved all kinds of stories: mystery, historical adventure, ships and sailing, humor, sports, romance, drama, fantasy, science fiction, horror, supernatural. The brilliant creation of Sherlock Holmes forever branded him a detective story writer in the public consciousness, but he struggled with that typecasting throughout his writing career. And while the supremely logical Great Detective rejected the supernatural, his creator embraced it from his earliest writings to his last, most notoriously in his works on spiritualism and fairies.

Certainly he flirted with the supernatural in some of the canonical works. An air of the uncanny permeates "The Speckled Band," "The Musgrave Ritual," *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, "The Devil's Foot," and "The Sussex Vampire." However, in every case there is a logical, natural, even mundane explanation. Perhaps Doyle felt that the supernatural would dilute or impede the effectiveness and impressiveness of Holmes's deductions.

For thirteen years now we Three-Pipe Problems have been taking a break from the Canon in October to sample the range of Doyle's tales of the supernatural (see list below). Even that somewhat random selection reflects the range of his interests. "The Captain of the Polestar" was inspired by his time as a ship's doctor in the arctic. "The Bully of Brocas Court" reflects his interest in boxing. "Lot No. 249" and "The Ring of Thoth" show his interest in history, archaeology, and the then-public fascination with ancient Egypt. Both science fiction and spiritualism, as well as humor, figure into "The Great Keinplatz Experiment."

In fact, perhaps "supernatural" is too limiting a term. Recent collections of these stories have included "weird," "imaginative," or "gothic" in their subtitle. Rather like "film noir," the stories encompass a wide range of genres and reflect more an attitude and style. And they span Doyle's career and inform his canonical works. (Frequently the story is related in the first person; often the protagonist or narrator is a doctor or medical student; sometimes the key character is on the verge of or driven to madness.) Another apt title for these stories might be "The October Country," as Ray Bradbury titled one of his best collections.

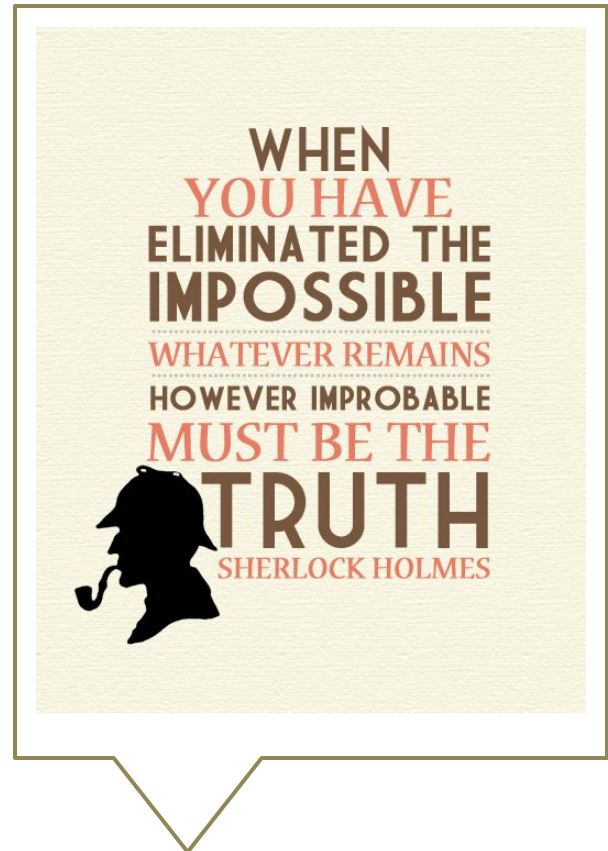
This year's October offering is one of the earliest known of ACD's literary efforts. "The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe" was written about 1877, when Doyle was 18, and submitted to *Blackwood's Magazine*, a major publisher of popular short stories at the time. (*The Strand* would debut in 1891.) It was never published but languished in the magazine's archives until its rediscovery and publication as a limited-edition booklet in 2001. Doyle did reuse the location name in his humorous short story, "Selecting a Ghost" (1883), which was also published as "The Ghosts of Goresthorpe Grange" and "The Secret of Goresthorpe Grange."

This first "Grange" exhibits many of the elements (OK, clichés) of the standard ghost story and of the beginning writer. A creepy, haunted house, protagonists taking bad risks, ghosts, and the reenactment of a crime all figure here. But also much in evidence are a strong narrative sense, vivid and atmospheric descriptions, good pacing, and interesting characters. In short, here we see a great storyteller warming up and giving the reader more than a chill or two.

Three-Pipe Problem October Doyle Stories

- 2004 "Lot No. 249" (1892)
- 2005 "The Bully of Brocas Court" (1921)
- 2006 "The Brown Hand" (1899)
- 2007 "The Terror of Blue John Gap" (1910)
- 2008 "The Brazilian Cat" (1898)
- 2009 "J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement" (1884)
- 2010 "John Barrington Cowles" (1886)
- 2011 "The Ring of Thoth" (1890)
- 2012 "Playing with Fire" (1900)
- 2013 "The Captain of the *Polestar*" (1883)
- 2014 "The Leather Funnel" (1903)
- 2015 "The Silver Hatchet" (1883)

- 2016 "The Great Keinplatz Experiment" (1885)
- 2017 "The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe" (c. 1877)



The saga of Sherlock Holmes began in 1887 with the publication of "A Study in Scarlet" in *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, a story Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle sold the copyright to Ward, Lock, and Co. for £25.

There was a time in my life which I divided among my patients and my literature...It is hard to say which suffered most. Arthur Conan Doyle