

The Pleasant Places of Florida
Presents

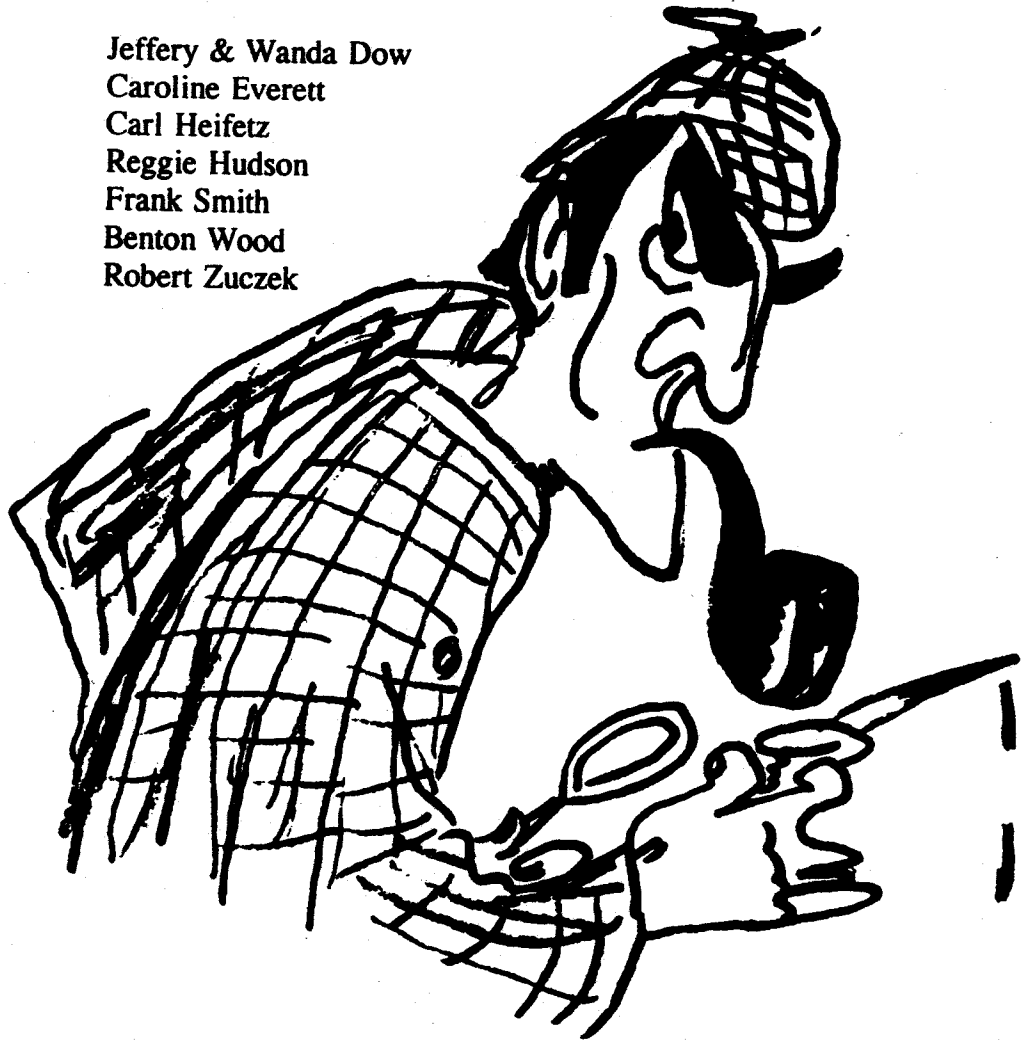
The Calendrical Canon

with
HOLIDAYS HOLMESIAN

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1996

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INTRODUCTION by Carl L. Heifetz

It is December 27. The excitement of Christmas has now faded into the languorous days that fill the interim preceding the New Year. The tree is resplendent in the living room in the far corner diagonally opposite the crackling fireplace. The train set is now unattended except for the miniature figures that populate the surrounding village. All of the discarded wrapping paper has been cleared away and the contents neatly stowed in the proper toy chests. A gentle snow outside the window can be barely perceived through the lacy handiwork left by Jack Frost during the night, and sleigh bells are faintly heard over the sound coming from the family room. There, several figures can be seen cuddled on the floor leaning against the overstuffed sofa. The largest figure is that of Grandpa, his neatly cut white hair and beard set off on top by the deerstalker cap perched gently on his head, and the new red and green turtle neck sweater, bearing leather patches on the elbow. Under his left and right arms rest, respectively, the twin nine year old grandchildren Tommy and Tammy. On Grandpa's lap, quietly sleeping, is the baby, and at his feet in placid and comfortable repose is the family spaniel, Topper. All eyes are focused on the giant television screen in front of them as they watch together, in the annual renewal of their family custom, the marvelous Christmas classic unfold before their eyes.

Let us now shift the scene to Grandma's warm, enormous kitchen, filled with the delicious, fragrant odors of turkey hash simmering for dinner. Sitting around the large oval table that has been passed down through several generations are the two teenaged grandchildren - Bobby and Bonnie, who have joined Grandma, Mom, and Dad at a late breakfast. The conversation has drifted to a discussion of the same well-remembered tale and the impact that it has had on their lives over the years. How the attempt to reunite Mr. Baker with his abandoned goose and hat led, via a goose's crop, to the discovery of the criminal who stole the remarkable and singular blue gem.

Yes, you perceived correctly. They were all renewing their acquaintanceship with *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*. As originally suggested by Christopher Morley himself, this is a perfect way to observe the spirit of the Christmas. We tell and retell the kind acts of the commissioner Peterson who first rescued Henry Baker from the Tottenham Court Road loungers and then his desire, via the assistance of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, to locate the rightful owner of the goose and hat which were abandoned during the skirmish. This parable is then climaxed by the spirit of forgiveness displayed by Mr. Holmes when he allowed the novice thief John Ryder to "go forth and sin no more."

Can there be any better way to mark holidays and special occasions than by passing on the lore of the Canon to our heirs and offspring? This is a Sherlockian imperative paralleling the words of an even more ancient canonical tradition "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." How can we, as a Sherlockian scion assist in this effort? In response to this urgent need, the Pleasant Places of Florida, a corresponding scion of the Baker Street Irregulars, have put together a document that spells out the adventures to be read and studied at different special occasions, giving an appropriate rationale for each selection.

In this brochure you will find several narratives by members of the Scion elaborating on their choice of adventures that are recommended for study on several major holidays. In addition, we have supplied a calendar of special occasions, or **HOLIDAYS HOLMESIAN** (1996 dates) with our recommendations of suggested reading throughout the year.

There are, of course, many accepted schedules by which Sherlockians make their annual trip through the Canon. Some prefer to follow a chronological approach and read the adventures in the time sequence that they actually occurred in. A classical means of fulfilling this approach is by a careful reading of the magnificent tome *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* by William S. Baring-Gould. Others prefer to read the stories in the order in which they were published, using as a text the "Doubleday" edition of *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* with its outstanding introduction by the father of us all, Mr. Christopher Morley. In this way, one can follow the development of the characters as literary figures. Isn't it fun to pretend that the narratives were actually written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D. in the sequence in which they were revealed to the public? For those who would like to better understand the Canon and its Victorian roots, *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes* is recommended. And electronically, to those of us who have nothing better to do than communicate via e-mail, the "Hounds of the Internet" provides another very useful service. At the beginning of each week, we are assigned an adventure for study and scholarly discourse.

Whether you choose to perform your annual trip through the Canon by the calendrical means we suggest in this document, or by whatever method has been most rewarding to you, we all welcome your input, comments, suggestions, and **most of all your purchase of this guide.**



MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY by Bob Zuczek (January 15, 1996)

Today is a day we honor an American who sacrificed his life to help achieve his dream of ending racial discrimination in America, thus enabling all Americans to move forward into a new age of understanding and tolerance of people who are different from themselves. When we think of those turbulent years in the 1950s and 1960s, we are reminded of bombing and civil rights marches that often ended in violence and arrests.

In *The Yellow Face*, A. Conan Doyle and his character Grant Munro show us a different aspect of racial intolerance. In this story, there is no actual crime of any sort. This is a mystery between a husband and wife that had at its core Effie Hebron Munro's overwhelming dread of the racial intolerance and social stigma of her previous interracial marriage. If any lesson is to be learned by us, I think it was best said at the end of the story when he lovingly picked up the child, kissed her, and said to his wife, "I am not a very good man Effie, but I think I am a better one than you have given me credit for being." Perhaps after reading *The Yellow Face* on this day, we may all have to reflect on how we measure up with Mr. Grant Munro, truly a better man than he was given credit for being.

APRIL FOOL'S DAY by Carl L. Heifetz (April 1, 1996)

This is the day to play tricks on people - innocent practical jokes whose major effect is a mild degree of inconvenience or discomfort. It is indeed a treat to sucker somebody in with a carefully planned subterfuge to be followed triumphantly with the exclamation of "April Fool!" On other days we substitute the equivalent punctuating exclamation of "Gotcha!" During his active practice, Sherlock Holmes had many occasions to say "gotcha!," but he always expressed himself in a much more erudite and prolonged manner. Classic cases of "April Fool's" are Sherlock Holmes' successful portrayal of a nonconformist clergyman to obtain the trust of Irene Adler in *A Scandal of Bohemia*, tricking her into revealing the secret location of her photograph taken with the foolish hereditary King of Bohemia. Mr. Holmes' "gotcha" was short lived, however. Ms. Adler's counter-deception, posing as a young man to wish Mr. Holmes a good night, was only a prelude to her counter-"gotcha" when Sherlock Holmes and his entourage found, the next morning, that instead of a triumphant tour de force, all was gone - lock, stock, and photograph. Irene Adler (now Norton) and her incriminating evidence of the King's former indiscretions were irretrievably lost. Isn't this a great story to read and reread over and over, to learn the lessons on humility and turnabout as fair play? But, you might have a little difficulty explaining to the children what an "adventuress" is. Let's give this story a PG rating.

Many other gotcha's abound in the Canon. In the *Red Headed League*, John Clay received his "April Fool" as he emerged from his hole in the floor to find Sherlock Holmes and assembled cast laying in wait. Colonel Moran was surprised in *The Adventure of the Empty House*, the snake in *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*, Mr. Percy "Tadpole" Phelps' in finding his *Naval Treaty* in the breakfast dish, Trelawney Hope in finding the missing letter still in its case in *The*

Adventure of the Second Stain, and Mr. Hugo Oberstein in being taken into custody after being lured into the smoking room of the Charing Cross Hotel in *The Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans*, and many other cases throughout the writings.

GOOD FRIDAY by Reggie Hudson (April 5, 1996)

What is the supreme moment of sadness in the Sherlock Holmes stories? Is it when we read the last story of the Canon, knowing that there are no more, when we read of the retirement of Mr. Holmes, or when we turn to a story bearing the title *His Last Bow*? I suggest that the saddest moment occurs on reading the *Final Problem*. The story's ending appears truly final with Watson's "best and the wisest man whom I have ever known" going over the Reichenbach Falls with his greatest enemy, Professor Moriarty. Even knowing that Mr. Holmes, in three years time, will rise again scarcely reduces the story's impact. For Sherlockians raised within the Christian tradition this story, more than any other, is the one to be identified with Good Friday.

EASTER by Wanda Dow (April 7, 1996)

Easter is a time of rejoicing. We celebrate it because it marks the rising from the dead of Jesus Christ. What better time then to read *The Adventure of the Empty House*? In this adventure, we are treated to the return of Sherlock Holmes, believed by the world to be dead after his battle with the evil Professor Moriarty at the Falls of Reichenbach.

Jesus had told his disciples that upon his death he would rise from the grave in three days to live again. To insure that the disciples would not go to the tomb and steal the body with the intention of telling everyone that their Lord had arisen, the chief priests and Pharisees had temple guards stationed at the tomb. On the third day, when the angel of the Lord came down from heaven, the guards shook with fear and fainted. The women, who had come to the tomb that morning, were frightened, but also filled with joy to learn that Jesus was no longer there. Later, He appeared to two disciples who were walking to Jerusalem, but they did not recognize him at first because He had changed his appearance.

Watson's reaction upon seeing Holmes is nonrecognition due to the fact that the latter had disguised himself as a strange old book collector. Later, when Holmes removed his disguise, Watson stared at his friend in great amazement. A gray mist swirled before his eyes and he fainted. Upon coming to his senses, he told Holmes that he is "overjoyed" to see him. Watson also gripped Holmes by the arms twice to verify that his old companion was indeed alive and in the flesh. Jesus told his disciples to touch him and make sure that he is not a ghost when they become frightened at his appearance. Watson asked Holmes how he was able to get out of "that awful abyss," and in the telling, Holmes stated: "Halfway down I slipped, but, by the blessing of God, I landed, torn and bleeding upon the path." Jesus arose from the dead after being brought down from the cross, torn and bleeding, and placed in a tomb that was sealed with a rock and guarded by temple police.

Hallelujah, Christ arose. And God bless Sherlock Holmes for returning to keep all of England on the path of Righteousness. Amen.

VETERAN'S DAY by Bob Zuczek (November 11, 1996)

Veteran's Day is also known as Armistice Day and Remembrance Day in Canada. On this day, as the name implies, we pay a special tribute to the men and women who have served their country in the armed forces. Unlike Memorial Day, in which we remember those veterans who have died, Veteran's Day is a celebration of the sacrifice and sense of duty that mark military service personnel. Although these individuals may have never seen combat, they all share the loss of leaving homes and loved ones behind in line of duty, often confronting loneliness on a foreign shore, disease, and the discipline of military service.

The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier not only vividly illustrates many of the conditions veterans may have had to endure, but also the comradeship all veterans must have experienced at one time or another. In this adventure, young James Dodd is seeking to find his friend, Godfrey, who saved his life by "...pulling me out from under the Boer rifles." When meeting opposition from his friend's father, Dodd engages the services of Sherlock Holmes to ensure the return of Godfrey's security and freedom. This type of selfless concern for a comrade touches the heart of each veteran. Therefore, when reading *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier*, let those of us who are veterans remember those special friends with whom we shared the rigors of military life so long ago.

PEARL HARBOR DAY by Bob Zuczek (December 7, 1996)

On December 7, 1941, America was attacked at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, causing thousands of American casualties and launching this country into World War II. Many years after this event, some very disturbing facts are now known or alleged:

- America had for some time been able to decipher the enemy naval codes.
- Some American personnel had known of the impending air attack.
- This information was not communicated to American military personnel at Pearl Harbor.

The reason? The apparent need to retain "secrecy!"

In *The Adventure of the Dancing Men*, we also see a number of the same elements, also resulting in tragedy for Mr. Hilton Cubitt, and yes, even Abe Slaney. Elsie Cubitt could indeed decipher the code that so concerned her husband, leading to his consultation with Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Her perceived need for secrecy kept her from revealing Abe Slaney's presence. Had Hilton Cubitt known of the nature of the threat, would he have taken a different course of action? Rather than taking a revolver into his drawing room on that fateful night, perhaps the police or Sherlock Holmes would have been there instead, to trap the dangerous felon as they did later.

The very person who could have avoided this tragedy lived in his very house, yet chose to remain silent and waited for events to unfold around her. After reading *The Adventure of the Dancing Men* on this Pearl Harbor Day, perhaps we might reflect on how our often perceived need for secrecy can affect not only our personal life but also our relationship with neighbors, business associates, and yes, even our government.



The Pleasant Places of Florida

**HOLIDAYS HOLMESIAN
SUGGESTED CANONICAL READING LIST**

*by Jeffery and Wanda Dow, Caroline Everett, Frank Smith,
Benton Wood, Bob Zuczek, and Carl L. Heifetz*



January 1: NEW YEAR'S DAY

As the New Year commences, we canonically remember the new relationship which started on this very day, back in 1881, when young Stamford introduced Watson to Holmes at St. Bart's Hospital in *A Study in Scarlet*. We may additionally commemorate this occasion by reading *The "Gloria Scott"*, Mr. Sherlock Holmes' very first case. This is both an excellent way to begin the year on a proper footing and, at the same time, avoid all of the football games on television.

January: NATIONAL EYE HEALTH CARE MONTH

Does *The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez* come to mind? Remember, if Dr. Doyle had been more successful as an ophthalmologist, he may have not had the time to discover the literary talents of fellow physician Dr. John H. Watson.

January 3-9: NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING WEEK

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, many methods are used to discover the true facts of the case, i.e., footprints, autopsy, the interviewing of numerous witnesses, typewriter comparison, and several other methods that the reader will discover. *The Adventure of the Resident Patient* further reveals Sherlock Holmes masterful ability to recreate criminal events from subtle clues left at the crime scene.

January 6: 12TH NIGHT, or the FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

On this occasion, Tarpon Springs, Florida (in Pleasant Places of Florida Territory) becomes the focal point for all local residents, especially those of Greek ancestry. The days and night are filled with many significant religious and cultural events: solemn services at the Greek Orthodox Church, festive parties, traditional Greek food and folk dancing, and the Blessing of the Fleet. The activities culminate in the highly publicized retrieval of the cross from its watery destination, by one of the valiant young men of the local community, after it has been blessed and tossed by the Archbishop. To celebrate

this occasion, we suggest that you read *The Greek Interpreter*. It is a time for Mr. Melas to count his blessings for a continuation of his life and to honor the memory of his compatriot whom he so valiantly sought to save from imprisonment and death.

January 6: SHERLOCK HOLMES BIRTHDAY

Sherlock Holmes quotes Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in two adventures - *The Adventure of The Empty House* and *The Adventure of the Red Circle*. He authored *The Lion's Mane* and *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier*.

January 15: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

In *The Yellow Face*, Grant Munro rises to the occasion by demonstrating his complete acceptance of his wife's racially mixed child.

January 15: NATIONAL HANDWRITING ANALYSIS WEEK

In the *Reigate Puzzle*, Sherlock Holmes' analysis of a torn note led him to the murderer of William Kirwin.

January 17: ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE VOYAGE

The Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans.



February 4-10: NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

In the *Red Headed League*, Sherlock Holmes prevented the theft of the French gold stored in the vaults of the Coburg Branch of the City and Suburban Bank, and in *The Adventure of the Empty House*, Holmes prevented his own murder by doing his own "neighborhood watch."

February 11: THOMAS EDISON'S BIRTHDAY

Thomas Edison's invention of recorded music was instrumental in bringing *The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone* to a successful conclusion.

February 12: MYCROFT HOLMES' BIRTHDAY

Sherlock Holmes' elder brother appears in two cases - *The Greek Interpreter* and *The Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans* (they are both good stories worth reading again).

February 12: WORLD MARRIAGE DAY

After you have finished celebrating Mycroft Holmes' birthday, turn your attention to the anticipated marriage of the wicked Baron Gruner and Violet De Merville in *The Adventure of the Illustrious Client*, and the dastardly murderous attack upon Sherlock Holmes. Alternative or additional readings are *The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor*, *A Scandal in Bohemia*, *The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist*, and *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*.

February 14: VALENTINE'S DAY

A Scandal in Bohemia - Other than detective work, Holmes' only love, "The Woman," is met in this story. Also, let us not forget that Dr. Watson met the love of his life and bride to be in *The Sign of Four*.

February 18-24: NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK

What could be more appropriate than *The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb*?

February 24: GREGORIAN CALENDAR DAY

The dating of *Wisteria Lodge* by good old Dr. Watson has led to great confusion among chronologists of the Canon. Perhaps he should have consulted a calendar before trying to give the date of this adventure, March of 1892, at a time when we all know that Mr. Holmes was missing and presumed to be dead. Or was he?

**March 1: NATIONAL FEMININE EMPOWERMENT MONTH**

Isadora Klein was an empowered and independent woman for her time in *The Adventure of the Three Gables*. She went to great lengths to remain that way.

March 3: FLORIDA STATEHOOD DAY (1845)

Also the month of the founding of the distinguished Sherlockian organization the Pleasant Places of Florida in 1972 - *The Five Orange Pips*: "Men at his time of life do not change their habits and exchange willingly the **charming climate of Florida** for the lonely life of an English provincial town."

March 5: DEBUT OF THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS (1881)

This gang of street Arabs appeared in four adventures: *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, *The Crooked Man*, and *The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax*. The

Sherlockian society bearing the same name was not established until 1934.

March 17: ST. PATRICK'S DAY

This is a day of celebration for people of Irish descent. Let us not forget our gratitude to a Scottish-born physician of Irish heritage who, through his efforts, made possible the publication of Dr. Watson's narratives. One of the tales directly attributed to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, featuring our favorite detective posing as an American of Irish ancestry, is worthy of reading again and again: *His Last Bow*. An alternative selection would be *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* in honor of St. Patrick's driving the snakes out of Ireland.

March 18: MRS. (MARTHA) HUDSON'S BIRTHDAY (1846)

The Naval Treaty - "Her cuisine is limited, but she has as good an idea of breakfast as a Scotswoman."

March 19-25: NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK

The weapon used to murder and incapacitate was a horrendous poison in *The Adventure of the Devil's Foot*. In addition, *The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger* comes to mind. Sherlock Holmes sage advice prevented a potential suicide by self-poisoning, and receives a sample of prussic acid as a memento.

March 25: FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Known in England as **Lady's Day**, has a canonical connection. On this day, in 1888 in *A Scandal in Bohemia*, Holmes remarked, "Irene Adler is married." To Holmes, Irene Adler was always known as "The Woman."



April 1: APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Mr. Holmes' excellent skills as an actor were applied in *The Reigate Squires (The Reigate Puzzle)*. First, Sherlock Holmes faked a seizure to distract attention from the significance of a note that was being examined. Then, he knocked a dish of oranges and carafe of water to the floor, blaming it on poor Watson, so that the confusion would enable him to inspect the pockets of a dressing gown, hanging behind the door, for further evidence.

April 1: MATHEMATICS EDUCATION MONTH

What better was to learn about the principles of trigonometry than by following Sherlock Holmes and his companions as, in *The Musgrave Ritual*, he mathematically calculated the

length of a shadow cast by a no longer existing elm by utilizing six feet of fishing rod and a long string. Mr. Holmes further demonstrated his skills in practical mathematics by calculating the speed of a train in *Silver Blaze*. In this case, he timed the rate by which the train passed the telegraph posts that were sixty yards apart. Perhaps the greatest kudos in theoretical mathematics should go to Professor Moriarty for his two major works of research: His works on the binomial theorem which won him a professorship at the young age of 21 (*The Final Problem*) and his work on The Dynamics of an Asteroid (*The Valley of Fear*).

April 4: PASSOVER

In *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange*, there were three glasses tinged with wine on the sideboard. Was the third glass placed there to fool the police into believing that three burglars committed the crime, or was it really left for Elijah during a Passover observance and conveniently used by Lady Brackenstall to cover her activities of the evening? We will never know the real story, but I wouldn't count on this interpretation. But it does provide a good excuse to reread this narrative, and a way to honor the holiday.

April 5: GOOD FRIDAY

The Final Problem - the world grieves the death of Sherlock Holmes.

April 7: EASTER

The Adventure of the Empty House - Holmes is resurrected and all rejoice.

April 14: NATIONAL BUILDINGS SAFETY WEEK

Does the *Adventure of the Norwood Builder* qualify? You can always reread *The Sign of Four* for further building instructions. And there was nothing safe about the hermetically sealed room with its convenient gas pipe in *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman*.

April 21-27: NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

To avoid overstuffing his "brain attic" with too many facts, Mr. Sherlock Holmes made great use of the library at the British Museum. For example, he read about voodooism to help his investigation during *The Adventure of the Wisteria Lodge*.

April 24: SECRETARIES DAY

Is there anyone who would like to take Mr. James Wilder, secretary to the Duke of Holderness, out to lunch? *The Adventure of the Priory School* would be an appropriate narration to honor this occasion.

April 28: CRIME STOPPERS FUN DOG SHOW

The Sign of the Four - Toby's admirable tracking powers, of course!

April 30: ARBOR DAY

“Where was the sun? Over the oak. Where was the shadow? Under the elm.” It sure is a good thing that the British did not celebrate Arbor day in those days. Had the fallen elm been replaced, Sherlock Holmes would never have located the missing crown of the kings of England in *The Musgrave Ritual*. On the other hand, it probably would have greatly benefited Brunton. He would never have found the trap door which led to his demise. Although the treasure would have eluded his grasp, he could have enjoyed a longer life and the carnal favors of his lady friends. Arbor Day also reminds us of the strange happenings just beyond the alley formed of ancient trees in the *Adventure of the Copper Beeches*.



May 1: NATIONAL BIKE MONTH

The Solitary Cyclist and *The Adventure of the Priory School* get my vote.

May 4: RUNNING OF THE KENTUCKY DERBY

This most famous horse race in the United States is run on the first Saturday in May. This day evokes the memory of the famous incident of the dog in the night time and the victory of the great *Silver Blaze*. Let's raise our julep cups to Silver Blaze as we read this exciting adventure. Also, in the *Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place*, the timing of the horse race featuring Shoscombe Prince played a major role.

May 10: GOLDEN SPIKE DAY

We celebrate the official completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. By that time, Great Britain was already traversed by a network of rail lines that Mr. Holmes and Dr. Watson frequently utilized in their quest for justice and the British Way. Many adventures could be recommended for this occasion, but a few easily come to mind: (1) The train-hopping episode in *The Final Problem* which failed to help our heroes elude the wily Professor Moriarty; (2) how Holmes figured out how Mr. Cadogan West's body was deposited on the railroad track in *The Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans*; and (3) in *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder*, the fact that Mr. Jonas Oldacre wrote the draft of his will while in transit on a train signaling the fact that he did not consider it to be an important document worthy of his attention, but merely a means to a nefarious end.

May 12: MOTHERS' DAY

The Adventure of the Priory School takes place in mid-May. Also, the young Lord Saltire may have been induced to leave the school with his stepbrother in the belief that he would soon be reunited with his mother in France. *The Yellow Face* is a story of a mother's love as is *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire*.

May 14-20: NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

The Valley of Fear is an example of cooperation between business and police. Private enterprise raised their own police force who were ineffective, by themselves, against the Scowers.

May 22: THE BIRTHDAY OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE (1859)

Dr. Watson's literary agent. He is often credited with writing "the American retrospectives in *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Valley of Fear*, and possibly the third person narratives in *His Last Bow* and the *Adventure of the Mazarin Stone*" (Tracy, *Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana*).

May 24: THE BIRTHDAY OF QUEEN VICTORIA (1819)

Sherlock Holmes decorated the wall of his quarters with a patriotic V.R. during target practice with his revolver in *The Musgrave Ritual*.

May 24: ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST TELEGRAM BY SAMUEL MORSE

We can honor the event by reading the adventure in which the use of the telegraph appears for the first time. In *A Study in Scarlet*, the use of the telegraph was mentioned five times.

May 30: UNITED KINGDOM SPRING BANK HOLIDAY

If the banks had been on holiday at the time, the events chronicled in *The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet* may have been avoided.

**June 1: ADOPT-A-SHELTER CAT MONTH**

The most logical story to read on this occasion is *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton*. For it is in this story that Dr. Watson states: "something rushed out at us and my heart sprang into my mouth, but I could have laughed when I realized that it was the cat." It is likely that the timely death of its master would cause Mr. Milverton's servants to either adopt the cat themselves or try to find a good domicile for this now

homeless feline. Other narratives featuring cats are: *The Yellow Face*, *His Last Bow*, and *The Adventure of the Norwood Builder*. Although in the latter, the villain “had turned a cat loose in an aviary...”, there is no evidence that the cat itself was mistreated or required a new place of residence. However, a man as cruel as Jonas Oldacre could possibly be counted on to carry out evil deeds on his furry companion. Based on this hypothesis, this story could serve as a likely alternative or accompaniment to that named above.

June 11: BRISTOL TO BORENMOUTH VINTAGE VEHICLE RUN

Every year, these vintage cars “run” from Ashton Court Estate, Bristol, Avon to Undercliff Drive, Bournemouth, Dorset. Wouldn't it be cool if one of the cars was either the huge 100-horsepower Benz of Baron Von Herling or the barely noticed little Ford chauffeured by none other than the eminent biographer Dr. Watson in *His Last Bow*?

June 14: FLAG DAY

In *The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor*, Sherlock Holmes predicts that some day our children will be citizens of a “world-wide country under a flag which shall be a quartering of the Union Jack with the Stars and Stripes.”

June 16: FATHER'S DAY

The Adventure of the Speckled Band and *A Case of Identity* for those with a sense of the ironic. In *The Adventure of the Priory School*, a father's love for his only son and heir to his title finally overcomes his fear of revealing a family scandal.



July 1: CANADA DAY

Who can forget the bravery of the Canadian citizen who became Lord Baskerville in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*? Would you take a lonely stroll through the hound-infested moor on a dark night?

July 2: SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA APPEARS FOR THE FIRST TIME

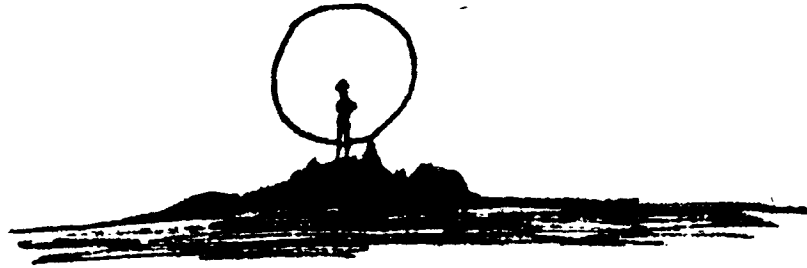
Why not read it again?

July 4: INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Adventure of the Black Peter. This story happens in early July.

July 24: BIRTHDAY OF WILLIAM GILLETTE, Greatest Sherlockian Portrayer on Stage

As an actor, Mr. Holmes enjoyed going to the theatre very much. There is no doubt that he surreptitiously saw himself portrayed by the consummate performer whose birthday we honor on this occasion. In *The Sign of Four*, Antheley Jones is quoted as saying: "You would have made an actor and a rare one...." This same thought was expressed in three alternative readings for the occasion: *A Study in Scarlet*, *A Scandal in Bohemia*, and *The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone*.

**August 7: DR. WATSON'S BIRTHDAY**

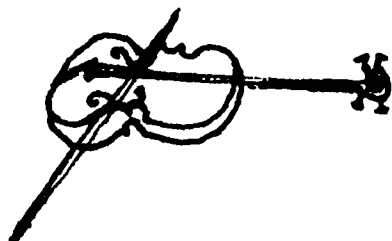
Sherlock Holmes briefly reveals the depth of his friendship for his colleague Dr. Watson in *The Adventure of the Three Garridebs*.

August 10-11: VICTORIAN GARDEN WALK

I wonder if a walk through a Victorian garden would reveal as many violets as there are Violets in the Canon. In honor of these English flowers of femininity, we have the opportunity to select one of four adventures for our daily reading. Or if so moved, we can read all four in one sitting. The Violets to be lauded on this date are Violet Westbury (*The Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans*), Violet Hunter (*The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*), Violet de Merville (*The Adventure of the Illustrious Client*), and Violet Smith (*The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist*). If roses are more to your liking, you can read again the stirring tribute to the goodness of the flowers in *The Naval Treaty*.

August 20: TOBACCO HARVEST IN MCLEAN, VIRGINIA (1995 Date)

Every year around this time, people gather in this small community to learn about the harvesting of tobacco. This product plays such a large role in the Sherlockian saga - pipes, cigars, cigarettes, snuff - that virtually any story could be selected. After all, the curved pipe and the three-pipe problem have become easily recognized hallmarks of our hero. Non-smokers should immediately go to November 21.



September 2: LABOR DAY

The Valley of Fear relates the unpleasant consequences that occur when a fraternal labor movement comes under the control of unscrupulous criminals. Who can forget "Escott the plumber" in the *Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton* or the gasfitters' ball in *A Case of Identity*?

September 2: MACKINAC BRIDGE WALK

Labor Day is an excellent day to take a nice long walk across this famous bridge in St. Ignace, Michigan. It is somewhat different from the shorter stroll taken by Mr. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John Watson in *The Problem of Thor Bridge*.

September 6: ST. PETERSBURG NAME RESTORED ANNIVERSARY (1991)

This is an anniversary of note for those of us in Pleasant Places of Florida territory, since we lay claim to a city by the same name, although with a much more pleasant climate. According to Baring-Gould, *The Adventure of the Creeping Man* took place on that date in 1903, before St. Petersburg lost its name.

September 7: IRENE ADLER IS BORN IN 1858

Can we ever get enough of *A Scandal in Bohemia*?

September 8: GRANDPARENTS DAY

It was in *The Greek Interpreter* that Sherlock Holmes honored his "...grandmother, who was the sister of Vernet, the French artist."

September 14: ROSH HASHANA

The process of making amends for offences against our fellow man begins with an apology. There are three cases in which Mr. Sherlock Holmes shows his remorse by apologizing to his good friend Dr. Watson. These are *The Sign of Four*, *The Adventure of the Empty House*, and *The Devil's Foot*.

September 22: FIRST ALL WOMAN JURY IMPANELED IN COLONIES

In *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton*, the offended female victim who murders Milverton, exercises her rights as a victim and as an all female judge, jury, and executioner. In *The Adventure of the Illustrious Client*, similarly expedited female justice was meted out to Baron Gruner.

September 22: AUTUMNAL EQUINOX

The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor. It occurs during autumn, and there is a mention of the season at the very end; and it is a bleak tale as befitting the season in most northern climes.

September 29: MICHELMAS

On this day, which usually starts the academic year in England, the *Five Orange Pips* began in 1887. Florida is mentioned several times in this case. It is apocryphally believed that The Master visited the Sunshine State and Founded Holmes Beach.

We also suggest reading *The Adventure of the Priory School* - what better way to celebrate learning than through the Canon. Also, had all of the principals in *The Adventure of the Three Students* paid attention to the lessons implicit in the "Writings," they would not have felt the need to cheat on their examination by taking an advanced look.

**October 12: COLUMBUS DAY**

The Adventure of the Second Stain. This mystery occurs on October 12. Also, since this day is highly revered by Americans of Italian descent, we will honor their ancestry by mentioning two other tales as alternative readings due to their featuring many members of the British-Italian community: *The Adventure of the Red Circle* and *The Adventure of the Six Napoleons*.

October 14: TIMEX WATCH DAY

Timex watch advertisements always feature the date Wednesday, October 14. The reason for this is obscure, but it does give us the opportunity to read again *The Sign of Four*, in which the unfortunate character of Watson's older brother is revealed to Holmes' astute observations.

October 23: NATIONAL MOLE DAY

No, this is not a celebration of a small burrowing insectivore that makes tunnels in your yard or a spy in the midst of a criminal organization, such as Porlock. This day is a celebration of the "mole" (gram molecular weight) as a way of counting the Avogadro number as 6.02×10^{23} molecules. This concept is central to understanding many chemical interactions on a rational, quantitative basis. It is celebrated in schools to help people become enthused about chemistry. As we are all very much aware, Mr. Sherlock

Holmes did not need Mole Day to achieve that purpose. He was always “a dabbler in science,” and at least on one occasion, in *A Study in Scarlet*, revealed to Dr. Watson and young Stamford, a remarkable test for detecting minute quantities of human blood simply and accurately. In this account, Dr. Watson wrote that Mr. Holmes’ knowledge of chemistry was “profound.” There are at least eight other cases in which Sherlock Holmes is seen conducting chemical experiments, and we know that he “spent some months in a research into the coal-tar derivativesin a laboratory in Montpelier (sic), in the south of France,” as narrated in *The Adventure of the Empty House*.

October 28: STOCK MARKET CRASH

The Stockbroker’s Clerk of course. Also, *The Red Headed League* which occurs on October 29.

October 31: HALLOWEEN

The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire and *The Adventure of the Cardboard Box* are gruesome tales for a gruesome holiday. And what could be more frightening than the specter of a gigantic, luminescent hound that springs at the throat of the last of the line in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*?



November 11: ARMISTICE DAY OR VETERAN’S DAY

If the incidents described in *His Last Bow* had not taken place, the First World War may not have ended in an armistice on the date that was once honored on that occasion. How many of us still remember standing up in school for a minute of silent prayer at 11:00 AM on that day?

We also honor all military veterans, including the ex-serviceman in *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier*.

November 21: GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT

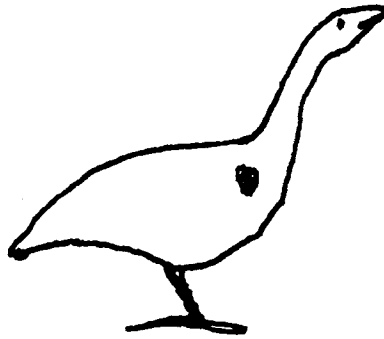
For the politically correct, I defy you to find a story that does not feature smoking or a tobacco product of some sort. If you do, read it. Actually, there are four. They will be found at the end of the calendar.

November 24-31: NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

If you had studied your bible, you would recognize the reference to David in *The*

*Crooked Man.***November 28: THANKSGIVING**

Can you imagine a more festive occasion of celebration than the breakfast in Mr. Holmes' flat that resulted in the successful conclusion of *The Naval Treaty*. What a day of Thanksgiving it was for "Tadpole" Phelps when the third breakfast dish turned out to be the missing document that was the source his "brain fever."

**December 6: CHANUKAH**

The Adventure of the Missing Third Quarter took place, according to Baring-Gould, on December 8, 1896.

December 7: PEARL HARBOR DAY

The secret cipher in *The Adventure of the Dancing Men* reminds us of the dangers that lurk when secrets are not shared between spouses or between government agencies.

December 18: ANTONIO STRADIVARI, ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH IN 1737

Mr. Stradivari is credited by experts as having constructed the most remarkable violins ever made. Since Sherlock Holmes would settle for nothing but the very best, he naturally possessed and performed on one. To honor this occasion, we may read one or all of the following narratives which reveal that Mr. Holmes did indeed possess such a fine instrument: *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, *The Adventure of the Cardboard Box*.

December 25: CHRISTMAS

The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle, of course. Sherlockian articles will make wonderful presents - books, videos, radio programs, membership in the Pleasant Places of Florida.

December 27: BIRTHDAY OF LOUIS PASTEUR

Louis Pasteur lived from 1822 to 1895, and during that time he set the stage for many advances in the study of microbiology and infectious diseases. The most specific description of an infectious disease may be found in *The Adventure of the Dying Detective*.

Great American Smokeout adventures: The following adventures are devoid, probably by accident, of any mention of tobacco products, and may be read on that occasion - *The Beryl Coronet*, *The Dancing Men*, *The Lion's Mane* and *The Sussex Vampire*.

Previous Publications of the P.P.of F.

Round-Robin Pastiches

- "The Case of the Foreign Cabman" (1975)
- "The Adventure of the Lost £'s" (1976)
- "The Adventure of the Second Stein" (1977)
- "The Adventure of the Solitary Balloonist" (1977)
- "The Curious Affair of the Witch's Brougham" (1978)
- "The Adventure of the Florid Ians" (1979)
- "The Case of the Three Merry Debs" (1980)
- "The Adventure of the Bar's Clue Bungle" (1982)
- "The Adventure of the Pale Ontologist" (1987)
- "The Adventure of the Doc-Croaker's Dirk" (1991)
- "The Sound of the Basket Hills" (1994)
- "A Case of Hide 'n' Tea" (1994)

Novellas

- "The Boxing Day Murder" by Courtney Anderson (1984)
- "The Adventure of the Wolf's Head Stick" by Duane Damon (1986)

Miscellaneous

- "Exercises in Ratiocination" by Ben Wood (1977)
- "A Tribute to Leslie Marshall, BSI" by Ben Wood (1979)
- "Holmesian Limericks & Sherlockian Sing-A-Long" (1981)
- "A Handy Holmesian Gazetteer" by Ben Wood (1985)
- "Dirty Pool"/"Philatelic Philandering" by Herst & Wood (1985)
- "Sonnets by the Major" by Bill Ward (1988)
- "The Philatelic & Numismatic Holmes" by Ben Wood (1950/1995)
- "Sherlockian Sing-A-Long" by Mike Carroll & Ben Wood (1991)
- "Sherlockian Citrus Labels" (1991)
- "Sherlockian Clip Art" by Ben Wood (1992)
- "Reminiscences of the PPofF Fall Gathering" (1988)
- "S'ian Cookery & Holmesian Needlepoint" by Joan Wood (1993)
- "Handbook & Roster of the P.P.of F." (1993)
- "Who's Where" by Ben Wood (1994)
- "Mycroft's Puzzle Book" by Ben Wood (1994)
- "Philatelic & Numismatic Holmes" by Ben Wood (Revised 1995)

Special Souvenir Programmes

- The Workshop of 1980
- The 20th Anniversary Celebration
- The Wessex Cup, I-V

Sherlockian Calendars: 1980, 1981, 1987, 1994, 1995



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