

A new conference organised by The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland in September 2017

Reichenbach and Beyond - *The Final Problem* revisited

Das Hotel Panorama, Hasliberg-Reuti / Meiringen, Switzerland
Thursday, 31st August 2017 to Sunday, 3rd September 2017



Following the successful conference *Alpine Adventures - Arthur Conan Doyle and Switzerland*, held at the Schatzalp, Davos, in September 2014¹, The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland venture to take a fresh look at one of the most iconic Holmes adventures: *The Final Problem*. And where else could this take place than in the heart of the Berner Oberland, where the epic struggle between Holmes and Moriarty took place more than 125 years ago.

The new conference **Reichenbach and Beyond - *The Final Problem* revisited** will take place in **Hasliberg-Reuti / Meiringen** from **Thursday, 31st August to Sunday, 3rd September 2017**. It will feature excursions into the dramatic landscape of the Berner Oberland, sights rarely explored by Sherlockians when they visit Meiringen and the Reichenbach Falls. What's more, the conference will present insightful lectures to examine new evidence and re-visit long-accepted theories around the incident on that fateful 4th May 1891.

***The Final Problem* revisited**

The starting point of this gathering is that for Sherlock Holmes the Reichenbach Falls is not a synonym for the end of his career, as he first predicted when he encountered the “*somewhat sinister figure of the late Professor Moriarty standing upon the narrow pathway which led to safety.*” Holmes reached safety and it was the Professor who fell that long way down into the abyss. The Great Hiatus marked a watershed in the career of Sherlock Holmes. In fact, *The Final Problem* was nothing final at all, but rather the beginning of something new. This is the starting point of the debates that this conference intends to generate.

We have a range of distinguished speakers who will debate which mountain passes Holmes could have taken when he “*took to (his) heels, did ten miles over the mountains in the darkness*” and how and, most importantly, with the help of whom, he actually made his way across the Alps. Some speakers will revisit certain aspects of the Great Hiatus; others will enlighten us about Holmes, Florence and Italy. We will assess what the three year long absence of Holmes in London actually meant for the universe of criminals and the police force there. A panel discussion will examine whether the Holmes that returned to Baker Street in 1894 was indeed the same one who left London in April 1891, a debate inspired by an observation

¹ See http://www.221b.ch/PDF/Alpine_Adventures_Report.pdf, *Arthur Conan Doyle's alpine adventures in Switzerland - some reminiscences about a splendid retreat in alpine heights*

made by a fisherman in Cornwall after he had read *The Empty House*.

Moreover, we introduce a Doylean angle. The end of Holmes was the beginning of new literary exploits, such as Brigadier Gerard. For Doyle the years after the publication of *The Final Problem* were a “*period of peregrination*” (Pierre Nordon) and one speaker intends to compare Holmes’ Great Hiatus with Doyle’s period of peregrination.

Charming setting, stunning views and dramatic expeditions

Das Panorama Hotel, situated above Meiringen, is going to be our home for this unique gathering. Sherlockians rarely visit Hasliberg-Reuti which, as a matter of fact, offers the best panoramic view of the Reichenbach Falls and the Rosenlaui valley; virtually every room has a balcony offering stunning views.



Das Panorama Hotel, Hasliberg-Reuti, <http://panorama-hasliberg.ch>

The three day programme includes a visit to Meiringen, the Sherlock Holmes Museum, the Reichenbach Falls and an excursion to Rosenlaui. A visit to the charming local museum of Meiringen, which hosts a splendid collection of period photographs of Meiringen as it looked when Holmes and Watson passed through in 1891, is scheduled too.



The Sherlock Holmes Museum - The Reichenbach Falls - Rosenlaui

One of the highlights of this meeting will undoubtedly be an alpine excursion in a comfortable Oldtimer postal coach from 1951 (see picture below) across three dramatic mountain passes to assess the sites where Holmes’ heels might have taken him on his way to Florence. The route will take us from the Reichenbach Falls over three alpine mountain passes, the Susten, Furka and Grimsel. We will make regular stops to enjoy the breath-taking views.



“(he) took to (his) heels, did ten miles over the mountains (...)”



Susten Pass



Grimsel Pass



Furka Pass

Programme (as of January 2017)

Thursday, 31st August 2017

During the day

Individual arrival at *Das Panorama Hotel*, situated in Hasliberg-Reuti, our accommodation for our conference. Hasliberg is easily reachable by car as well as public transportation. See further details under “Access”.

Late afternoon

At 16.00 we all meet in the lobby of Das Panorama Hotel where our organisers Marcus Geisser and Michael Meer will welcome us.

We will then proceed by funicular to Meiringen where we first visit the charming the *Museum der Landschaft Hasli*, the museum of the county of Hasli which holds a superb collection of artefacts and

Make a beeline to Italy and combine your weekend in the Swiss Alps with the gathering organised by our Italian friends from *Uno Studio in Holmes - The Sherlock Holmes Society of Italy* in Florence from Friday, 8 to Sunday, 10 September 2017. Please contact Enrico Solito for more information: solito.enrico@gmail.com.

pictures that bring visitors back in a time where it is always 1895, or, in our case, 1891, of course.

We then walk to *Sherlock Holmes Museum* where we hope a welcome drink will be waiting for us. We will have ample time to admire what is, arguably, the best recreation of the consulting room of 221b Baker Street anywhere.

Evening

We return by funicular to our hotel where we will be greeted by our hosts, the owners of the hotel, Panos Perreten und Monika Ellinger. After the dinner, a **film** depicting the many falls into the Falls of Reichenbach, compiled by Michael A. Meer, will be shown.

Friday, 1st September 2017

Morning

After breakfast, the *first part of the lecture program* starts.

The list below shows the lectures that will be presented on Friday morning and Sunday morning. As always, please note that this list remains subject to possible last minute changes. Please note that all papers will be delivered in English.

Catherine Cooke, ASH, BSI, studied French and German, then Library Studies at the University of London. She has worked for Westminster Libraries in London since 1978 and has managed Marylebone's Sherlock Holmes Collection since April 1982. She joined The Sherlock Holmes Society of London in 1980, served on Council for many years, currently as Secretary for Meetings. She won the Baker Street Irregulars' Morley-Montgomery Award for the best article in the 2005 *Baker Street Journal*, the first person outside North America to do so. She received the Sherlock Holmes Society of London's Tony Howlett Award for 2014. For our conference, she will examine particular aspects of Holmes' Tibetan trip and journeys.

Vincent Delay, from Lausanne, Switzerland, is the founder of the Société d'études holmesiennes de la Suisse romande. He has published a series of monographs on numerous Holmesian and Doyleian aspects and is the author of highly atmospheric detective stories. He acts as curator of the Sherlock Holmes Museum in Lucens, formerly located in the Chateau de Lucens. For our conference in Hasliberg-Reuti, Vincent will elaborate on some astonishing revelations that Lausanne played a part in Holmes' Great Hiatus.

Marcus Geisser, BSI, RBI, a worldwide traveller for one and a half decades thanks to his work with the International Committee of the Red Cross, recently settled in London. Marcus is a founding member and first President of The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland. In 2014 he joined the council of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London as member. His most recent article is *Who was von Bork?* (*The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Summer, 2014). He has is currently doing research on Doyle's formative years in Feldkirch, Austria, and Holmes and cars. For our conference, Marcus will present a comparison between Sherlock Homes' Great Hiatus and Doyle's period of peregrination.

Clifford S. Goldfarb, BSI, is a Canadian lawyer, specializing in charities and non-profits. Cliff is Chairman of the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Reference Library, and a former 'Meyers' of The Bootmakers of Toronto. His extensive Sherlockian and Doylean writing includes *The Great Shadow: Arthur Conan Doyle, Brigadier Gerard and Napoleon* (1997) and *Investigating Sherlock Holmes* (joint with Hartley R. Nathan, 2014). Brigadier Gerard was the character that replaced Holmes

after his (temporary) disappearance at the Reichenbach. The paper that Cliff is preparing for our conference is entitled *The Brigadier in Switzerland: Travels with Arthur and Napoleon* is the title of his paper about the countries in which the Gerard stories are set.

Reinhard Hillich, born in 1948, looks back at along career as a Germanist and is the translator of numerous Conan Doyle short stories into German. Since 2009 he works as freelance lector, layouter and translator. He lives in Berlin. His paper is entitled *The Great Hiatus - a Chance for New Rivals of Sherlock Holmes*. While the readership mourned the disappearance of Sherlock Holmes after the publication of The Final Problem in December 1893, other aspiring and new authors saw this moment as a favourable opportunity to make a name with their detective stories and set up their careers as writers. From a literature-historical perspective, this was a particularly productive and creative phase. The example of Arthur Morrison will serve Reinhard to show how the great model was copied, modified and partially dismantled, too.

Eva Iggländ, born and educated in Sweden, has been living in Switzerland for 25 years. “*I read my first Sherlock Holmes story (A Study in Scarlet) in Swedish when I was 12 years old and have been a member of the SHSL since school days. It was not until 1988 that I went to my first meeting. As this was a thoroughly enjoyable experience I have kept coming back regularly. For someone, who is not very used to the terrain and the conditions of the Alps, it is impossible to cross them alone. This is made even more difficult by the fact that it has to be done in secret, without attracting attention, during a difficult time of the year and without having brought any equipment, not to mention that it only took a few days, we can assume it did not happen that way. That is why Sherlock Holmes must have had someone to help him. My paper outlines the reasons for this assumption, and also suggests who this person was.*”

Jon Lellenberg and Daniel Stashower, BSIs, need hardly an introduction. They have been researchers and authors in Sherlockiana and Doyleana for decades. Jon lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico and Daniel in Washington DC. They have co-edited two superb publications that shed new light into the life of Arthur Conan Doyle: *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* (together with Charles Foley) and more recently *Dangerous Work: Diary of an Arctic Adventure*. For our conference, we are delighted to announce that they join forces once again. They work on a paper about *The Stark Munro Letters*. Published in 1895, Doyle was working on this book when in Davos in December 1893, the very month when *The Final Problem* was first published. Doyle, as mentioned in a letter to the iron merchant and author John Reid from Glasgow sent from Davos in December 1893, could not yet figure out whether this was the “*best or the worst thing I ever wrote*”. Jon and Daniel will give us their verdict. Although Daniel cannot attend in person, Jon will reveal the results of their research at our conference.

Guy Marriot, BSI, an English solicitor, spent his international career working on intellectual property issues in the music and entertainment industries and lived in the United States for a decade. A Sherlockian for many decades, he has served as Chairman of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and is its current President. His interests include islands as well as taxis, trams, and buses. He is also a Patron of the London Transport Museum, a Vice-President of the London Bus Museum and proud owner of two iconic London cabs, a 1936 Austin and a 1955 Beardmore. For our conference, he will debate various options for the route described by Holmes thus: “*I took to my heels, did ten miles over the mountains in the darkness, and a week later I found myself in Florence.*”

Enrico Solito, BSI (Gennaro Lucca), from Florence, Italy, is the former President of Uno Studio in Holmes, the Italian Sherlock Holmes Society. He has run the magazine of the society for more than 15 years and has been a prolific writer about various aspects of Sherlockiana publishing numerous articles in Sherlockian magazines around the world. Enrico is a member of many international societies and author or pastiches (three novels, thirty short stories) published in Italy and Japan. In 2010, together with Gianlucca Salvatore, Enrico edited for the BSI International Series “Italy and Sherlock”. He has also published “Arthur Conan Doyle in Italy”, a book of photographs with accompanying research into the trip made by

Arthur Conan Doyle around Europe. Enrico's participation in our conference has still to be confirmed, but if he joins us, he will elaborate on aspects of Holmes and Italy.

Marina Stajic, Ph.D., FABFT, ASH, BSI, from New York, USA, worked as the Director of the Forensic Toxicology Laboratory at the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, City of New York, for almost 30 years. It is not surprising that her favorite topic is the forceful administration of poisons. Her BSI investiture as Curare reflects her dabbling with poisons a good deal. Her ASH *nom d'aventure* is Lady Frances Carfax, not because she is a beautiful woman, still in fresh middle age, but rather because of her daily exposure to chloroform and her close relationship to coffins. Marina will examine a particular poisoning case that occurred in London during Holmes' Great Hiatus and thus baffled Scotland Yard.

Bryan Stone, originally from the UK, has been a Swiss citizen for many years. He lives not far away from Basle, where Holmes and Watson passed through when travelling to Meiringen. Bryan, chair of the church board of the Anglican church of Basel for many years, has recently published a book on Basle and the Church in England. Brian has spent his professional career in the international railway business and it is therefore not surprising that his knowledge of period time tables reaching back to the very beginning of railways remains unrivalled. For our conference he will join other speakers to discuss a plausible way that Holmes could have taken on the evening of 4th May, 1891, to reach Florence a week later. We know that Bryan will contradict some conclusions of other speakers!

Lunchtime and afternoon

Lunch and afternoon are at the leisure of our participants. For example, the Hasliberg is very well connected with funiculars and cables cars and offers fantastic panoramic walks. Or, this will be your opportunity to pay an extended visit to Meiringen.

The organisers offer *an excursion to Rosenlauri and the Reichenbach Falls*. Separate booking is necessary and some extra charges will apply. Participants will take the funicular from Hasliberg-Reuti to Meiringen, where they will change to a postal coach to reach Rosenlauri. Details are being worked out, but the intention is to have lunch at the Rosenlauri. Marcus Geisser, whose BSI investiture is Rosenlauri, will deliver some speculations about why Peter Steiler suggested to Holmes and Watson to go to this romantic spot, nestled in some of the most charming but also dramatic mountain landscapes Switzerland can offer. The return to Meiringen - and from there by funicular back to Hasliberg-Reuti - can be done either by postal coach or via a walk down Reichenbach Falls, at every one's leisure and pace. In case you wish to join this leisurely excursion, please get in touch with Marcus Geisser directly (marcusgeisser@gmail.com).

Evening

Dinner will be served at our hotel. This is then followed by a **panel discussion** to reassess the question of whether the Holmes who returned to Baker Street in 1894 was indeed never quite the same when compared to the one who left London in April 1891, a famous observation made by a fisherman in Cornwall after he had read *The Empty House*.

Saturday, 2nd September 2017

Whole day

Following a visit to the Reichenbach Falls and a brief re-enactment how Holmes managed to escape from there, a *Grand Alpine Tour* in a postal coach from 1951 across *Susten, Furka and Grimsel mountain passes* with stop over's to enjoy stunning views across the Swiss Alps will enable participants to assess some of the possible routes Holmes could have taken to reach Florence. The rental of this amazing alpine coach tour

bus is generously sponsored by some of our participants, namely (in alphabetic order): Helen Dorey, Marcus Geisser, Guy Marriott and Michael A. Meer.

Evening

Dinner at our hotel.

Sunday, 3rd September 2017

Morning

After breakfast, *the second part of the lecture program* continues. See list on pages 4, 5 and 6.

Lunchtime

The program draws to a close just before lunch.

We hope you will have enjoyed yourselves and look forward to seeing you at the next Reichenbach Irregulars conference!

Accommodation & conference venue

Das Panorama Hotel, a family run and privately owned 3 star hotel, is located in Hasliberg Reuti which is situated just above Meiringen. Hasliberg has become a popular destination for winter and summer sports. Thanks to an extensive network of cable cars and funiculars it offers ample opportunities for wonderful walking and hiking in alpine heights. Whereas Meiringen is in the Hasli valley (600 meters or 2000 feet above sea level), Hasliberg Reuti is above the valley, situated at an altitude of approximately 1000 meters, or 3300 feet. Thanks to its location on a plateau, our venue offers panoramic views over Meiringen, to the Reichenbach Falls into the valley of the Rosenlaui. Practically all rooms have balconies with stunning panoramic views.

The address of our hotel is:

Das Hotel Panorama
6086 Hasliberg-Reuti
Switzerland
Email info@panorama-hasliberg.ch
Website: http://panorama-hasliberg.ch/de/Herzlich_Willkommen
Phone +41 33 972 30 72
Our host is Mr Panos Perreten, who is also the owner of the hotel.

Prices

We have made every effort to keep the prices as reasonable as possible. For example, we have found sponsors amongst our participants to cover the cost of the hire of the Oldtimer coach for our Grand Alpine mountain pass tour on Saturday.

For one person in a double room (double or twin bed, please mention your requirements when you do your booking), with bathroom or shower and toilette ensuite, telephone, TV and W-LAN, balcony with panoramic view, the **price per person in a double room is Swiss Francs 390.-** (or Swiss Francs 780.- for both persons in one double room). This includes **3 nights, including 3 breakfasts, and 3 dinners (4 course**

dinner), including taxes. Lunch and any drinks are not included.

For one person in a single room, with bathroom or shower and toilette ensuite, telephone, TV and W-LAN, balcony with panoramic view, the **price per person is Swiss Francs 510.-**. This includes **3 nights, including 3 breakfasts, and 3 dinners each night (4 course dinner), including taxes. Lunch and drinks are not included.**

On top of these room charges, which will have to be paid in advance (see below, under “Reservations”), we will ask for **an additional fee of approximately Swiss Francs 100.- to 130.- charge per person** to cover the costs of funicular costs to Hasliberg-Reuti – Meiringen – Hasliberg Reuti (Thursday afternoon, Saturday), the Museum der Landschaft Hasli, the Sherlock Holmes Museum, and one or two coffee stops during the Grand Alpine Tour on Saturday (lunch will probably not be included) and the conference facilities at our hotel. We are currently trying to secure local sponsors for some of these costs in order to keep this fee as low as possible. The fee should be paid in cash in Swiss Francs to the organisers upon arrival.

The **trip on Friday afternoon to Rosenlauri** has to be booked separately and will cost an additional **approximately Swiss Francs 50.- per person**, probably less. This can be paid in cash in Swiss Francs to Marcus Geisser and Michael Meer upon arrival.

Access

By car

Das Panorama Hotel is easily reachable by car. Please consult the hotel website which gives you all the necessary indications: <http://panorama-hasliberg.ch/de/Anreise>. We know it is only in German so please get in touch with the hotel (see address above) should you need further instructions in English. The hotel offers a limited number of parking spaces. Please inform the hotel management when you make your booking that you need a car parking space. Charges may apply.

By public transportation

The Swiss Federal Railways has an excellent up to date website in English that quotes timetables and prices: <http://www.sbb.ch/en/home.html>. Please check the timetable when you organize your journey.

There are **two** options.

1. The hotel offers pick up at the **Meiringen** Railway Station and then a transfer to the **Meiringen - Hasliberg Reuti Funicular**. From there, you take the funicular up to Hasliberg Reuti and the hotel is in walking distance from the funicular station. If you would like to choose this option, please inform the hotel when you do your booking. Charges may apply.

There are numerous ways to reach Meiringen by train; it depends on where you come from. For example:

- **From Geneva Airport:** take a train to Berne, change to a train to Interlaken Ost, and there you take the train direction Lucerne and get off in Meiringen. This trip takes about 3½ hours.
- **From Zurich Airport:** take a hourly direct train to Lucerne, there change to a train direction Interlaken which stops at Meiringen. This trip takes about 2½ hours.

2. You can reach **Hasliberg-Reuti** and Das Panorama Hotel by public transport directly (train and bus):

- **From Geneva Airport:** take the hourly direct train to Lucerne, change to a train to Interlaken Ost and get off at **Brünig Railway Station**. From there you **take the bus to Hasliberg Reuti**. The bus stop is **Hasliberg Reuti (Gondelbahn)**. Gondelbahn stands for funicular. The Hotel is in walking distance. This trip takes about 4½ hours.
- **From Zurich Airport:** take the hourly direct train to Lucerne, there change to a train direction Interlaken which stops at **Brünig Railway Station**. From there you **take the bus to Hasliberg Reuti**. The bus stop is **Hasliberg Reuti (Gondelbahn)**. Gondelbahn stands for funicular. The Hotel is in walking distance. This trip takes about 2 hours and 50 minutes.

Zurich Airport remains the nearest major international airport to Hasliberg-Reuti. There is also a small airport in Berne called Bern Airport (BRN), which offers flights from the UK.

We hope this information is clear. In case of doubt, please get in touch with the organisers or directly with the hotel management.

Reservation of your hotel room

Early booking is appreciated, but no later than **30st June 2017**. The rental of the Oldtimer Postal Coach for the alpine mountain pass excursion may limit the number of participants (it offers 34 seats) therefore early booking is advisable.

Please send your reservation by email to info@panorama-hasliberg.ch, to the attention of Mr Panos Perreten. Kindly send a copy of your reservation to the organizers, meer@221b.ch and marcusgeisser@gmail.com.

Participants are asked to **reserve their rooms directly with Das Panorama Hotel. Advance payment will be requested.**

Please state the following information when you submit your room reservation:

- First name and family name of each participant
- Your address, including a phone number
- Approximate time of arrival
- Approximate time of departure
- Any dietary restrictions or any other special requirements
- Please mention “Reichenbach and Beyond’ autumn 2017 / The Reichenbach Irregulars” when you send your reservation as we have pre-booked a certain number of rooms

Please book as soon as possible, **but no later than 30st June 2017**.

As mentioned, please note that the hotel will ask you to pay the full price in advance when you reserve your rooms. Prepayment is required as we have reserved a certain number of rooms in advance. Major credit cards are accepted. We thank you for your understanding. The usual **cancellation policies** for individual guests will apply, see also, <http://panorama-hasliberg.ch/>:

- 28 days before arrival - annulations possible at no costs
- 27 - 14 days before arrival - 25 % of the overall price are charged
- 13 - 7 days before arrival - 50 % of the overall price are charged
- 6 -2 days before arrival - 75 % of the overall price are charged
- 2 or less days before arrival - 100 % of the overall price are charged

The **additional fee per person** as well as the **charges for the trip to Rosenlauri** (see above) **should be paid in cash, in Swiss Francs, upon arrival**, to Marcus Geisser and Michael Meer. We thank you for understanding.

Contact

We from The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland do not pretend to be professional tour organisers. Undoubtedly, we have forgotten this or that in this program. Please get in touch with us if you have any questions.

Marcus Geisser, BSI, RBI, marcusgeisser@gmail.com,
Michael A. Meer, BSI, RBI, michael.meer@gmx.net

Or pay regular visits to our website which will be updated as the organization of this conference progresses:
www.221b.ch .

“ (...) a week later I found myself in Florence (...)”

And if you have more time to spend, why not make your own additional beeline? We are pleased to announce that our Italian Sherlockian friends from **Uno Studio in Holmes - The Sherlock Holmes Society of Italy** have confirmed their gathering & conference in **Florence**, a week later, from **Friday, 8 September to Sunday, 10 September 2017**. Please contact Enrico Solito for more information: solito.enrico@gmail.com.