

Meeting Notes

December 12, 2020



Reported by Carla Coupe

In our December meeting, The Red Circle not only continued its international outreach, we also welcomed our largest number of attendees so far. One hundred fifty people joined us to hear award-winning Sherlockian scholar Mattias Boström speak on Sherlock Holmes in the 1920s.

As usual, producer-*par-excellence* Alan Rettig kicked things off with his reminders about meeting best practices, and deftly handled the technical side of the meeting.

Peter thanked Alan for his great work and then introduced our afternoon's speaker, Mattias Boström. Author of the Agatha-Award-winning *From Holmes to Sherlock: The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon* (Mysterious Press, 2017), Mattias is an invested member of the Baker Street Irregulars ("The Swedish Pathological Society"). His articles have been included in the *Baker Street Journal* and he has won the Morley-Montgomery Award. He is also the main editor of the *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle in the Newspapers* series (Gasogene Books).



Mattias began by explaining that Peter had asked him to provide some anecdotes that were not included in his book *From Holmes to Sherlock*. This request led him to a new area of research: Sherlock Holmes in the 1920s. He began by showing a silent film short starring Eille Norwood, the movie star who was considered a master of disguise. These types of films brought Holmes to a wider audience. The filming process itself was still developing, and Mattias regaled us with many amusing anecdotes about how the filming was done and the sometimes rough-and-ready studio production methods. A vigorous Q&A session followed his talk. You can enjoy the [video of Mattias's entire talk here](#).

Peter thanked Mattias and moved on to announcements, including information on the upcoming virtual Birthday weekend festivities that will take place from January 7-10. Links to various public events can be found here [here at the website](#) in the "Sherlockian Calendar."

The Paul D. Herbert collection will be auctioned online soon. We will post more information as it becomes available.

On February 18, the Perseverance Rover will land at Jezero Crater on Mars. Scientific instruments SHERLOC and WATSON are aboard. The landing will be broadcast live.

Greg Ruby announced that on Christmas day at 8 pm EST, the Fourth Garridebs will be performing a table read of the script for “The Three Garridebs.” This radio play was first broadcast on Christmas day 1939, starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. For more information, go to the [Fourth Garridebs’ Facebook page](#)

The BSI’s 2021 conference “Sherlock Holmes and the British Empire” will take place on June 25-27, 2021. Conference coordinator Ross Davies hopes that the conference will be held at the Bear Mountain Inn, near West Point, NY. [Check the BSI website](#) for more information.

Red Circle pins are available from Tom Fahres. The pins are \$14.95 (including domestic shipping) for the first one, and \$10 for each additional pin. He also has Sherlockians of Baltimore pins at the same price. These can be combined with your Red Circle pin order for the same shipping rate. [Contact Tom](#) for full details.

One way The Beacon Society promotes bringing Sherlock Holmes to younger readers is through the R. Joel Senter Sr. Essay Contest. Students from the 4th through 12th grades can submit their essays and the winners will receive recognition, a plaque, and a cash prize. Details and submission requirements [are available here](#).

Peter then turned over the mic to Bev Wolov, the Red Circle’s fashion maven and noted lace historian. Since Mattias was speaking about Sherlock Holmes the 1920s, Bev wanted to continue that theme by looking at an illustration from “The Problem of Thor Bridge.” The story was published in 1922 but the events took place at the turn of the century. Sir Alfred Gilbert was a talented artist and renowned sculptor, with an unfortunate tendency to take a commission and never finish it. To escape his creditors, he ended up living in Bruges. He illustrated a few Holmes stories, including THOR. Like Sidney Paget, he used current fashions in his illustrations. Bev pointed out many of the fashion details he included, and how they were correct for wealthy Maria Gibson, but not for governess Grace Dunbar. To anyone with a knowledge of period fashion, the illustration is especially jarring because the clothing in the illustration does not match the period of the story. Sherlock Holmes would have appreciated Bev’s attention to detail.

Then Dana Richards presented a quiz on THOR, which was not only diabolical, but contained several groaner questions.

Out of a possible 12 points, Elaine Davies was the afternoon’s winner with 9 points. Congratulations, Elaine! Runners up with 7 points included Janice Weiner, Stefan Weishaupt, Debbie Clark, and Evy Herzog. A hearty round of applause for those who placed!

Peter finished out the afternoon by thanking Mattias, Bev, Dana, and Alan, and reminded attendees to [contact him](#) to be included on the mailing list or with suggestions for speakers for the March meeting. As we all know, “The Red Circle is easy to get in and impossible to get out.”