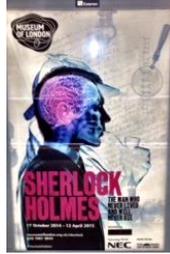


Visiting the Sherlock Holmes Museum of London Exhibit*

Marino C. Alvarez



Opening day, October 17, 2014, of the Sherlock Holmes Exhibit was an exciting event. I was anxious to see the collection, since registering two months before departing on our journey first to Russia and then to London. My wife, Vicki, and I were first attracted by the dancing men figures adorning the outside of the Museum of London. Upon entering we presented our registration material and were then directed to enter through a passage-way disguised as a panel of book shelves.



The collection is very impressive consisting of original manuscripts, paintings, costumes, and cinema and television video excerpts of actors portraying Sherlock Holmes. Notable were Claude Monet's painting, *Charing Cross Bridge London, 1902*, and the *Westminster Bridge, The Houses of Parliament And Westminster Abby Seen From The River, 1872*, an oil on canvas by

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John Anderson are just a few of the art of London pieces that comprise this fine collection. Among this art is a highlight of an oil on canvas painting by Sidney Paget of A. Conan Doyle that was completed at Undershaw in 1897 and on loan from the Sherlock Holmes Museum in Switzerland.

An interesting display is a set of post cards placed between panels of glass with the front of the cards facing in one direction and the back of the card in the other. The challenge for the observer is to identify the card written by A. Conan Doyle and the Sherlock Holmes connection. I searched among the many cards trying to find the link between the face of the card and the message. Of course, there were others who were trying to locate the card by first walking to one side of the display and then going around to the other. Then, it happened. A card with a



picturesque view of a mountain surrounded by desolate isolated terrain in an array of colors, and the caption "Autumn in Dartmoor." Again I hurried around the display to find the corresponding card's message. It was a Tuck's Post Card with a one penny Edwardian postage stamp dated 20

Aug 20 [1920]. The card was addressed to:

Malcomb Conan Doyle
Windler Lane
Crowborough

Although the handwriting is somewhat faint, it reads:

This is where the
Hound used to run
about in the story.

D.

The D. stands for Daddy and is addressed to his son Adrian (Dimples). This was confirmed when speaking with Catherine Cooke, Reference Librarian, at the Westminster Library, and again at the home of Roger Johnson and Jean Upton. The post card is part of the Conan Doyle Estate.

Catherine Cooke, Roger Johnston, and Jean Upton are listed as contributing members to this collection, so it was a special honor to be asked by Catherine to sign my book[†] housed in a Sherlock Holmes special collection of the Westminster Library. Roger Johnson and Jean Upton invited Vicki and me to their home in Chelmsford. Both Roger and Jean are members of our *Nashville Scholars of the Three Pipe Problem* scion. They are also members of the BSI, ASH, and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London. We spent a delightful day that included viewing their Sherlock Holmes collection that is very extensive and most interesting, then to a tasty lunch at Admiral J. Mc Hardy Pub, and a walk to the Essex Police Museum for a private tour by Roger. Upon returning to their home, and before departing for London, Jean surprised us both with a beautiful certificate and the honor of invested membership to *The Occupants of the Full House*, a BSI scion.

The Sherlock Holmes Exhibit, the Westminster Library experience, Roger and Jean's hospitality, coupled with my visit to the British Library to examine A. Conan Doyle's

[†] Marino C. Alvarez, *A Professor Reflects on Sherlock Holmes* (London: MX Publishing, 2012).

manuscripts, letters, and speeches culminated a most enjoyable and rewarding Sherlockian experience.

If you plan visiting the Sherlock Holmes Exhibit - a treat awaits. I recommend reading *Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die*, a series of articles compiled by Alex Werner, Head of History Collection at the Museum of London.