

# THE MAGIC DOOR

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## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

since the inception of the ACD Collection  
1969–2019

## Collectors: A Singular Set of People

BARBARA RUSCH

*Barbara Rusch is a collector of 19th-century ephemera and the founder and first president of the Ephemera Society of Canada.*

### Colligo, ergo sum: I collect, therefore I am.

The Sherlockian Canon is rife with collectors of all varieties. They include Jack Stapleton with his butterflies, Nathan Garrideb and his private museum of natural history, and Baron Gruner and his exquisite Chinese porcelains. While Watson collects the records of his friend's cases, crammed into a tin dispatch-box at Cox and Co. awaiting publication, Holmes himself boasts a "collection of strange episodes" and the accumulation of criminals he has hunted down and added to his metaphorical trophy case.

Sigmund Freud, himself an avid collector, wrote that collecting is a compensation for loss, and a balm to ease the fear of death. Certainly it is a process by way of creating self-identity. In the Canon all the collectors share certain common traits. They are all intelligent, passionate, compulsive, acquisitive, meticulous and narcissistic. Marginalized in a sense, they carry on their solitary endeavours just within the parameters of what is socially acceptable. They are also virtually all male, and the collecting phenomenon in the Canon appears to be a strictly male preserve. I have noticed in the collecting circles in which I travel that men outnumber women by a significant margin. Perhaps this is because men by nature are hunters, for whom amassing large quantities of material objects constitutes somewhat instinctive, even aggressive, behaviour. In the Victorian world, men wielded sole economic power, and with it the financial wherewithal to do with as they pleased. Victorian men, who may have had difficulty expressing emotions within relationships, would perhaps have found it easier and more socially acceptable to show genuine passion and enthusiasm for objects, and especially for amassing them in a collection. Victorian women, by contrast, were overwhelmingly

## A Macedonian Never Forgets!

DON HOBBS

*Don Hobbs is a member of The Baker Street Irregulars. As a collector, he amassed the largest and most complete collection of foreign language translations in the world, encompassing 106 of the 109 languages known to have at least one translation of the Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In October 2017, he donated his entire collection of over 12,000 volumes to Southern Methodist University.*

*Don lives in Flower Mound, Texas, with his wife, Joyce, and an empty upstairs library. When not collecting (now for SMU and not for himself), Don works as a Clinical Consultant for a radiology software company. He and Joyce enjoy traveling, especially to Italy and Spain. They always take an extra, empty suitcase to allow them to acquire more books, mostly ones they cannot themselves read.*

During more than 35 years as a collector of foreign translations of the Canonical works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, I have accumulated many stories on the stories. Collecting has always been part patience, part luck, and part knowledge. Not all of the parts are equal. Sometimes it is 90% luck and other times it might be 90% patience. Knowledge is always the ace in the hole.



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## BEYOND SHERLOCK HOLMES

### Through the Magic Door

DONNY ZALDIN

“It is a great thing to start life with a small number of really good books which are your very own.”

– *Through the Magic Door*

Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Through the Magic Door* was published in serialization in *Cassell’s Magazine* between December 1906 and November 1907, and the following year in book form by Smith, Elder & Co. (UK). The volume was based on a series of six articles published in 1894 in *Great Thoughts* in England, and numerous Associated Press newspapers in America. The subject of the essay is the charisma and charm of books, in which ACD invites readers to enjoy the greatest minds of all time through the writings they have left behind, and argues that, in doing so, the selfishness and hopelessness of the world can be left behind. One contemporary review called *Magic Door* “a fine manly book about great books and the importance of literature in life.”

Many writers on the writings have compiled lists of the essential volumes teachers and students of Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes must have in their library. But *Through the Magic Door* tells us—in ACD’s own words—what volumes and treatises he had on his bookshelf, and the joy and benefit he derived from them.

Amongst his favourites were Gordon’s *Tacitus*, Sir William Temple’s *Essays*, Addison’s works, Swift’s *Tale of a Cab*, Clarendon’s *History*, Lesage’s *Gil Blas*, Buckingham’s *Poems*, Churchill’s *Poems*, and Rawley’s *Life of Bacon*, all of which fed his “inquiring and omnivorous mind” and “made it all worth while.” He admired: Boswell, Bunyan, Chatham, Clive, Dickens, Gibbons, Hallam, Hampden, Hastings, Johnson, Machiavelli, Pitt, Scott, Shakespeare, Southey, Stevenson and Thackeray. Also the great British poets: Browning, Burns, Byron, Chatterton, Coleridge, Keats, Milton, Rogers, Shelley, Tennyson and Wordsworth. If Conan Doyle had to choose the one book which gave him “the most pleasure and most profit,” it would be Macaulay’s *Essays*, which had been his “comrade in [his] student days” and became “entwined into [his] whole life.”

These writings were sacred to ACD, each book “a mummified soul embalmed in cere-cloth and natron of leather and printer’s ink ... enfolding the concentrated essence” of men “who have faded into the thinnest shadows, as their bodies into palpable dust, yet here are their very spirits.” There was not a single volume that was not “a dear, personal friend,” and he kept his favourites—the ones he cared to re-read—near his pillow.

Conan Doyle implored anyone who could read to share his excitement for collecting and reading books, which represented “those little sacrifices which make a possession dearer.” From his personal experience, he counselled, “A book should be your very own before you can really get the taste of it, and unless you have worked for it, you will never have the true inward pride of possession.”

Come through the magic door with me and sit on the green settee, where you can see the old oak case with its untidy lines of volumes ... Close the door of that room behind you, shut off with it all the cares of the outer world, plunge back into the soothing company of the great dead, and then you are through the magic portal in to that fair land whither worry and vexation can follow you no more ... There stand your noble, silent comrades, waiting in their ranks ... Choose your man. And then ... away you go together.

ACD regarded books as “a noble gateway ... through which one may approach the study either of letters or of history ... what nuclei for thought!” He admired the “power ... of handling a great subject, and adorning it by delightful detail ... an admirable, if somewhat old-fashioned literary and historical education,” at one’s fingertips. He recognized “the value of a noble, inspiring text” which has the power to enlighten “with beautiful mental impulses and images, reflected into our souls from the printed thoughts which meet our eyes [and are] etched into our memory forever.”

I conclude this column as Conan Doyle concluded his timeless essay on books:

And now ... the time has come for us to part, and I hope my little sermons have not bored you over-much. If I have put you on the track of anything which you did not know before, then verify it and pass it on ... the mere thinking and talking of books is in itself good ... For the time the magic door is still shut ... But, alas, though you shut that door, you cannot seal it. Still come the ring of bell, the call of telephone, the summons back to the sordid world of work and men and daily strife. Well, that’s the real life after all—this only the imitation. And yet, now that the portal is wide open and we stride out together, do we not face our fate with a braver heart for all the rest and quiet and comradeship that we found behind the Magic Door?

Conan Doyle’s tombstone at All Saints Church, Minstead, England reads, “Steel True / Blade Straight / Arthur Conan Doyle / Knight / Patriot, Physician & Man of Letters.” Some have suggested that it would be fitting to add “Statesman,” “Justicer,” and “Spiritualist” to this impressive list. ACD might have been pleased and proud to have “Bibliophile” added to the monument which defines his life and work.





## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

### The Case of the Consecutive Curators

CLIFF GOLDFARB

In the 50 years since the ACD Collection's inception in 1969 (it opened to the public in 1971) it has had only four Curators. The first three share one feature not unusual for Toronto—each was born in another country. Cameron and Peggy came here from the U.S. and Victoria from Britain. Jessie is the first native-born Canadian Curator, with the further distinction of sharing her birthday of May 22nd with Sir Arthur. All four hold an advanced degree in Library Science from the University of Toronto.

#### **CAMERON HOLLYER (Curator from 1969-1991)**

Cameron Hollyer was one of the Library staff members who made the first major acquisitions that formed the basis of the Collection, when it resided at the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library on St. George Street. He had the enthusiastic support of John Parkhill, Director of the Library, and Mary McMahon, Head of the Literature Department.

Cameron was born in 1926 in Buffalo, New York, and was educated at Harvard University and the State University of Buffalo. He came to Toronto in 1958 where he earned his Library Science degree from the University of Toronto, joining the Library's Literature Department on graduation.

Cameron was an enthusiastic Sherlockian and an accomplished Doylean scholar. In 1977 he skilfully managed the Collection's move to the Reference Library at 789 Yonge Street. Every major scholar, biographer and bibliographer of Conan Doyle and Holmes came to the Collection and benefitted from his expertise. On top of his erudition it was impossible not to be charmed by his modesty and gentle, but brilliant, humour. Those who are not fortunate enough to have met him can get a glimpse of this in his delightful poetry and Sherlockian writing, privately published as *The Collected Works of Cameron Hollyer* (1991) and available in the Collection. He was likely the only one of the Curators who was asked whether he was Arthur Conan Doyle or Sherlock Holmes! He always dealt kindly with such queries.

Cameron was a welcome speaker at Sherlockian societies and was invested as "The Three Students" in the Baker Street Irregulars. After his retirement, he continued to work in the Collection until his untimely death on June 4, 2000.

#### **VICTORIA GILL (1991-2005)**

Our next Curator was Victoria Gill. She was fortunate to have Cameron as her unofficial assistant until 2000. Victoria was the very model of a literary librarian. Cameron introduced her as his successor with "Now, the Reign of Victoria."

Victoria was born in Yorkshire, England, and came to Toronto with her family while still in her teens. She earned her BA, MA and MLS from the University of Toronto and joined the Library in 1975 as an assistant in the Literature Department. She was the librarian in charge of British literature from 1983 to 1996, when the Collection became part of the Library's newly formed Special Collections Department. Like Cameron, Victoria could always be counted upon to provide expert advice and assistance to visiting scholars.

Her pamphlet, "Managing the Collection," a less whimsical version than Cameron's, of the founding, growth and nature of the Collection, was published shortly before her retirement, and is a fitting memorial to her expert tenure.

#### **PEGGY PERDUE (2005-2017)**

When Victoria retired, with no obvious successor around, the position was advertised and Margaret (Peggy) Perdue was selected. David Kotin, then Manager of Special Collections, told us. "I think you are going to be very happy with our choice." David was a master of understatement.

Born in New York, Peggy grew up in Freehold, New Jersey. She has a BA in Asian Studies from Rutgers University with a Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and her MLS from the University of Toronto. Peggy has worked as a Japanese translator and ESL teacher. She also worked at the United Nations University in Tokyo, The Royal Ontario Museum and The Japan Foundation.

Peggy started at the Toronto Public Library as a children's librarian. After becoming Curator, she quickly became an enthusiastic and popular Sherlockian, as well as a learned and proper Doylean. Peggy has joined numerous Sherlockian societies and was invested as "Violet Westbury" in the Baker Street Irregulars. In addition to writing regular columns for *Magic Door* and *Canadian Holmes*, she wrote the 2009 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual*, "Did you notice nothing curious about that advertisement?"

Peggy picks up languages with astonishing facility. She used these skills during her years as Curator to take outreach to new limits. Peggy has the experience of visiting Sherlockians and Doyleans, "which extends

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## THE LUMBER ROOM

# Balancing Act: Collecting for the Public

JESSIE AMAOLO

There are differences in building a collection to please oneself and choosing items for a public institution such as The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library.

The most important consideration for a curator when making decisions about what to purchase is the collection policy. This is a document created by curators and specialists and approved by management which sets out the parameters of what is to be acquired. Some of these areas include: subjects (Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes, The Victorian Era); formats (book, periodical, manuscript, original art); users (students and researchers, lifelong learners, the general public); and geographic region (Canadian, international). This document is essential as a constant guide and reference tool for curators to follow in order to stay within budget, consistent in what they collect, and reliable in what they offer.

Another item to concentrate on is the budget. It is important for a curator to balance spending between rare and contemporary materials, as well as set a pace for expenditures so that there are funds available for important acquisitions later in the year. The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection has a modest budget that does not always allow for us to compete with private collectors when one-of-a-kind materials come up for sale. This is why support from the Friends of the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection is so valuable. Also, we gratefully welcome donations that fit within our collection policy as they help us to acquire materials which we might otherwise be unable to afford.

It is crucial to think about the research value of potential acquisitions. The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection is a significant, world-famous collection known for the quality of its holdings, and as such we strive to uphold our status. In order to do this, we collect primary materials:

manuscripts, letters, first editions, and artwork; and secondary sources: critical, bibliographical, and biographical studies.

A final consideration worth mentioning is the mandate of a good curator to be up on trends and news within the community, and to ensure that these trends are reflected in purchases. The curator assesses gaps in the material and tries to fill them in order to create the most comprehensive collection possible for visitors and researchers. This is especially significant in a world where libraries strive to remain relevant.

The diversity, depth, and breadth of the materials we have gathered are incredibly important, allowing us to maintain our status as a distinguished research collection with an international reputation. I am proud to say that the three curators who have come before me have done a thorough job in choosing material for the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection over the years. There are many times that I have become aware of a rare item for sale, only to learn that we already have one. I believe this to be an excellent mark of a well-established and comprehensive collection.



The Arthur Conan Doyle Room in the Toronto Reference Library



# A Macedonian Never Forgets!

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The more collectors know their subject, the more luck and patience fall into place. Sometimes you painstakingly search out a possible source and other times you just stumble onto a rare item by pure happenstance. On occasion the waiting pays off and at other times it is a wasted effort. There are times when a book leaves no lasting impression but those are balanced out with ones that are truly remarkable.

One of my most memorable stories involves a Macedonian translation. When I began collecting translations of the Holmes stories, I would use Ronald B. De Waal's excellent bibliographies (*The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes*, *The International Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Universal Sherlock Holmes*) and the internet to search for different foreign editions I could add. I would go down the list of languages in one of the bibliographies and search the internet for a language or a specific title, hoping I would receive a hit in return for my effort. During one search, I hunted for the only Macedonian translation listed. I received negative results for both the title and the publisher, but when I explored for the translator's name, Tome Momirovski, I had a hit, but a rather oblique one at best. It was from the Macedonian Translators Union. Scrolling down their page, I came across the same name, Tome Momirovski.

I had no idea if this was the same person responsible for the 1961 Macedonian translation of Sherlock Holmes. The Macedonian Translators Union listed the name and postal address but no telephone number or email address. This was the closest I had come to finding this elusive edition so I promptly sat down and wrote him or her (at this point I was not sure) a letter, explaining the reason behind this missive. It was a good thing I used my Sherlockian letterhead which included my email address because in just over two weeks, I had an email back from Mr. Momirovski (for the record, he is male). He made it clear he was indeed the translator of *Avanturite na Šerlok Holms*.

Tome Momirovski was excited that someone remembered his effort as a college student in the late 1950s. As part of receiving his Master's Degree in Western Literature he spent nearly a year translating Western literary works, Sherlock Holmes among them. He went on to have a long career as a professor

at the University of Skopje and other smaller colleges in Macedonia. As a child, Sherlock Holmes was always one of his favourite characters, thus making those stories an easy choice when he began looking for works to translate. In 1961, two years after receiving his Master's Degree, *Avanturite na Šerlok Holms* was published. The paperback edition featured tales from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, and *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

In his email message, Mr. Momirovski apologized because he did not have a copy of the book. Neither did any of his friends or colleagues. The University where he still taught did not have a copy either, but rest assured, he said, *a Macedonian never forgets!* This interesting statement became more intriguing as time passed. And time did pass. A full year went by without a word from him. Bella was his granddaughter's name, and it was her email address which Tome had used initially. After such a long period of time, I decided to send him a message through her. She responded back immediately with apologies for her grandfather. His wife, her grandmother, had died and Tome had been in mourning for the past year. At the end of Bella's message, she assured me not to worry about getting a copy of the book because *a Macedonian never forgets!*

Another seven months passed by. Then, unexpectedly, I got the message I had hoped for and dreamed of from the beginning. They had found a copy of the book. Bella asked for my mailing address and I sent it to her without delay. I waited more than six months before sending Bella another message, hoping that a gentle nudge was all that was needed to get things rolling. In the email, I again included my postal address, just for good measure. Another half a year passed by before that message was answered. This time Bella explained that she had been in London working,

she still had the book and in closing, she told me to rest assured because *a Macedonian never forgets!*

Bella told me she would be returning to Skopje in a few weeks and would send the book at that time (with still no word about her grandfather). Two months later I got another email from Bella, asking me once again for my postal address. I could only assume that this Macedonian *does* forget. Finally, after another month of agonized waiting, the long-sought and -awaited Macedonian translation arrived in the mail. I did not have the heart to tell Bella or her grandfather that in the ensuing four and half years, another Macedonian translation had been published. *A Skandal vo Bohemija* was the second Macedonian Sherlock Holmes book published, but ended up becoming the first in my collection. This 2007 edition includes six Canonical tales. So you see, *a Macedonian never forgets*, and a certain patient American collector never forgets a good story about his books.



# A Singular Set of People

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gatherers, nesters, creating order out of the chaos of the larger world by controlling their visual environment. Now that the preponderance of women are in the work force, they have more opportunity to apply their disposable income to passions of a personal nature.

What I firmly believe is that collectors are born, not made, just as one is born with red hair or blue eyes. It's something in the genes which spreads through the system, germinating from a yearning for communion with the past, either one's own or a time about which one can only fantasize. While collectors may be neurotic, obsessed and insecure, most do not seek the approbation of the world and care little for its judgements. They are responding to some basic instinct, a kind of primal urge which can be gratified only in the thrill of the chase.

Sherlockians are by nature enthusiastic collectors, most especially of books and paper ephemera, accumulating rare volumes of the Canon or historical documents relating to either the creation or the creator. Books and ephemeral artifacts, especially, serve as a sociological barometer, measuring the customs and behavioural standards of a given age, and as such, the information they disclose can often prove of greater value to researchers than the dry data of official records and textbook history. Less studied, and therefore more candid, they offer an unexpurgated glimpse into the popular culture of a vanished age. Having served their original purpose, these documents now take on a second life as part of the historical record, providing evidence of those who created it, printed it, used it, saved it or are depicted on it.

The collecting of transitory paper has enjoyed a long and glorious tradition. As Secretary of the Navy during the reign of Charles II, Samuel Pepys was in a unique position to observe both the heady swirl of court intrigue and the more mundane activities of the average Londoner. A voracious reader and bibliophile, his wide-ranging interests also led him to the accumulation of what he referred to as "Vulgaria," the printed throwaways of his day. In 1700 he pasted about 1,000 examples dating from 1650 through the 1690s into two enormous leather-bound volumes which he entitled "London and Westminster," providing evidence, amongst other things, of the plague of 1665 and the Great Fire the following year. These bulging scrapbooks bring to mind Holmes's own enormous commonplace books filled with newspaper cuttings and detailed bibliographic references to persons or subjects of interest, a 19th-century version of Wikipedia. Today Pepys's enormous collection takes pride of place in twelve specially-constructed bookcases in Magdalene College, Cambridge. In many ways he was the perfect collector, a special brand of visionary, able to look backward and forward at the same time, attuned to the value of the seemingly trivial, yet endowed with a strong sense of posterity. In this tradition, Conan Doyle was a fitting disciple, preserving his own valuable library filled with correspondence, journals and research papers, many of which found their way into the legendary auction of 2004. Dan Posnansky is yet another of these visionaries with a lifelong passion, whose unparalleled collection of Sherlockiana was disseminated at auction in December 2017, to the great benefit of a new generation of collectors.

By the 19th century, collecting had become hugely popular even amongst the middle and lower classes, so it seems Conan Doyle was documenting a phenomenon that was already well entrenched, cutting across all classes and income brackets. The canonical collectors are consumed by their activities, a kind of obsessive/compulsive disorder which Watson might describe as a "monomania." Nor is Baron Gruner the only one to possess "the collection mania in its most acute form." However, given that the expensive paintings for which Moriarty obviously holds a soft spot, and the rare and valuable collections that Nathan Garrideb and Gruner, the "aristocrat of crime," so treasure were far beyond the pocketbook of the average collector, was there anything affordable in Holmes's day truly worth collecting? Actually, there is much to be said for the acquisition of the seemingly trivial. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, one of the characters introduces himself by declaring, "My father named me Autolycus, who was likewise a snapper up of unconsider'd trifles." With the onset of the Industrial Revolution, mass production allowed for a vast new array of consumer goods which suddenly became available. These unprepossessing trifles, which might previously have been regarded in bad taste, or simply ignored, now became the kitsch of popular culture. As to whether these otherwise overlooked objects held any inherent value, Sherlock Holmes makes the telling observation: "To the man who loves art for its own sake, it is frequently in its least important and lowliest manifestations that the keenest pleasure is derived." Spoken like a true collector!

Nowhere is this admiration for the seemingly ordinary better expressed than in a passage in Jerome K. Jerome's humorous novel *Three Men in a Boat*, written in 1888:

All our art treasures of today are only the dug-up commonplaces of three or four hundred years ago. I wonder if there is any intrinsic value in the old soup plates, beer-mugs, and candle-snuffers that we prize so now, or if it is only the halo of age growing around them that that gives them their charms in our eyes ... Will it be the same in the future? Will the prized treasures of today always be the cheap trifles of the day before? That china dog that ornaments the bedroom of my furnished lodgings ... I do not admire it myself. But in 200 years' time it is more than probable that that dog will be dug up from somewhere or other, minus its legs, and with its tail broken, and will be sold for old china, and put in a glass cabinet. And people will pass it around and admire it.

While it is true that value lies in the eye of the beholder, in which one man's chipped china dog is another man's treasure, this peculiar form of fanaticism was by no means confined to the Victorian sensibility. The same may be said of 21st-century collectors, equally victims of this implacable disease, obsessive in their pursuit of the rare or the trivial, who regard their acquisitions with a kind of ritual mysticism, their personal archives assuming the status of a shrine. Nor is the collecting phenomenon necessarily a solitary pursuit. In 1995, I participated in a film entitled, fittingly, "Hunters and Gatherers," an exploration of the obsessive nature of collecting, and the kinds of objects with which people are inclined to surround themselves, through which they make sense of the world and the part they play in it. The filmmaker, Darrell Varga, through his glimpse into the motivations of individual obsession, looks to answer the question of the psychology of the collector and the subculture to which he or she belongs.



He makes the case that collecting is in fact a very social act representing the need to connect with a larger community, either with other collectors or through the objects themselves, an expression and a sharing of a common aesthetic principle, as participants seek a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, every collector has his or her own agenda, and collects for very personal reasons.

Regardless of its monetary value or historical significance, to the collector with imagination, every artifact has a compelling story to tell, retains an inner life, and evokes an entire world, while the collector serves as the custodian of memory, a tour guide through time, peeping through the keyhole at the memories of a bygone age.

In the novel *The Great Victorian Collection*, by Brian Moore, a professor of 19th-century history dreams that a priceless collection of Victorian *objets d'art* has unexpectedly materialized and been entrusted to his care. When he awakens, the collection he dreamed up has miraculously appeared—in the parking lot of a motel in Carmel, California. Should he neglect it, even for an instant, it may well vanish as unexpectedly as it appeared. The lesson is clear: having acquired these artifacts, whether a chipped little china dog or a porcelain saucer worth a king's ransom, we become their custodians, however temporarily, and are responsible for their continued existence in an uncertain world, without whose care they risk both physical degradation and monetary devaluation, and are liable to crumble, fade and disappear altogether.

In her novel *The Volcano Lover*, Susan Sontag offers a glimpse into the nature of the archetypal collector in the form of Sir William Hamilton, 18th-century envoy to the court of Naples:

To collect is to rescue things, valuable things, from neglect, from oblivion, or simply from the ignoble destiny of being in someone else's collection ... There is no such thing as a monogamous collector. Sight is a promiscuous sense. The avid gaze always wants more ... Collections unite. Collections isolate. They unite those who love the same thing. They isolate from those who do not share the same passion ... Collectors often admit they care more for inanimate objects than for people. You can trust the things. They never change their nature. Their attractions do not pall ... For the collector to show off his collection is not bad manners. Indeed, the collector, like the imposter, has no existence unless he goes public, unless he puts his passions on display ... What a burden it is, finally, to be a collector!

Indeed, to the collector falls the responsibility to preserve the collection, properly display it, share the knowledge it imparts, and pass it on to another generation to cherish in equal measure. Though the responsibility may seem onerous, it is actually a rare privilege to care for these precious relics of the past.

Perhaps no amount of speculation or psychological analysis will suffice to adequately explain the inner workings of the mind of a collector, including those who collect Sherlockiana with an almost religious zeal, and perhaps it's just as well. Collectors, their inscrutable cachet intact, will remain forever an enigma.

As always, Holmes has the final word on the subject. As he observes in "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge," in another context entirely, though equally applicable to this one, "A singular set of people ... Curious people, Watson! I don't pretend to understand it all yet, but very curious people anyway."

# The Case of the Consecutive Curators

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over many nations and three separate continents." Now as the Senior Department Head of Special Collections, she intends to maintain her extensive interests and contacts in the world of Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle.

## JESSIE AMAOLO (from December 2017)

The return of Jessie Amaolo at the end of 2017 was welcomed by the Friends, by virtue of her work as curatorial locum during Peggy's six-month sabbatical in 2015. Born in Toronto, Jessie obtained a BA in Psychology from Ryerson University, and an MLS and diploma in Archives & Records Management from the University of Toronto. During her school years she worked as a page in Toronto's Eatonville Library, and then started her career in two of the Library's branches. Jessie joined the Special Collections Department in 2014 where she gained experience in all of the Library's special collections, including the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Literature and the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy. She has worked with manuscripts and archival materials, curated collections, prepared exhibits, and answered reference requests, all of which have prepared her to step into her new position. Jessie's library title is "Services Specialist" in the Special Collections Centre, but as with her predecessors, she is the Curator.

Jessie has already begun her outreach activities by conducting tours of the Collection, helping scholars with their research, working with the Friends to organize events, contributing to *Magic Door*, and showing new acquisitions at Friends and Bootmakers meetings.

## THE ASSISTANTS

It would be an injustice to tell you about our four Curators and not mention the exceptional library assistants who have worked with the Collection over the years. Janice McNabb and Beatriz Hausner worked with Cameron. And the recently retired Susan Murray and Marilyn Penner were Peggy's assistants. Since her retirement, Marilyn continues to write her whimsical column "Canon Fodder" for *Magic Door*.

These women, all of whom displayed great interest in the Collection, prepared new items for the shelves, reshelfed materials, welcomed visitors, worked on various assignments, and generally made the work of the Curator easier.

## THE MANAGERS

During most of the Collection's formative years as a part of the Literature Department, Cameron and Victoria reported to Mary McMahon, who is fondly remembered by some of our more venerable Friends. When the ACD Collection became part of the Special Collections Department in 1996, David Kotin and his successor Mary Rae Shantz have been invaluable to the Collection and the Friends.

Mary Rae Shantz recently retired as Manager, Service Development for Special Collections. We are grateful for her support over the years.

Her successor is Allison Lennox.





## CANON FODDER

### Canonical Collectors

MARILYN PENNER

"It's a treat to meet you again after so many years, Mr. Lomax," I said, shaking hands with the sub-librarian of the London Library. "What brings you to Toronto?"

"The possibility of setting up an exhibition showing collections and curiosities of the Holmesian—I beg your pardon!—the Sherlockian Canon, and I have brought over pictures and information about the prospective exhibits." Mr. Lomax held a thumb-drive before my eyes. "You want to see it, don't you? I know you want to see it."

"If you don't mind—YES!"

He chuckled. "Slide over, then." Pulling up a chair, he slipped the thumb-drive into its slot on the computer.

"Now, don't shout. The pictures themselves are not 'hush-hush', but the exhibition has not yet been confirmed." One by one, Mr. Lomax opened the files and showed me the pictures in "*The Musgrave Collection*": (The "Stuart Crown"; "Coins of Charles I"; "Royal Jewels found at Hurlstone"; "Copy of 'The Musgrave Ritual'"); "*The Sholto Collection*" ("A pity the Agra Treasure went into the Thames, but Dr. Watson is loaning his late wife's pearls. We cannot insure the paintings and tapestries, but we can arrange insurance for the hookah or the silver dove lamp."); "*The Vandeleur – Stapleton Lepidoptera Collection*" ("Sir Henry Baskerville did not want his family name attached to it, and lepidopterists cite Vandeleur as their authority. The British Museum considers it to be one of the finest collections of British butterflies and

moths extant."); "*Baron Adelbert Gruner's China Collection*" ("I'm rather proud of the small part we had in that case," the London Library official said, beaming.)

"They are so exquisite," I said, looking at the pictures. "The butterflies especially. Some would look lovely as jewelry—I mean, not as they are; but their designs could be used as brooches."

"The lady has good taste," Mr. Lomax replied, smiling. He opened another file.

I gave a cry. "The Cow-Hoof Horseshoes!"

"Shh! Remember you are in a library!" The sub-librarian's smile deepened. "We have a firm agreement with the Duke of Holderness to exhibit them. They are 'quite something special.'"

"And last—so far—is "*The Nathan Garrideb Collection*."

It was, as Dr. Watson had written, like a small natural history museum. Picture after picture of butterflies and moths, insects, scarabs, ancient coins, flint instruments, fossils, and skulls labeled "Neanderthal," "Heidelberg," "Cro-Magnon," and I don't know what else appeared on the screen. It was dizzying.

"Mr. Garrideb should have met Mr. Stapleton and Dr. Mortimer in Dartmoor," I said when the 'slideshow' ended. "They would have really gotten along."

The sub-librarian nodded. "Indeed."

He pulled the thumb drive from the computer and faced me.

"Do you know what links these collections together? Not just Sherlock Holmes. Misery. With five million dollars from a bequest, Nathan Garrideb intended to found a national collection. When he found out the bequest did not exist, he lost his mind and was parted forever from his treasures. The 'Cow-Hoof Horseshoes' in the Holderness collection were the means of one of the Duke's sons kidnapping the other. As Vandeleur, Jack Stapleton was a

leading authority on British lepidoptera. Had he applied to his generous uncle, Sir Charles Baskerville, instead of murdering him for his money, both men would have lived honoured lives. The outcome of the Musgrave Ritual? One dead butler and one mad maid. Neither Charles I nor II got back that crown. Thaddeus Sholto smokes his hookah in his cocooned sanctum, and stares at his paintings, but his twin brother was murdered for the Agra treasure. And Baron Gruner was blinded by acid. He can look neither at his china nor his other collection, the diary of 'Souls I Have Ruined.'"

"What about Dr. Barnicot's Napoleonic Collection?" I replied. "Except for two plaster busts, it's intact and I'm sure he's enjoying it."

"And nothing but those two broken busts connect his collection to the Holmes Canon. What if one of them had held the black pearl of the Borgias?" Mr. Lomax raised his hand and swept it around the Baillie Centre.

"It's much better to collect books," he said. "Reading profits the mind and entertains the spirit—and it's safer."

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