

# Sherlock Holmes and the Clocktower Mystery

## Volunteer's Guide to the Exhibit

This exhibit is an “interactive short story” told in eight “chapters”, each with accompanying room and evidence panels. It is a “new story” not one of the published Sherlock Holmes stories. The exhibit basically reflects the world of Sherlock Holmes and the interests of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (The Arthur of the Sherlock Holmes Adventures). The introduction panels concerning Sir Arthur Conan Doyle discuss his life and interests.

Visitors should allow between 40 to 60 minutes in this exhibit. Detective Guides (for clues and suspects) and pencils are available at the beginning of the exhibit. Volunteers are cautioned against giving too much information away. Please do not “solve” the mystery for the visitor.

The exhibit is self-guided and reading intensive. The exhibit requires careful reading, listening and observation on part of visitors.

The exhibit is a murder mystery (if it was a movie it might be rated PG-13) and shows murder scenes and murdered victims and therefore is most appropriate for middle and high school students and adults. Parents or guardians must decide if it is appropriate for their younger children and work together as a family to discuss the mystery.

The mystery can be solved by each person individually or it can be done by school groups or families by choosing a “designated reader” who informs the rest of the group and a designated “detective” who fills in the clues.

The exhibit encourages students (and adults) to use their problem-solving skills individually or in groups. **The exhibit is an example of inquiry-base learning.**

The rooms or “sets” are the clocktower, the caretaker's room, the lodging house bedroom, the carnival side show, the séance room, the Limehouse dock and opium den, and Conan Doyle's study. Each scene contains clues and “red herrings” and “cheat guides”. Visitors can have free run to look for evidence within the rooms, backtrack to previous visited rooms, etc.

At the end of the exhibit, visitors are invited for a “consultation” with an actor representing a character in the story who guides them through the clues and deductions and illuminates any loose ends. The Actor normally works Tuesday through Sunday. This consultation can be done by a volunteer on Mondays and Tuesdays when the actor is off duty. At the consultation, visitors are asked to keep the mystery's secret when they leave. The door to the consultation room must be kept locked if no one is available for the consultation.

This exhibit is an excellent resource for Language Arts, Victorian Literature or History as well as a demonstration of the scientific methods of observation, data collection, and analysis. It can provide a strong teambuilding experience for student groups. It uses detective-style investigation as a model for scientific investigation and can be linked to popular current TV programs that focus on forensic science such as CSI.

Volunteers can work in the Exhibit in the following ways:

- (1) The traditional method, in the exhibit helping visitors to go from one room to the next and confirming the clues when they find them.
- (2) As the final “consultant” (either “in character” or as a Museum volunteer) on Monday or Tuesday, leading visitors to the solution by discussing the clues with them.

Questions you might ask students:

- Do you know who Sherlock Holmes is?
- What do you know about him?
- Was he real or a fictional character?
- Who wrote the Sherlock Holmes Stories?
- When were the stories written?
- Where did the stories take place?
- Most of the stories were written from one person’s point of view, who was that person?
- What are the “props” or “supporting cast” of the Sherlock Holmes stories?

Questions you might ask Adults:

- Did you ever read any of the Sherlock Holmes stories?
- What did you like/dislike about them?
- What do you know about Sherlock Holmes from the stories?
- What do we know about the world of Sherlock Holmes?
- What do you know about the interests of the author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?

Fun Information:

Did you know that the idea of writing a series of short stories round the same character was a new idea for the time? Doyle initially agreed to write a series of six stories.

Did you know that the entire world of Sherlock Holmes comes from only 56 short stories and 4 novels that together comprise the “Holmsian Canon,” every word of which has been studied in minute detail by professional and amateur scholars.

Did you know that the Sherlock Holmes stories have been translated into 41 languages and that more has been written about Sherlock Holmes than any other character in fiction?

Did you know that Sherlock Holmes NEVER said, “elementary, my dear Watson” .....he said “elementary” and he said “my dear Watson”...but never together.

Did you know that there are numerous Sherlock Holmes societies throughout the world (there is a very famous ones called the Baker Street Irregulars) with chapters in all major cities? These societies debate and argue about the events of the stories, and require prospective members to take a test on Sherlockian scholarship.

Well-Known Sherlock Holmes Quotations:

- “Elementary”
- “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”
- “It is a great mistake to theorize ahead of your data.”
- “The game is afoot!”

Below are a list of words and names from Victorian England and the Sherlock Holmes stories which are used in this exhibit that might be unfamiliar to visitors:

**221B Baker Street:** A set of rooms consisting of a parlor and 2 bedrooms rented by Holmes and Watson from landlady, Mrs. Hudson.

**Cricketer:** One who plays the English national pastime of cricket, a game where the bowler pitches a ball to a batsman who sends it to various wickets or posts around the field.

**Diogenes Club:** The “queerest club in London” for unsociable and unclubbable men. No member was permitted to take notice of another. No talking was allowed. Mycroft Holmes was one of the founders and spent most of his day there.

**Escapologist:** A “Houdini-like” entertainer who escapes from impossible situations.

**Handbill:** A single sheet of paper advertising a product or event, what we would call a “flyer” today.

**Hanson cab:** A small horse-drawn carriage, frequently used as a taxi and popular in Victorian times.

**Inverness cape:** A buttoned outer garment worn over the shoulders with an additional shorter shoulder layer.

**Lestrade and Gregson:** As Holmes described in “A Study in Scarlet”, the “pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional....” (Two of the official Metropolitan Police detectives who often brought cases to Holmes.)

**Limehouse:** A very bad neighborhood in the warehouse and wharf area of London.

**Mycroft Holmes:** Holmes elder brother (seven years older) who had, according to Holmes, “better powers of observation and deduction than do I”. Mycroft Holmes was also described as “the British government”...he weighed all information from all departments and then “decided national policy.”

**Miss Irene Adler:** Retired opera prima donna of the Imperial Opera of Warsaw, she bested Sherlock Holmes in the story “A Scandal in Bohemia” and was always referred to by him with the honorable title of “THE Woman”.

**Opium:** A drug derived from the juice of poppies, popular in Victorian England and generally linked to the China Town and wharf area of London.

**Pall Mall:** Pronounced Pell Mell, the area of central London near the government offices.

**PC:** Police constable.

**Professor Moriarty:** A man of good birth, excellent education, and phenomenal mathematical ability (at the age of 21 he “wrote a treatise on the binomial theorem and won the mathematics chair at one of the smaller universities”), but also “the Napoleon of crime, the organizer of half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in London”.

**Reichenback Falls:** The place where Holmes was believed to have been killed by Professor Moriarty in the story, “The Final Problem.”

**Séance:** A gathering of people to contact the dead, led by a psychic “medium” and a very popular form of entertainment during the Victorian era.

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:** Born in Scotland in 1859. Received a medical degree and set up a consulting practice specializing in the diseases of the eye. Began to write because his practice was not very busy. Created one of the most enduring literary characters of all time in Sherlock Holmes, but was prouder of his “more serious” historical novels. Developed a great interest in psychic studies and spiritualism. Knighted in 1902 for writings about the Boer War. Died in 1930.

**Sherlock Holmes:** A fictional character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Was born in 1854 to a family of English country squires. Attended Cambridge University but apparently never received his degree. Author of numerous technical monographs on cigar ash and footprints, etc. published two accounts of his own cases, and the “Practical Handbook of Bee Culture with Some Observations on the Segregation of the Queen”. He created the profession of private consulting detective. Recreations (hobbies): violin, boxing, chemistry. Address: 221B Baker Street, HW1, London

**Scotland Yard:** Today we use the words Scotland Yard, but it is more appropriately called the “Metropolitan Police”. The name is derived from the location of their headquarters, built in a square in London named Scotland Yard. The London metropolitan police force, used as a national detective bureau only when invited in by other local police agencies.

**Strand Magazine:** An extremely popular magazine that began publishing in 1891 and ended in 1949. The first Sherlock Holmes story to appear in the Strand was “A Scandal in Bohemia” in 1891. Conan Doyle was paid 35 pounds for it. With artists illustrations on nearly every page and well-known authors (Kipling was paid 100 pounds for a 1,000 word story), the Strand was the first of the modern magazines and published all kinds of short stories. It was so popular in its early years that there were queues at the railway bookstalls for each new number. Each sixpenny issue sold over 350,000 copies.

**Telegram:** A message transmitted by Morse code through telegraph lines and conveyed to recipients by paper messages usually with same day service. In England this was done through the Post Office. It was eventually replaced by the telephone.