

Adventure VI – The Boscombe Valley Mystery



Paul Churchill once quipped he had a hard time studying for Sherlockian quizzes, so inspired by Simon Goodenough's *A Study in Scarlet – A Sherlock Holmes Murder Dossier*, Paul began collecting Canonical artifacts around 1990 to help him remember each story. Over 1,500 artifacts later, Paul's 'Evidence Boxes' became legendary in the Sherlockian world as he displayed them at numerous Scion meetings.

What Paul could not find, he made. He became known as a master forger, and 'created' numerous 'genuine faux' objects, such as letters, documents, and telegrams. Paul was invested in the Baker Street Irregulars in 2006 as "Corot." After Paul's passing, the Evidence Boxes were bequeathed to Watson's Tin Box Scion Society, a Society Paul co-founded in 1989. Debbie Clark has maintained the Boxes and continues the practice of displaying the items from one of the Boxes at each society meeting.

Beth Austin assisted in this effort by photographing, annotating the items, and finding the quotes for many of the items, while Denny Dobry and Rusty Mason supported Paul's efforts by photographing each of the items, as well as developing a comprehensive inventory with notations of item's mentioned in the story. Each of the Boxes is posted with permission of Debbie Clark and Jacquelynn Morris.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.



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If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than 1/2d. being reckoned as 1/2d.; and if it be found that there was an error, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

784

Charges }
to pay }

£ s. d.

Received
here at }

WIGMORE POST OFFICE

at

10.10.14

10.13.14

TO { DR JOHN H. WATSON. 737 SUSSEX GARDENS, HYDE PARK, LONDON W.2

HAVE YOU A COUPLE OF DAYS TO SPARE? HAVE JUST BEEN WIRED FOR FROM THE WEST OF ENGLAND IN CONNECTION WITH BOSCOMBE VALLEY TRAGEDY. SHALL BE GLAD IF YOU WILL COME WITH ME. AIR AND SCENERY PERFECT. LEAVE PADDINGTON BY THE 11.15.

SH

Paymaster

N.B.—This Form must accompany any inquiry made respecting this Telegram.

Pictured is the telegram sent to Watson from Holmes, requesting his company on the mystery at the Boscombe Valley mystery.

From the story:

We were seated at breakfast one morning, my wife and I, when the maid brought in a telegram.



POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

London

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Office Stamp.



6294

Charges
to pay

£ s. d.

Ad
at

ROSS, HEREFORDSHIRE

at

8.50^{PM}

Received
here at

8.53^{PM}

TO { MR SHERLOCK HOLMES, 221B BAKER STREET, LONDON NW1

AM PUZZLED IN BOSCOMBE VALLEY TRAGEDY AND REFER
TO YOU FOR ANY ASSISTANCE. HAVE ARRANGED FOR
LODGINGS FOR YOU AND ONE OTHER AT HEREFORD ARMS
IN ROSS. DO BRING ALONG YOUR DOCTOR FRIEND. AIR
AND SCENERY PERFECT HERE IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND.
WILL MEET YOU AT ROSS STATION AT FOUR.

LESTRADE

N.B.—This Form must accompany any inquiry made respecting this Telegram.

Pictured is the telegram sent by Inspector Lestrade to Holmes requesting his assistance on the tragedy in Boscombe Valley. He also states to bring along Dr. Watson.

From the story:

‘Lestrade, being rather puzzled, has referred the case to me.’

The Herefordshire Gazette

Vol. XVII, No. 32

Ross, Tuesday, 4 June, 1889

Price: 1 d.

James McCarthy Questioned About Father's Death at Coroner's Inquest Verdict of "Wilful Murder" Returned Against Son; Case To Be Referred to Next Assizes

SON'S

TESTIMONY

ROSS: A coroner's inquest was held to-day to examine the evidence in the death of Mr. Charles McCarthy, late of Hatherley Farm, this county, which occurred yesterday. Mr. James McCarthy, the only son of the deceased, was then called and gave evidence as follows: "I had been away from home for three days at Bristol, and had only just returned upon the morning of last Monday, the 3rd. My father was absent from home at the time of my arrival, and I was informed by the maid that he had driven over to

Ross with John Cobb, the groom. Shortly after my return I heard the wheels of his trap in the yard, and, looking out of my window, I heard him get out and walk rapidly out of the yard, though I was not aware in which direction he was going. I then took my gun, and strolled out in the direction of the Boscombe Pool, with the intention of visiting the rabbit warren which is upon the other side. On my way I saw William Crowder, the game-keeper, as he has stated in his evidence; but he is mistaken in thinking that I was following my father. I had no idea that he was in front of me.

When about a hundred yards from the Pool, I heard a cry of "Cooce!" which was a usual signal between my father and myself. I then hurried forward, and found him standing by the Pool. He appeared to be much surprised at seeing me, and asked me rather roughly what I was doing there. A conversation ensued, which led to high words, and almost to blows, for my father was a man of a very violent temper. Seeing that his passion was becoming ungovernable, I left him, and returned towards Hatherley Farm. I had not gone more than one hundred and fifty

yards, however, when I heard a hideous outcry behind me, which caused me to run back again. I found my father expiring on the ground, with his head terribly injured. I held him in my arms, but he instantly expired. I knelt beside him some minutes, then made my way to Mr. Turner's, the game-keeper, his being the nearest person I could ask for assistance. I saw no one else, and my father who returned, and I had no idea how he was injured by his fall. He was not a man, being so cold and for in his manner

he had, as far as I know, no active enemies. I know nothing further of the matter."

The Coroner: Did your father make any statement to you

The Coroner: I am afraid that I must press it.

Witness: It is really impossible for me to tell you. I can assure you that it has nothing to do with the sad tragedy which followed.

The Coroner: That is for the Court to decide. I need not point out to you that your

will be called upon to give evidence.

looked round for it, but it was gone.

Q: Do you mean that it disappeared before you went for help?

A: Yes, it was gone.

Q: You cannot say what it was?

A: No, I had a feeling something was there.

Q: How far from the body?

A: A dozen yards or so.

Q: And how far from the edge of the wood?

A: About the same.

Q: Then if it was removed it was while you were within a dozen yards of it?

A: Yes, but with my back towards it.

This concluded the examination of the witness. The jury returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder" within a short time. The suspect is to be bound over to the Magistrates at Ross tomorrow, and the case is expected to be referred to the next Assizes.

The Coroner: How was it, then, that he uttered it before he saw you, and before he even knew that you had returned from Bristol?

Witness: (with considerable confusion): I do not know.

A Jurymen: Did you see nothing which aroused your suspicions when you returned on hearing the cry, and found your father injured?

Witness: Nothing definite.

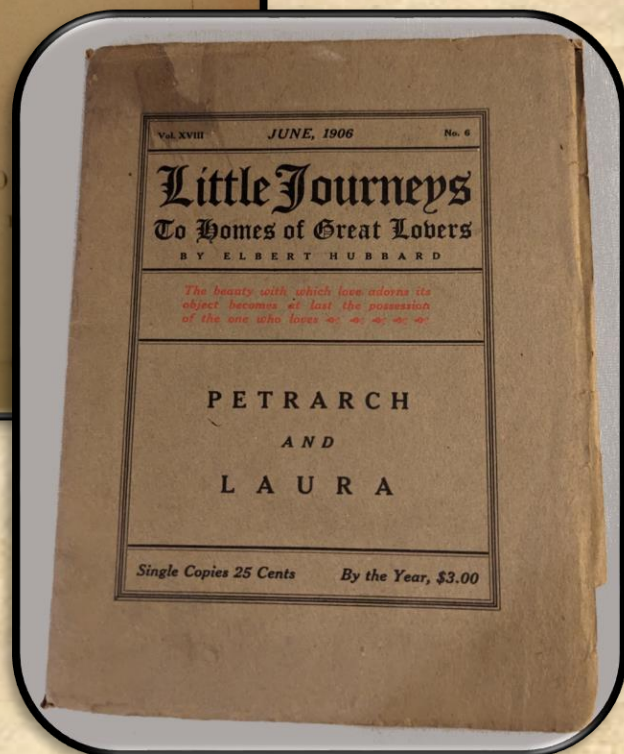
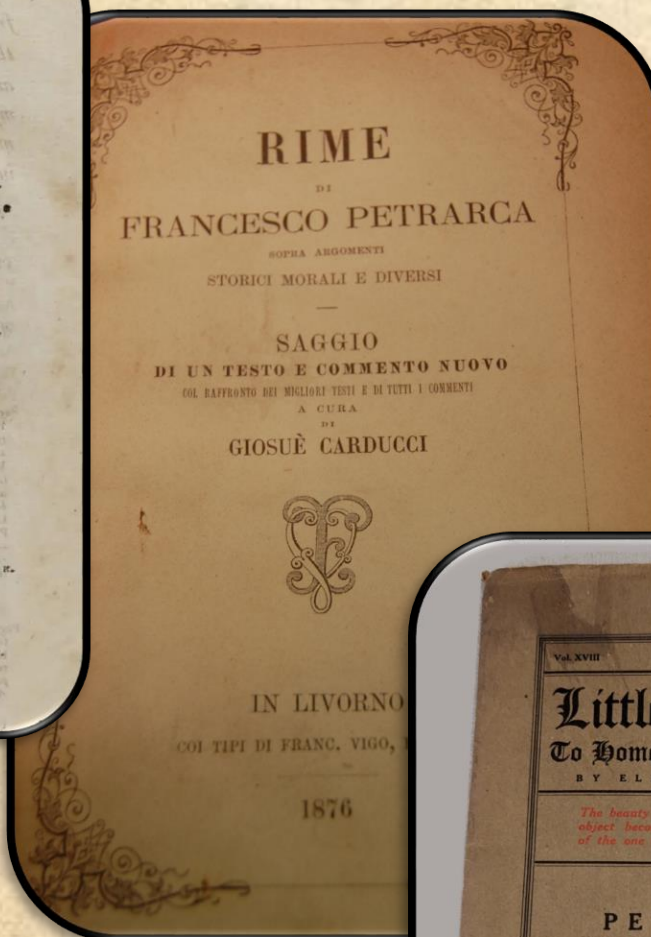
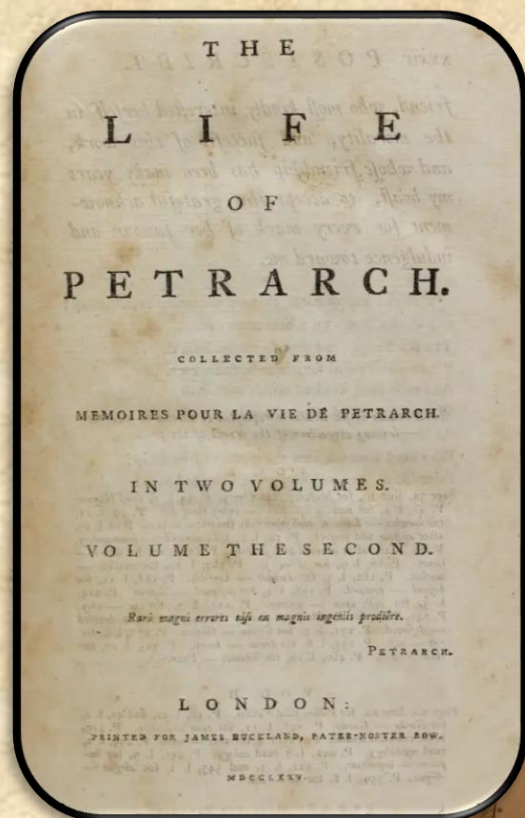
The Coroner: What do you mean?

Witness: I was so disturbed and excited as I rushed out into the open, that I could think of nothing except my father. Yet I have a vague impression that, as I ran forward, something lay upon the ground to the left of me. It seemed to me to be something grey in colour, a coat of some sort, or a plaid perhaps. When I rose from my father I

Pictured is the article in the local newspaper detailing the inquest of the McCarthy death. Holmes provided the article to Watson while they were travelling by train.

From the story:

He picked out from his bundle a copy of the local Herefordshire paper, and having turned down the sheet, he pointed out the paragraph in which the unfortunate young man had given his own statement of what had occurred.



Pictured is one of the pocket books written by Petrarch Holmes owned. Petrarch was a scholar and poet of the early Italian Renaissance, and one of the earliest humanists.

From the story:

‘And now here is my pocket Petrarch, and not another word shall I say of this case until we are on the scene of action.’



Pictured is the case of cigarettes Holmes brought with him to Ross in Herefordshire County. Tobacco always relaxed Holmes while he thought through a case.

From the story:

‘I have a caseful of cigarettes here which need smoking, and the sofa is very much superior to the usual country hotel abomination.’



Pictured is the barometer Holmes used when determining whether the weather would worsen. A barometer was commonly known as 'a glass'.

From the story:

'The glass still keeps very high,' he remarked, as he sat down. 'It is of importance that it should not rain before we are able to go over the ground.'



Pictured is one of Charles McCarthy's boots, which Holmes wanted to inspect to compare it to the boot prints he found at the scene of the murder.

From the story:

We called at the door, when the maid, at Holmes's request, showed us the boots which her master wore at the time of his death.



Pictured is the stone which Holmes determined was the murder weapon. Holmes noted the grass under the stone was still green and alive, thus the stone has recently been moved to that spot.

From the story:

A jagged stone was lying among the moss, and this also he carefully examined and retained.

‘This may interest you, Lestrade,’ he remarked, holding it out. ‘The murder was done with it.’



Pictured is the penknife, one of the items Holmes determined was carried by the murderer of Mr. McCarthy. He provided Lestrade the list of items in the killer's pocket.

From the story:

'And the murderer?'

'Is a tall man, left-handed, limps with the right leg, wears thick-soled shooting-boots and a grey cloak, smokes Indian cigars, uses a cigar-holder, and carries *a* blunt penknife in his pocket.'



Pictured is the butt of an Indian cigar, as well as the holder, items Holmes determined was carried by the murderer of Mr. McCarthy. He provided Lestrade the list of items in the killer's pocket or on him.

From the story:

'And the murderer?'

'Is a tall man, left-handed, limps with the right leg, wears thick-soled shooting-boots and a grey cloak, smokes Indian cigars, uses a cigar-holder, and carries *a* blunt penknife in his pocket.'



Pictured is a map of Australia, denoting the location of Ballarat, where John Turner, living as Black Jack, terrorized highway travellers.

From the story:

‘We have come now out of mere vagueness to the definite conception of an Australian from Ballarat with a grey cloak.’

Glb
N 21
N x 16
No. of Message

8 June 89
too

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.
(Inland Telegrams.)

A.
Prefix..... Code.....

Office of Origin and Service Instructions.

ROSS STATION POST $\frac{1}{6}$ msg $\frac{1}{6}$ msy $\frac{1}{6}$ msy

Words 30

Charge 3/6

Sent At 10.31 p.m.

To BRISTOL

By [Signature]

Please Write Distinctly TO

FROM

MR SHERLOCK HOLMES

% HEREFORD ARMS

ROSS, HEREFORDSHIRE

Address Recd.

ROYAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

BRISTOL

URGENTLY	NEED	MAP	OF	COLONY
OF	VICTORIA	IN	AUSTRALIA	FOR
SOLUTION	OF	BOSCOMBE	VALLEY	MURDER
CASE	RETURN	BY	SPECIAL	COURIER
FUNDS	GUARANTEED	PER	LESTRADE	SCOTLAND
YARD	FORM	OF	PASS	PAID

NOTICE TO THE SENDER OF THIS TELEGRAM.

This Telegram will be accepted for transmission subject to the Regulations made pursuant to the 15th Section of the Telegraph Act, 1866, and to the Notice printed at the back hereof.

HARRISON & SONS, PRINTERS, LONDON

Pictured is the telegram Holmes sent to the Royal Geographic Society in Bristol asking for a map of Australia, denoting the location of Ballarat.

From the story:

‘This is a map of the Colony of Victoria,’ he said. ‘I wired to Bristol for it last night.’

Cigar ash
found behind beech
tree near Boscombe
Pool —
Indian manufacture
(rolled in Rotterdam)
Monograph
#107

Pictured is the envelope in which Holmes placed the tobacco ash he found near Boscombe pool. He noted on the envelope where the tobacco originated and its place in his monograph.

From the story:

‘I found the ash of a cigar, which my special knowledge of tobacco ashes enabled me to pronounce as an Indian cigar.’



Pictured is the note sent by Holmes to John Turner, requesting an interview with him. The note was written on Hereford Arms Hotel stationery.

From the story:

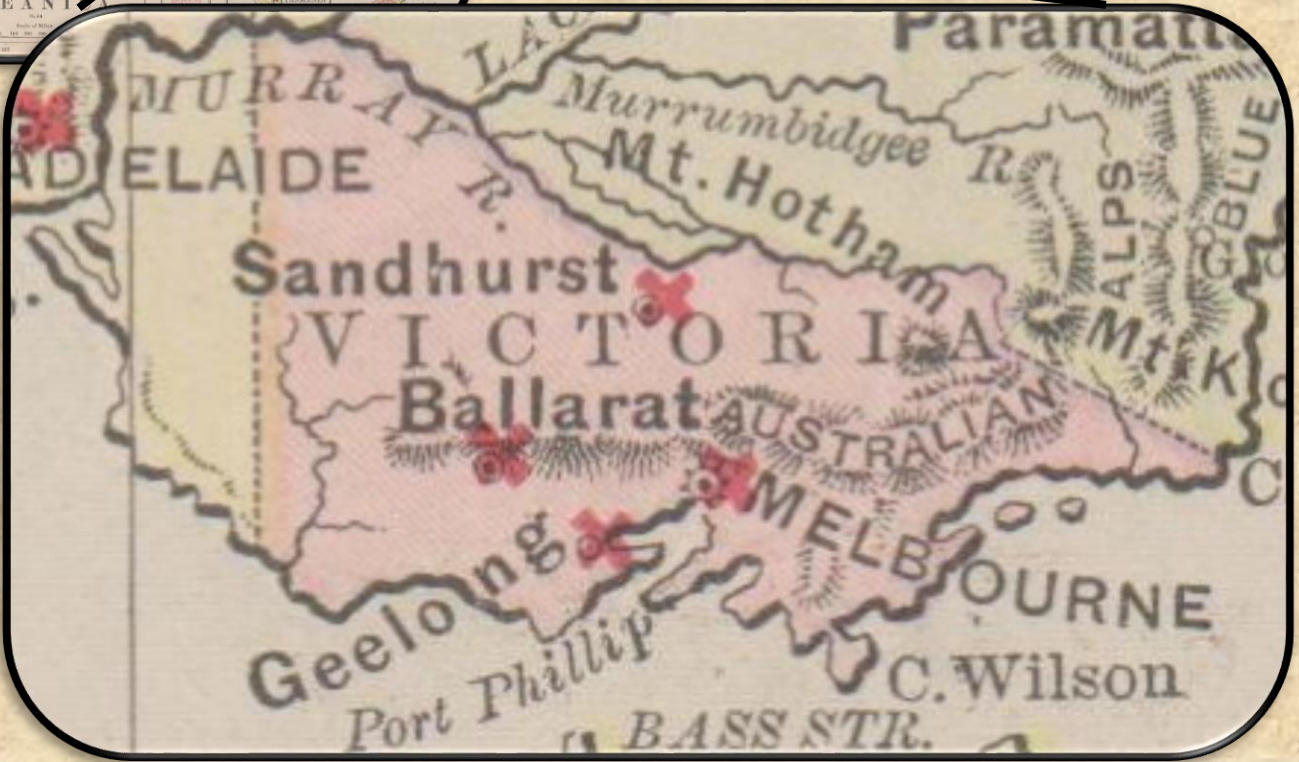
‘Pray sit down on the sofa,’ said Holmes gently. ‘You had my note?’



Pictured are the playing cards, two Jack of Clubs, by which James Turner was nicknamed while he was living in Ballarat, Colony of Victoria, Australia.

From the story:

‘Black Jack of Ballarat was the name I went under, and our party is still remembered in the colony as the Ballarat Gang.’

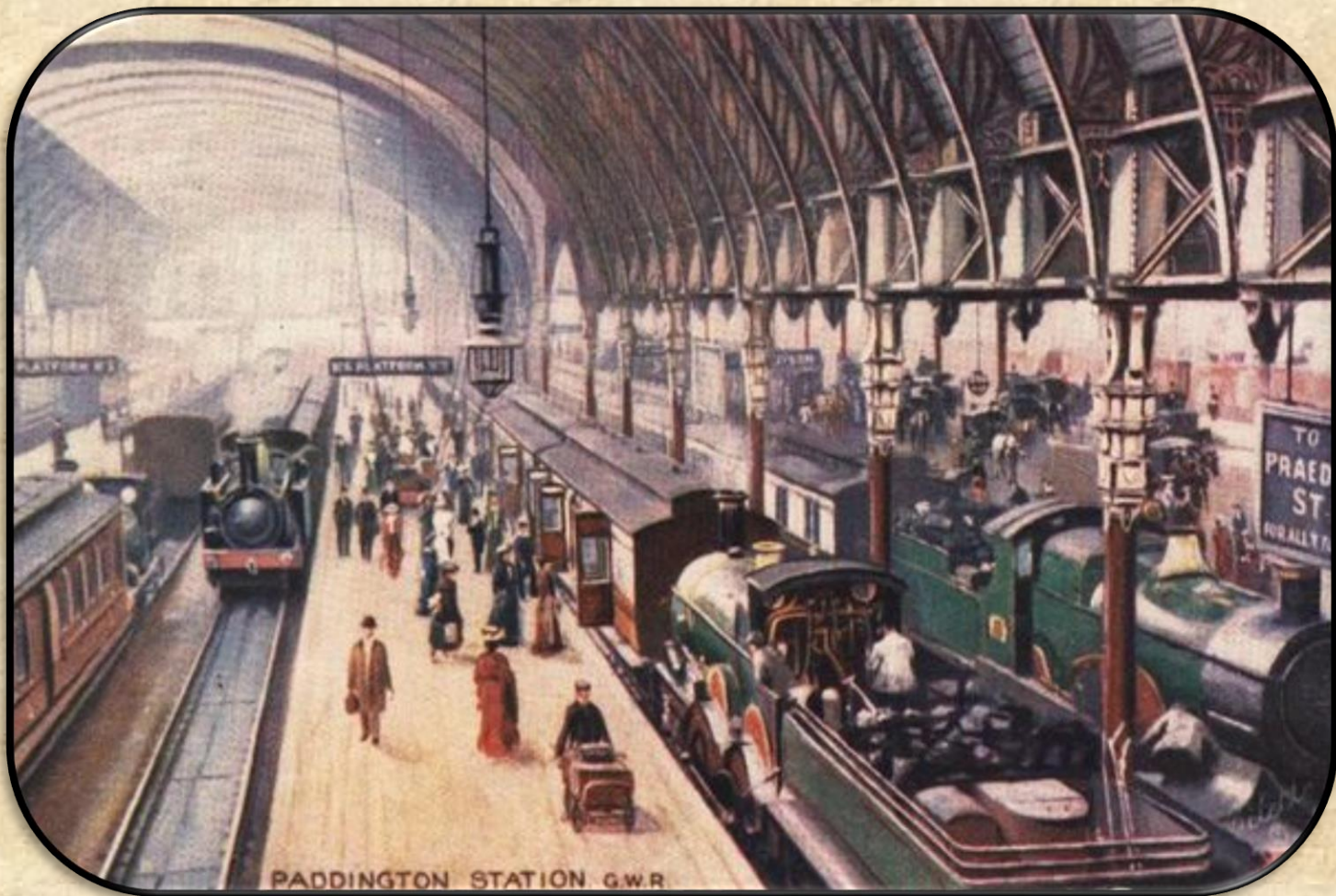


Pictured is a colored map of Australia, denoting the location of Ballarat, where John Turner lived while in Australia.

From the story:

‘One day a gold convoy came down from Ballarat to Melbourne...’

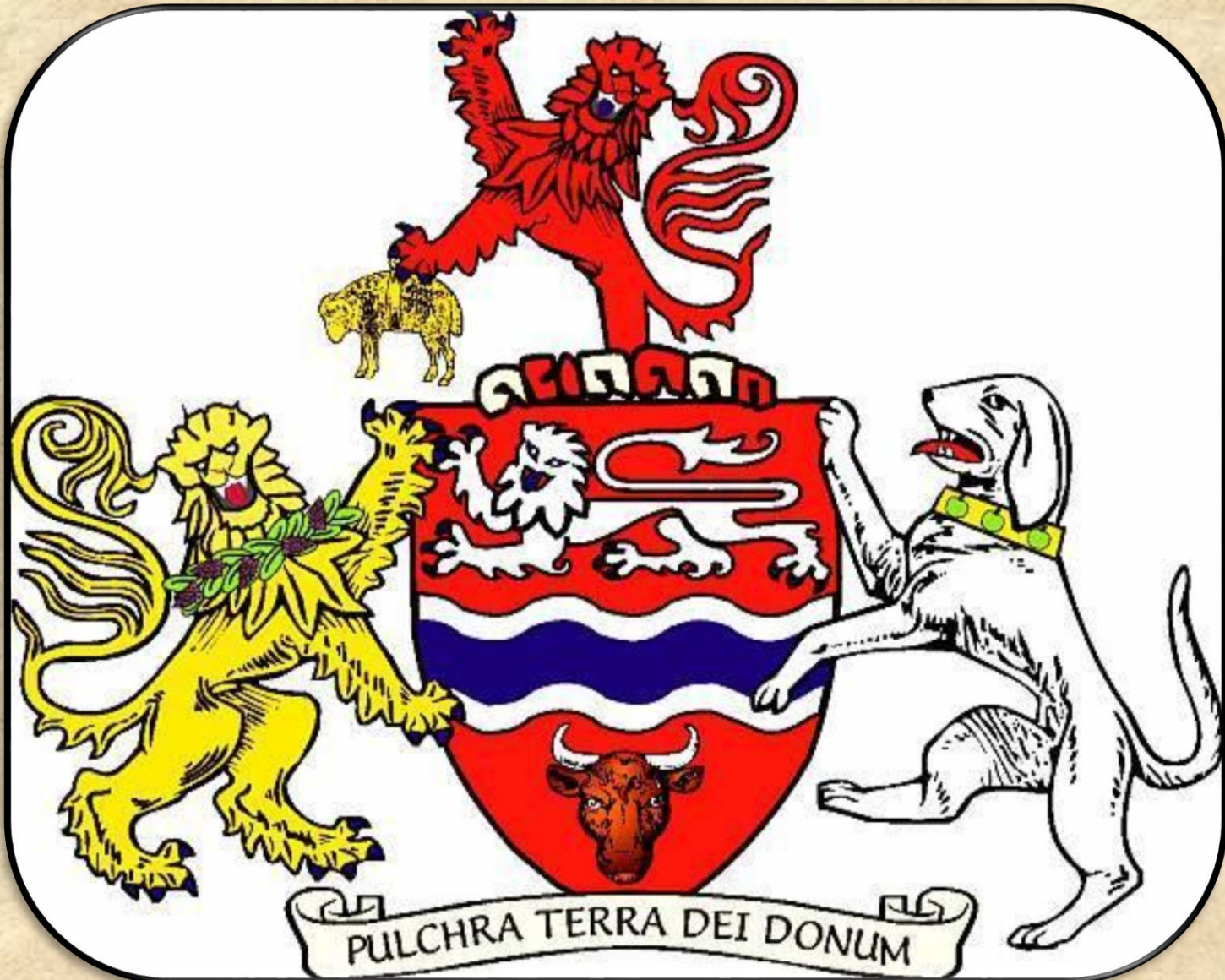
Additional items of interest
in “The Boscombe Valley
Mystery” not included in
the original Evidence Box.



Pictured is a postcard depicting Paddington Station, the departure point for Holmes and Watson to reach Boscombe Valley in Herefordshire County. Paddington Station was approximately 1 mile from Baker Street.

From the story:

‘Shall be glad if you will come with me. Air and scenery perfect. Leave Paddington by the 11.15.’



Pictured is the coat of arms for Herefordshire County, location of the town of Ross, the Hereford Arms, and Boscombe Valley, where the tragedy of Charles McCarthy occurred.

From the story:

‘Boscombe Valley is a country district not very far from Ross, in Herefordshire.’



Pictured is a tintype of the Boscombe pool, the site of the tragedy concerning Charles McCarthy.

From the story:

‘The Boscombe Pool is thickly wooded round, with just a fringe of grass and of reeds round the edge.’



Pictured is Patience Moran, the young girl who witnessed the argument between Charles and James McCarthy. Was she related to Colonel Sebastian Moran?

From the story:

‘A girl of fourteen, Patience Moran, who is the daughter of the lodge-keeper of the Boscombe Valley Estate, was in one of the woods picking flowers.’



Pictured is a WW1 recruitment ad, using the call, “Coo-ee”. Cooee! is a shout originated in Australia to attract attention, find missing people, request assistance, or indicate one's own location.

From the story:

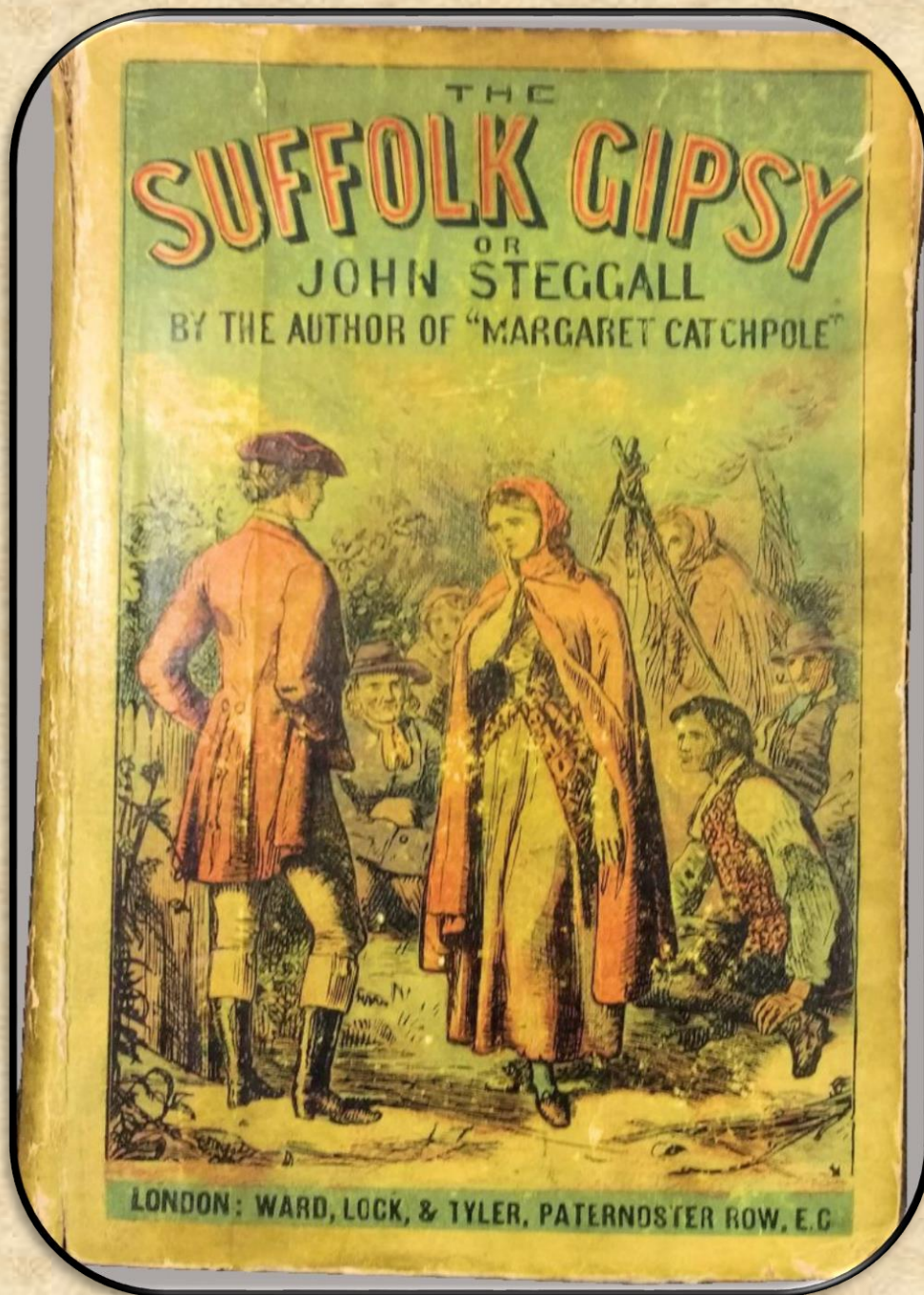
‘When about a hundred yards from the Pool I heard a cry of 'Cooee!' which was a usual signal between my father and myself.’



Pictured is a postcard depicting Stroud Valley, a group of 5 Valleys -- Chalford, Nailsworth, Ruscombe, Slad, and Painswick. The Thames River and Severn Canal pass through the valleys.

From the story:

It was nearly four o'clock when we at last, after passing through the beautiful Stroud Valley and over the broad gleaming Severn, found ourselves at the pretty little country town of Ross.



Pictured is the yellow-backed novel, published by Ward, Lock & Tyler., Watson read while waiting for Holmes in the hotel. A yellow-back or yellowback is a cheap novel which was published in Britain in the second half of the 19th century.

From the story:

...where I lay upon the sofa and tried to interest myself in a yellow-backed novel.



Pictured is the marriage certificate between James McCarthy and Catherine Dowling of Bristol, which occurred two years before his father was killed at the Boscombe pool.

From the story:

‘...what does the idiot do but get into the clutches of a barmaid in Bristol, and marry her at a registry office!’



Pictured is James Turner and his partner, prospecting in the Nerrena Creek outside Ballarat. Both were members of the Ballarat Gang.

From the story:

‘Black Jack of Ballarat was the name I went under, and our party is still remembered in the colony as the Ballarat Gang.’

'You didn't know this dead man. God keep you out of the clutches of such years, and he has blasted my life. I'

'It was in the early 'sixties and reckless, ready to turn my hand had no luck with my claim, took to here a highway robber. There were station from time to time, or stepping Ballarat was the name I went under Ballarat Gang.

'One day a gold conveyer for it and attacked it. There were emptied four of their saddles at the get the swag. I put my pistol to the I wish to the Lord that I had shot fixed on my face, as though to remove wealthy men, and made our way of old pals, and determined to settle which chanced to be in the market for the way in which I had earned my dear little Alice. Even when she right path as nothing else had ever make up for the past. Ali was going

'I had gone up to town hardly a coat to his back or a boot

"Here we are, Jack," said you. There's two of us, me and my fine, law-abiding country is English 'Well', down they came to the West lived rent free on my best land ever turn where I would, there was his end up, for he soon saw I was more afraid wanted he must have, and whatever it was until at last he asked for a thing which I could

His son, you see, had grown up, and so had my girl, and as I was known to be in weak health, it seemed a fine stroke to him that his lad should step into the whole property. But there I was firm. I would not have his cursed stock mixed with mine; not that I had any dislike to the lad, but his blood was in him, and that was enough. I stood firm. McCarthy threatened. I braved him to do his worst. We were to meet at the Pool midway between our houses to talk it over.

When I went down there I found him talking with his son, so I smoked a cigar, and waited behind a tree until he should be alone. But as I listened to his talk all that was black and bitter in me seemed to come uppermost. He was urging his son to marry my daughter with as little regard for what she might think as if she were a slut from off the streets. It drove me mad to think that I and all that I held most dear should be in the power of such a man as this. Could I not snap the bond? I was already a dying and a desperate man. Though clear of mind and fairly strong of limb, I knew that my own fate was sealed. But my memory and my girl! Both could be saved, if I could but silence that foul tongue. I did it, Mr Holmes. I would do it again. Deeply as I have sinned, I have led a life of martyrdom to atone for it. But that my girl should be entangled in the same meshes which held me was more than I could suffer. I struck him down with no more compunction than if he had been some foul and venomous beast. His cry brought back his son; but I had gained the cover of the wood, though I was forced to go back to fetch the cloak which I had dropped in my flight. That is the true story, gentlemen, of all that occurred.'

James Turner

09 June 1889

Pictured is the statement written out by James Turner, describing his actions to kill Charles McCarthy, clearing James McCarthy of the crime.

From the story:

'Well, it is not for me to judge you,' said Holmes, as the old man signed the statement which had been drawn out. I pray that we may never be exposed to such a temptation.'



Pictured is Richard Baxter, a 17th Century Puritan, who has been described as "the chief of English Protestant Schoolmen".

From the story:

‘I never hear of such a case as this that I do not think of Baxter's words, and say: ‘There, but for the grace of God, goes Sherlock Holmes.’