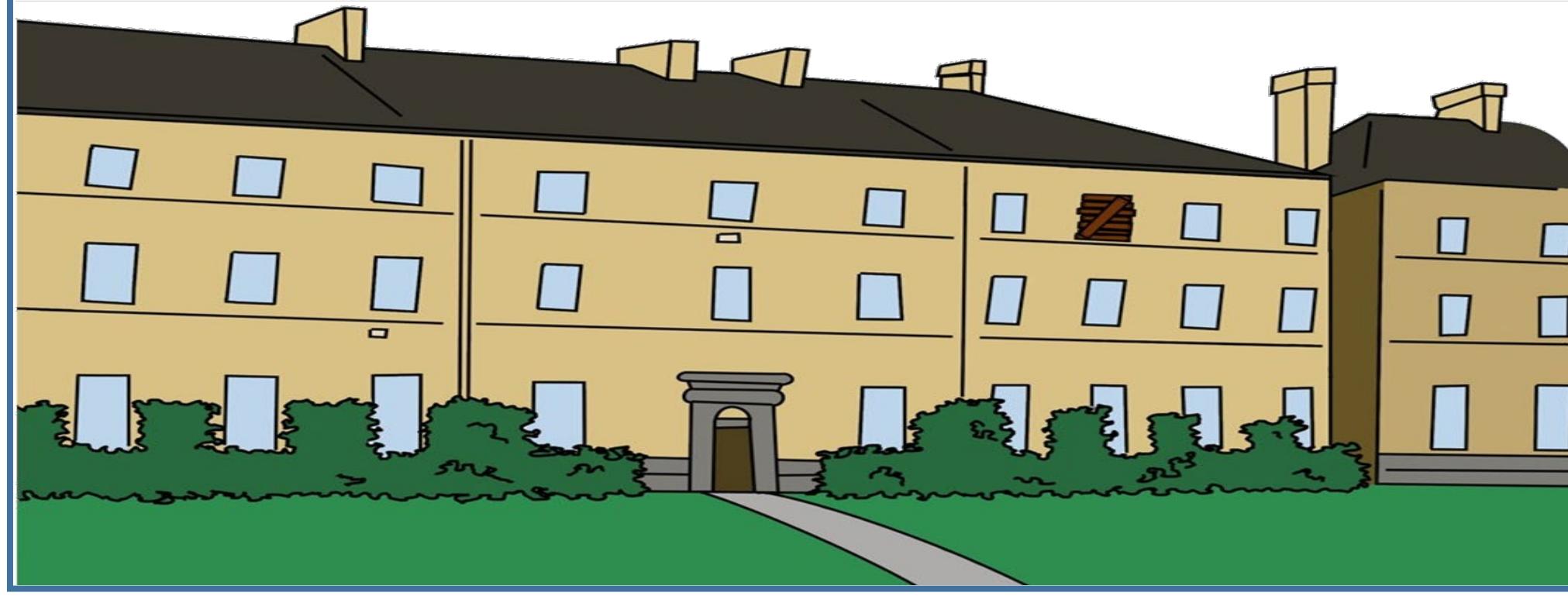


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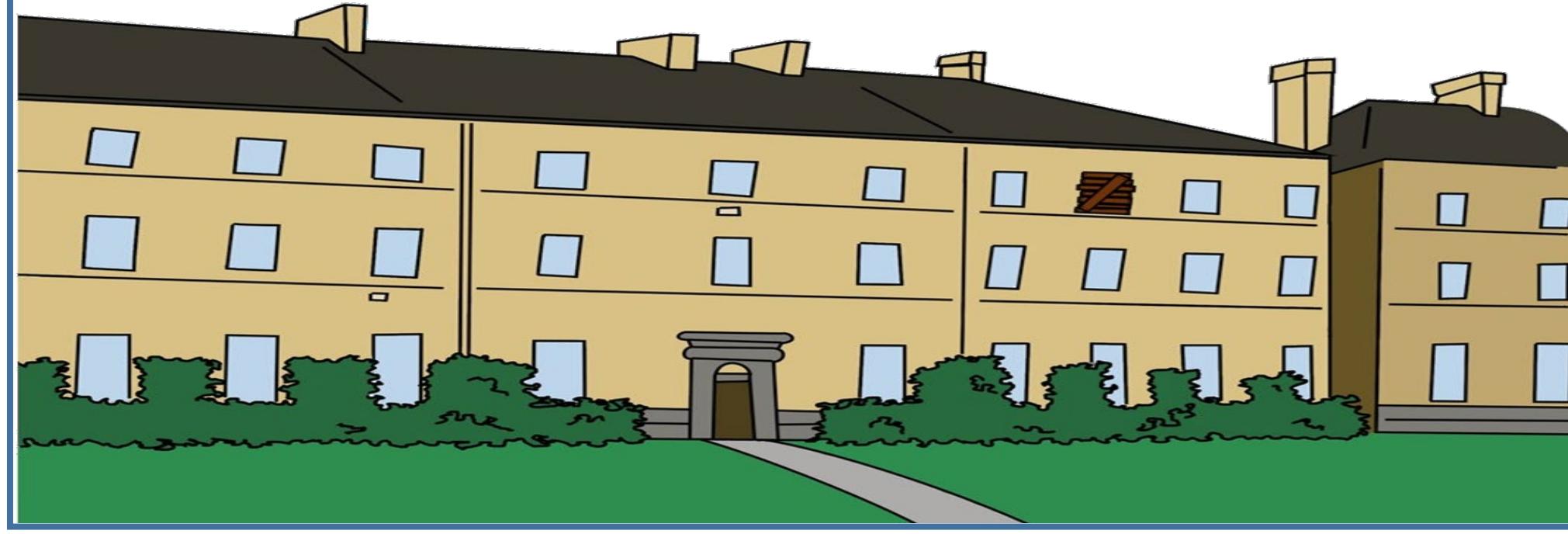
Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



Baker Street Elementary

The Life and Times in Victorian London

074 -- Time on Your Hands -- Pocket Watches -- February, 2022

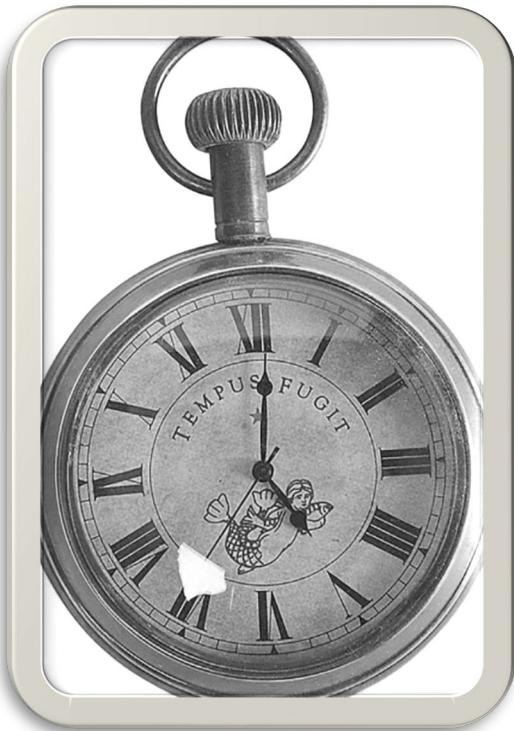


Welcome to topic # 074...
today we will be looking at
pocket watches during the
Victorian period.

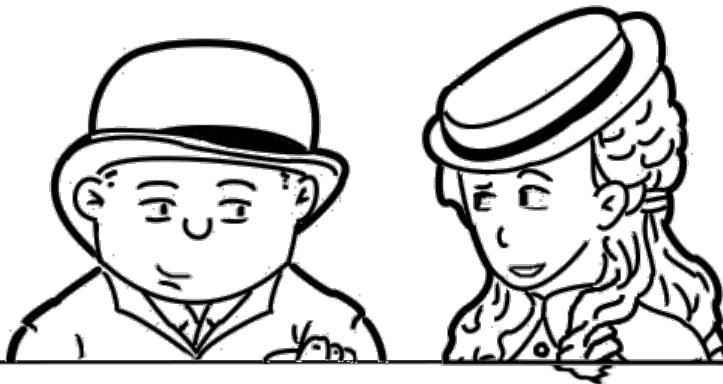


In a number of the Sherlock Holmes cases, a character checked the time with his watch, and often will kept important items — usually a key — on the attached chain.





In two adventures, Sherlock's study of a watch's characteristics provided information about its owner.



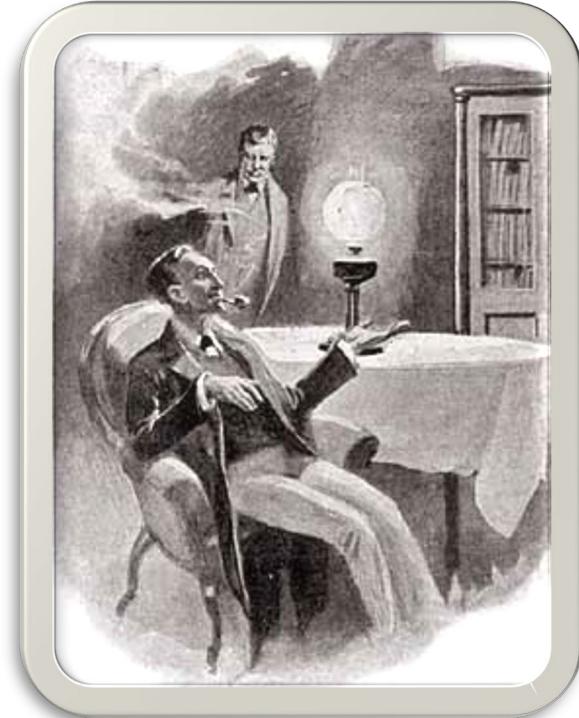
At the beginning of The Sign of Four, Watson shared his watch for Holmes to demonstrate what he can deduce about the owner's characteristics...



*...and in "The Five Orange Pips,"
you mentioned how Sherlock
used a watch to establish a
victim's time of death.*



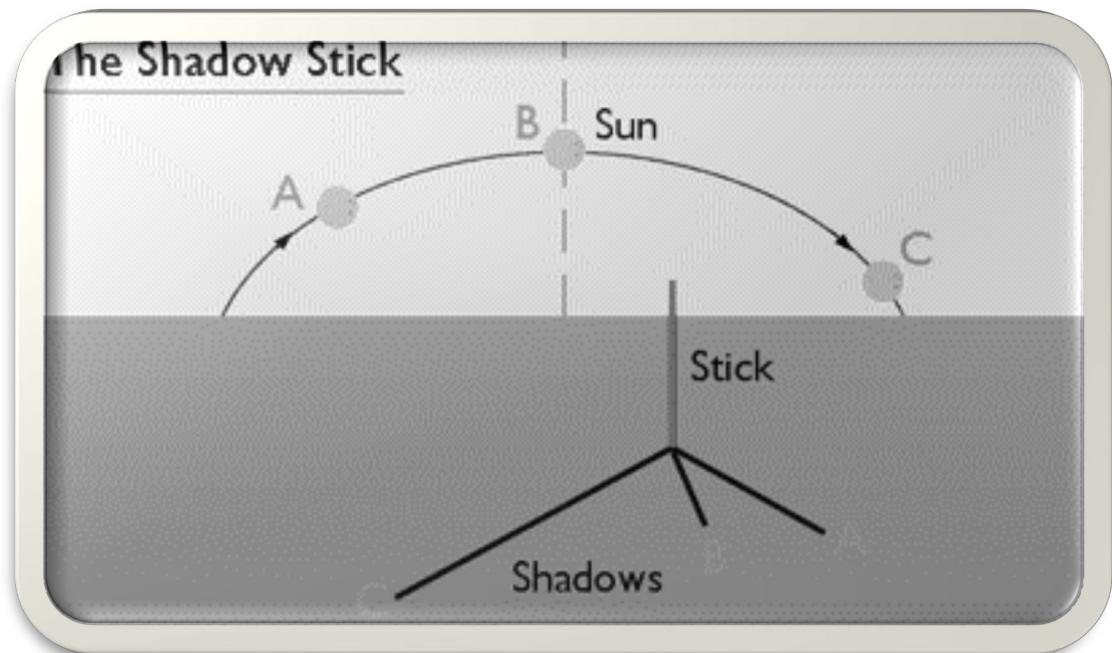
*For Sherlock, watches
possessed a great
individuality.*



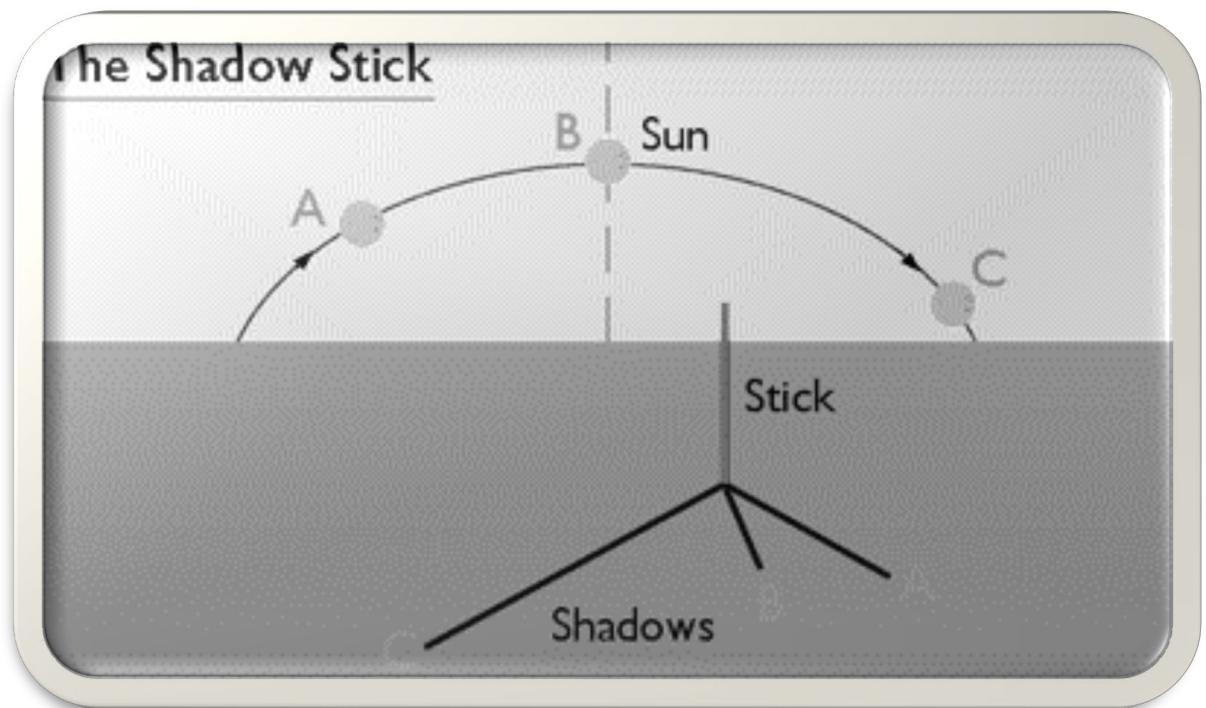
The concept of time reflects man's observation of change — from day to night, for example — and is measured by motion as well as observed by motion.

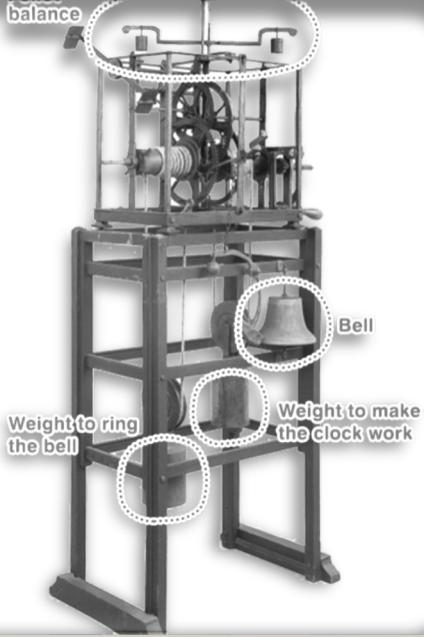


Early timepieces tracked the movement of the sun by a shadow cast by a stick in the ground, (became the sundial over time).



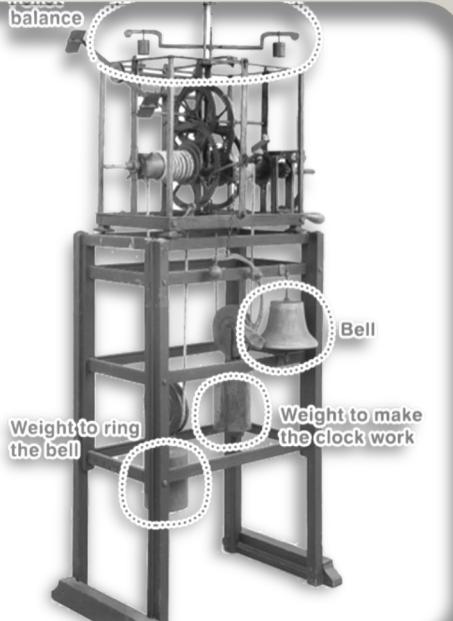
To keep time when the sun was not visible, mechanical devices were created, including hourglasses and candles with the hours marked along its length.





The 1300s marked the creation of mechanical clocks that used weights to move a clock's hands.





In 1450, a coiled spring was introduced, making clocks smaller, and in 1657 Christiaan Huygens created the pendulum clock that greatly increased the timepiece's accuracy.



These clocks depended on the pendulum invented by Galileo and lost only 15 seconds a day (vs. half an hour or more each day for other mechanical clocks).





Personal timepieces were first developed by Peter Henlein, when he created the "Nuremberg egg"...

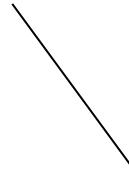




*...a portable clock using a
spring mechanism in an oval
enclosure at the beginning of
the 16th century.*



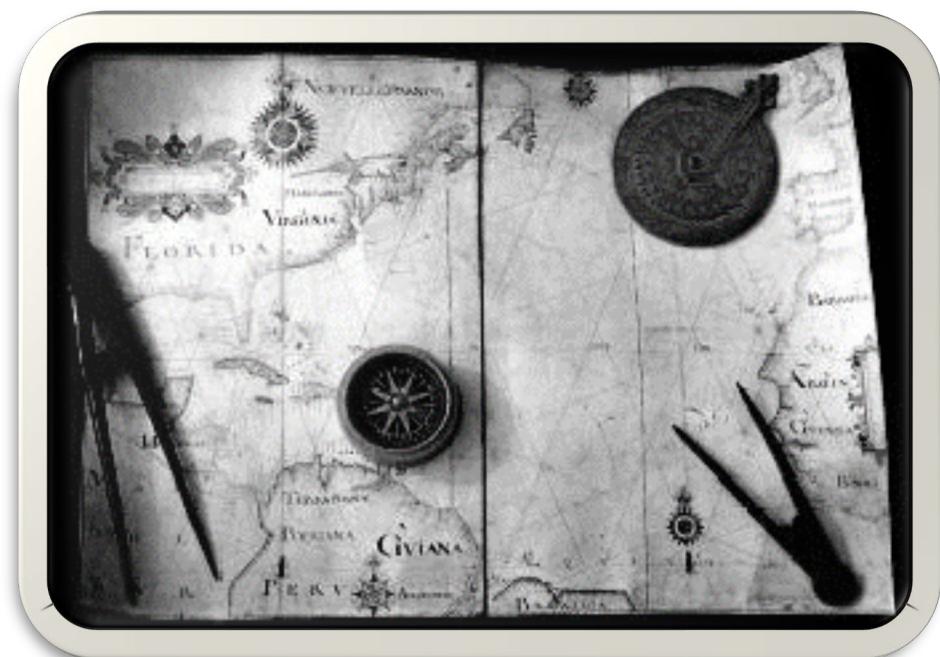
*Due to their costs, they
were used primarily by
the nobility.*



Additional innovations were developed, such as increasing resistance when winding the watch to indicate a well-wound spring and making the gears from copper.



Such improvements often required fine needlework and added to the watch's cost but made them accurate enough by 1762 to be used for navigation.



*The introduction of the waistcoat,
popularized by Charles II, created a
demand for "pocket watches" that
would fit inside the "watch pocket."*





Given the amount of precious metal in the watch as well as their costs, such watches were considered "like a bank account..."





*...that could be sold or
pawned in times of need
(such as your brother did).*





Wristwatches also gained in popularity in the late 1800s (although there are accounts of Queen Elizabeth I having one).





Primarily marketed to women as jewelry, they became much more important and popular among the military...

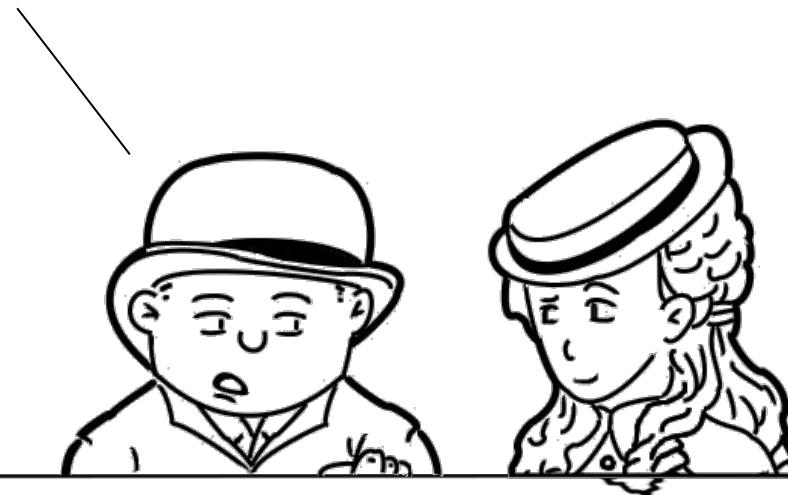




*...at the end of the 1800s,
and manufacturers began
marketing such timepieces
to men.*



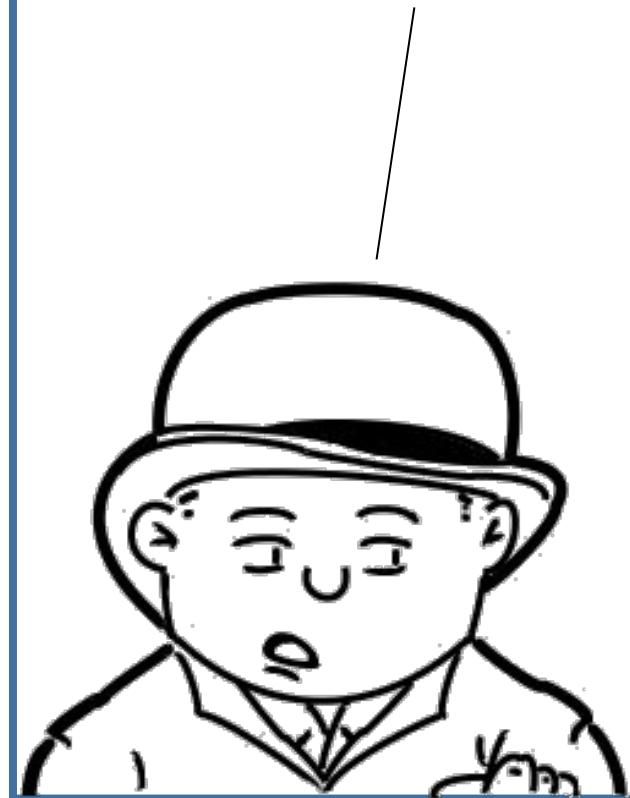
Mechanical watches involve a spring that as it unwinds, powers a balance wheel (weighted to move back and forth at a constant rate)...



...that, in turn, allows other gears to move the hands forward incrementally.



At the center of the balance wheel and other friction points are the watch's "jewels," originally rubies or sapphires (replaced by synthetic ones today).

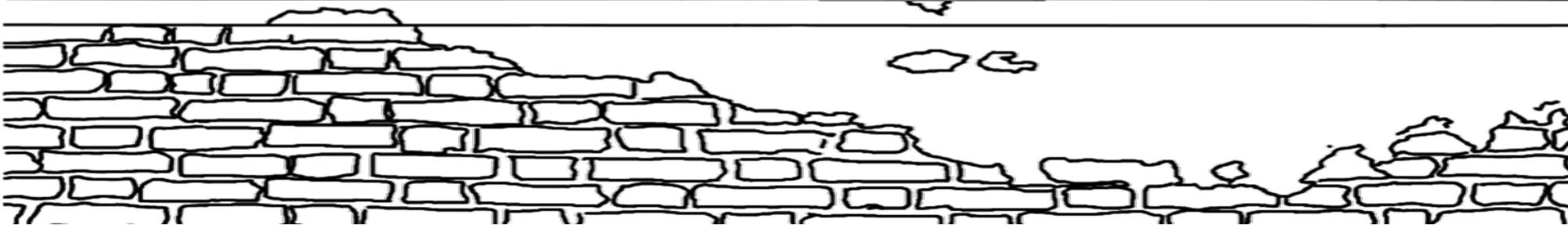


Current watches have about 17 jewels, but higher amounts exist, indicating a more complicated mechanism.



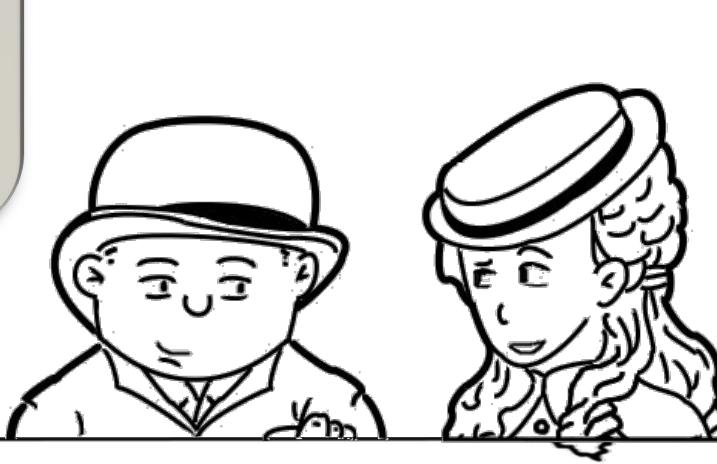


When fully wound, mechanical watches will usually run between 24 and 36 hours, and should, therefore, be wound daily at the same time to maintain accuracy.





While you did not provide
many details of the
"Camberwell poisoning case" in
"The Five Orange Pips"...





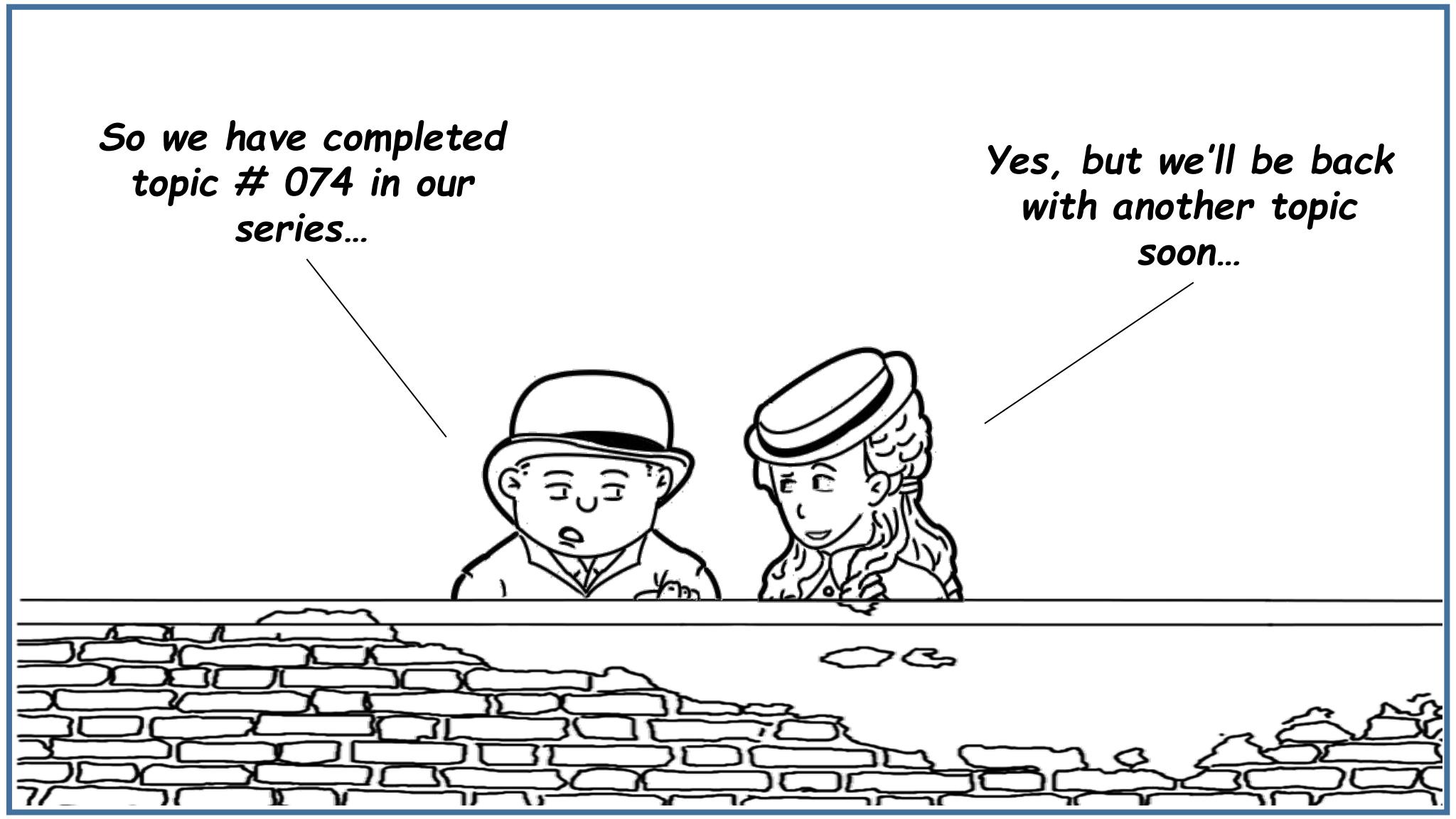
...Stillman Drakel, a Canadian historian of science, used what was provided to distill the essence of the case, including the un-named dead man.





*His deductions began with
the fact that Holmes
wound up a watch.*





*So we have completed
topic # 074 in our
series...*

*Yes, but we'll be back
with another topic
soon...*

Original Source Material for this topic:

- 1) William S. Baring-Gould, ed. *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc, 1967), page 576.
- 2) <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/04/050415115227.htm>
- 3) <https://physicsworld.com/a/a-brief-history-of-timekeeping/>
- 4) <http://www.localhistories.org/clocks.html>
- 5) <https://www.ripeinsurance.co.uk/valuables/blog/history-of-watches/>
- 6) <https://prisma.watch/history-of-watches/>
- 7) <https://www.racked.com/2018/3/27/17126050/watch-history>
- 8) <https://www.oxbridgewatches.com/blogs/blogbook/the-history-of-watches>
- 9) <https://precisionwatches.com/how-does-a-mechanical-watch-work/>
- 10) <http://www.secondsaroundwatchco.com/vintageWatchGuide/>
- 11) <http://www.dandrake.com/porlock/camberwell.html>



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