Adventure XIV – The Adventure of the Copper Beeches



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 cofounded 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.



Pictured is the long cherrywood pipe Holmes chose to smoke while considering Violet Hunter's plight.

From the story:

'You have erred, perhaps,' he observed, taking up a glowing cinder with the tongs, and lighting with it the long cherrywood pipe which was wont to replace his clay when he was in a disputatious rather than a meditative mood.



Pictured is the letter written by Violet Hunter asking for Holmes' opinion on whether she should accept an offer of employment.

From the story:

'I think that I have touched bottom at last, however. This note I had this morning marks my zero point, I fancy. Read it!' He tossed a crumpled letter across to me.

WANT PLACES

All letters to be post-paid

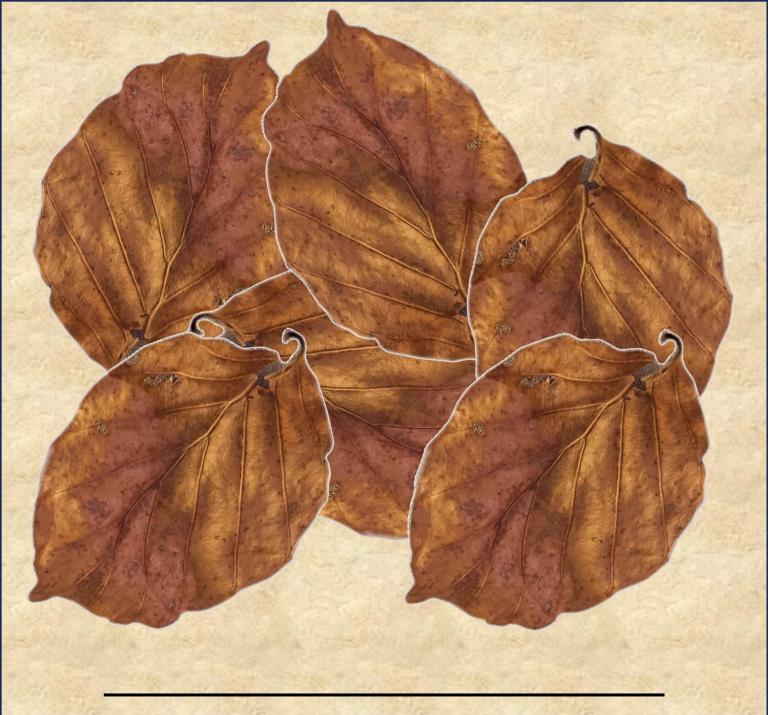
German, music and drawing. 5 years' excellent character. Violet Hunter, 3, Euston-road, NW.

WESTAWAY'S — Well-known agency for Governesses in London and suburbs. All applicants screened. Apply 16, Charing Cross-road, NW.

Pictured is the want ad run by Westways, a firm who places governesses. Also pictured is the advertisement Violet Hunter ran seeking a position as a governess.

From the story:

'I advertised and I answered advertisements, but without success.'



Pictured are leaves from a copper beech tree, giving the name to the manor in which the Rucastle's reside, and where Violet Hunter is employed as a governess.

From the story:

'The Copper Beeches, five miles on the far side of Winchester. It is the most lovely country, my dear young lady, and the dearest old country house!'



Pictured are slippers Mr. Ruscastle mentioned his son uses to kill cockroaches. Violet Hunter was hired to be the son's governess.

From the story:

'One child - one dear little romper just six years old. Oh, if you could see him killing cockroaches with a slipper! Smack! smack! smack! Three gone before you could wink!' He leaned back in his chair and laughed his eyes into his head again.

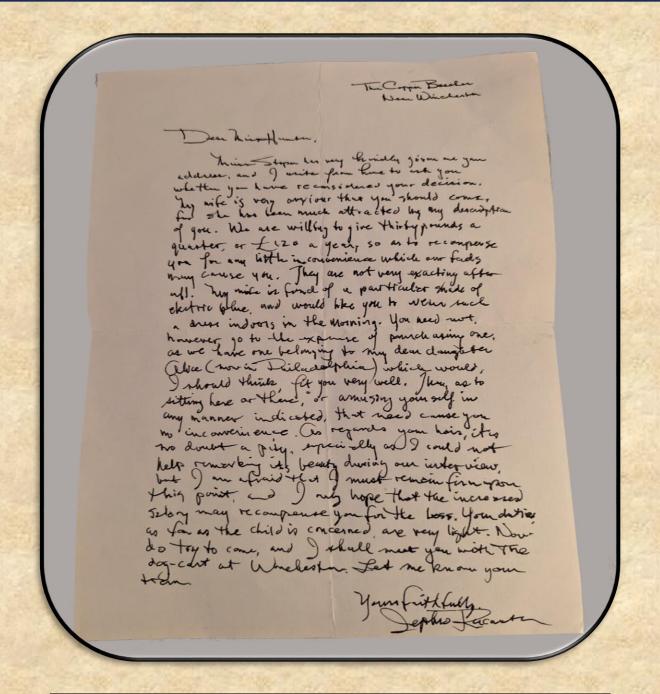


Pictured is a photo of Violet Hunter, wearing the blue dress required by the Rucastles. Her hair has also been cut much shorter.

From the story:

'My wife is fond of a particular shade of electric blue, and would like you to wear such a dress indoors in the morning.'

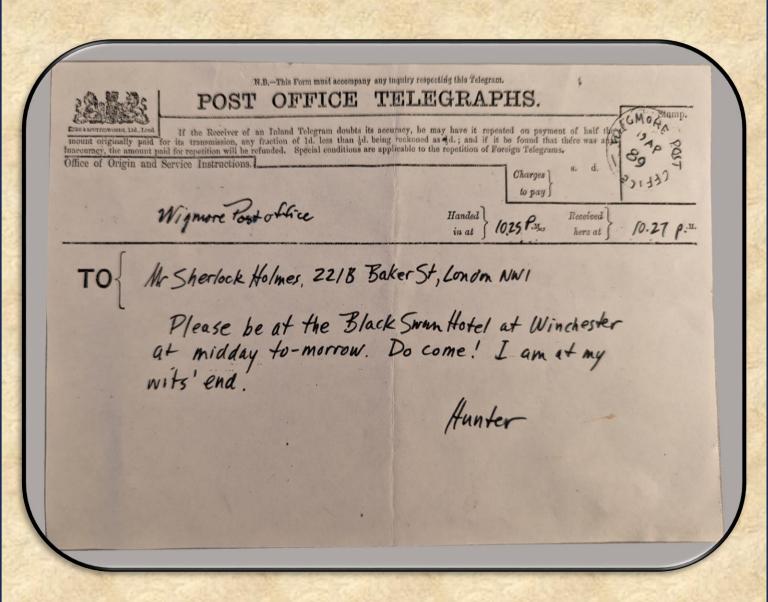
'Or to cut your hair quite short before you come to us?'



Pictured is the letter Jephro Rucastle sent to Violet Hunter, asking her to reconsider her decision on his employment offer, including a substantial raise in the offer.

From the story:

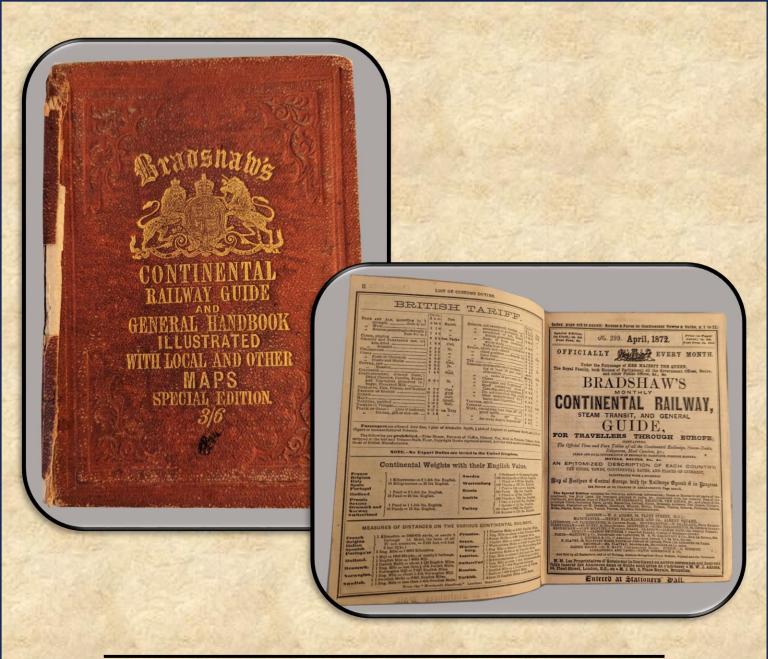
'I had almost overcome my pride, so far as to go back to the agency and inquire whether the place was still open, when I received this letter from the gentleman himself.'



Pictured is the telegram sent by Violet Hunter, pleading for Holmes to come meet her in Winchester, after accepting employment at the Rucastle residence.

From the story:

The telegram which we eventually received came late one night, just as I was thinking of turning in, and Holmes was settling down to one of those all-night researches which he frequently indulged in...

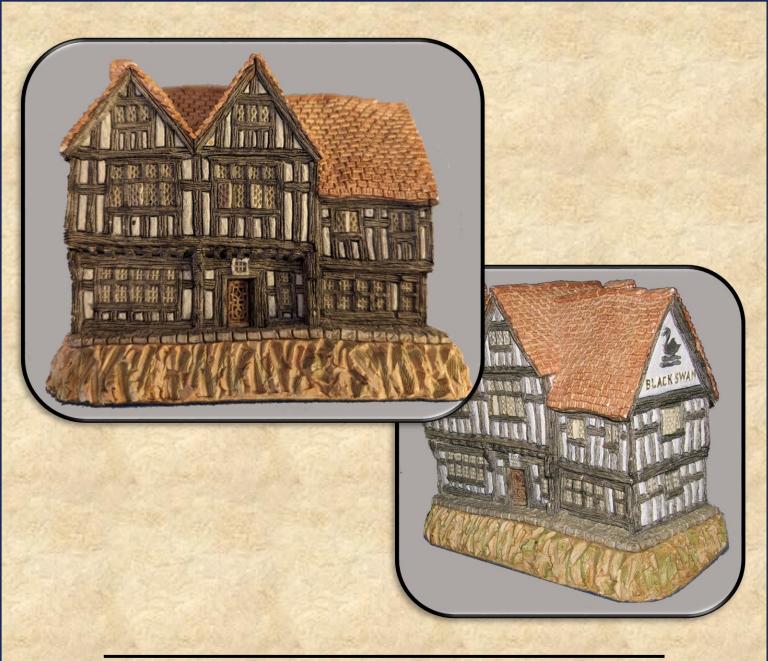


Pictured is Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide, which Holmes and Watson refers to on a routine basis to find the best available transportation to investigate a case.

From the story:

'Just look up the trains in Bradshaw'; said he, and turned back to his chemical studies.

'There is a train at half-past nine,' said I, glancing over my Bradshaw. 'It is due at Winchester at 11.30.'

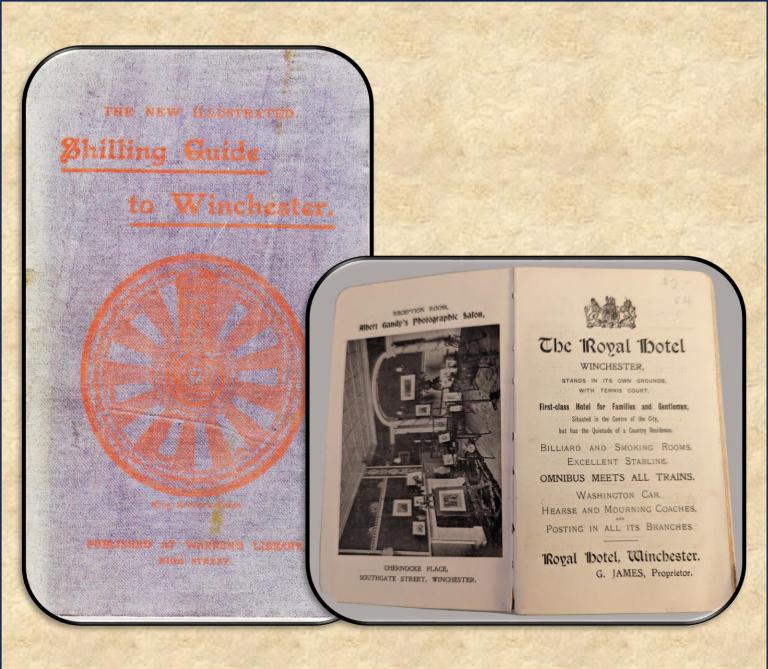


Pictured is a model of the Black Swan Hotel, in Winchester, near the Copper Beeches. Violet Hunter asked Holmes to meet her there to discuss her situation.

From the story:

Please be at the Black Swan Hotel at Winchester at midday tomorrow (it said).

The 'Black Swan' is an inn of repute in the High Street, at no distance from the station.



Pictured is a guide to the town of Winchester, probably purchased by Holmes and Watson once they arrived at the rail station. Such a guide would be useful during the investigation.

From the story:

'Had this lady who appeals to us for help gone to live in Winchester, I should never have had a fear for her. It is the five miles of country which makes the danger.'



Pictured is the blue dress which the Rucastle's required Violet Hunter to wear during her employment. The stole was probably worn in colder times.

From the story:

'My wife is fond of a particular shade of electric blue, and would like you to wear such a dress indoors in the morning.'

'The dress which I found waiting for me was of a peculiar shade of blue.'



Pictured is a photo of little Edward, or Eddie, the small child of Jephro Rucastle. He enjoys killing bugs with his slippers.

From the story:

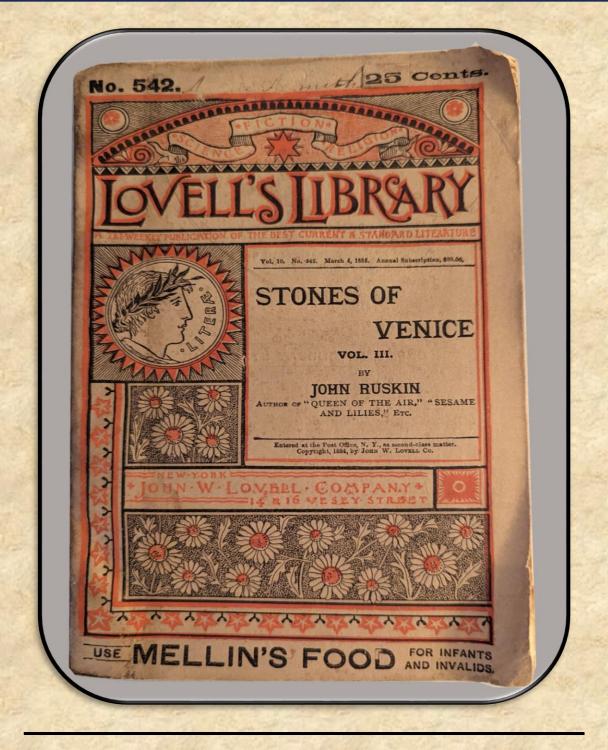
'He is small for his age, with a head which is quite disproportionately large. His whole life appears to be spent in an alternation between savage fits of passion and gloomy intervals of sulking. Giving pain to any creature weaker than himself seems to be his one idea of amusement.'



Pictured is the handkerchief and piece of broken mirror Violet Hunter used to sneak a look at the person on the road attempting to get her attention.

From the story:

'My hand mirror had been broken, so a happy thought seized me, and I concealed a little of the glass in my handkerchief. On the next occasion, in the midst of my laughter, I put my handkerchief up to my eyes, and was able with a little management to see all that there was behind me.'



Pictured is the yellow-backed novel Jephro Rucastle asked Violet Hunter to read for him while sitting in a chair in front of window at the residence.

From the story:

'Then he handed me a yellow-backed novel, and, moving my chair a little sideways, that my own shadow might not fall upon the page, he begged me to read aloud to him.'



Pictured is the coil of hair Violet had cut off her own head.

From the story:

'I had, as you know, cut off my hair in London, and I had placed it in a great coil at the bottom of my trunk.'



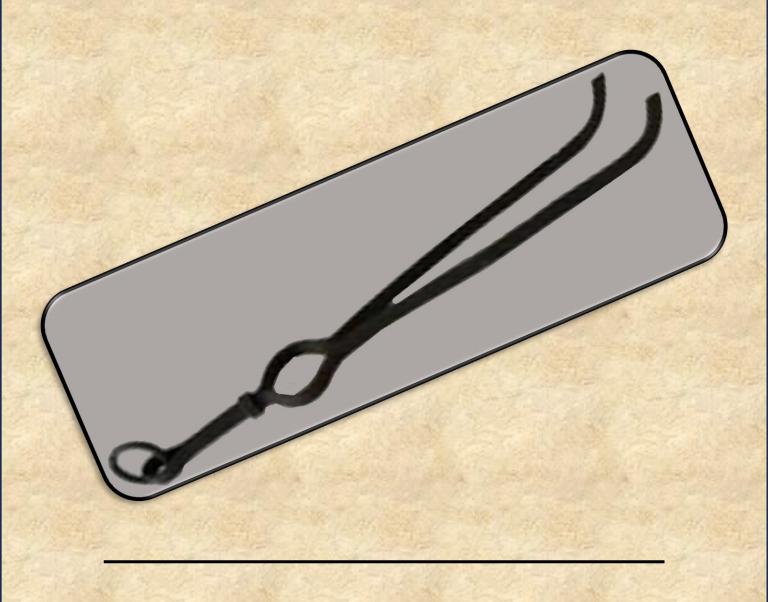
Pictured is the dog tag for Carlo, the mastiff owned by Jephro Rucastle. The dog was severely abused. Also pictured is the cartridge from the bullet Watson fired to kill the dog while he was mauling Mr. Rucastle.

From the story:

It was a giant dog, as large as a calf, tawny-tinted, with hanging jowl, black muzzle, and huge projecting bones.

Running up, I blew its brains out, and it fell over with its keen white teeth still meeting in the great creases of his neck.

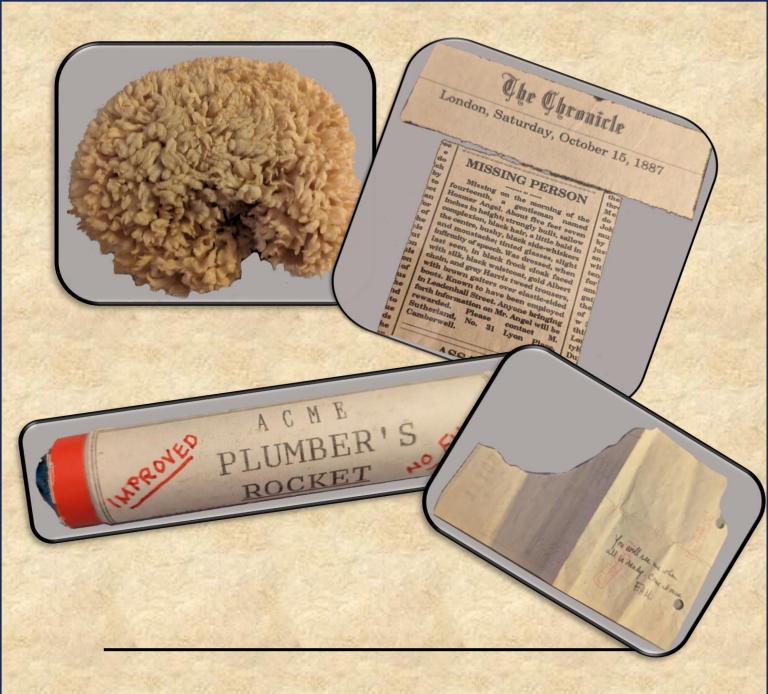
Additional items of interest in "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" not included in the original Evidence Box.



Pictured are the tongs Holmes used to light his long cherry-wood pipe.

From the story:

'You have erred, perhaps,' he observed, taking up a glowing cinder with the tongs, and lighting with it the long cherrywood pipe which was wont to replace his clay when he was in a disputatious rather than a meditative mood.



Pictured are items from some of Holmes' previous adventures, including a sponge, a plumber's rocket, a note from a husband, and a missing person ad.

From the story:

'The small matter in which I endeavoured to help the King of Bohemia, the singular experience of Miss Mary Sutherland, the problem connected with the man with the twisted lip, and the incident of the noble bachelor, were all matters which are outside the pale of the law.'



Pictured is the door at the Ruscastle residence, behind which the oldest daughter was held captive. The door was secured with an iron bar, as well as a lock on the door itself.

From the story:

The centre door was closed, and across the outside of it had been fastened one of the broad bars of an iron bed... The door itself was locked as well, and the key was not there.



MAURITIUS

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

L'ADRESSE SEULE DOIT ETRE MISE DE CE CÔTÉ DE LA CARTE



Mr. Sherlock Holmes 221 Baker Street M.W. Condon, UK

Pictured is a post card sent by the Rucastle daughter, after marrying Mr. Fowler, and moving to the island of Mauritius.

From the story:

Mr Fowler and Miss Ruscastle were married, by special licence, in Southampton the day after their flight, and he is now the holder of a Government appointment in the Island of Mauritius.