

Adventure L – The Problem of Thor Bridge



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.



Pictured is Mrs Gibson's lace scarf or mantilla.

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

November 17, 1900

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I wish to thank you very much for your effective and professional handling of the problem at Thor Bridge. It was a sad business but had you not acted as you did, the tragedy would undoubtedly have turned out worse.

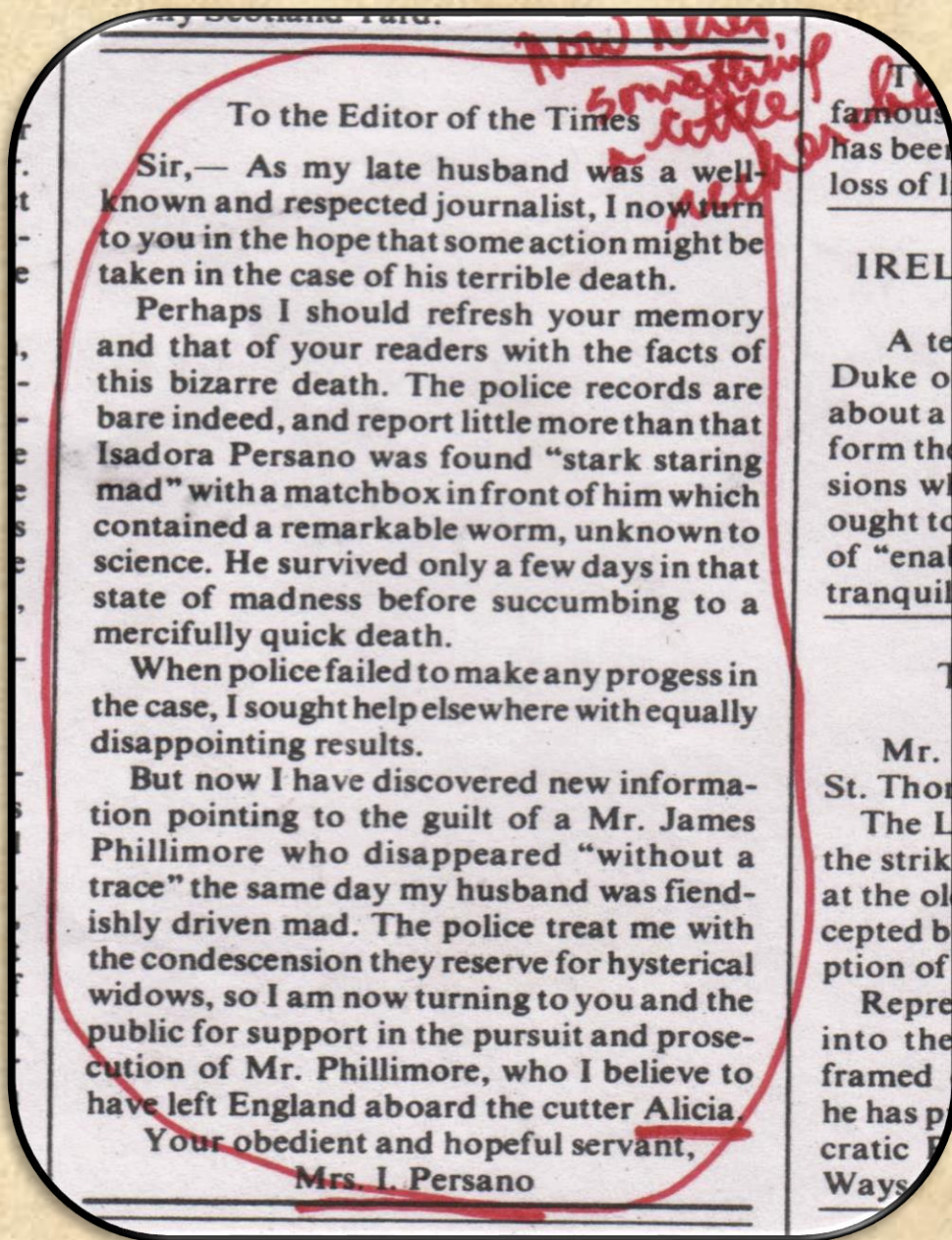
I have returned to the States with my family and I intend to seek my old Senate seat in the near future. Miss Dunbar has graciously accepted my offer of marriage and we shall arrange for the nuptials to take place some time in December.

May the new century treat you and Dr. Watson well.

I remain

Sincerely yours,
J. Neil Gibson

Pictured is the letter from Gibson to Holmes on US Senate stationery in which Gibson thanks the detective for all his efforts, announces his engagement to Miss Dunbar, and reports his intention to return to the US to seek his old Senate seat!



Pictured is the article in *The Times* containing a letter to the editor from the widow of Isadora Persano in which she implicates Mr. James Phillimore in the death of her husband and his escape aboard the cutter Alicia.

From the story:

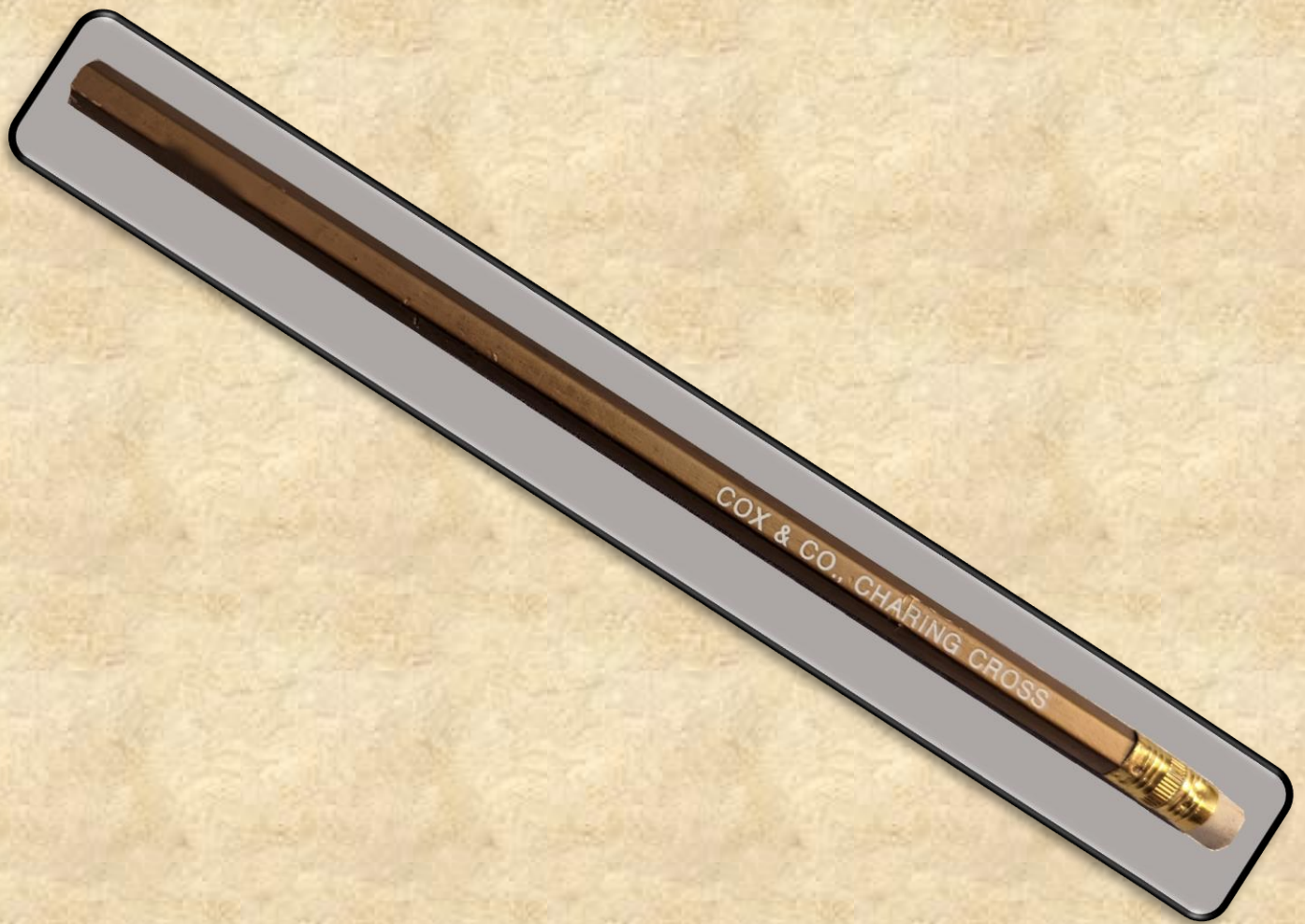
Among these unfinished tales is that of Mr James Phillimore... the cutter *Alicia*... and Isadora Persano.



Pictured is a postal card showing Charing Cross, the location of Cox and Co., where Watson's tin box is stored.

From the story:

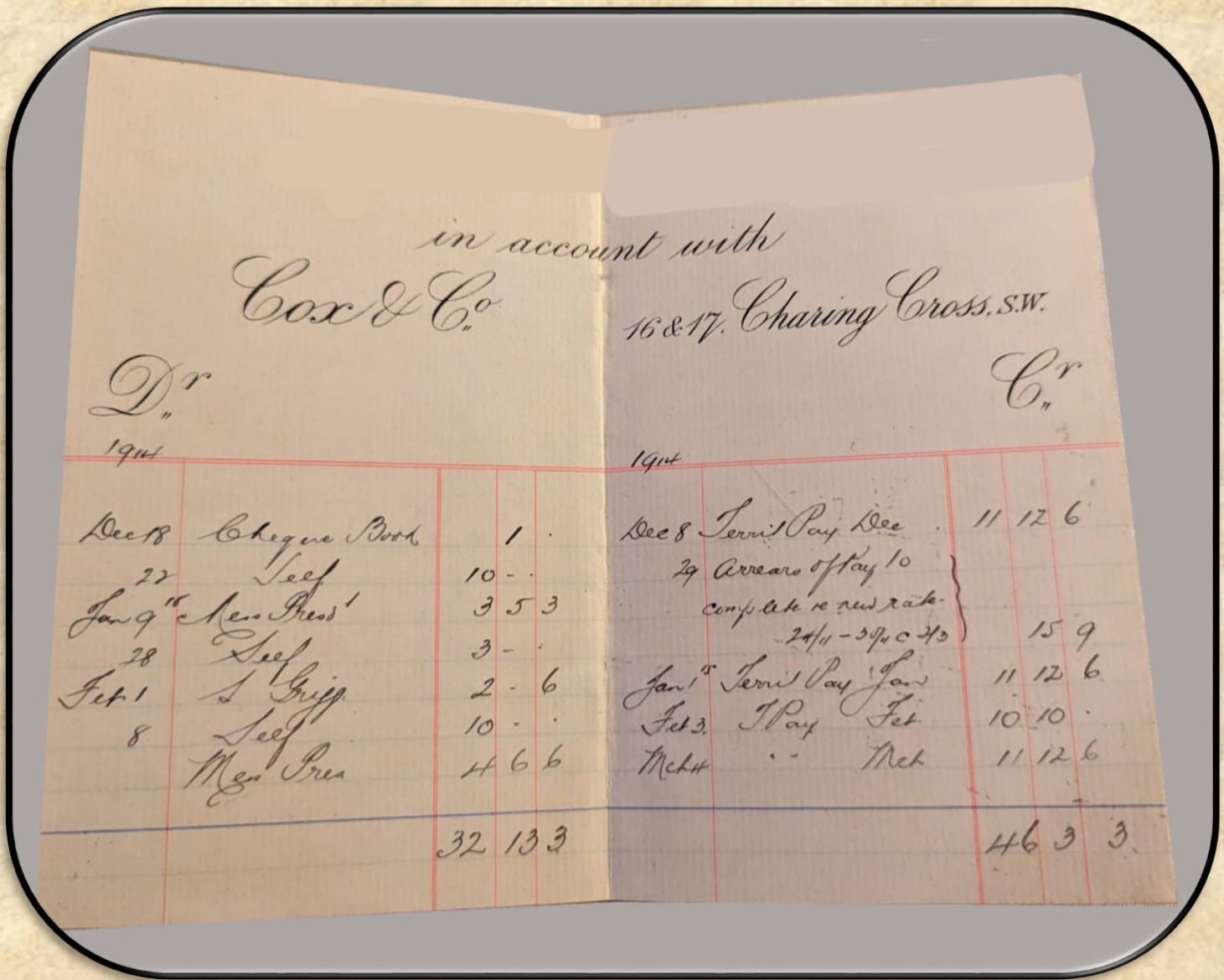
Somewhere in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross, there is a travel-worn and battered tin dispatch-box with my name, John H. Watson, MD, Late Indian Army, painted upon the lid.



Pictured is a gold tone pencil with the annotation "Cox & Co., Charing Cross" upon it.

From the story:

Somewhere in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross, there is a travel-worn and battered tin dispatch-box with my name, John H. Watson, MD, Late Indian Army, painted upon the lid.



Pictured is pass book from Cox & Co. Bank, Charing Cross where Watson stored his tin box with many of the unpublished stories.

From the story:

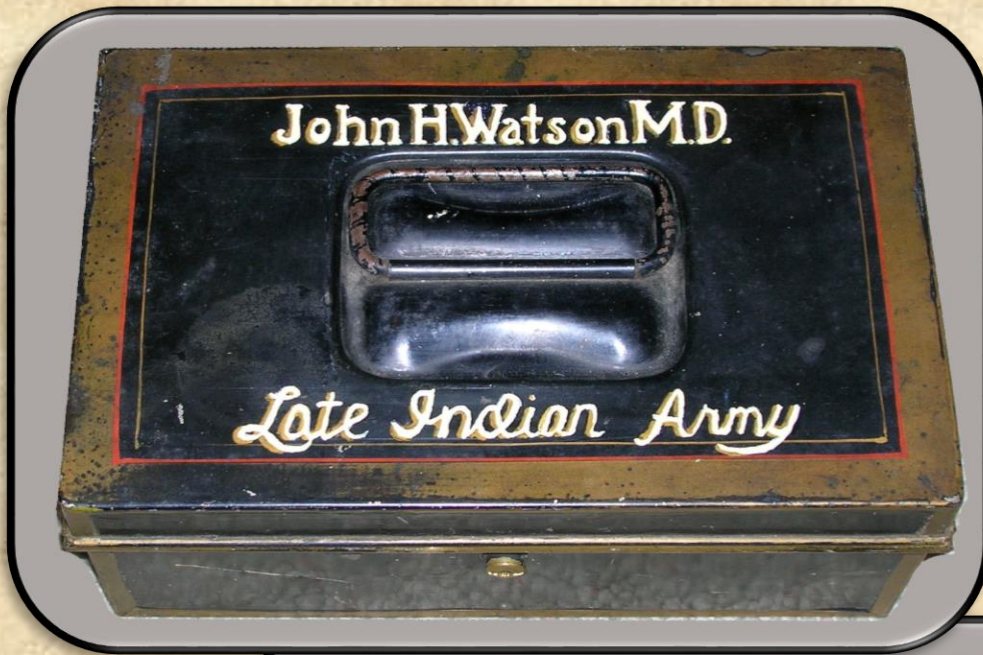
Somewhere in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross, there is a travel-worn and battered tin dispatch-box with my name, John H. Watson, MD, Late Indian Army, painted upon the lid.



Pictured is a leaf from the plane, or sycamore, tree in the back yard of 221B.

From the story:

It was a wild morning in October, and I observed as I was dressing how the last remaining leaves were being whirled from the solitary plane tree which graces the yard behind our house.



Pictured is two tin boxes which Watson used to store unpublished cases, which were kept at Cox and Co.

From the story:

Somewhere in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross, there is a travel-worn and battered tin dispatch-box with my name, John H. Watson, MD, Late Indian Army, painted upon the lid.



Pictured is the remarkable worm possessed by Mr Persano and the matchbox he carried the worm in.

From the story:

A third case worthy of note is that of Isadora Persano, the well-known journalist and duellist, who was found stark staring mad with a matchbox in front of him which contained a remarkable worm, said to be unknown to science.

CLARIDGE'S HOTEL
49-55 Brook Street, Grosvenor Square
London, W.1

October 3rd

Dear Mr Sherlock Holmes

I can't see the best woman God ever made go to her death without doing all that is possible to save her I can't explain things I can't even try to explain them but I know beyond all doubt that Miss Dunbar is innocent You know the facts who doesn't It has been the gossip of the country And never a voice raised for her It's the damned injustice of it all that makes me crazy That woman has a heart that wouldn't let her kill a fly Well I'll come at eleven tomorrow and see if you can get some ray of light in the dark Maybe I have a clue and don't know it Anyhow all I know and all I have and all I am are for your use if only you can save her If ever in your life you showed your powers put them now into this case
Yours faithfully

I Neil Gibson

Pictured is the first note from Neil Gibson to Sherlock Holmes on Claridge's Hotel letterhead to set up an appointment for a consultation.

From the story:

'Ah, I forgot I had not told you. I am getting into your involved habit, Watson, of telling a story backwards. You had best read this first.'

The letter which he handed to me, written in a bold, masterful hand, ran as follows...'



Pictured is the stock certificate for Homestake Mining Company, part of Neil Gibson's old investments.

From the story:

'You have heard of Neil Gibson, the Gold King?' he said.

'Well, he was once Senator for some Western state, but is better known as the greatest gold-mining magnate in the world.'



Pictured is a gold assaying weight scales, owned by Neil Gibson during his days in America prospecting gold.

From the story:

‘You have heard of Neil Gibson, the Gold King?’ he said.

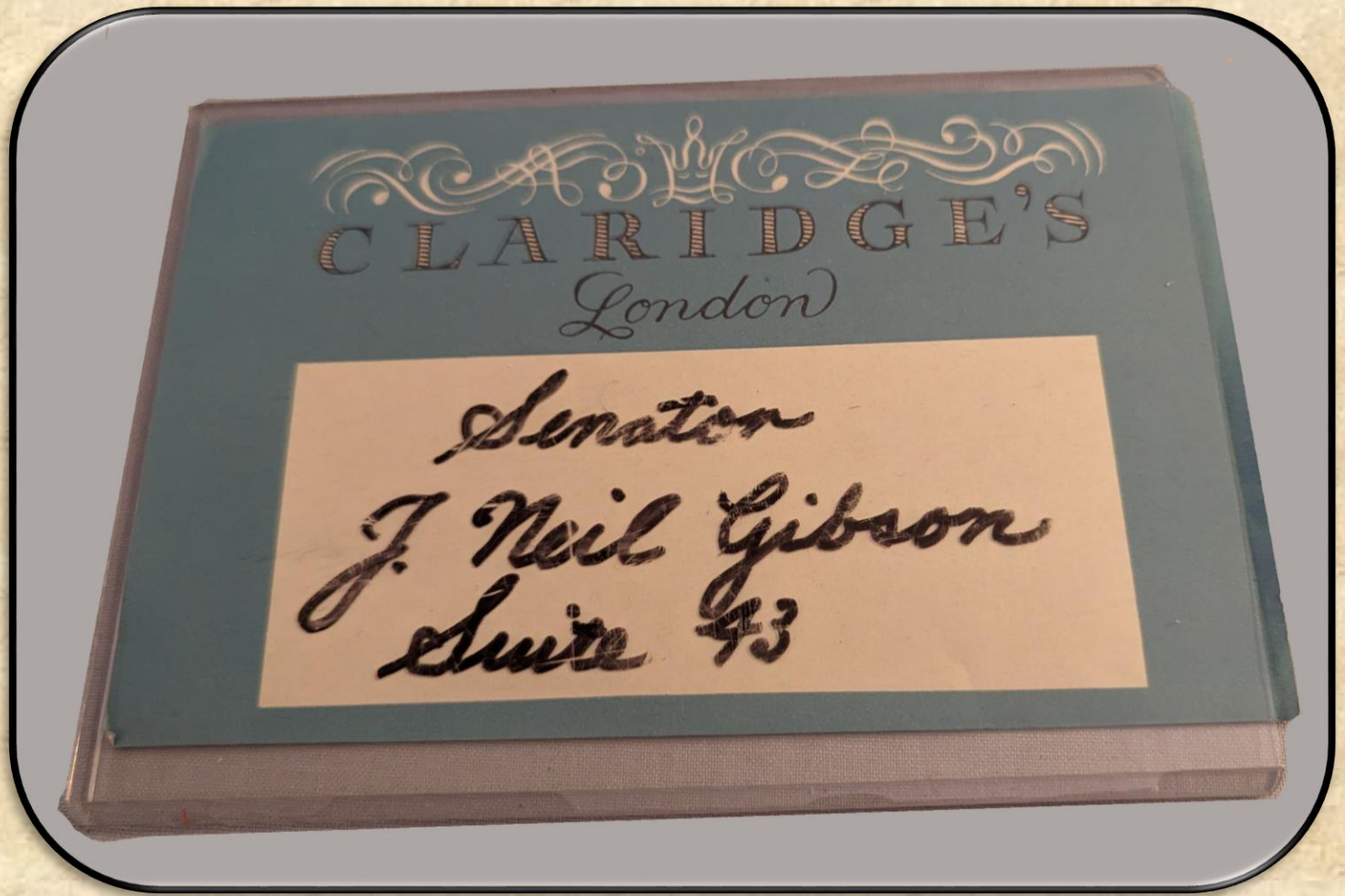
‘Well, he was once Senator for some Western state, but is better known as the greatest gold-mining magnate in the world.’



Pictured is the porcelain ash tray from Claridge's Hotel depicting that company's coat-of-arms. Gibson stayed at the Claridge Hotel while in London.

From the story:

CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, October 3rd. DEAR MR SHERLOCK HOLMES, I can't see the best woman God ever made go to her death without doing all that is possible to save her.



Pictured is the card which once adorned the door of Gibson's suite at Claridge's.

From the story:

CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, October 3rd. DEAR MR SHERLOCK HOLMES, I can't see the best woman God ever made go to her death without doing all that is possible to save her.



Pictured is the egg and egg cup served to Watson at Baker Street.

From the story:

‘There is little to share, but we may discuss it when you have consumed the two hard-boiled eggs with which our new cook has favoured us.’



Pictured are issues of *The Family Herald*, which Holmes suggested distracted the cook from properly cooking the eggs.

From the story:
‘Their condition may not be unconnected with the copy of the *Family Herald* which I observed yesterday upon the hall-table. Even so trivial a matter as cooking an egg demands an attention which is conscious of the passage of time, and incompatible with the love romance in that excellent periodical.’

GOLD KING'S WIFE MURDERED

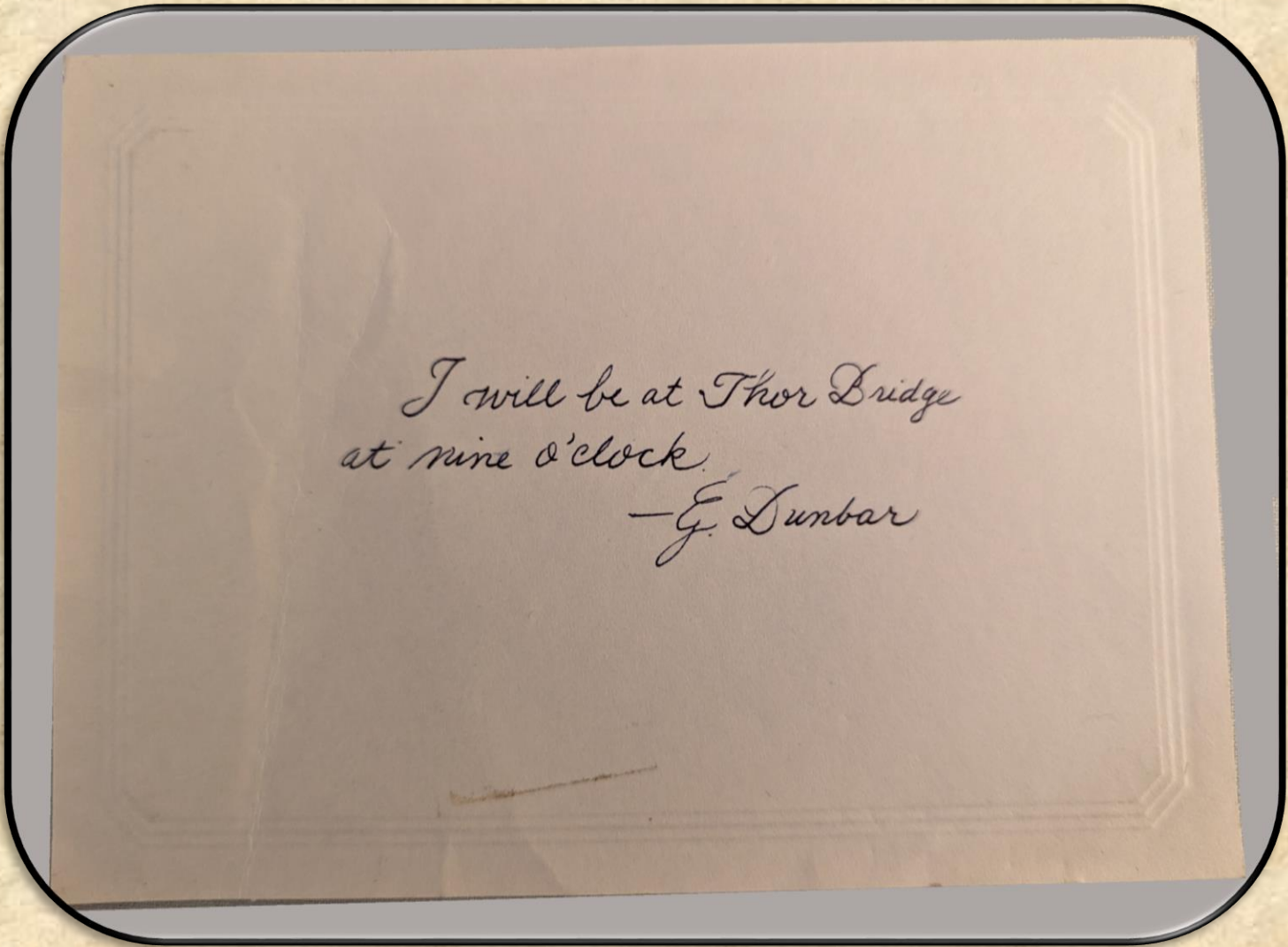
The body of the wife of American J. Neil Gibson, commonly referred to as "The Gold King" was found this morning on a bridge crossing the Thor Mere in Hampshire. The scene is on the grounds of a grand old manor-house, the centre of an historical English estate. The victim, the former Maria Pinto, the daughter of a Government official at Manaus, Brazil, was found in the grounds, nearly half a mile from the house, late at night, clad in her dinner dress, with a shawl over her shoulders and a revolver bullet through her brain. No weapon was found near her and there was no local clue as to the murder. Mr. Gibson is one of the greatest financial powers in the world. The crime seems to have been committed late in the evening, and the body was found by a gamekeeper about eleven o'clock, when it was examined by the police and by a doctor before being carried up to the house. A note from the family's governess, a Miss Grace Dunbar, was found clutched in the hand of the dead woman. Sergeant Conventry, of the local Hampshire Constabulary, has detained Miss Dunbar for questioning.

Pictured is the article from The Times describing the murder of Mrs Gibson and the detaining of Miss Dunbar.

From the story:

Holmes waved his hand towards some papers on a chair.

'I had no idea that the case was coming my way or I should have had my extracts ready,' said he.



*I will be at Thor Bridge
at nine o'clock.
-G. Dunbar*

Pictured is the note, some-what crumpled where it had been gripped in the victim's hand in rigor mortis. The note was from Miss Dunbar to Mrs Gibson.

From the story:

'Then the dead woman had a note upon her making an appointment at that very place and signed by the governess.'

J.. Neil Gibson

President
Gibson Enterprises

Thor Place
Hampshire



Eric Coventry
Sergeant

Hampshire Constabulary
Winchester

Pictured is the calling, or visiting, cards for Constable Coventry and J. Neil Gibson.

From the story:

He did not accompany us himself, but we had the address of Sergeant Coventry, of the local police, who had first examined into the affair.

If I were a sculptor and desired to idealize the successful man of affairs, iron of nerve and leathery of conscience, I should choose Mr Neil Gibson as my model.



Pictured is Sergeant Coventry's uniform chevron.

From the story:

He did not accompany us himself, but we had the address of Sergeant Coventry, of the local police, who had first examined into the affair.



Pictured is the gold plated Colt .45 pistols owned by Neil Gibson. One of them was the supposed murder weapon.

From the story:

‘Well, the gentleman has a lot of fire-arms of one sort and another. We never quite matched that particular pistol - but the box was made for two.’



Pictured is the small sundial where Miss Dunbar had left her note to Mrs Gibson.

From the story:

‘It implored me to see her there after dinner, said she had something important to say to me, and asked me to leave an answer on the sundial in the garden...’



Pictured is the twine used by Mrs Gibson for her suicide, as well as Watson's revolver which Holmes used in his test.

From the story:

As he walked he had firmly tied one end of the string to the handle of the revolver. We had now reached the scene of the tragedy.

Additional items of interest
in “The Problem of Thor
Bridge” not included in the
original Evidence Box.



Pictured is a postal card from Manaus, Brazil, where Mrs. Gibson, nee Pinto, was raised.

From the story:

‘met my wife when I was gold-hunting in Brazil. Maria Pinto was the daughter of a Government official at Manaus, and she was very beautiful.’



Pictured is the a postal card for Winchester in Hampshire, where Miss Dunbar's murder case had been referred to the Assizes.

From the story:

'That was the view taken by the coroner's jury and also in the police-court proceedings. It is now referred to the Assizes at Winchester.'