

## AFTERWORD

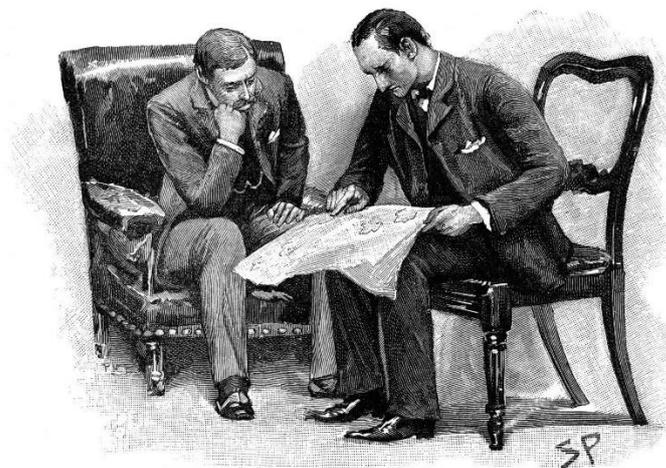
### The Adventure of the French Deception

#### Why a third Sherlock Holmes story?

##### NOTE:

My Sherlock Holmes stories were inspired by a wonderful photo of Frederick Leach (David Parr's employer) and his assembled workers taken, in 1882, on a day out to Clayhithe. The men are arranged in rows, like a college photo. One man stands out from all the others because of his physique and his hat. The man is tall, has a Holmesian quality, and, most importantly, is the only one wearing a deerstalker. The wearer is none other than David Parr.

Incredibly, both men were born in 1854. David Parr was born on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1854 and in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story 'His Last Bow', set in 1914, Sherlock Holmes is described as sixty years of age - his birthday is 6<sup>th</sup> January.



"WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT?"

An illustration of Sherlock Holmes by Sidney Paget for The Strand Magazine

'May's' story stems from my research and an interesting connection between Sir Conan Doyle and some of the most illustrious Victorian artists, which was brought to my attention on an outing last year with the Sherlock Holmes Society London.

A more significant surprise awaited me. I discovered a link between Sir Conan Doyle and the 'David Parr House', but you will have to read on to find out more...

The (unstated) theme of my 'May' story is the beginning of the end for the work of William Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites, the Holland Park set and their associates.

There are two shocking aspects to this, firstly, one can pin it down to a painting: Édouard Manet's 'Le déjeuner sur l'herbe', which the French artist had commenced in 1862 and exhibited upon its completion in 1863. Apparently, not much is known about the painting, so it is possible that it is laden with hidden meaning and points to a secret.



Le déjeuner sur l'herbe \* – Édouard Manet  
1862 – 1863 - Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
[\* The Luncheon on the Grass]

And, secondly, that the end was already brewing as Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. opened for business on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1861, and was finding expression in 1862 as Frederick Leach, (who would become David Parr's employer), bought his business premises in City Road, Cambridge. In other words, the end had begun for Morris only a year after he commenced trading with his Oxford University friends and, for Leach, the very year he began trading and Manet began applying paint to his large canvas.

Manet's work was ahead of its time, which is why, aside from its subject, it caused such outrage. Significantly, it paved the way for the French Impressionists, whose independent exhibitions brought them to prominence during the 1870s and 1880s. In turn, they made it possible for other art movements to sweep across Europe, which led to changes in taste and inspired new fashions in paintings, architecture, interior design and furnishings etc.

To appreciate how staid opinion and taste in art had become in 1863 when Manet hoped 'Le déjeuner sur l'herbe', would be selected by the hanging committee at the Salon in Paris, and how long it took his painting to effect change – not amongst the resistant incumbent generation of artists but the next generation whom his painting had inspired - one just needs to see the subject of the paintings still being selected by the Royal Academy's hanging committee fourteen years later in William Powell Frith's painting 'A Private View at the Royal

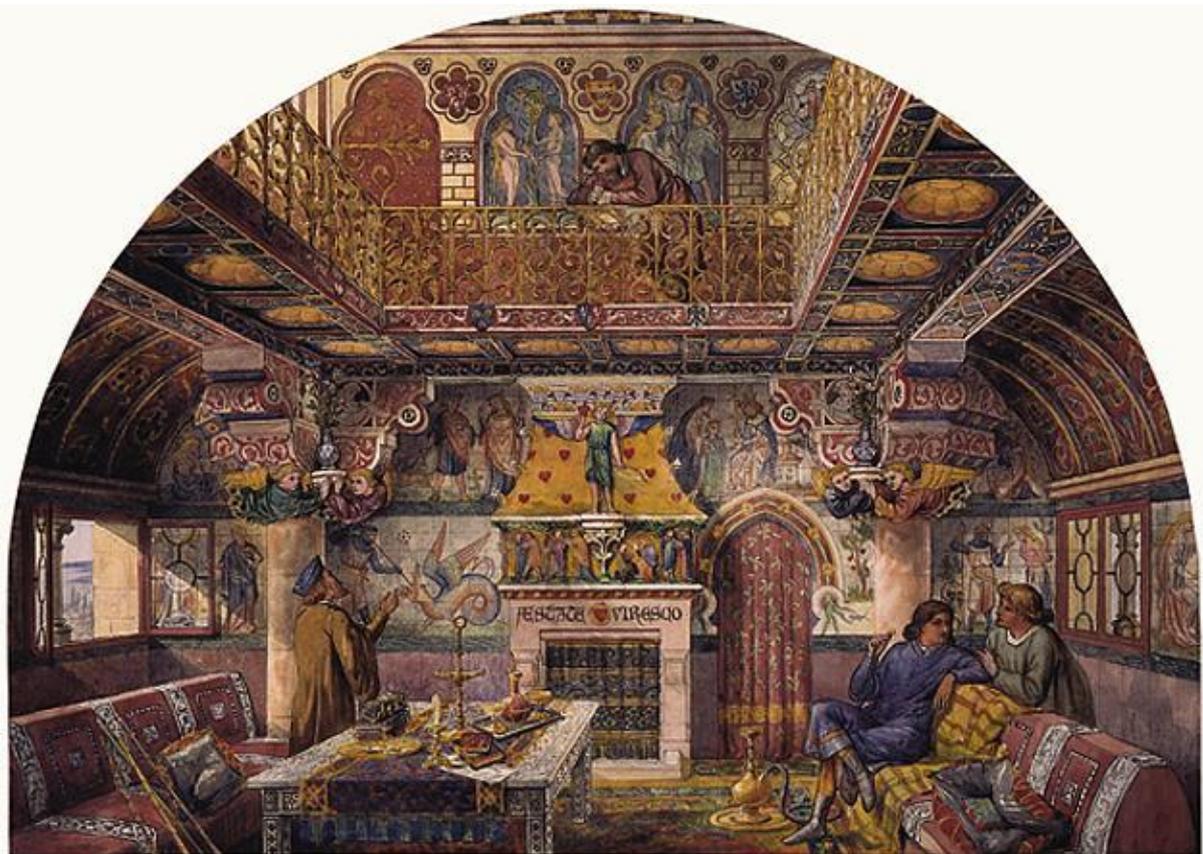
Academy, 1881' - see link. Then again, one could argue that disillusioned, progressive artists had given up submitting their work to the traditional galleries having been rejected repeatedly. In 1870, Edward Burne-Jones even went so far as to resign from the Old Watercolour Society after the negative reception of his painting 'Phyllis and Demophoön'. Similarly, Dante Gabriel Rossetti stopped exhibiting altogether and continued to sell his work to his patrons through a dealer (Charles Augustus Howell – see 'April's' Afterword).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Private\\_View\\_at\\_the\\_Royal\\_Academy,\\_1881](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Private_View_at_the_Royal_Academy,_1881)

### **Having established the beginning of the end, what of the end?**

It is best described in respect of the Gothic Revival architect, William Burges, whose designs encompassed objects and furniture and echoed those of the Pre-Raphaelites and ushered in the Arts and Crafts movement:

'On Burges's death in 1881, the Gothic Revival he championed with such force was in decline. Within twenty years his style was considered hopelessly outdated and owners of his works sought to eradicate all traces of his efforts. From the 1890s to the later twentieth century, Victorian art was under constant assault, critics writing of 'the nineteenth century architectural tragedy', ridiculing 'the uncompromising ugliness' of the era's buildings and attacking the 'sadistic hatred of beauty' of its architects. Of Burges, they wrote almost nothing. His buildings were disregarded or altered, his jewellery and stained glass were lost or ignored, and his furniture was given away.' [See end of document for sources.]



Summer Smoking Room, Cardiff Castle, concept illustration - William Burges

Visitors to the David Parr House, who are left awestruck by the beautiful mural he painted on his living room walls, would find it hard to imagine anyone deploring his creation and wanting to eradicate it, and such strength of negative feeling. Such published opinions help to demonstrate just how remarkable it is that David Parr's house survived successive changes in fashions in décor, allowing us to appreciate his skill and artistry.



The Athenaeum Club in 2019 – author's collection

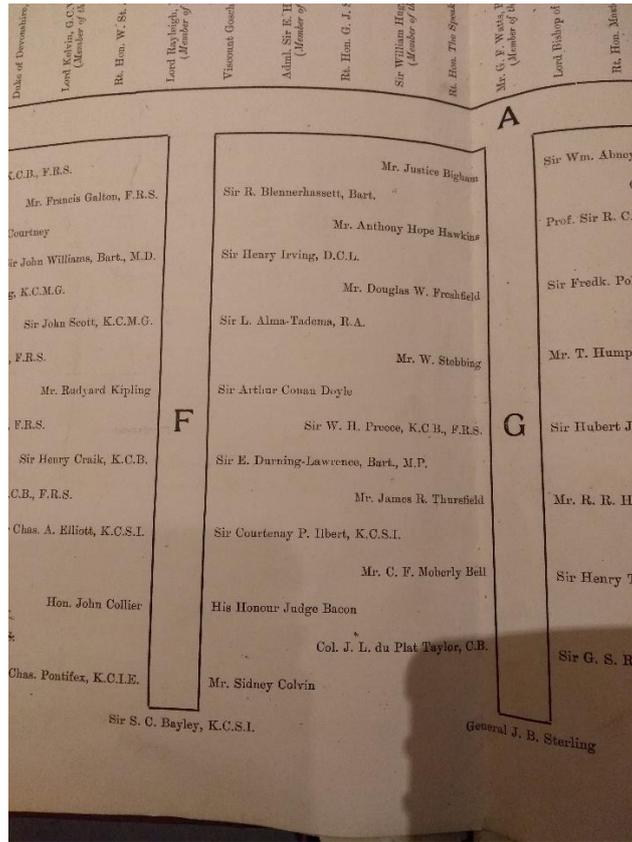
Last year, I visited **The Athenaeum Club**, a private members' club in London for those who have attained some distinction in science, engineering, literature or the arts. The club's archivist had pulled out documents from the archives which mentioned Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or related to the Sherlock Holmes' canon and had put them on display.

Amongst the artefacts was a seating plan for a dinner held at the club on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July in honour of those who had been awarded an Order of Merit in its inaugural year, who are shown seated at the head table. **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** was amongst the invited guests and seated next to the painter Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema and opposite the author Rudyard Kipling. The artist William Holman Hunt was seated two along on the opposite side of his table and the late Victorian artist John Waterhouse was seated on the next table.

#### **How is the Order of Merit dinner connected to the David Parr House?**

**Architect George Frederick Bodley** was seated two tables along from **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**.

David Parr, under his employer Frederick Leach, worked with the Gothic Revival architect George Frederick Bodley (pupil of Sir George Gilbert Scott) on the decoration of St John the Baptist's church at Tuebrook in Liverpool, on the ceiling decorations of the chapel of Jesus College Cambridge (in conjunction with William Morris). Subsequent collaborations with Bodley included the roof and organ loft of St Botolph's Church, Cambridge, the interior decoration of St Salvator's Church, Dundee, and the decoration of the Old Hall in Queens' College, Cambridge. Frederick Leach was responsible for and David Parr applied the decorations on the walls and ceilings of All Saints, Cambridge, one of Bodley's most significant works.

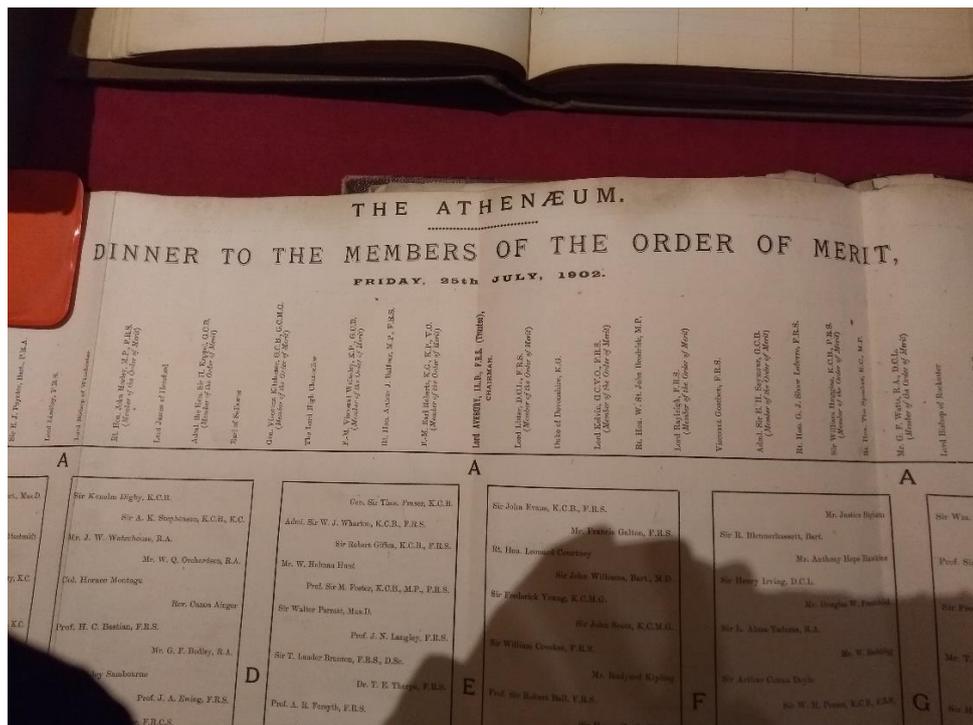


Above and below: 'Dinner for Members of the Order of Merit, Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1902' seating plan

The Athenæum Club archives – photographs from author's collection

Above: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is shown to the right of the letter 'F' and artist George Frederic Watts, who was awarded the Order of Merit is shown above the letter 'A'.

Below: **George Frederick Bodley** is shown to the left of the letter 'D'.



The Order of Merit was founded by King Edward VII in 1902, a year after the end of Queen Victoria's reign and two months before his coronation. The first mention of a possible Order of Merit arose after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Later, Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, her courtiers, and politicians alike, felt a new order would make up for the insufficient recognition offered by the established honours system to achievement outside of public service, in fields such as art, music, literature, industry, and science. However, Sir Frederic Leighton, President of the Royal Academy, advised against the new order, primarily because of its selection process.

George Bodley was 75 years old when he attended the Order of Merit dinner. His presence recognised his achievements and is indicative of his position amongst his contemporaries, those who, like him, had achieved eminence in the Victorian era.

The Order of Merit dinner was held in the second year of Edward VII's reign and helped him stamp his mark on a new era. Yet, many would have felt a tinge of sadness at the celebration. Of the seven founding Pre-Raphaelites, only William Holman Hunt and William Rossetti (Dante Gabrielle Rossetti's brother) were still living. Of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown had died in the previous decade. Of the Holland Park Circle, Sir Frederick Leighton and the architect William Burges had also died. Compiling this piece, I know that George Frederic Watts and Val Prinsep (George Frederic Watts's pupil and painter of the Pre-Raphaelite school) would die two years later, in 1904.

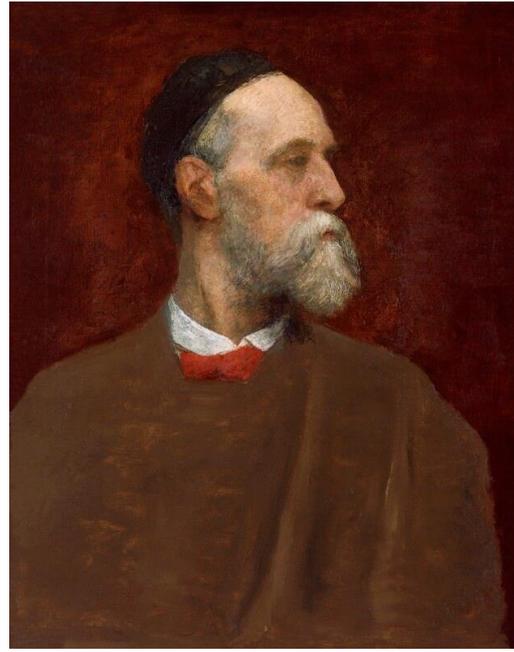
In April's Afterword, I discussed the Holland Park Circle and Sir Frederick Leighton, because they featured in the accompanying story. Otherwise, I should have given precedence to the artist George Frederick Watts (1817 – 1904), who became Victorian Britain's leading artist and was considered its Michael Angelo. He was the first living artist to have a room dedicated to his work at the Tate Gallery and the thirty or so portraits he donated helped found the National Portrait Gallery. The following four examples are, therefore, in the public domain.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti by G F Watts in 1871



William Morris by G F Watts in 1870



Above left: 'Choosing' by G F Watt's – a portrait of the actress **Ellen Terry** believed to have been painted in the year they married. The marriage took place on 20 February 1864, when Watts was 46 years old and a week before Terry turned seventeen. Ellen left Watts after only 10 months.

Above right: **George Frederick Watts** – a self-portrait painted in 1879 when Watts would have been 62 years old.

Previous page, right: according to the information on the National Portrait Gallery's website, there is a legend that Watts could only persuade **William Morris** to submit to one sitting but produced a 'noble head' all the same. Seemingly, the painting is sometimes dated '1880' as it was reworked in that year before being displayed at the Grosvenor Gallery and it is also the date it was presented to the National Portrait Gallery.

Previous page, left: **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** was 43 years old when he sat for Watts. He had established himself as an artist but the previous year he had published the poems recovered from his wife's grave (as discussed in April's Afterword), consequently, he was enjoying reinvigorated fame.

George Frederick Watts made his living from painting portraits and, in addition, embarked on creating a 'Hall of Fame' with his portraits of eminent Victorians. However, it was not the work he was most passionate about. He was a painter and sculptor associated with the Symbolist movement, who had stated: "I paint ideas, not things." Watts became famous in his lifetime for his allegorical works, such as *Hope* and *Love and Life*.

Interestingly, in the 1860s, Watts became influenced by Dante Gabriel Rossetti's work, which is evident in his 'Choosing' painting of Ellen Terry.

Mrs Russell Barrington, who published her 'Reminiscences of G. F. Watts' in 1905, paraphrases a letter, dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 1882, from her subject, who had been compelled to write upon the news of Rossetti's death:

'...although, he had been prepared, he was still shocked by Rossetti's death. What a light he ought to have been! Watts thought he was certainly the greatest genius he had ever known, and acquainted as he was with Tennyson and Browning, this seemed much to say; but Rossetti had a fire, a something, Watts thought that made him quite unlike other men. He feels that Rossetti ought to have been with Dante and Milton far out of the reach of doubts...'

Yet, in respect of Edward Burne-Jones, she goes on to say:

'... though Edward Burne-Jones was, as an artist, one whom Watts greatly admired, they had not otherwise come into any close intimacy.'

This is a particularly interesting statement as Edward Burne-Jones had sat for Watts a few months before William Morris had sat for his portrait in April 1870, so the opportunity had been there, further to the one described below. Barrington's aside helps to show the strength of Watts's admiration for Rossetti, whose temperament was adversely affected when he started taking chloral to help with his insomnia and turned into an addiction.

In 1850, Watts had assisted his friend Henry Thoby Princep and his wife Sara in the acquisition of a 21-year lease of Little Holland House (the dower house of the Holland House estate). He was famously invited for the weekend and stayed for more than 20 years. The bohemian family attracted London's literary and cultural society. Edward Burne-Jones was nursed back to health there upon leaving Oxford and Sir Frederic Leighton bought a plot of land adjacent to the plot bought by their son, Val Princep, when Little Holland House was pulled down to make way for Melbury Road. Val Princep engaged the architect Philip Webb to design his house. Webb was William Morris's friend who designed Morris's 'Red House'.



Photograph of Little Holland House taken when occupied by the Princeps and G. F. Watts.  
Collection – unknown

Watts was offered the baronetcy twice by Queen Victoria and refused twice. At the age of 85, he accepted the Order of Merit and received the insignia from King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace on 8 August 1902.

Sir Frederick Leighton was offered a baronetcy after Watts turned it down and accepted. His is the shortest-lived peerage in history; after only one day his hereditary peerage became extinct upon his death. According to Caroline Dakers' 'The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society', 'He died owing the Home Office £360 17s. for the letters patent creating him a baron; for his parliamentary robe, he owed Messrs Wilkinson and Son, Robe Makers, £39 18s.'

The two reasons cited why Watts declined his baronetcy are that he either feared Ellen Terry's son, Edward Gordon Craig, having some right to the title after his death, or he would have to increase the price of his work to pay for the costs associated with becoming a Lord.

### Postman's Park

In 1900, Postman's Park, (near St. Paul's Cathedral, London), became the location for George Frederic Watts's Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice. His initiative, which was mostly paid for by him, is a memorial to ordinary people who died while saving the lives of others and who might otherwise be forgotten, and takes the form of a loggia and long wall housing ceramic memorial tablets.

*For the fascinating history, check out the Wikipedia page for 'Postman's Park'.*



Alice Ayres's memorial tablet, designed by William De Morgan and installed in 1902.



### 'The Dean's Daughter'

Portrait of Lily Langtry by G. F. Watts  
1879 – 1880 - Watts Gallery, Compton

My 'May' story attempts to explain how *Irene Alder* was able to deceive Sherlock Holmes not once but twice in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'A Scandal in Bohemia', thereby adding to her back-story.

Various names of beauties linked to kings and archdukes of Europe have been put forward as the inspiration for *Irene Adler*. One theory is that it was Lily Langtry because she was born on Jersey and, according to Doyle, *Irene Adler* was born in New Jersey.

## Notes on Édouard Manet's 'Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe'

Whilst I used creative licence to spin the pictorial elements in Manet's painting into a murder mystery, most details are accurate. When Sherlock Holmes sets his challenge the painting had been included a retrospective of 20th Century French paintings in Paris. Manet's domineering father had been a judge and died in September 1862. His studio assistant had committed suicide in the way described - his sister-in-law had noted it in her diary - and, Manet had painted the lad's portrait in 1859, which became 'The Boy with Cherries'. The French serial killer's reign had ended. Lastly, details relating to the creation of 'Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe's and the painting's rejection from the Salon are also accurate.

There are, however, some notable exceptions. Greyson Froggatt is a completely fictitious character. Froggatt being a British Ambassador in Paris ensured he could exploit his position, whilst enjoying the protection his role afforded.

But, where was the painting when Watson and Mrs Northam venture to Paris to view it? The painting was in Manet's possession until 1878 when it was sold to the opera singer Jean-Baptiste Faure, who was an avid collector of Impressionist paintings. He owned 67 paintings by Manet alone and died in Paris in 1914.

Otherwise, I planned my story so that it doesn't deviate from the Sherlock Holmes canon, but should just slot in with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's writing - having said that, Doyle upset Holmes' timeline once or twice himself. I was pleased to add to Irene Adler's (aka Mrs Northam) back story in such a way that it puts a new twist on Doyle's 'A Scandal in Bohemia' by adding, rather than taking anything away.

I read an early draft of the story to some of my fellow Cambridge Writers in which all of the mystery unfolded in Watson's living room. Whilst they liked the mystery, they felt it would make for a more satisfying story if some of the action took place in other locations. As there were two exhibitions of French Impressionist art in London in the 1910s and 1920s alone, it suggests the painting would have been on display somewhere in Europe. Failing that, Watson could have made an appointment to see it. Doubtless, Holmes's name when employed by Watson had the power to open doors. Given Watson's age and poor health, I didn't want him to have to travel too far, just far enough to make it an adventure.



The Boy with Cherries

1859 – Édouard Manet

Calouste Gulbenkian Museum

Lisbon, Portugal

An aside in recognition of **Mental Health Awareness Week**, which falls in the month of May. The achievements of our favourite Victorian consulting detective and artists often belie their personal struggles, ones that go hand in hand with their genius and drive.

When I visited Wightwick Manor in 2019, the Head Curator said that, if **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** were still alive today, it is likely he would be diagnosed with bi-polar disorder. She was well-placed to make such a confident claim. Rosalie Glynn Grylls (Lady Mander), who lived in the manor, wrote a highly respected biography of Rossetti, which was published in 1964.

**William Morris** was also known for his quirks and for being a quarreller. Canon Dixon related to Morris's biographer, John Mackail, an incident from 1857. Morris had been visiting Dixon in Manchester, prompted by the famous Art Treasures Exhibition: '...we both, I think, misread the Railway Guide, and drove to the station when there was no train; and there was nothing for it but to wait till the next day. I was made aware of this by a fearful cry in my ears, and saw Morris 'translated': it lasted all the way home; it then vanished in a moment; he was as calm as if it had never been, and began painting in water-colours'.

Fiona MacCarthy gave another example in her biography of William Morris: 'At a dinner in Oxford, when her name [Jane Burden, who would become his wife] was mentioned in a manner he took to be insulting, Morris bit his four-pronged fork so hard he twisted it and crushed it beyond recognition'.

Wikipedia's webpage for the 'deerstalker' has a section devoted to **Sherlock Holmes**, which claims that: '...Later, less-informed depictions of Holmes have him wearing this cap in the city, failing to take into account the fact that the fashion-conscious Holmes would be loath to commit such a sartorial faux pas; the deerstalker is traditionally a

rural outdoorsman's cap. It is not appropriate headgear for the properly dressed urban gentleman.'

I am a supporter of Wikipedia, however, in this instance I strongly disagree. The world renowned expert on autism Uta Frith says in her 1989 book 'Autism: explaining the enigma' that Sherlock Holmes behaves very much like someone with Asperger's syndrome, remarking that, 'He is not merely eccentric, his absent-mindedness in relation to other people and his single-mindedness in relation to special ideas are highly suggestive.' And, cites his emotional detachment and his circumscribed interests, giving the example of his monograph on the distinction between one hundred and forty ashes from cigars, cigarettes and pipes.

Holmes's preference for the soft deerstalker, rather than a stiff and restrictive hat, is explained by **Temple Grandin** - see her Wikipedia page. Grandin, who is on the autism spectrum, has noted in her autobiographical works that '...autism affects every aspect of her life.' She '...has to wear comfortable clothes to counteract her sensory processing disorder and has structured her lifestyle to avoid sensory overload'. In her lectures, Grandin has said that she favours old clothes because they have been washed repeatedly, making them incredibly soft. Grandin is not alone. She has been approached by mothers who struggle to find clothes their children will wear and have had to resort to scouring jumble sales.

**See YouTube for more on Temple Grandin and Uta Frith. And, search BBC iplayer Sounds for Uta Frith's appearance on Desert Island Discs.**

In April's Afterword, I illustrated David Parr's and his employer's (Frederick Leach) wide-reaching social connections by playing '**Six degrees of separation**'.

Six degrees of separation is the idea that all people are six, or fewer, social connections away from each other. Applying this rule, I connected Leach and Parr to Queen Victoria in five degrees. This month I can do it in less...

Lucinda Hawksley's biography 'The mystery of Princess Louise: Queen Victoria's Rebellious Daughter' reveals the princess was friends with many leading artists, including William Morris, James McNeill Whistler and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Seemingly, she attended Morris's speeches and an exhibition of Morris's work at Westminster Hospital. And, she made a point of visiting the chloral addicted Rossetti, when he was being shunned by his acquaintances and considered mad.

This month I can connect David Parr and Frederick Leach to Queen Victoria in three degrees:

David Parr/Frederick Leach > William Morris > Princess Louise > Queen Victoria

Last month's story, in which Nathaniel Willis (aka David Parr) is invited to a recital held in the presence of the Prince of Wales, may have seemed farfetched. However, given Hawksley's findings, it is possible that David Parr and Frederick Leach attended the same speech given by William Morris as Princess Louise. Morris gave speeches on a host of topics, including art, the preservation of ancient buildings, decoration, as well as politics.

And, as you may have deduced from a previous section, there may be a special connection for the David Parr House. Might one connect David Parr and Frederick Leach to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with only two degrees of separation:

David Parr/Frederick Leach > George Frederick Bodley > Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?

Aside from being seated within spitting distance of Doyle at the Order of Merit dinner, Bodley may have been introduced to him as Doyle was interested in architecture. Sherlock Holmes's creator designed his home 'Undershaw' near Hindhead in Surrey with the assistance of an architect friend – see photo below (collection unknown). It was Doyle's home at the time of the Order of Merit dinner.



## A poem entitled: 221b

My 'May' story takes Doyle's character 'Irene Adler' from 'A Scandal in Bohemia'.

The BBC television series 'Sherlock' produced a modern take on the same story, entitled 'A Scandal in Belgravia', with the actors Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman playing Holmes and Watson. The episode includes a reoccurring nod for Sherlock Holmes obsessives. Maybe you saw the episode and wondered why there is much talk about the counter on Watson's blog being stuck on 1895 – the no. of visitors to his site. Why 1895? The nod refers to the following poem narrative:

Here dwell together still two men of note  
Who never lived and so can never die:  
How very near they seem, yet how remote  
That age before the world went all awry.  
But still the game's afoot for those with  
ears  
Attuned to catch the distant view-halloo:  
England is England yet, for all our fears—  
Only those things the heart believes are  
true.

A yellow fog swirls past the window-pane  
As night descends upon this fabled street:  
A lonely hansom splashes through the rain,  
The ghostly gas lamps fail at twenty feet.  
Here, though the world explode, these two  
survive,  
And it is always eighteen ninety-five.

by Vincent Starrett (1886-1974)

Similarly, standing in David Parr's drawing room it feels as though one has travelled back in time and the year is 1895.

Parr painted the walls in 1912, when Art Deco was in its infancy, suggesting he wanted a visual reminder of the golden years when he worked on commissions for William Morris, George Frederick Bodley, and Sir George Gilbert Scott.

## SOURCES :

Section on 'Having established the beginning of the end, what of the end?'

'Within twenty years his style was considered hopelessly outdated and owners of his works sought to eradicate all traces of his efforts.' [Cherry, Bridget; Pevsner, Nikolaus (2002) [1991], Penguin Books]. From the 1890s to the later twentieth century, Victorian art was under constant assault, critics writing of 'the nineteenth century architectural tragedy', [Turnor, Reginald; Nineteenth Century Architecture in Britain (1950) Batsford] ridiculing 'the uncompromising ugliness' [Turnor, Reginald; Nineteenth Century Architecture in Britain (1950) Batsford] of the era's buildings and attacking the 'sadistic hatred of beauty' [Clark, Kenneth; The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste' (1983) John Murray] of its architects. Of Burges, they wrote almost nothing. His buildings were disregarded or altered, his jewellery and stained glass were lost or ignored, and his furniture was given away.'