

Adventure X – The Adventure of the Speckled Band



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.

A Toast to the Stoner Sisters

By Paul G. Churchill

First Presented at the Meeting of the Speckled Band of Boston

14 May 2004

Let us offer a toast to the ill-fated twins
Who would suffer great pain for their stepfather's sins;
To poor Julia Stoner against whom he raged
For the trifling crime of becoming engaged;
And to Helen, her sister, who barely survived
All the sinister plans that old Roylott contrived!
They had lost their dear father when they were but two,
And they missed the old gen'ral whom they never knew.
When their mother remarried that very same year,
It was all for the best; they had nothing to fear.
It was said that their stepfather had been in gaol;
He had beaten his butler to death went the tale!
Grimesby Roylott came back to his homeland so dear
With two girls and a wife and a thousand a year.
They were back in Olde England and then, right on cue,
It was Mom's turn to die, on the railway, near Crewe.
The old doctor gave up on his medical plan,
And they went to the Saxon estate, Stoke Moran.
The estate down in Surrey they say once was grand,
With a manor house, riches, and acres of land!
But the place had now fallen into disrepair;
It was heavily mortgaged for Roylott, the heir.
Then one Christmas our Julia went to her aunt's,
Up in Harrow in Middlesex where, just perchance,
She was swept off her feet by a half-pay Marine,
And her forthcoming marriage made life look so green.
But the loss of her income led Roylott to scheme,

So he plotted a deed that would shatter her dream.
First he added a vent and a rope with no wire,
Then he bolted her bed to the floor near the fire.
In a fortnight the time came to do what was planned;
First she screamed, then she gasped out the words, "Speckled Band!"
By the time Helen came back to be by her side,
It was over and Julia fainted and died.
Now two years had gone by since poor Julia passed,
And the time for poor Helen was coming up fast;
On her beau, Percy Armitage, Helen now leans,
Second son of a Crane Water man of some means;
But with eyes all averted he couldn't keep pace,
So then Helen remembered the Farintosh case,
How an opal tiara was found and returned
By a London detective named Holmes, so she learned.
Now our Helen was smart and so sought Holmes's aid,
And we all know just how the adventure was played:
Grimesby Roylott stopped by after Helen had left;
After calling Holmes names, with a strength that was deft,
He then grabbed up a poker and bent it awry,
But our hero untangled it, then winked his eye.
Afternoon saw the pair head to Surrey by train;
From the Crown they then went with revolver and cane.
The detective arrived with a plan up his sleeve:
That night Helen would open the shutters and leave.
Holmes and Watson were there when the hissing began,
And now Roylott was foiled by his own wicked plan!
Let us drink to the sisters, one dead, one alive:
May the mem'ry of what they endured long survive!!
One last word for the doctor whose death came to pass:
We can all here agree, he's a snake in the grass!!!

Pictured is the toast given to the Speckled Band of Boston in May, 2004, by Paul Churchill, honoring the two sisters, Helen and Julia Stoner.

B 23212

CERTIFIED COPY of an Entry in a REGISTER of BIRTHS (6 & 7 Wm. IV., cap. 86).



Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON.

SUPERINTENDENT REGISTRAR'S DISTRICT

1217 BIRTHS in the Sub-District of in the County of Sussex

No.	When and where Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Baptismal Name, if added after Registration of Birth.
	Crawley April 1863	Helen Stoner	girl	James Stoner	Claudia Stoner	Major-General			Thomas William Holliday Registrar	

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	Crawley April 1863	Julia Stoner	girl	James Stoner	Claudia Stoner	Major-General			Thomas William Holliday Registrar	

CERTIFIED to be a true Copy of an Entry in the Certified Copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 12th day of April 1863

By the Act of 6 & 7 William IV., c. 86, sec. 33, it is enacted, "That the Registrar-General shall cause to be made a Seal of the said Register Office, and the Registrar-General shall cause to be sealed or stamped therewith all Certified Copies of Entries given in the said Office; and all Certified Copies of Entries purporting to be Sealed or Stamped with the Seal of the said Register Office, shall be received as evidence of the Birth, Death, or Marriage to which the same relates, without any further or other proof of such Entry; and no Certified Copy purporting to be given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect which is not sealed or stamped as aforesaid."

By sec. 37 of the same Act it is enacted that, "for every general search of the Indexes shall be paid the sum of twenty shillings, and for every particular search the sum of one shilling, and for every Certified Copy the sum of two shillings and sixpence," exclusive of Inland Revenue Stamp (33 & 34 Vict., c. 97) of one penny.

The Act 24 & 25 Vict., c. 98, sec. 36, enacts that "whosoever shall unlawfully destroy, deface, or injure, or cause or permit to be destroyed, defaced, or injured, any Register of Births, Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, or Burials, or any Certified Copy of any such Register, or any part thereof, or shall forge or fraudulently alter in any such Register, any Entry relating to any Birth, Baptism, Marriage, Death, or Burial, or any Certified Copy of such Register or of any part thereof, or shall forge or counterfeit the seal of or belonging to any Register Office, or shall offer, utter, dispose of, or put off any such Register, Entry, Certified Copy, Certificate or Seal, knowing the same to be false, forged, or altered, shall be guilty of Felony, and be liable to Penal Servitude, or to Imprisonment with Hard Labour."

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Pictured are the birth certificates of Helen and Julia Stoner, born in April, 1863. Their father died when they were very young, and their mother died 8 years before Miss Stoner sought Holmes assistance.

From the story:

'My sister Julia and I were twins, and we were only two years old at the time of my mother's re-marriage.'

Interest
 on acres - £ 580-7-3
 Net Income
 livestock - £ 27-4-4
 tenants - £ 58-1-4
 gypsies - £ 35-2-7
 crops - £ 49-4-2

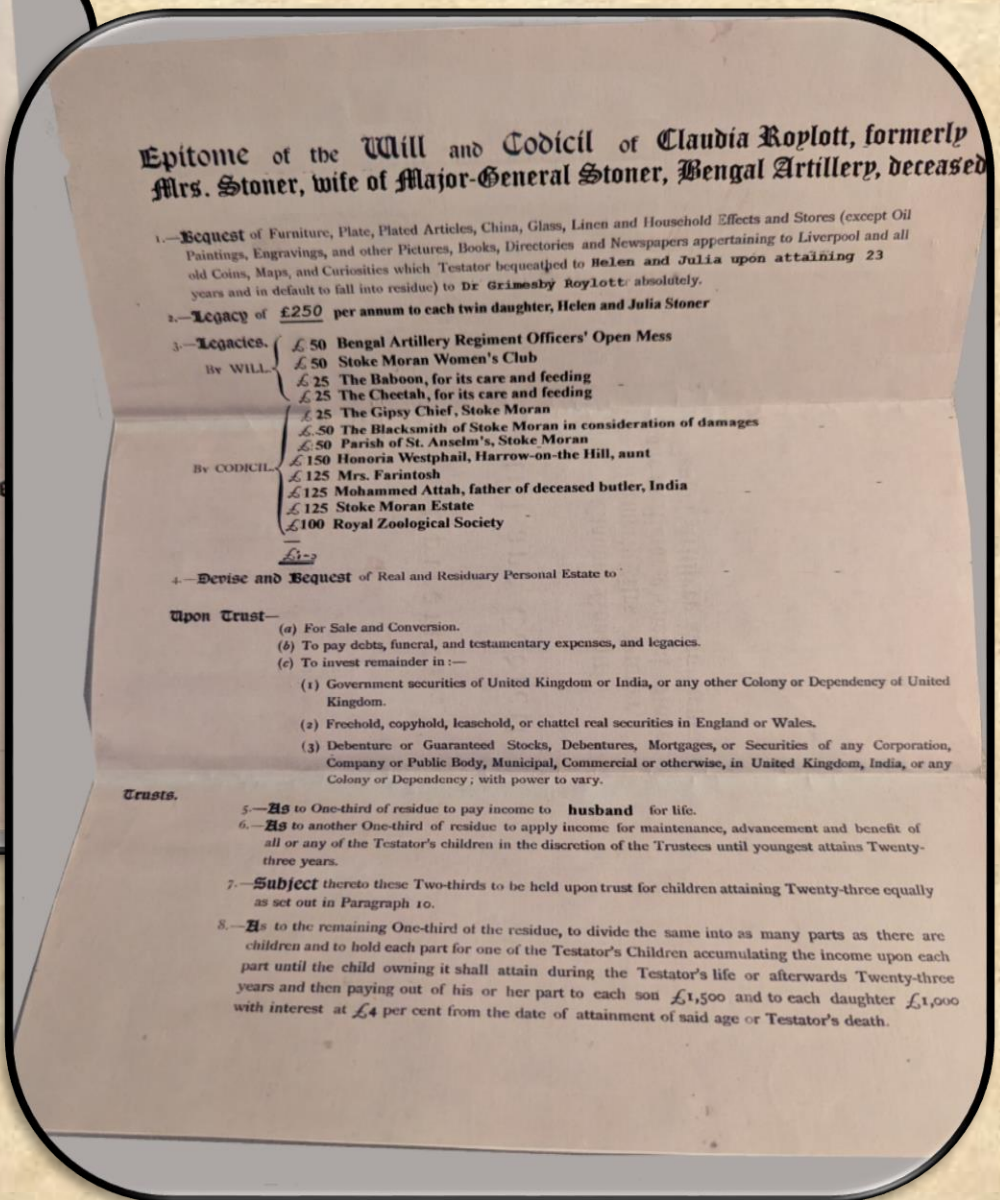
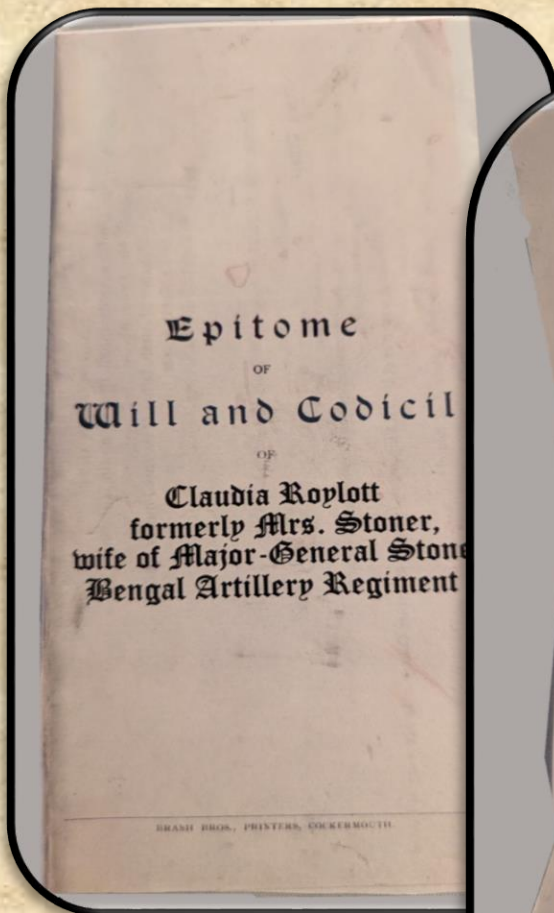
 £ 750-0-8
 over
 hand?
 worth currently

 £ 1000-18-6 total worth
 at time of wife's death.
 fall in agricultural prices.

Pictured are notes taken by Holmes on the principal and interest due to the Stoner sisters from their father and mother's inheritance, and Roylott's take.

From the story:

'She had a considerable sum of money, not less than a thousand a year, and this she bequeathed to Dr. Roylott entirely whilst we resided with him, with a provision that a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage.'



Pictured is the Will and Codicil of Claudia Roylott, formerly Stoner, the mother of Julia and Helen Stoner.

From the story:

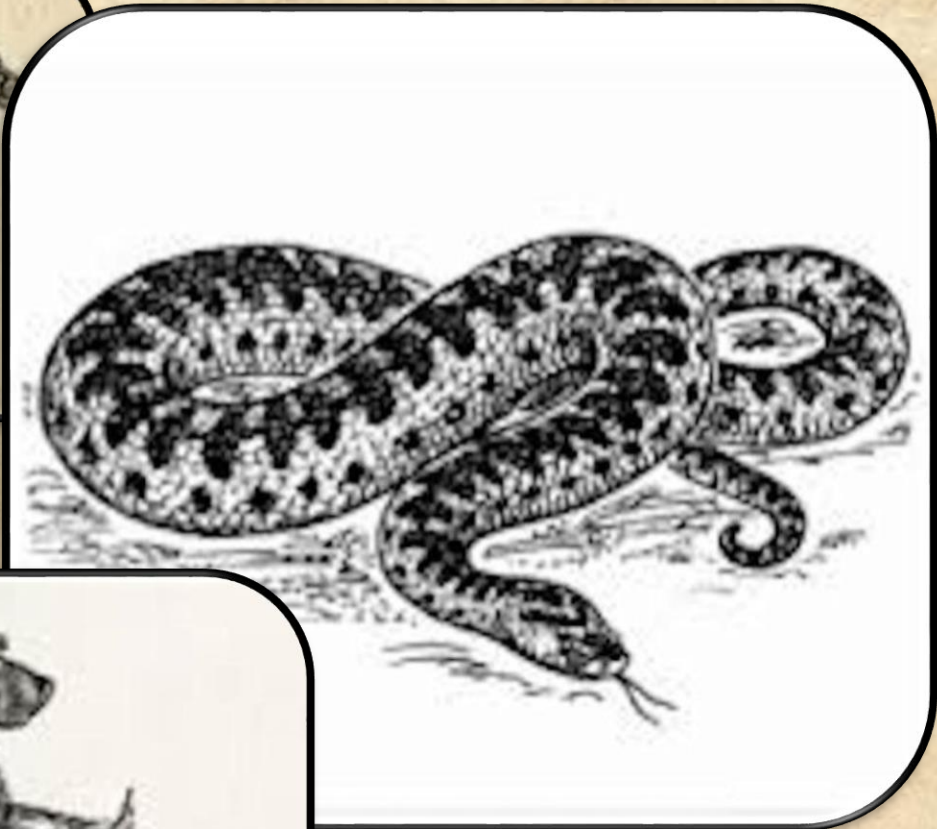
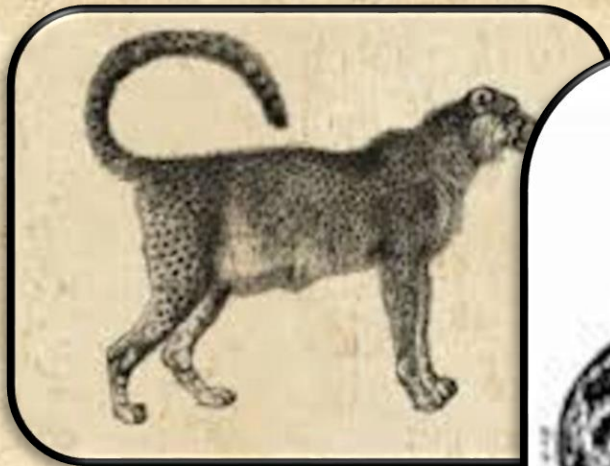
‘She had a considerable sum of money, not less than a thousand a year, and this she bequeathed to Dr. Roylott entirely whilst we resided with him, with a provision that a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage.’



Pictured is the opal tiara owned by Mrs. Farintosh, which Holmes helped recover when it was stolen. Helen Stoner was referred to Holmes by Mrs. Farintosh.

From the story:

‘Farintosh,’ said he. ‘Ah, yes, I recall the case; it was concerned with an opal tiara. I think it was before your time, Watson.’



Pictured are drawing of the various denizens, including Indian animals, located at Stoke Moran.

From the story:

‘He has a passion also for Indian animals, which are sent over to him by a correspondent, and he has at this moment a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds, and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master.’



Pictured is a gypsy, part of a nomadic people. Many Gypsies settled down during the winter months and made all kinds of products. In spring, they started to travel and sell their manufactured wares, as well as offer all kinds of services.

From the story:

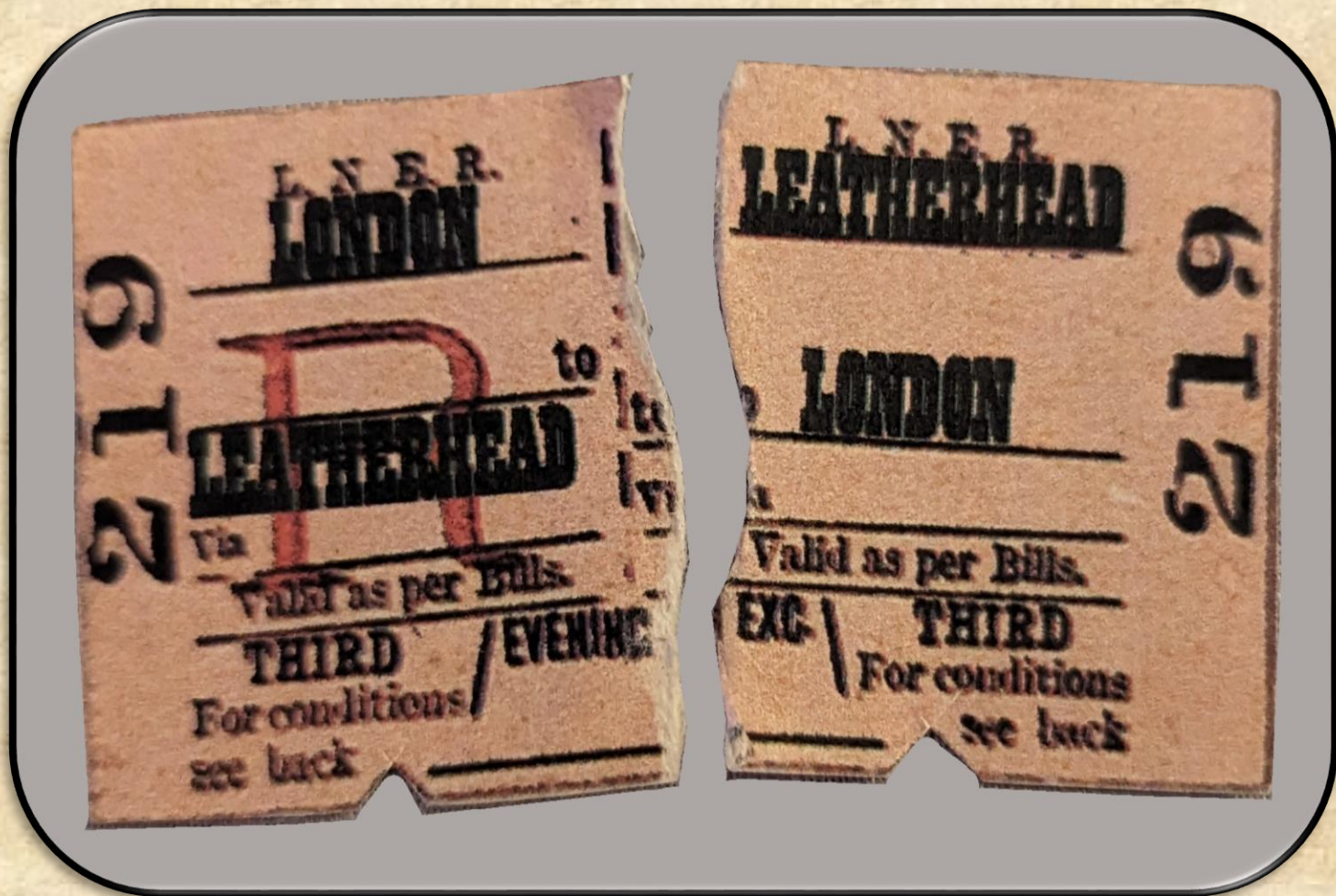
‘He had no friends at all save the wandering gypsies, and he would give these vagabonds leave to encamp upon the few acres of bramble-covered land which represent the family estate...’



Pictured is the Indian cigars Grimesby Roylott favored and smoked at Stoke Moran.

From the story:

‘The windows of the three rooms open out upon the lawn. That fatal night Dr. Roylott had gone to his room early, though we knew that he had not retired to rest, for my sister was troubled by the smell of the strong Indian cigars which it was his custom to smoke.’



Pictured is Holmes' train ticket from London to Leatherwood, the closest rail station to Stoke Moran, Helen Stoner's residence.

From the story:

At Waterloo we were fortunate in catching a train for Leatherhead, where we hired a trap at the station inn, and drove for four or five miles through the lovely Surrey lanes.



Pictured is Holmes toothbrush and tooth powder. Holmes take these with him to Leatherhead to assist Helen Stoner.

From the story:

‘An Eley's No. 2 is an excellent argument with gentlemen who can twist steel pokers into knots. That and a tooth-brush are, I think, all that we need.’



Pictured is the pistol (a Webley) Holmes suggests Watson take with them to visit Stoke Moran, the residence of Grimesby Roylott and Helen Stoner. The Eley's No. 2 cartridges would have been used in the Webley pistol.

From the story:

'I should be very much obliged if you would slip your revolver into your pocket. An Eley's No. 2 is an excellent argument with gentlemen who can twist steel pokers into knots.'

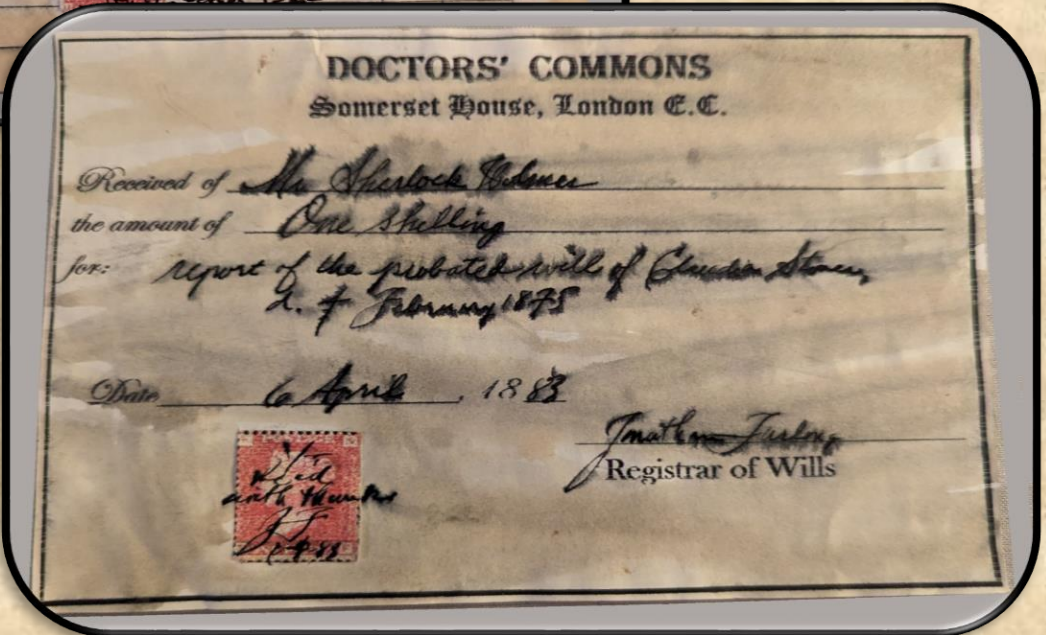
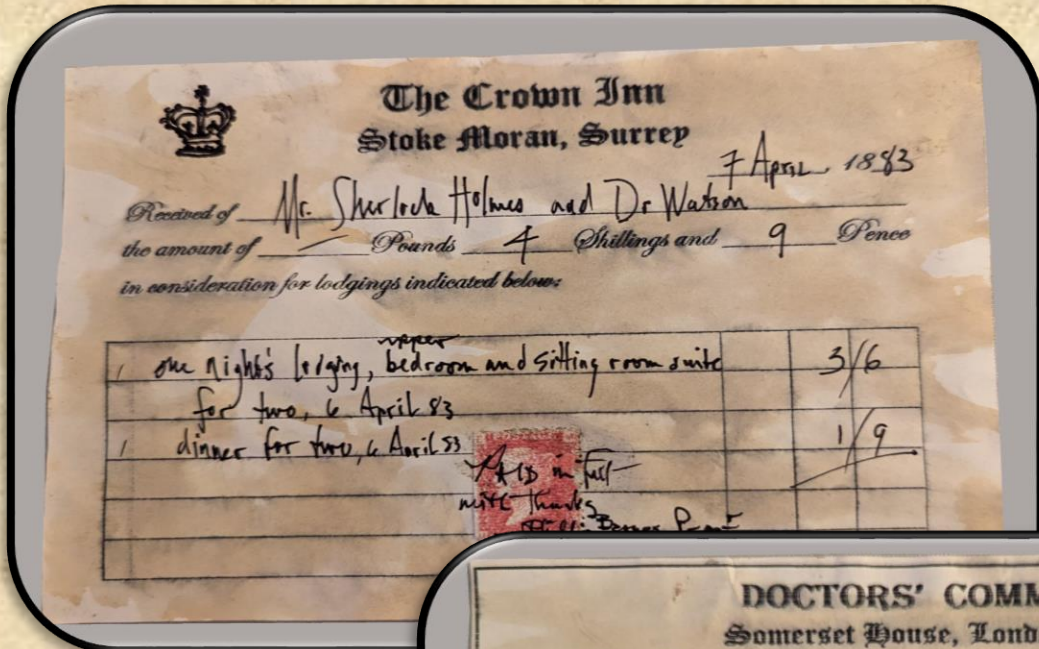


Pictured is the saucer which was located on top of Roylott's safe. Holmes found the saucer with milk.

From the story:

'Well, look at this!' He took up a small saucer of milk which stood on the top of it.

'No; we don't keep a cat. But there is a cheetah and a baboon.'



Pictured is receipts for Holmes – one from the Crown Inn, where he and Watson procured a room across from Stoke Moran, and one from Doctor’s Commons, from which Holmes obtained a copy of Claudia Roylott’s will.

From the story:

‘And now, Watson, we shall order breakfast, and afterwards I shall walk down to Doctors' Commons, where I hope to get some data which may help us in this matter.’

Sherlock Holmes and I had no difficulty in engaging a bedroom and sitting-room at the Crown Inn.



Pictured is the candle stump and box of vestas which Holmes brought to Stoke Moran. He used the candle once they extinguished the lamp in Helen's bedroom.

From the story:

Holmes had brought up a long thin cane, and this he placed upon the bed beside him. By it he laid the box of matches and the stump of a candle. Then he turned down the lamp and we were left in darkness.



Pictured is the dark lantern used by Roylott in his study. A dark lantern is a candle lantern with a sliding shutter so that it may conveniently be made dark without extinguishing the candle.

From the story:

On the table stood a dark lantern with the shutter half open, throwing a brilliant beam of light upon the iron safe, the door of which was ajar.



Pictured is one of the Turkish slippers worn by Grimesby Roylott on the night he tried to murder Helen Stoner, and ended up dying himself.

From the story:

Beside this table, on the wooden chair, sat Dr. Grimesby Roylott, clad in a long grey dressing-gown, his bare ankles protruding beneath, and his feet thrust into red heelless Turkish slippers.

CORONER'S REPORT

Sedric Hardcastle the Coroner for the County of *Surrey*
do hereby certify the death of *Grimesby Roylott, M.D.*
to have been the result of *an accident*

and do add the following particulars: *met his death while indiscreetly
playing with a dangerous pet kept at the
Manor House, Stoke Moran, this County.*



Sedric Hardcastle, Coroner
Signed by me this day, the *9th* of *April*, 18*83*

Pictured is the Coroner's report for the passing of Grimesby Roylott who "met with his death while indiscreetly playing with a dangerous pet kept at the Manor House, Stoke Moran, Surrey"

From the story:

'It is a swamp adder!' cried Holmes— 'the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten.'



Pictured are the whistles Dr. Roylott used to train the swamp adder to enter and exist his daughter's room.

From the story:

At the moment when Holmes struck the light I heard a low, clear whistle, but the sudden glare flashing into my weary eyes made it impossible for me to tell what it was at which my friend lashed so savagely.



Pictured is the snake skin shed by the swamp adder while he was in the safe, held by Dr. Roylott to murder his two daughters.

From the story:

‘It is a swamp adder!’ cried Holmes— ‘the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten.’



Pictured is the dog leash, or whip, which Roylott used to control the swamp adder. Holmes used it to capture the snake once it had killed Roylott.

From the story:

As he spoke, he drew the dog whip swiftly from the dead man's lap, and throwing the noose round the reptile's neck, he drew it from its horrid perch, and, carrying it at arm's length, threw it into the iron safe, which he closed upon it.

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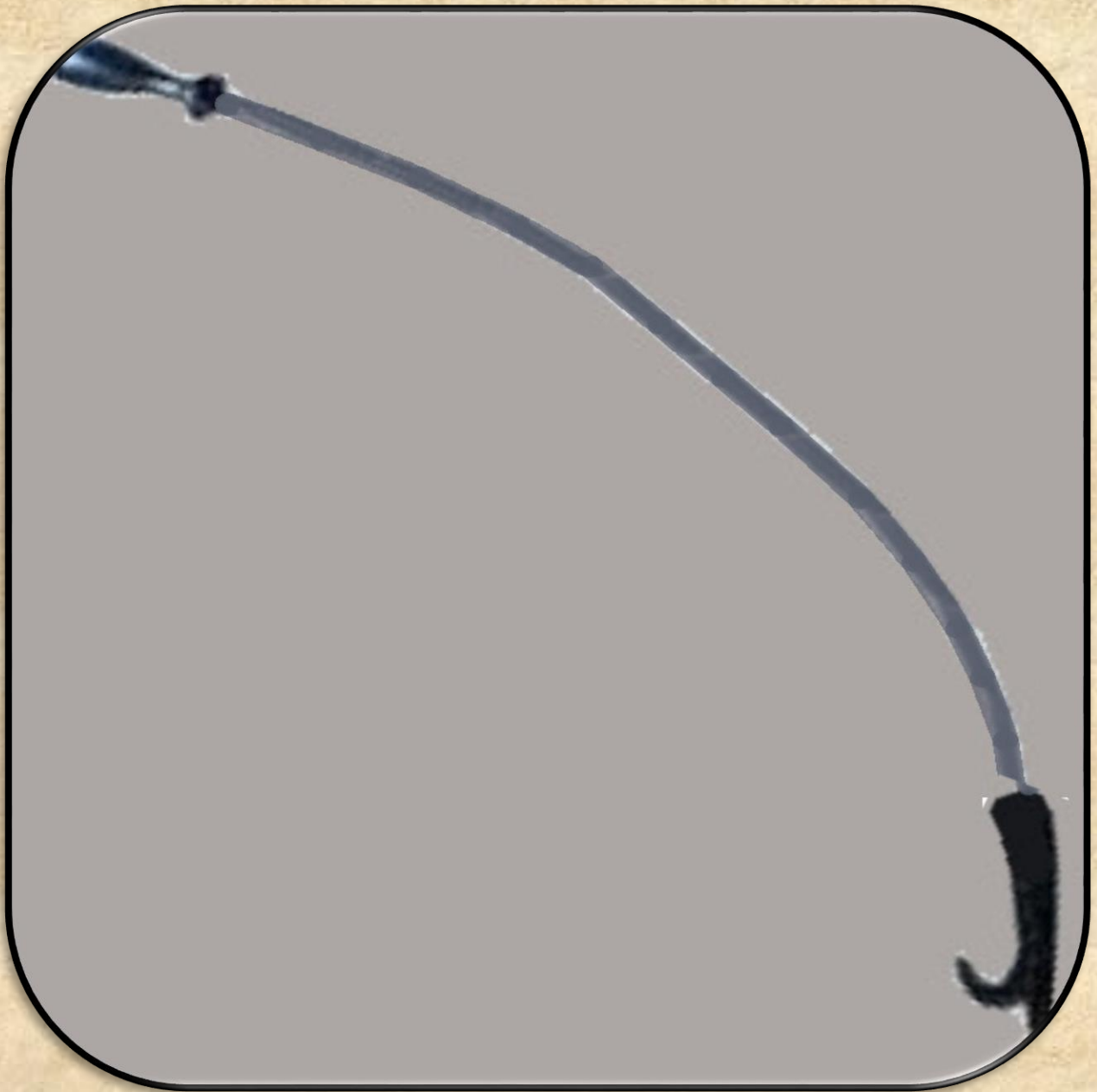
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33, BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

Pictured is a McClure's magazine from 1894 featuring an article on the poisonous snakes of India.

From the story:

'It is a swamp adder!' cried Holmes— 'the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten.'

Additional items of interest
in “The Adventure of the
Speckled Band” not
included in the original
Evidence Box.



Pictured is the fireplace poker at 221b Baker Street. A poker is used to stir the coals in a fireplace.

From the story:

He stepped swiftly forward, seized the poker, and bent it into a curve with his huge brown hands.

'See that you keep yourself out of my grip,' he snarled, and hurling the twisted poker into the fireplace, he strode out of the room.



Pictured is the riding, or hunting, crop brought to Baker Street by Dr. Roylott.

From the story:

‘Ha! You put me off, do you?’ said our new visitor, taking a step forward, and shaking his hunting-crop. ‘I know you, you scoundrel! I have heard of you before. You are Holmes the meddler.’



Pictured is the ventilator Dr. Roylott had installed between his room and that of his step-daughter, Julia. The ventilator allowed the swamp adder to pass back and forth to each room in the middle of the night. The bell-rope was attached to the top of the ventilator.

From the story:

‘No, it is not even attached to a wire. This is very interesting. You can see now that it is fastened to a hook just above where the little opening of the ventilator is.’



Pictured is the pub sign for the Crown Inn, where Holmes and Watson procured a room across from Stoke Moran.

From the story:

Sherlock Holmes and I had no difficulty in engaging a bedroom and sitting-room at the Crown Inn.



Pictured is the cane carried by Holmes to Leatherhead. The cane provided protection to Holmes and Watson from the deadly snake adder, sent by Roylott to murder his daughter, Helen.

From the story:

The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously with his cane at the bell-pull.



Pictured is the bell-rope which hung from the ventilator in Julia Stoner's bedroom, connecting her room to Dr. Roylott's room. The bell-rope was used to convey the swamp adder down to Julia's bed.

From the story:

'My attention was speedily drawn, as I have already remarked to you, to this ventilator, and to the bell-rope which hung down to the bed.'