

Changes to the Chronology published June 2014

The purpose of this document is to document the major changes I have made to my Chronology since it was first published in June 2014. I don't remember when I created the website **david.beckwith.net.au**, but one of the major reasons for doing so was to update the Chronology. Obviously when I published Volume III of Chronicles of Sherlock Holmes the chronology in Volume II was superceded by the addition of the new stories. But equally there were both spelling errors and typographic errors in the published version, and of course as time passed my dating of events was refined to take into account unknown or overlooked aspects of the Canon. This document deals only with changes to dates to stories of the Canon, if I move the date of a Canonical story, then any unpublished stories referred to in the main stories may also have their dates changed: these are not recorded here.

When I published the first version of my Chronology in June 2014 it had already been developing and maturing for about 5 years. I had started by quickly putting the 60 stories into order. I then sought guidance on the Internet from others who had tried a similar task. One was William S. Baring-Gould, but initially he was only one of several, and to a large extent he was the one who I did not agree with for many events of the period 1884 to 1887 inclusive. It was only after I had purchased the "Annotated Sherlock Holmes" by Baring-Gould that I saw why. He postulated that Watson had gone to the

USA in that period and had a wife prior to Mary Marston. I found this thesis impossible to believe, and I still hold this to be true. However, I will admit now that his concept has merit, and indeed is corroborated by another great chronicler, Leslie S. Klinger, of whom I now have his three volumes “New Annotated Sherlock Holmes”.

I never intended to play the ‘Great Game’ which is one the names given to the task of attempting a cohesive definitive ordering of the stories of the Canon. Any attempt to do so will result in only a partial success, Conan Doyle clearly never checked with what he had already written about Holmes and Watson, and so he contradicts himself repeatedly. If your source reference is in error, it logically follows that you cannot make inferences as absolutes. There are too many incidences of this in the Canon and a single example will suffice to prove the logic. “Wisteria Lodge” is set in 1892 in London, but this cannot be since Holmes was not in London in 1892, but the Wisteria Lodge incident *did happen* sometime according to the Canon.

I set out to create a chronology that would be a solid background against which to set my stories, and to be able to refer authoritatively about both actual historic events and events of the fictional world of Holmes and Watson.

I also took into account the most serious fact that as a reader of the Holmes Canon, and in my case since my childhood, what I read was as true as any fiction can be, and if one never read about a Constance Adams (and

certainly the Canon contains no such person) then why should one believe any analyses of this fiction that seeks to obtain such a coherency that required her creation?

I believe that even if my Chronology can never be accepted as being comparable to those of Baring-Gould and Klingler, it still has significant merit, for it introduces no major events that are not mentioned in the Canon in order to produce a plausible chronology. I am surprised that no one playing the 'Great Game' has produced a comprehensive list of errors that Conan Doyle made.

That is not to say that I have not introduced events that occurred before "Musgrave Ritual" or after "Creeping Man" (the two of Holmes's cases "Lion's Mane" and "His Last Bow" clearly fall outside the main sequence of events). An example of an introduced event is that we know Watson was in Australia because he says so, while he never says he was in the USA as Baring-Gould and others assert.

As to my introduction of details of both Holmes's and Watson's pasts, and events from roughly that of the setting of the "Creeping Man" in 1903 onwards, these events have no impact on the Canon (even including "Lion's Mane" and "His Last Bow"). With regard to Holmes's involvement with MO3, Watson simply could not publish anything he knew of this, and I found it impossible to believe that a mind that resorted to cocaine to relieve boredom would be content to simply look after bees. As to Watson's children, I needed the Watson lineage to continue so that the untold cases could

plausibly be published after more than 100 years had passed.

My Chronology is not frozen. I made errors in the published version of 2014, and have corrected them on my webpage, but in this document I explain the changing of dates. Other changes I have made are simply embellishments on what I wrote in 2014, new events discovered, new cases inserted (my stories), and spelling and typographic corrections.

One serious error on my part was discovered when I wrote the “Tide Waiter” and that was the dating of “Noble Bachelor”, correcting the date of “Noble Bachelor” went unnoticed when I then wrote “Delicate Affair”, and this error was compounded by my not realising that more details of that case were in the Canon, and I was contradicting them. My stance now is that my story of the “Delicate Mission for the Reigning Family of Holland” of 22 – 24 April 1887 is not the case of a similar name that occurred sometime between January and March of 1890 and this second case is the one referred to in “Scandal in Bohemia” (18 March 1890) and “Case of Identity” (16 Apr 1890), in this second case Holmes’s reward is different and Watson did not accompany him. To correct this error on my part, my story is now named “Delicate Mission” in my Chronology, although the published name will have to await a reprint to have this error corrected, Baring-Gould gave this case the title “Delicate Affair of the Reigning House of Holland”, I choose to name it a “Matter” since that is how the Canon refers to it.

Details of the changing of dates in my Chronology from the version published in 2014 follow.

The Reigate Squires

26 Apr 1887 → 14 Apr 1887

The reason for the date change is quite simple. Throughout the Chronology the date I assign to a case is the date the case commences. In this story, while the real story is 26 Apr 1887, the case actually begins on 14 Apr 1887.

Silver Blaze

25 Oct 1889 → 25 Oct 1887

There are dating clues in this story. The old date cannot be correct, since Watson is married at that date. Baring-Gould sets the date as 25 Sep 1890, but this is also wrong for the same reason. Thus, I have moved the event to the new date.

The Second Stain

15 Jun 1889 → 16 Jul 1889

I had three cases named 'Second Stain' (one in December 1887, one 25 June 1888 [mistyped as 1886], and one in July 1889). I have removed two of them. Baring-Gould also has three, one 12 Oct 1886, one in July 1889, and one set sometime between March 1881

and December 1889 (a somewhat implausible date range), I can only find one reference in the Canon in “Naval Treaty” dating the case to July 1889. I have also adjusted the day number to agree with the day being a Tuesday.

The Hound of the Baskervilles

3 Oct 1888 → 25 Sep 1888

The reason for the date change is quite simple. Throughout the Chronology the date I assign to a case is the date the case commences. In this story, while the real story continues to 3 October 1888, the case actually begins on 25 September 1887.

The Cardboard Box

28 Aug 1889 → 31 Aug 1888

An error on my part. Watson was living at 221B when this case occurred, so I moved the year back by one year, and change the day number to keep the same day name.

Boscombe Valley

3 June 1903 → 3 Sep 1889

I can no longer explain why I placed this case in 1903, nor find any notes whatsoever to explain why I had the month wrong, and the year wrong (for 3 June 1903

was a Wednesday). The Canon specifies the month and day number and day name (September 3, Tuesday), and Watson is married. There are only three years possible for 3 September to be a Tuesday between 1885 and 1905, these are 1889, 1895, and 1901. By my dating of Watson's marriages, 3 September 1889 is the only possible date.

Crooked Man

29 Aug 1888 → 28 Aug 1889 → 11 Sep 1889

Again, I can no longer find the reasoning behind my changes. The Canon states 'A summer night a few months after marriage', so I cannot explain the published version in Chronicles Volume II. The change to August 1889 was clearly to reflect Watson's marital status, the number from 29 to 28 to preserve my perceived weekday name. Other chroniclers postulated 1887 or 1888 for the year, no doubt not having fixed a date for Watson's marriage. Baring-Gould has 11 September 1889, and I see no reason to not agree with him.

Veiled Lodger

22 Sep 1896 → 22 Sep 1889

This change is exceedingly difficult to explain. The Canon clearly states the year is 1896, and it states Holmes has been working as a consulting detective for 23 years of which 17 of which Watson chronicled (presumably the missing 6 are 3 years before meeting

Holmes, and 3 following the Reichenbach Falls incident). Therefore, clearly 1896 should be believed. Unfortunately Watson is married when the case occurs, so is cannot be 1896! I have decided to be bold and ignore the 1896 reasoning. Conan Doyle published this case in 1927, long after the events it describes. It is as if he commenced the account with a setting of 1896, but then never consulted his own writings for corroboration. Thus, what I believe is the facts about 23 and 17 years are genuine, but the events of the actual case to be solved are from a different period, as if two sets of Watson's notes got mixed up. I can give no other solution to fitting this case into a chronology.

Scandal in Bohemia

20 Mar 1888 → 21 Mar 1890

When I first learned of Baring-Gould's assertion that Watson had a wife prior to Mary Marston, I thought that case was clear evidence that he could be right. The Canon states the exact date as being 20 March 1888, but Watson is married, and his wife cannot be Mary Marston for he has not yet met her. When I published my chronology in Chronicles Volume II I left this problem unresolved, and with no explanation of the dichotomy. As I pondered upon the problem of resolving the dating of cases involving a question of Watson's marital status, I kept coming back to why did Baring-Gould actually postulate in a prior marriage and how did this affect the dating of cases in the Canon. To summarise Baring-

Gould's assertion, he says that Watson journeyed to the USA in January 1884 and returned in August 1886 with bride to be Constance Adams, he marries her in November 1886, and she dies late December 1887. By Baring-Gould's chronology of Canonical stories this period includes

- "Resident Patient" (6 Oct 86)
- "Noble Bachelor" (8 Oct 86)
- "Second Stain" (12 Oct 86)
- "Reigate Squires" (14 Apr 87)
- "Scandal in Bohemia" (20 May 87)
- - - but the Canon states 20 March 1888
- "Twisted Lip" (18 Jun 87)
- "Five Orange Pips" (29 Sep 87)
- "Case of Identity" (18 Oct 87)
- "Red-headed League" (29 Oct 87)
- "Dying Detective" (19 Nov 87)

Of these Baring-Gould and I agree on the dates of very few! In that same period of time, I place only the following

- "Resident Patient" (2 Oct 86)
- "Reigate Squires" (14 Apr 87)

I now place "Scandal in Bohemia" differently to the date I first published, and I shall return to this shortly. Of the remaining three cases, only "Resident Patient" and "Reigate Squires" are in common, Baring-Gould places "Beryl Coronet" in 1890.

Baring-Gould places “Resident Patient” in 1886 when he says Watson was in the USA. So if he is going to contradict himself, what can be believed?

As for “Reigate Squires” the Canon states the exact date Spring 1887, and qualifies it to 14 April. The setting is that Watson receives a telegram informing him that Holmes is ill in Lyon, and then three days later ‘we were back in Baker Street together’. I can find no reference that Watson was either married, or not residing in 221B Baker Street. So why consider Watson was married?

Finally, this brings me back to “Scandal in Bohemia”, the date given in the Canon cannot accord with Watson being married to either Constance Adams or Mary Marston. Baring-Gould asserts that Constance Adams died in late December 1887, and that Watson marries Mary Marston in May 1889, so he must move the given date of 20 March 1888. He argues that the story internally makes it impossible for Tuesday 20 March to be correct, because the story must commence on a Friday. He then cites that the described weather fits with the actual weather in London on his chosen to date 20 May 1887, this date duly fitting his hypothesis of Watson being married to Constance Adams at the time. I find this all too convenient, I have no access to historical weather conditions, and I find it extraordinary to resort to this precision of detail. I cannot believe that Baring-Gould performed the same amount of diligence for other date and weather correlations for the other 59 stories of the Canon. Another equally pedantic observation is that the Canon date of 20 March 1888 is the 47th day of Spring in

Britain, while Baring-Gould's date 20 May 1887 is not in Spring, but is the 15th day of Summer in Britain, as an American Baring-Gould possibly was not aware that seasons do not begin and end on the dates in Britain and the USA.

So Baring-Gould found it convenient to 'correct' a stated date to fit his Chronology. This is also the single date I need to also 'correct' to fit my Chronology that contains no Constance Adams and I move it to Friday 21 March 1890.

It is worth a digression here. I assert that Conan Doyle made changes to the manuscripts he received from Watson for publication, in particular to obfuscate facts. "Scandal in Bohemia" is a prime candidate for this treatment. Many have considered Albert Edward future King Edward VII as a candidate for being represented as the King of Bohemia, but this cannot be, his age and marital status do not fit. The German connections are dubious, Bohemia was not part of newly unified Germany, but was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the majority of its people did not speak German. I believe there is much in "Scandal in Bohemia" that is part of Conan Doyle's obfuscation, and no attempt to correlate with actual historic persons or events should be made, this was Conan Doyle's intent. Baring-Gould however, offers candidates for the King of Bohemia as Grand Duke Rudolf and Archduke Franz Ferdinand, both of Austria and born 1858 and 1859 respectfully. I feel it is safe to say an Archduke of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is not to be considered, and Rudolf can be discounted since he

committed suicide in 1889. I propose Oscar Gustaf Adolf of Sweden and Norway, born 1858, reigning as Gustaf V, but as I said above, Conan Doyle never intended a correlation to a real person to be made.

Five Orange Pips

16 Sep 1887 → 23 Sep 1890

While the date of this case can be found in the story, for the month and year are stated, and it also claims that Watson is living at 221B Baker Street, and this cannot be true. The story opens with Watson glancing at his notes from 1882 to 1890, and then proceeds to state this case occurred in 1887. However, Watson being at 221B Baker Street is not as a resident, but as a guest, his wife has gone to visit her aunt (first edition reads mother – corrected by Conan Doyle). So if Watson is married, it must be in the years inclusive of 1890. So I move the date to corresponding day name in the same month, but in a different year when Watson was actually married.

The Red-headed League

11 Sep 1887 → 11 Oct 1890

11 September 1887 is the date given by Baring-Gould, but the Canon reads 'It is *The Morning Chronicle*, of April 27, 1890. Just two months ago.' and 'The Red-Headed League is Dissolved, Oct 9, 1890'. An oversight on my part to follow Baring-Gould and not what was written.

Case of Identity

18 Apr 1888 → 16 Apr 1890

When I realised that I had made an error regarding the 'Delicate Affair/Mission', I also noticed that my original setting of this story was in error since Watson is visiting Holmes at 221B Baker Street (and therefore he is married). Three other chroniclers had set the year as 1888 although almost everyone agrees that Watson marries Mary Marston in 1889, Baring-Gould had set it as October 1887, so he was presuming Watson was married to Constance Adams. A simple mistake where a casual reading of the case one can read 'our lodgings' when the text reads 'his (Holmes's) lodgings. I have thus moved the date to corresponding day 2 years later, the Canon states only the day of the week.

Sussex Vampire

19 Nov 1901 → 19 Nov 1896

The Canon offers only day name and number, Baring-Gould has the year as 1896. I can no recall why I considered 1901 to be the year, perhaps I was influenced by the publication year. I have chosen to follow Baring-Gould and move the event to 1896.

The Final Problem

24 Apr 1891 → 14 Apr 1891

Baring-Gould gives the date as the 21st but internal reference to dates and events show that the commencement date in the Canon of 24th April 1891 is incorrect. The Canon states a '*charming week*' elapsed between being in Strasbourg and being in Geneva, and the amount of time to travel from Dieppe to Strasbourg via Brussels and Luxembourg is not accounted for. If we assume that one on the most critical dates in the Canon is correct, that is the apparent death of Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls, then we must work back from this date and allow time for the journeys as recorded from start of the story.

In the timetable below, the numbers in parentheses are the dates derived from the Canon by assuming 24 April is correct, as can be seen these have impossible distances being covered in the deduced number of days, and a '*charming week*' reduces to 2 days.

In this table the first column is the corrected date starting 14 April, and the second column in parentheses is the deduced date from the "Final Problem" assuming the case started 24 April.

- 14 (24) Holmes visits Watson.
221B Baker St. is burnt.
- 15 (25) H & W depart England
- 16 (26) Canterbury - Newhaven - Dieppe
- 17 (26) Dieppe to 'un-named'
- 18 (26) 'un-named' to Brussels
- 19 (27) in Brussels

- 20 (28) in Brussels
- 21 (29) Brussels to Luxembourg
- 22 (30) Luxembourg to Strasbourg
- 23 (30) in Strasbourg
- 24 (30) Strasbourg to Basle
- 25 (01) Basle to Beaune
- 26 (01) Beaune to Lyon
 - “a charming week” day 1 on river Rhône
- 27 (01) depart Lyon day 2
- 28 (01) un-named day 3
- 29 (01) un-named day 4
- 30 (02) in Geneva day 5
- 01 (02) Geneva/Lausanne day 6
- 02 (02) Lausanne to Leuk day 7
- 03 (03) in Meiringen
- 04 (04) Reichenbach Falls incident
- 06 (06) Col. Moriarty publishes his letters