



The

Pink 'Un



Editor, Webmaster, and Tantalus: **Phil Dematteis**, 1817 Belmont Drive, Columbia SC 29206-2813, hansomwheels@aol.com

Program Cochairs: **Phil Dematteis** and **Diane Bodie**, dwbodie@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer: **Myrtle Robinson**, mtr@lindau.net

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I Find It Recorded in My Notebook . . .

Thirteen people attended the April 18 meeting of the Hansom Wheels: **Tom and Krys Elmore, Becky and Kevin Lewis, Manuel Mesa, Jerred Metz, Myrtle and Tim Robinson, Wayne Scott, Julie Smoak, Hannah Timmons, Mary Snead Dematteis (Mrs. Tantalus); and me (the Tantalus)**. The reason there were so few is that global warming had wiped out all other life on Earth, and we were the only ones left.

No, that wasn't it. The problem was that we had scheduled the meeting for the Thursday before the Easter weekend, and a number of people were so selfish that they preferred to spend the holiday with their families in faraway places rather than attend the Hansom Wheels. Now, when we set up the schedule for this year at the end of last year, we didn't know that Easter was going to occur this close to the meeting, which is almost always on the third Thursday of whatever month the meeting is being held in. But unlike Christmas, which is always on December 25, and even Thanksgiving, which doesn't have a specific date but is always the fourth Thursday in November, Easter is on the first Sunday after the first full moon that comes after the vernal equinox *unless* the full moon is on Sunday, in which case Easter is pushed back a week so as not to fall on the same day as Passover. Who the heck can keep track of all of that? Well, somebody does, obviously, but it's too complicated for me.

In fact, just an hour or so before the meeting, **Julie Smoak** called me at home to make sure that the meeting really was going to be held that night, since, she said, today was Maundy Thursday. I said, "Today's not Monday, it's Thursday." She said "No, it's Maundy Thursday." I said, "It's not Monday through Thursday, it's just Thursday." She said, "No, no! Maundy Thursday!" This was beginning to sound like an Abbott and Costello routine, so I hung up on her.

Anyway, after dinner, I tooted the Gold Kazoo and declared the game afoot. We toasted *the woman*, Irene

Adler, and the troublemaking **Julie Smoak** led us in the Musgrave Ritual.

Next came the Happy Hour Posers, where the victims are required to decipher the titles of Adventures from ridiculous clues: 1. A timepiece owned by Jan Hus (before he was burned at the stake) = a sundial in Bohemia = "A Scandal in Bohemia," the Assigned Story for the evening (Hus was a sixteenth-century Bohemian religious Reformer). 2. Chris Hemsworth is having trouble with his denture = the problem of Thor's bridge = "The Problem of Thor Bridge" (Hemsworth plays Thor in the Marvel superhero movies). 3. A coalition of cheetahs! = "The Speckled Band" (a group of cheetahs is called a "coalition," like a pride of lions or a murder of crows). 4. Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, or Maggie Simpson = "The Yellow Face."

The Featured Presentation was **Tom Elmore's** PowerPoint-illustrated talk, "Women Who Were *the* Woman?" Pretending that the Adventures are not true accounts (which we know they are) but fiction written by that guy Doyle (in actuality Watson's literary agent), **Tom** discussed a series of nineteenth-century adventuresses who might have been the model for Irene Adler: they included Lily Langtry, Lola Montez, Sarah Bernhardt, Johanna Loisinger, Lillian Nordica, Cora Pearl (who once had herself served naked on a silver platter!), and Marie Boozier (from Columbia!). I thought the most likely candidate was Ludmilla Stubel, who was an opera dancer (not singer, but close enough), was involved with an Austrian archduke (not a king of Bohemia, but close enough; unlike Irene, though, she actually married him), and apparently died in 1890 (Watson calls Irene "the late Irene Adler" in "A Scandal in Bohemia," which was published in *The Strand* in 1891).

Hannah Timmons read the Sacred Sonnet, "221B," and we all went home to die. *What??!!* No, no, I mean we all went home to *dye* Easter eggs!

For August: A Walk down Memory Lane!

The Hansom Wheels will meet at **7:00 p.m., Thursday, August 15**, at **The Palmetto Club, 1231 Sumter Street**. The price will be **\$27.00 per person**. For the program, we will revisit some (hopefully) amusing incidents from the history of The Hansom Wheels. The Assigned Story will be "The Veiled Lodger." Why, you ask? Because we've only read it once, and that was way back in 1983. Please make **reservations** at **(803) 787-2219**; by email at hansomwheels@aol.com; or **click**

"**Reply**" on the message to which this newsletter is attached **as soon as possible** but **no later than Monday, August 12**. See you there!

Note: If you make a reservation and then find that you can't attend after all, *please* call or email and **cancel** as soon as possible. The Palmetto Club charges us for uncanceled reservations! Thank you!

Happy Hour Posers (Name the Adventures)!

1. The vacationing nun stayed at an Airbnb.
2. I tried out for the Los Angeles baseball team but didn't make it.
3. The elderly carpenter had to go to the hospital because he accidentally attached his hand to a board with the compressed-air tool he was using.
4. The NFL commissioner was being followed by the cops.

Step Right Up!



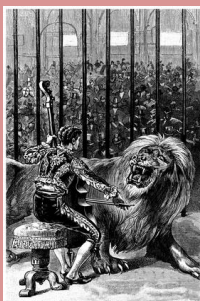
by Liese Sherwood-Fabre

In “The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger,” Holmes and Watson meet Mrs. Ronder, a circus performer who had been maimed by the lion who killed her husband seven years earlier.¹ Sherlock notes that Ronder had owned a circus rivaling the well-known shows of Wombwell and Sanger. The description of the Ronder circus, however, suggests more similarities with Sanger’s than with Wombwell’s traveling menageries.

Circuses’ histories trace back to ancient Rome, where men and women could mingle while watching races, equestrian stunts, and mock battles that were performed in permanent arenas. The fall of the Roman Empire ended the arenas’ prominence, but performers who had their beginnings there, including animal trainers and troubadours, took to traveling from village to village performing at local fairs until the late 1700s.²

The first modern circus was developed by Philip Astley, a trick rider who formed the Astley Amphitheatre with a ring design for optimum centrifugal and centripetal forces for horseback-riding stunts. In addition to trick riding, performances included acrobats and large-scale reenactments of such events as battles, floods, or other natural disasters.³ Such shows spread from England to Continental Europe, and then the U.S. U.S. circus promoters such as J. Purdy Brown and P. T. Barnum introduced such innovations as the “three-ring” circus, the “big top,” and travel by railroad rather than horse-pulled wagons.⁴

British and European circuses continued to utilize only one ring with a tent using four poles instead of the taller center pole of the American big top. “Lord” George Sanger and his brother started their own touring circus with family friends as performers in England in 1854. Four years later they had added a number of animal acts and continued touring, setting up their tent after a parade through the streets of the town. Their parade was impressive, with 160 horses, 11 elephants, a dozen camels, and about 330 people. Always the showmen, they once followed Queen Victoria’s military escort through London.⁵



George Wombwell’s circus, on the other hand, was best described as a traveling menagerie. Starting with two boas that he exhibited in taverns, he expanded his collection to more and larger exotic animals, including elephants, giraffes, various big cats, primates, and even a rhinoceros (billed as the “real unicorn of scripture”). At its height, he had three different menageries traveling the country. Given the difference in climates for most of these animals, their death rate was high, and he would often have those that expired sold to taxidermists or medical schools. He was, however, not above displaying the dead exhibit. On one occasion, an elephant died, and a rival menagerie advertised itself as having the only live elephant. Not to be outdone, Wombwell advertised the opportunity to see a *dead* elephant. The public responded by flocking to his exhibit.⁶

As a rival of Wombwell and Sanger, Ronder’s circus would have been extensive indeed, with a large menagerie of animals (Sahara King being only one of many big cats), numerous acrobatic acts such as Leonardo’s and Mrs. Ronders’s, trick horseback riding, and clowns such as Griggs. The circus having traveled and been known throughout the country, the tragic death of its owner would have been news carried by both national and local newspapers and would have easily captured the interest of the world’s most famous consulting detective.

The first 24 of Liese Sherwood-Fabre’s essays are now available in The Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes, both paperback and eBook. Retailers are listed on her Webpage (www.liesesherwoodfabre.com).

1. Doyle, Arthur Conan, and Robert Ryan. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (Kindle Location 31236).

2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circus>

3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circus>

4. <https://www.britannica.com/art/circus-theatrical-entertainment>

5. <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/nfca/researchandarticles/sanger>

6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Wombwell