

About Tri State Pipe & Tobacco Club

The Tri State Pipe & Tobacco Club was founded in the year 2000 by three friends (Larry Rathburn, Andy Spencer, and Dan Hudson) as a way for pipesmokers and enthusiasts to get together on a regular basis and share their fondness of pipes and tobacco.

Our members are from all over the greater Fort Wayne, Indiana area. Our informal meetings take place about 5:30 pm around the middle of each month in an area restaurant--one that is pipesmoker friendly of course.

Among our members are pipemakers, shop owners, estate pipe dealers, serious collectors and pipe smokers. Meeting nights are social events with pipes sold, bought, traded and more importantly smoked. Many tobaccos can be sampled and purchased. The informal discussions include pipemaking methods & materials, tobacco blends, pipemakers, new acquisitions and more. Members show their newly acquired pipes and the old favorites, including some one of kind pipes.

Our membership is somewhere around 20-25. We get anywhere from 8-15 on meeting nights. Our meetings are open to anyone who is interested and newcomers are always made to feel welcome. So if you are interested in stopping by, check our website or call one of our club leaders listed on the front of this newsletter for meeting information.

Tri State Pipe & Tobacco Club recommends:



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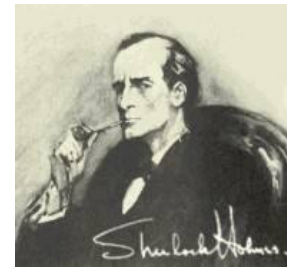
"An informal society of
pipe smoking friends"

*"I believe
objective*

*that pipe smoking contributes to somewhat calm and
judgment in all human affairs."* Albert Einstein

The Calibash Papers (The Holmes Pipe Mystery)

By Mr. John Hall of England



Sherlock Holmes is often regarded not merely as the world's greatest and most famous consulting detective, but as the world's greatest and most famous pipe smoker.

Yet - as is so often the case where Holmes is concerned - when we look more closely at the matter, all is not as it might immediately appear.

Let us look, for example, at that very famous 'three pipe problem,' mentioned in the case of 'The Red-headed League.' The glaring discrepancy over the dates in 'The Red-headed League' (the case begins on the 27th of April, and then 'Just two months' later - according to Watson - it is the 9th of October!) deflect the critical reader's attention very neatly. Holmes asserts to Watson that the matter 'is quite a three pipe problem,' which is fair enough; but then he adds 'I beg that you won't speak to me for fifty minutes.

Three pipes in fifty minutes sounds a heck of a lot to me. I reckon to take between twenty-five and thirty-five minutes for an average sized pipe, while the world record is a shade under four hours, using a modest three grams of tobacco (held by a Belgian gentleman, unless some yet more patient puffer has recently displaced him). Holmes averages out at seventeen minutes per fill, which is definitely at the low end, and that doesn't take any account of the time spent in tapping out dottle and refilling the pipe. Holmes might have been smoking nineteen to the dozen of course; yet Watson says that he himself 'had come to the conclusion that [Holmes] had dropped asleep,' which suggests that Holmes was smoking very placidly indeed:

As a further point, Holmes is known to have smoked shag, a tobacco noted (and named, 'shaggy dog') for its coarse cut at a time when tobacco generally was cut coarser than it is now; and the coarser the cut, the slower the baccy burns. The clue perhaps may lie in Watson's reference to that 'black clay pipe'

Continued on page 4

“Pipe and Pen” by clubmember and Secretary, Andy Spencer

Andy Spencer



News, Notes & Jottings

It is with great regret that I feel obliged to pass along to you news of the passing of two great and prolific pipemakers of note. The first to depart our midst was Mauro Armellini, an Italian maker with a strong reputation for making super smoking pipes at very reasonable prices. In Richard Carleton Hacker's pipe books he describes Armellini as being expert in the use of high-speed pipemaking machinery but to my knowledge Armellini made all of his pipes, even those retailing under \$100, by hand. A real friend of the working

man looking for a fine pipe with outstanding smoking properties for a VERY reasonable price, Mauro Armellini will be missed by many pipesters.

Equally tragic is the sudden and unexpected death of Karl Erik Ottendahl at the young age of 61. Karl was felled by a stroke, and will most definitely be missed by many pipesmokers around the world. His pipes were also very reasonably priced, perhaps even more than Armellini's. Not unusual to get smooth machine-made pipes from him retailing in the \$75 price range, and even his fine handmades were not much over two bills. Karl had a reputation for being very kind and accommodating in his personal dealings with pipesmoking enthusiasts all over the globe.

If you have been hankering for a pipe from either of these gentlemen I would strongly suggest setting about the task of purchasing one. Prices are sure to rise at least slightly as existing stocks become depleted, and neither of them will be making any more. Looks as though some of Armellini's family will continue to make pipes under his name, but I've no idea what will happen with regard to K.E. Ottendahl's line of pipes.

More bad news, I'm afraid, this time in the form of an overly intrusive federal government agency and PayPal. As many of you know, PayPal is an online payment service owned by eBay. Seems that the federales already put a halt to PayPal being used for legitimate, legal firearms sales (including muzzleloaders as well as military relics and antiques—a decision on airguns like pellet rifles is still pending), and now have their sights set on tobacco transactions. E-tailer Cup o' Joe's, which advertises in both P & T and in the NASPC newsletter was recently advised by PayPal that they will no longer transaction business involving tobacco products. Presumably the rationale here is that online sales of tobacco tins and bulk pipe tobaccos is that there is no way to reliably regulate and control the sale so that minors will not purchase such items via e-commerce.

CLUB OFFICERS

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Cloud 9

Sherman Carver



Pipe Blend Reviews, by Sherman Carver

Deep Hollow by McClelland

I decided to try this tobacco by McClelland merely because I liked the name. In any event, this is your average looking dark brown, ready-rubbed tobacco consisting of Virginias.

From the first whiff of the open can, it smells like tomato soup and is overly moist. But since I happen like tomato soup, I decided not to be put off by its rather unpleasant tin aroma. I hiked off into the woods and settled myself into a dark pine grove to light up (and promptly lost the path...stupid trees). It had a sweet flavour common to Virginia blends and... and... well, whether it was imagined or not, I also thought I could sense the lingering effect of the tomato-tin aroma.



All in all, it burned decently, though the last quarter was far too moist to be smoked—perhaps letting it dry out will help. Although this isn't a bad blend, it's also not particularly great either.

“On Burley”, Continued: Black Cavendish, Latakia, and/or Turkish tobacco. These mostly American produced mixtures, made from highest quality leaf and expertly blended can be excellent. The lower end Burley based blends are mediocre, at best. Based on the lightly flavoured, mild Burley, only top-flight quality ingredients and Burley's body can save the blends, known, high end or low, as 'American' blends.

Burley has found a great following as a high-end tobacco in its own right among pipe smokers, especially since its use and distribution in Danish and Dutch blends.

I use Burley in my own blends, but with a larger ratio of blended Virginias, to give the blend a richer base. I then tweak it with small amounts of Latakia, Turkish, Perique, Black, (unflavoured, unsweetened), Cavendish or other top flavouring tobaccos, (but not 'toppings' or 'casings'). The most popular of my own blends, 'Burns' Blend No. 3 - "Pub Blend" or 'Burns' Blend No. 96', though, for sailing, backpacking or working outside, for all day smoking, and enjoying, has the highest quality coarse-cut Burley, unflavoured Black Cavendish and ribbon-cut Bright and rubbed flake dark Virginias, without further flavours. The name comes from customers who smoke it in pubs and other public places, for its pleasant room note and lack of complaints, without compromising on 'pure' tobaccos.

Give a man a pipe he can smoke, Give a man a book he can read;
And his home bright with a calm delight, Though the room be poor indeed.

--Richard Thompson

On Burley

As posted on the TSPTC Bulletin Board
by "Doc" from Vancouver, BC

Burley tobacco is a straightforward, quite bland tasting, American tobacco which is full bodied and mild in character. The two historically 'American' types of tobaccos for commercial use, ('American' in the way the U.S.A. evolved tobacco is grown, cured and produced), are the 'American Mixture', a cut Burley Plug mixed with flake Virginia, and the straight Burley Plug itself.

Originally, all the Burley grown in Kentucky, Virginia and Ohio were varieties called Red Burley, Little Burley, Twist Bud and Burley. About the beginning of the War Between the States, a mutation of the leaf was grown and became known as White Burley.

George Webb, of Brown County, Ohio, brought home some Little Burley seeds he bought in Virginia's Brachen County, and planted them. Where he expected the early green leaves of Little Burley, he discovered a creamy coloured young crop. Believing they were bad seeds, or diseased, he destroyed the fields. This was 1864, and due to the beginning of war, seeds were in short supply the next year, so he sowed the remainder of the 'bad' seeds, and hoped for a normal crop. He was dismayed to see the odd creamy seedlings.

Harvesting the crop hoping to get something from the buyers and, perhaps purchase some proper seed, he was surprized to find the buyers liked this light bodied, fine textured leaf, which produced a milder smoke than the standard Burley of Ohio. White Burley was soon the only Burley leaf grown and by the mid-1870s, it was the most popular filler in Plug, became the main ingredient of American cigarettes and the base for most American tobacco blends.

Compared with flue-cured Virginia, Burley's bland taste is due to a low sugar content in it's chemical make-up, while contemporary flue-cured Virginia has the highest sugar content of all. It absorbs large amounts of flavourings, known as it's "drinking quality", and it's fine texture, good burning quality has made it America's most popular tobacco. It is now grown throughout the tobacco growing States, making up 30% of the U.S. crop and is now grown in Canada, Mexico, Italy, Spain, Greece, Brazil, some Central African countries and Japan.

Burley is available now in cake, cube cut, sliced plug, or, most popular, cut, crushed and 'ready rubbed' plug. With it's bland taste, it is almost always flavoured by the manufacturers, and except for the original aroma and taste, straight Burleys are very similar smokes, though, depending upon the grade of leaf and manufacturing process, it can widely vary in smoothness. When not carefully produced and aged, Burley can be overly robust or even harsh, and tends to be flavourless, but top leaf, when well matured, can be an exceptionally mellow, slow burning, mildly flavoured all day smoke. It's slow burning properties, especially the coarse or broad versions, makes it a very good 'outdoor' smoke.

These days, Burley is the favourite base for flavoured or 'fragrant' tobaccos, ("Aromatic" properly refers to Oriental blends), mixed with varying grades of flake or ribbon-cut Virginias, and sometimes blended with Cavendish, Continued Page 7

News, Notes & Jottings Don't know about the rest of you, but it seems HIGHLY suspect that there are twelve-year-olds out there conspiring to order some tins of Esoterica, GLP, McClelland's or C & D blends. Suppose it **could** happen, but it seems about as likely as the odds of my winning Lotto. Until this latest restriction is hashed out and, hopefully, defeated in court (someone is going to have to challenge its legitimacy in the legal system first), we may be faced with only being able to obtain hard-to-find pipe tobacco by sending checks or money orders out through snail mail. Truly unfortunate.

Don't know how the impending change in seasons affects the rest of you, but for many this time of year seems perfect for pipe-smoking. Been spending several evenings out on the deck, puffing away while enjoying the cooler temperatures. Of course, there can be too much of a good thing, with temps dipping into the twenties and thirties. Daytime isn't too bad to be out, though, especially when ol' Sol warms my bones up a bit. Time for sweatshirts, raking leaves, football games, and...pipes, of course. Grab one of yours to load and light, taking in the sights of neighbors getting their yards ready for fall and taking in the aroma of autumn as different scents of fallen leaves and smoke waft from yard to yard.

Time for jack-o-lanterns and fall decorations and leaf piles and kids playing football out in the yards. Also time to grab that last taste of summer's wine in the form of savoring those precious few days outside before the winter winds blow too gustily and coldly. Carpe diem, seize the day! There aren't many days left until pipe-smoking is relegated to an indoor activity, so grab the opportunity while it presents itself to take your pipe on a casual fall walk or to lounge outside while relaxedly puffing away on your favorite briar. Time won't wait, and springtime is a very long way off indeed!

Pipe Sightings and Stories Recently watched a program on The History Channel dealing with the mystery surrounding the disappearance of U.S. military pilot Lieutenant David Steeves in 1957. Steeves' jet aircraft vanished as he flew an otherwise routine training mission over a snow-covered mountain range in California. Repeated searches yielded no evidence of a crash site, let alone an aviator, until Steeves re-emerged from the wilderness, on foot, some 54 days later! Nearly every other photo of Steeves, who was such an intrepid individual that he survived some of the most inhospitable terrain in the U.S. as, on two sprained ankles, Steeves crawled, hobbled and dragged himself along over the snow for the better part of two months, shows him smoking his pipe.

Just goes to show you that pipe-smoking increases an individual's hardiness and fitness. Sadly, jubilation over Steeves' return quickly gave way to unfounded rumors that he had flown to Mexico and sold his aircraft, a trainer version of our first jet fighter, to Soviet agents and had then returned to be "found." Other detractors pointed

continued on page 5

The Holmes Pipe Mystery, continued: which Watson says that Holmes used in this instance. A clay pipe usually (then and there, at any rate) has a fairly small bowl to start with; and if it were well-used to boot then the bowl would be caked with carbon, thereby reducing the capacity yet further.

None the less, Holmes's 'fifty minutes' seems to me just another example of the man's tendency to confound the good doctor with apparent precision, as for example that glance at the quarter-mile posts to give a speed 'accurate' to a half mile in 'Silver Blaze.' When Watson writes that Holmes 'suddenly sprang out of his chair with the gesture of a man who has made up his mind,' a less charitable commentator could probably have said 'with the gesture of a man who has been keeping one eye on the clock, and knows that he'd better stop smoking if he is to impress his credulous room-mate

Well, okay, once is happenstance. But then take a look at another case, that most famous business of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, at the start of which Holmes asks Watson to call at Bradley's tobacconist's, and 'ask him to send up a pound of the strongest shag tobacco.' Watson obliges, and when he returns at 'nearly nine o'clock,' he finds that 'the room was so filled with smoke that the light of the-lamp upon the table was blurred by it.' The implication is surely that Holmes had smoked, or at any rate that he had proposed to smoke, a whole pound of strong tobacco.

We know that Watson went out at around 10 AM, for Holmes says to Dr. Mortimer that it will take him twenty-four hours to make up his mind about the case, and that Mortimer should call the following day at 10 AM.

Ignoring the time taken by Watson to place the order, etc, Holmes had eleven hours in which to smoke uninterruptedly. I just have queried whether Holmes's 'three pipe problem' could be solved in under an hour, as he suggests, and think it could most definitely not be; but let's assume he could smoke three pipes per hour, and did so solidly for eleven hours. (And he couldn't; nobody could, you need the odd lungful of fresh air, not to speak of meals, or going to the loo with the pipe lit - not, agreed, as dangerous to a chap as going with a cigar in one's mouth, as I can painfully testify, but not recommended none the less.) He must thus have smoked thirty-three pipes, and each pipe would take roughly three grams, which is a hundred grams in total, a trifle under a quarter of a pound.

True, Holmes may not have rubbed his tobacco out very much, so the weight per fill would be somewhat greater; but against that, the coarser cut would burn slower, so that cancels itself out. A quarter of a pound would do it, a half pound would allow ample margin of safety. So why order a full pound? Holmes may, to be sure, have run low generally, and be wanting to top up his stash for the next few days; but once again one suspects that the request for a full pound was to impress Watson with Holmes's machismo. Indeed, I suspect that Holmes was secretly a filter-tip ciggie man. but didn't want to let on. (Well, you wouldn't, would you?)

Perhaps the most telling piece of evidence in the case against Holmes as dedicated pipeman is his famous monograph, UPON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ASHES

OF THE VARIOUS TOBACCOS, mentioned in THE SIGN OF FOUR. In this monograph, Holmes claims that he can distinguish between the ashes of no less than 140 different forms of cigarette, cigar, and pipe tobaccos. Again, this strikes me as odd. For one thing, are there 140 different types? To be sure, there are many more mixtures of tobacco around, and certainly were in Holmes's day, but individual types of baccy? I can think of Virginia, Burley, Latakia, Perique, Havana - what else? I know that there are different Virginias, etc, of course, but are they that different in the ash stage?

Another point is that the ash from one form of tobacco isn't always consistent. I tried this experiment once, just to see if Holmes was in fact right, and by rubbing out a flake type to a greater or lesser degree (I actually used Dunhill's Navy Rolls) I found that I could vary the appearance of the ash quite considerably. (Don't take my word for it, reader, try it yourself!) Indeed, with a bit of trial and error I could make Navy Rolls ash look remarkable like the ash from Craven Mixture, which is the original of Watson's Arcadia mixture; and in THE CROOKED MAN Holmes claims that the ash from that is quite unique. Now, I don't pretend that my fake would have fooled Holmes; but it would certainly have fooled me!

Notes & Jottings--Pipe Sightings and Stories continued: out that no pieces or parts or impact site for Steeves' plane had been found. Those questions continued to arise about his disappearance and later reappearance to an unreasonable extent. Questions were cast as to how Steeves could afford a Jaguar and wild stories began to circulate regarding the stability of his marriage and that he allegedly had gambling debts which he hoped to pay off with a life insurance settlement. All later disproven, but not until real damage had been done to Steeves' good name and reputation.

Suspicion and rumor-mongering grew to such proportions that Steeves ended up resigning his commission in 1958 and set out to make his way in civilian life. An avid aviation enthusiast freed from the rigid constraints of military service, Steeves flew numerous experimental aircraft and risked life and limb in the development of new technologies. He later was becoming successful in another aviation venture when killed in a flying accident in 1965.

The military and even newspapers which were behind some of the irresponsible spreading of wild-eyed "theories" as to what REALLY happened to Steeves during the time of his disappearance issued letters of apology to his family, sadly to late to provide the same service to the by then late Mr. Steeves. Later searches finally revealed a small piece of aircraft having lettering identifying it as being being from Steeves' plane. No other parts of the craft were ever found, though, lending further credence to the idea that it must have landed in a lake.

Since watching the show containing the above information, I've often wondered if Steeves might have had his pipe and perhaps a pouch of tobacco along with his survival matches to help sustain him through his hardships in the wilderness. Doubtful, yet there is Steeves in so many photos with a billiard comfortably and naturally held between his teeth. Kind of makes a fellow wonder.