

*“Let us escape from this weary workaday world by the side door of music. Carina sings tonight at the Albert Hall, and we still have time to dress, dine, and enjoy.” – Sherlock Holmes, *The Retired Colourman**

Musings on the amusements in the Canon

A new Reichenbach Irregulars conference in alpine heights!

Hotel Le Bristol, Leukerbad, Switzerland

Thursday, 1st June to Sunday, 4th June 2023

The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland are delighted to announce a new conference due to take place from **Thursday, 1st June to Sunday, 4th June 2023** in the relaxing **alpine spa resort of Leukerbad** which is a spectacular 5 minutes’ cable car ride away from the **dramatic Gemmi Pass** and the **“melancholic Daubensee”**, both key locations in *The Final Problem*.



The spa resort of Leukerbad



View from the Gemmi



the “melancholic Daubensee”



Musings on the amusements in the Canon invites you to enjoy a unique combination of exploring Sherlockian sights that only few of us ever visited, the “melancholic Daubensee” and the Gemmi Pass, both sites offering superb views into wonderfully dramatic alpine scenery. Whilst examining and musing on the amusements in the Canon through a series of conference papers and amusing performances delivered by high-calibre speakers from around the globe.

Our speakers and performers will provide insights into the veritable treasure box of amusements in the Canon. There will be “a good deal of (...) music on the program”, examining, for example, Sherlock Holmes as an enthusiastic musician and “a composer of no ordinary merit.”

Naturally, we want to investigate some of “those strangest forms” that art in the blood can produce and thus suggest that we apply to our musings the well-known mantra of Father Ronald Knox, as laid out in his seminal *Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes*, that if “there is anything pleasant in life, it is doing what we aren’t meant to do (...), it is finding out what we aren’t meant to find out.” We will take a broad view of amusements, including not just entertainment and recreation but also distraction and diversion. Art. Opera. Love. To name but a few angles.

And, yes, “the bath!”: bathing of course, will be a major feature, whether Turkish (“rather than the invigorating home-made article”) or any other kind. We will be in one of the foremost spa resorts in the Swiss alps, Leukerbad.



In fact, we will literally dive into canonical amusements because we will meet in the indulgent surroundings of the well-known **spa hotel, Hotel Le Bristol, Leukerbad**, a 4-star hotel that offers its guests direct access to its own spring (33 ° Celsius / 91 Fahrenheit) and an out-door and indoor 2000 m² (21500 square foot) private spa & wellness area, including thermal baths area, panorama sauna and steam bath.

Explore their website to find out more about where you spend this long weekend:

[Le Bristol****Hotel & SPA | Le Bristol Wellness Hotel Leukerbad](https://www.lebristol.ch/en/le-bristol-wellness-hotel-leukerbad)

As you can see, we put relaxation and contemplation at the center of this long weekend! Because we believe that we need exactly that since the global Covid 19 pandemic has somewhat eased.

Programme (as at May 2022: as always, details may be subject to change)

Thursday, 1st June 2023 - “For a charming week we wandered up the Valley of the Rhone, and then, branching off at Leuk, we made our way over the Gemmi Pass (...)”

Today, it does not take a week to reach Leukerbad, situated at the foot of the Gemmi Pass. Leukerbad is easily accessible by car and public transport. Geneva is the nearest airport and from there by train and bus it is an easy 2½ hours journey along Lake Geneva and through the valley of the Rhône to Leukerbad. The railway station is Leuk and from there a bus ride brings you to Leukerbad. The hotel offers car parking. See *How to reach Leukerbad* below.

18.00	Welcome by the organisers A celebratory aperitif accompanies the official opening of the conference
19.30	3 course dinner at the Hotel Le Bristol followed by an evening program still to be confirmed

Friday, 2nd June 2023 - “Excellent, Watson! You are scintillating (...)”

On Friday, we begin, with our scintillating speakers, to examine and, equally importantly, to *enjoy* their musings on the plentiful amusements in the Canon. Please note the list of speakers below.

Throughout the weekend, we will ensure there is time for you to enjoy the spa at our hotel and to meet old friends, or make new friends, something that we have missed so much during the pandemic.

Morning	Breakfast at the Hotel Le Bristol at your leisure - and enjoy an early morning splash into the spa!
10.30 - 12.00	First part of the conference (see list of speakers further below in the program)
12.30 - 13.30	1 course lunch at the Hotel le Bristol
14.00 - 15.30	Second part of the conference (see list of speakers further below)
Rest of the afternoon and evening	The rest of day and the evening are at your own leisure & pleasure! You are free to choose where you want to have dinner (not included in the price) with friends old and new and of course to have a late evening bathe!

Saturday, 3rd June 2023 - “(..) we passed over the Gemmi, and walked along the border of the melancholy Daubensee”

On Saturday an excursion takes us to the Gemmi Pass and the Daubensee¹, both locations visited by Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson on their journey to Meiringen in spring 1891. We will ascend to the Gemmi Pass by cable car (but those who wish can make an early start and walk up!) and visit the nearby “melancholic Daubensee”. We will enjoy lunch at the top of the Gemmi Pass - be prepared for some surprise *en plein air* amusements.

Morning	Breakfast at leisure at the Hotel Le Bristol - and enjoy the spa!
11.00 -14.00	By cable car to the Gemmi Pass. It is a short, but dramatic 5-minute ride climbing from a mere 1401 meters / 4596 feet above sea level to an impressive 2350 meters / 7710 feet. We will explore the nearby Daubensee accompanied by some <i>en plein air</i> amusements. Still, beware of falling rocks! We will enjoy a 1 course lunch on the Pass at the Panorama Restaurant Wildstrubel which on a clear day offers dramatic views into the Swiss alps.
Rest of the afternoon	You can enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Return to Leukerbad. Or you can spend some more time at the Gemmi Pass, for example, walk around the Daubensee (2 hours, an easy walk on a clearly marked route). Please note that the last descent by cable is around 17.00 / 18.00.
19.30	3 course dinner at the Hotel Le Bristol followed by an evening program still to be confirmed.

¹ Please note that the although the cable car to the Gemmi Pass and the Restaurant Wildstrubel usually operate quasi all year round, weather conditions may make an actual visit to the nearby Daubensee difficult. E.g. there might still be snow.

Sunday, 4th June 2023 - “*Well, leave it there, Watson.*”

All good times come to an end! We end our musings on amusements in the Canon with the third and final part of our conference.

Morning	Breakfast at the Hotel Le Bristol at your own leisure - and enjoy the spa!
10.30 - 12.00	Third and final part of our conference (see list of speakers further below in the program)
12.30 - 13.30	1 course lunch at the Hotel le Bristol to say good-bye!
<i>After lunch it is time to say goodbye and we hope to see you again at our next Reichenbach Irregulars conference in alpine heights!</i>	

Speakers

We are delighted to announce already now a stellar list of speakers! With one or two exceptions they have all confirmed to join us. If *you* would like to join our list of speakers (or performers), please get in touch with us. We are open to any suggestions!

Catherine Cooke, from London, was appointed Chairman of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London (SHSL) in 2021. An invested member of the BSI and ASH, Catherine is the recipient of numerous awards, such as the SHSL’s Tony Howlett Award, the Tony and Freda Howlett Literary Award and the BSI Morley-Montgomery Award. She also manages the Westminster Libraries’ Sherlock Holmes Collection.

Helen Dorey, MBE, FSA, from the United Kingdom, is the Deputy Director of Sir John Soane’s Museum, London. Amusements are close to her heart as she joined the Sherlockian world long ago in 1991 as a ‘dancing cow’ on one of the London Society’s legendary Swiss pilgrimages! She is on the Council of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and is a BSI with the investiture ‘Helen Stonor’. She is also - the best bit - married to Markus, our co-organizer of this conference!

Mark Jones, BSI ("Peter Jones"), MBt is a Sherlockian and Doylean based in the United Kingdom. He studied and taught the history of the 18th and 19th centuries and continues to work in higher education as a consultant. He has written several books on television, film and literature including *Dark Matters* (co-written with Lance Parkin), an introduction to Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* novels for young teenagers. He has contributed articles to *The Baker Street Journal*, *Canadian Holmes*, *The Serpentine Muse* and numerous blogs. Mark is the co-convenor of The Literary Agents scion society of the BSI and together with Paul M. Chapman he is co-convenor of *Doings of Doyle - The Arthur Conan Doyle Podcast*: [Doings of Doyle](#).

Guy Marriott, from the United Kingdom, has served as Chairman and President of The Sherlock Holmes Society of London and is an invested BSI. He is also a Patron of the London Transport Museum and a Vice-President of the London Bus Museum. His other interests include travelling not only across alpine passes, but also to remote islands, as well as the history and preservation of all types of passenger transport. He is also the co-editor of The Reichenbach Irregulars' first ever book *Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and Switzerland - Serious and less serious musings!* which was published in 2021.

Julie McKuras, from the USA belongs to many scion societies and served as president of the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota. She is a board member of The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota and has co-chaired several conferences. A frequent speaker at conferences, she has contributed articles to *The Baker Street Journal* and *The Sherlock Holmes Society of London Journal* as well as to a number of publications. With Susan Vizoskie she co-edited *Sherlockian Heresies* in 2010, and *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual* in 2017 and 2019.

Michael Meer, from Switzerland, a former President of The Reichenbach Irregulars, has been a Sherlockian since his childhood. Among his recent contributions to our game is “Playing the Game’ and the Truth about ‘His Last Bow’” for the BSI manuscript series (Trenches – The War Service of Sherlock Holmes, 2017). Together with Markus Geisser, Michael is the co- architect and co-organiser of the 2014, 2017 and 2019 Reichenbach Irregulars conferences. He is also the co-editor of The Reichenbach Irregulars' first ever book *Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and Switzerland - Serious and less serious musings!* which was published in 2021.

Marsha Pollak, ASH, BSI, is a long-time Sherlockian and retired librarian from San Jose, California. She was given the Baker Street Irregulars' Two Shilling Award in 2022 and is currently responsible for the BSI's Oral History Project and the Standing on the Terrace segment at the annual dinner. She also has served as the General Editor of the BSI Professions Series and is looking forward to once again joining the Reichenbach Irregulars in Switzerland.

Peggy Perdue lives in Toronto, Canada. Naturally drawn to the magical intersection of scholarship and piffle, Peggy first dove into the deep waters of Sherlockian studies during her time as curator of Toronto's A. Conan Doyle Collection from 2005-2018. She now enjoys making presentations even more as a "civilian." After having been a highly convincing participant to our Cornish comparison panel at our 2017 *Reichenbach and Beyond* conference and speaker at our 2019 *Dark Deeds in the Canon* conference, we are delighted to welcome Peggy back. Peggy's talk will focus on the Victorian circus. Helpful tip: you might not want to sit in the front row for this.

Dr. Matthias Schäublin, from Basle, Switzerland, is a Reichenbach Irregular of the very first hour. He joined our Society shortly after it was founded in Meiringen on 24 June 1989 and attended many of our earliest exploits in Meiringen throughout the 1990s. Matthias was not only our very first Vice-President. Those lucky ones who have copies of the incredible rare The Reichenbach Journal will know that Matthias was one of the regular contributors and columnist of our journal that we published from 1990 until 1999. Matthias can only tentatively confirm at this stage, but we hope that we can welcome Matthias back to the circle of The Reichenbach Irregulars after a hiatus of more than two decades with – so he tells us – some reflections about Sherlock Holmes and Love.

Marina Stajić, PhD, ASH (“Lady Frances Carfax”), **BSI** (“Curare”) is well up in poisons generally. She earned her undergraduate degree in Chemistry from University of Novi Sad, Yugoslavia and subsequently her doctoral degree in Forensic Toxicology from the University of Maryland. After 29 years, Dr. Stajić retired from her position as Director of Forensic Toxicology of the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, City of New York. Her BSI investiture reflects her dabbling with poisons a great deal and her ASH *nom d’avanture* her long-time exposure to chloroform and to coffins. Dr. Stajić is a member of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, an honorary member of The Sherlock Holmes Society of France (“Mme Fournaye”) and a member of several BSI scion

societies. She has been a speaker at three previous Reichenbach Irregulars alpine adventures. Dr. Stajic lives in Manhattan with her fabulous felines Altamont and Sigerson.

Mia Stampe Lagergaard, from Denmark, is a life-long member and current President of the Sherlock Holmes Klubben i Danmark (The Danish BSI). Founder of the Copenhagen Speckled Gang in 2000. In 2003 she was made a BSI with the investiture "The Dynamics of an Asteroid". Mia has published regularly in The Baker Street Journal, but writes primarily for the Danish newsletter *Sherlockiana*. One of her articles looked at Holmes on Mars, "A Study in (the) red (planet)." Mia participated in our 2019 Dark Deeds in the Canon conference that took us from Hasliberg and Meiringen to Splügen. We are delighted that this time Mia is going to give her debut as one of speakers on Watson's musings on the beach ...

Prices per person, what is included, what is not included

Per person in a double bedroom

The price is Swiss Francs (CHF) 720.- and it **includes**:

3 x nights in the 4 star Hotel Le Bristol, Leukerbad, in the room as per booking; 3 x breakfast; 2 x three course dinner; 3 x one course lunch; free entry to the thermal baths area, panorama sauna and steam bath of the Hotel Le Bristol; free use of bath towels, bathrobes and slippers; cable car Gemmi Bahn Leukerbad - Gemmi Pass - Leukerbad (return ticket); wifi; tourist tax.

In Switzerland, **tips** are usually included in the price but can be paid at individual discretion.

What is **not included**: Any insurance for cancellation fees, accident etc. Insurance is every participant's own responsibility. Whilst most meals are included in the programme, drinks, coffee are not included and must be paid separately. **Dinner on Friday is not included.**

Please note that the organizers do not allocate the occupancy of double bedrooms. This is at the discretion of the participants.

Per person in a single bedroom

The price is Swiss Francs (CHF) 870.- and it **includes**:

3 x nights in the 4 star Hotel Le Bristol, Leukerbad, in the room as per booking; 3 x breakfast; 2 x three course dinner; 3 x one course lunch; free entry to the thermal baths area, panorama sauna and steam bath of the Hotel Le Bristol; free use of bath towels, bathrobes and slippers; cable car Gemmi Bahn Leukerbad - Gemmi Pass - Leukerbad (return ticket); wifi; tourist tax.

In Switzerland, **tips** are usually included in the price but can be paid at individual discretion.

What is **not included**: Any insurance for cancellation fees, accident etc. Insurance is every participant's own responsibility. Whilst most meals are included in the program, drinks, coffee are not included and must be paid separately. **Dinner on Friday is not included.**

Please note that there is **no need for pre-payment. You pay when you check out.** Cancellation fees see below.

How to reach Leukerbad



Leukerbad is situated in the Swiss Canton of Wallis in the South Western part of Switzerland. See the map to your left.

At an altitude of 1401 meters / 4596 feet above sea level, it is reachable all year round by private car or public transportation.

By car - Wherever you come from, once you reach Leuk which is situated in the valley of the Rhône and easy to reach via the Motorway Number 9, a 13.5 km / 8.4 miles drive takes you up to Leukerbad. It's a good 25 minutes' drive on a slightly bendy, but perfectly safe road which offers some great views. The hotel offers car parking. Please reserve your parking when you do your reservation. CHF 15.- per night in an indoor parking. CHF 8.- per day for an outdoor parking.

By public transportation

By train & bus - Wherever you come from, your destination where you get off must be Leuk. In Leuk, you change to the nearby bus terminal (walking distance) and from there you take a bus (line 471) to Leukerbad. Check the time table nearer to your day of departure on the Swiss federal railways website - [Connection | SBB](#) - but there is usually a bus every 30 minutes (always 08 minutes and 38 minutes past the hour, as per May 2022). The trip takes about 30 minutes.

You get off at Leukerbad Busterminal. From there you can either walk to the Hotel Le Bristol (700 meters / 0.43 miles / 9 minutes' walk) or you take the local bus and get off at the bus stop Bristol which is situated next to our hotel. We will share the most accurate local bus timetable with participants closer to the actual start of our weekend.

By plane - The airport closest to Leukerbad is Geneva. From Geneva Airport, you take a train to Leuk. The railway station is inside the airport, so very easy to get to. The trip from Geneva Airport takes approximately just under 2 ½ hours. Check the time table nearer to your day of departure on the Swiss federal railways website - [Connection | SBB](#) - but - as per May 2022 - there is a direct train 19 minutes past every hour (direction Brig). Or 01 minute past the hour, but then you need to change trains at Sierre / Siders. And always get off at Leuk.

Once you reach Leuk, see above “*By train & bus*” for how you reach Leukerbad by bus from Leuk.

Transfer by taxi from Leuk railway station to Hotel Le Bristol - The easier but also more expensive option is that once you get off at Leuk railway station, and that you take a local taxi from the Leuk railway station to the Hotel Le Bristol directly. We haven't done it, but various websites tell us that the 20 minutes ride costs approximately CHF 85.-

Reservations

We have managed to reserve a limited number of bedrooms for about 40 - 50 participants. They will go according to a “first in, first reserved” basis.

Therefore, as we are not a tour operator who can pay for rooms in advance, we strongly **recommend you book as early as possible** in order to avoid disappointment.

As in the past, **every participant reserves the room directly with the hotel.**

Please send your reservation (full name, full address, phone number) to

welcome@lebristol.ch – copy to reichenbachirregulars@gmail.com

You must put **“Musings on amusements 2023”** in the subject line and you must copy us – reichenbachirregulars@gmail.com – when you send your reservation.

If you have any **dietary restrictions, mobility issues or anything else that the hotel needs to be aware of** to make your stay more pleasant, **please mention it clearly when you make your reservation.**

In case you come by car, the hotel offers car parking. Please reserve your parking when you do your reservation. CHF 15.- per night in an indoor parking. CHF 8.- per day for an outdoor parking space.

Payment

No pre-payment is required. You pay for your hotel room, 2 dinners, 2 lunches & any drinks that you have had at the hotel when you check out (all major credit card are accepted; **if you use American Express, please check when you do the reservation**).

The price quoted above includes a small program fee for the Gemmi Pass excursion, the lunch at the Gemmi Pass etc. which you will be asked to pay to the organizers, us, in cash.

Covid19 regulations

On 1st April 2022, Switzerland lifted all Covid19 regulations.² This includes the mask requirement on public transport. No pandemic-related entry restrictions are in force at the present time.³

Still, you will understand that it is the responsibility of each participant to check possible travel restrictions closer to the actual day of departure next summer, including with the airline that you may use as they may have their own Covid19 regulations in place.

Moreover, we are all only too aware that possible new variant of Covid19 could change our travel plans abruptly and with lasting effect.

We hope that our cancellation fee arrangements (see below) takes this inherent level of uncertainty when it comes travelling these days sufficiently into account. We strongly recommend that you get insurance for cancellation.

Cancellation

The hotel offers us a very generous scheme. You can cancel your trip without any costs 48 hours / 2 days upon arrival. However, if you must cancel afterwards, you must pay the full cost of your arrangement.

² [Coronavirus: the situation in Switzerland - SWI swissinfo.ch](https://www.swissinfo.ch/coronavirus)

³ [Travel \(admin.ch\)](https://www.admin.ch)

We strongly recommend that you get insurance for cancellation.

Important addresses

Address of the hotel

Hotel Le Bristol
Rathausstrasse 51
CH-3954 Leukerbad
Phone + 41 27 472 75 00
Email: welcome@lebristol.ch

Organizers

On behalf of The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland:

Markus Geisser & Michael Meer

Email: reichenbachirregulars@gmail.com

Website of The Reichenbach Irregulars of Switzerland: www.221b.ch

London, May 2022