

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2017-4-19)

How Appropriate
A toast to our founder, Mycroft Holmes
by S. Brent Morris
before a meeting of The Diogenes Club of Washington, DC, on September 20, 2014

I am honored to be called upon to propose a toast to Mycroft Holmes, the co-founder of our namesake, the Diogenes Club of London.

Perhaps the only thing inappropriate about our new scion is that the Diogenes Club of London “contains the most unsociable and unclubbable ... in town.” In stark contrast, we gathered here today are surely some of the most sociable and clubbable in town.

Mycroft and his colleagues named their club after Diogenes of Sinope, a Greek cynic philosopher. How appropriate in Washington to have a club named after a cynic.

Diogenes’s father minted coins in Sinope, but Diogenes debased the coinage which led to his exile from Sinope. How appropriate in Washington to have a club named after someone who increased inflation and created financial chaos.

Diogenes moved to Athens, lived in a clay jar, and famously walked through the streets during the day with a lit lantern looking for an honest man. How appropriate in Washington to have a club named after someone looking for an honest man.

We don’t know much Mycroft Holmes, except that he is smarter and seven years older than Sherlock. We also know “he is the British Government.” How appropriate in Washington to honor someone who is the Government. Washington is a city where the following conversation is not only common but also entirely appropriate. Perhaps you’ve had or overheard such a conversation yourself:

“So tell me, where do you work?”
“I work for the government.”

That’s it. Conversation over. New topic.

But perhaps the most appropriate thing about honoring Mycroft Holmes is that “his specialism is omniscience.” Sherlockians are remarkable in their wide-ranging interests and knowledge. As for omniscience, we have present today experts, in some cases world-class experts in the following areas

- railroading
- defense policy
- cryptography
- arsenic poisoning
- deaf education
- card shuffling
- numismatics
- geology
- lace making
- computer science
- formal logic
- music
- mystery writing

This surely must be evidence of omniscience!

Please raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the co-founder of our namesake club, Mycroft Holmes.