

The Fighting Arts of Sherlock Holmes

For more details, see <http://www.bartitsu.org/index.php/the-bartitsu-legacy/the-fighting-arts-of-sherlock-holmes-part-1/> for a two-part article by the Bartitsu Society.

Dr. Watson's summary list of Sherlock Holmes's strengths and weaknesses in *A Study in Scarlet* includes: "Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman."

BARTITSU

"We tottered together upon the brink of the fall. I have some knowledge, however, of baritsu, or the Japanese system of wrestling, which has more than once been very useful to me. I slipped through his grip, and he with a horrible scream kicked madly for a few seconds, and clawed the air with both his hands. But for all his efforts he could not get his balance, and over he went."

- Sherlock Holmes in "The Empty House"

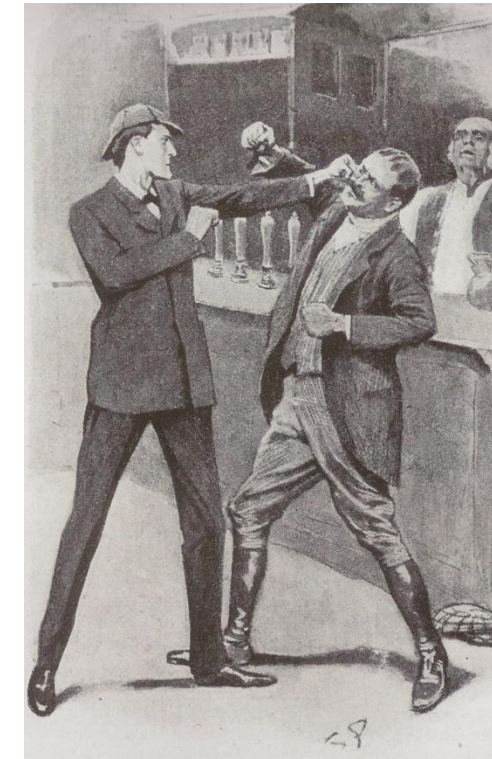
BOXING

"Not Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" roared the prize-fighter. "God's truth! how could I have mistook you? If instead o' standin' there so quiet you had just stepped up and given me that cross-hit of yours under the jaw, I'd ha' known you without a question. Ah, you're one that has wasted your gifts, you have! You might have aimed high, if you had joined the fancy."

- Sherlock Holmes in "The Sign of the Four"

"The next few minutes were delicious. It was a straight left against slogging ruffian. I emerged as you see me. Mr. Woodley went home in a cart."

- Sherlock Holmes in "The Solitary Cyclist."



FENCING

"Bar fencing and boxing I had few athletic tastes."

- Sherlock Holmes in "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott"



SINGLE-STICK

"I'm a bit of a single-stick expert, as you know. I took most of them on my guard. It was the second man that was too much for me."

- Sherlock Holmes in "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client"

THE FAVORITE WEAPON - A LOADING HUNTING CROP



In "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons" Watson claims that a "loaded hunting crop" was Holmes' favourite weapon. "Loading" refers to the practice of filling a weapon with lead to increase its bludgeoning potential.

"The light flashed upon the barrel of a revolver, but Holmes's hunting crop came down on the man's wrist, and the pistol clinked upon the stone floor."

- John Watson in "The Red-Headed League"

HOLMES WAS ALSO AN EXCELLENT SHOT



"When Holmes in one of his queer humors would sit in an arm-chair with his hair trigger and a hundred Boxer cartridges, and proceed to adorn the opposite wall with a patriotic V.R [the royal monogram for Queen Victoria] done in bullet pocks, I felt that neither the atmosphere nor the appearance of the room was improved by it"

- John Watson in "The Red-Headed League"

Using .450 short-barreled Webley Metropolitan Police revolver in *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes, with some help from Watson, was able to pick off a Pygmy Andaman Islander at a fair distance from the deck of one moving steam launch to another.

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Holmes dispatched the "hound of hell" by emptying "five barrels into the creature's flank" in semi-darkness under the most harrowing circumstances, as the beast was savaging Sir Henry Baskerville who, thanks to Holmes, survived the attack.