



he door of the waiting car clicked open

and the gravel crunched. Our actor greeted us in low whispers as we handed over Holmes' outer garments (which the Americans might recognize, if they had been keeping watch for some days) in exchange for his keys. In under two minutes, we were in the car and Patrick was leading the actor back the way we had come. He was, I thought, already dressed and made up for his role, although anyone paying attention to his gait would know his middle-aged strength—he was a competitive runner, which gave him the necessary thinness to enact Holmes. In fact, I learnt later, this fleetness of foot came in useful the very next afternoon, when the waiting Sherlockians saw “Holmes” set out for a walk along the cliffs, set off baying after him, only to be utterly confounded when Sherlock Holmes broke into a brisk sprint and left them panting in his wake.

(The following day, Patrick withdrew his guard, and within the hour, knock came on the door. The actor was suitably taken aback by these Americans who imagined his stone cottage was inhabited by Sherlock Holmes. With exquisite rural politeness he asked, Were they not aware that Sherlock Holmes was a fictional character?)

By the time the confused and downhearted pack walked back up the drive, we had been gone for three days, and our trail was cold.

Or so we thought.

