

'Did you find the story interesting?' asked Dr Mortimer.
'It may interest a collector of stories to frighten children,' said Holmes.

Dr Mortimer took a newspaper from another pocket.
'Now, Mr Holmes, let me read you something which was written only three months ago. It is from the Devonshire County newspaper, and it is about the death of Sir Charles Baskerville.'

Holmes looked more interested. Dr Mortimer began to read:

The sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville has caused great sadness in the county. Although he had lived at Baskerville Hall for only two years, everyone liked him. Sir Charles had lived abroad and made his money there. He came back to spend his fortune on repairing Baskerville Hall and its farms and villages, as the buildings and lands were in very poor condition. He was a friendly and generous man, who gave freely to the poor.

The official report of his death does not explain everything that happened. However, it does show that there was no question of murder. Sir Charles died from natural causes, and the strange stories people are telling about his death are not true. His friend and doctor, Dr James Mortimer, said that Sir Charles' heart had been weak for some time.

The facts are simple. Every night before going to

bed, Sir Charles went for a walk in the gardens of Baskerville Hall. His favourite walk was down a path between two hedges of yew trees, the famous Yew Alley of Baskerville Hall. On the night of 4th June he went out for his walk to think and to smoke his usual cigar.

Sir Charles was going to London on the next day, and Barrymore, his butler, was packing his suitcases. By midnight Barrymore was worried that Sir Charles had not returned, so he went to look for him. He found the door of the Hall open. The day had been rainy and wet so Barrymore saw the prints left by Sir Charles' shoes as he had walked down the Alley. Half-way down the Alley is a gate, which leads to the moor. There were signs that Sir Charles had stood there for some time. Barrymore followed the footprints to the far end of the Alley. And there he found Sir Charles' body.

Barrymore reported something interesting about the footprints. He said that they changed between the moor gate and the end of the Alley. As far as the moor gate there was a whole footprint for each of Sir Charles' steps. After he passed the gate, only toe prints could be seen. Barrymore thought that Sir Charles had walked on his toes.

A man called Murphy, who buys and sells horses, was not far away at the time of Sir Charles' death. He had been drinking a lot of beer, but he says he heard cries. He is not sure where they came from.