



Ineffable Twaddle

"It is my business to know what other people don't know."

The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

A monthly publication of
The Sound of the Baskervilles

A Scion Society of The Baker Street Irregulars • Since March 31, 1980

Serving the Greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington



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Some Humour in Honor of Our U.S. Elections!!!

To the citizens of the United States of America from Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: In light of your failure in recent years to nominate competent candidates for President of the U.S. and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective immediately.

Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths and territories (except Kansas, which she does not fancy). Your new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, will appoint a Governor for America without the need for further elections. Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed.

To aid in transition to British dependency, the following are introduced with immediate effect:

£ The letter "u" will be reinstated in words such as "colour," "favour" and "neighbour." Likewise, you will learn to spell "doughnut" without skipping half the letters, and the suffix "-ize" will be replaced by the suffix "-ise." You will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels.

£ Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like" and "you know" is unacceptable and an inefficient form of communication. There is no such thing as U.S. English. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take into account the reinstated letter "u" and the elimination of "-ize."

£ You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad.

£ You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not ready to be independent.

£ You will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler.

£ All intersections will be replaced with roundabouts, and you will start driving on the left



side...Roundabouts will help you understand the British sense of humour.

£ The former U.S. will adopt U.K. prices on petrol of roughly \$10/U.S. gallon. Get used to it!

£ You will learn to make real chips. French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called "crisps." Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with vinegar.

£ Henceforth, only proper British Bitter will be referred to as beer, and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as Lager. American brands will be referred to as Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine, so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion.

£ Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors to play English characters. Watching Americans attempt English dialogue is akin to having one's ears removed with a cheese grater.

£ You will cease playing American football. Those brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby (which has some similarities to American football, but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full Kevlar body armour like a bunch of nancies).

£ Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the "World Series" for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 2.1% of you are aware there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable. You will learn cricket, and we will let you face the South Africans first to take the sting out of their deliveries.

£ An inland revenue agent from Her Majesty's government will see you shortly to ensure acquisition of all monies due—backdated to 1776.

£ Daily tea time begins promptly at 4 p.m. with proper cups and saucers (never mugs), high quality biscuits (cookies) and cakes, and strawberries—with cream—when in season.

—God Save the Queen!

Inside this issue:

Some Humour in Honor of Our U.S. Elections!!! 1

Contributed by Jean Macdonald

Our Study Begins with A Study in Scarlet 2

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Our New Study of the Canon 2

California Trip Reunites Us with Ann Deussenberry 2

Things to See, Buy, Do & Know 3

Brass in Pocket 3
Contributed by Margaret Nelson

Member News & Updates 4



Joyous Thanksgiving Wishes to One and All!!



Our Study Begins with A Study in Scarlet

The November 10th Meeting of The Sound of the Baskervilles will begin at 6:00 p.m. at T.S. McHugh's Public House, 21 Mercer Street, Seattle, (206) 282-1910.

Come early, order dinner and catch up with other SOBs! Many arrive as early as 5:00.

Even our introduction to and the first meeting of Holmes and Watson are shrouded in mystery. As Jack Tracy tells us (*The Encyclopedia Sherlockiana*), the novel is dated as having taken place in the month of March, the year being variously identified as between 1878 and 1886, though 1881 is most commonly accepted. *STUD* appeared in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for 1887 and was published in book form the following year.

Says PFL David: *First, note that we will skip the LBP (long boring part)—that is, we will not cover Chapters 1 through 5 of Part II of this novel!!!*

The title comes from Holmes' own comment that the case was a "study in scarlet"—"the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life."

Watson, much later (RESI), tells us that while this case demonstrates the value of Holmes' peculiar methods of investigation, the facts described in *STUD* were so *commonplace* that he barely felt justified in laying them before the public.

Who cares?! This case is distinct as being the first published chronicle of Sherlock Holmes, as well as the story of the beginning of the Holmes-Watson partnership. We meet Holmes, the world's first consulting detective; we meet Watson, the biographer; and as a consequence, we meet Conan Doyle, the literary agent!! What a marvelous—and very *un-commonplace*—occasion!!



Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Our New Study of the Canon



Our next 5-year study of the Canon will be *in order by publication date*. The source we will follow in establishing this publication date-order is The Oxford Sherlock Holmes.

If you use the single volume or the 2-volume Doubleday version or the single volume Barnes & Noble version of the Canon, you won't be far off in being able to read the stories from start to finish in your volume's order. Be prepared to read the four novels as they come up; leaving out the LBPs (long boring parts) may occur, as may a dividing up into 2-parts the longer novels—but we'll deal with those decisions as timing dictates.

Check the specific Monthly Meeting announcement (*above*), so you're sure to study the right story!! And, remember that we *always* return to "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle" for our December Meeting!!!



California Trip Reunites Us with Ann Deusenberry

A half dozen years ago, Editor Terri's friend Helaine Bowles told co-worker Ann Deusenberry about her "crazy Seattle friends" who were part of a Sherlock Holmes society. Intrigued, Ann contacted us and joined The SOBs!!

In September, Haugens attended a landmark birthday for Helaine in Benicia, CA, and had a reunion with both Helaine, her family and other old friends, and with Ann, who hosted a Victorian tea for the group.

That's Ann in the light blue sweater and Helaine in white at the far right, as we stand in front of the library where Helaine and Ann work!



"Sherlock Holmes—his limits
 1. *Knowledge of Literature.—Nil.*
 2. " " *Philosophy.—Nil.*
 3. " " *Astronomy.—Nil.*
 4. " " *Politics.—Feeble.*
 5. " " *Botany.—Variable.*
Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening..."

A Study in Scarlet

Interesting Facts From *STUD*:

☞ Watson says his Maiwand experience left his health "irretrievably" ruined and that the government had given him the "next nine months in attempting to improve it". The inference is that, had he succeeded in recuperating sufficiently, he would have been expected to resume his military service.

☞ The term "firing across a handkerchief", used late in the story, refers to an acceptable and lethal method of settling differences. Each party to a duel would hold one corner of the same handkerchief in his teeth while the shooting commenced. The proximity this technique caused virtually assured that someone would be killed.

Our curiosity was piqued at the October Meeting when, discussing *LAST*, we wondered how the Germans feel about Holmes and his spy activities in WWI. Do the Germans even have scion societies??

Thanks to Al Nelson,

*"In the back of Klinger I found this German scion:
 221b: Deutche-Sherlock-Holmes-Club, PO Box 150314,
 67028 Ludwigshafen am Rein,
 Germany"*

Queen Elizabeth has ladies-in-waiting who cater to her every need. So what does she carry in her ever-present purse? —Nancy Parry, Easton, Pa.

According to reports, she carries good-luck charms, family photos, treats for her corgis, crosswords cut out by her staff and a makeup case—a wedding gift from her husband.



The queen and one of the royal purses

Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

• **From SOB Margaret Nelson:** I'd like to recommend a charming movie about a "home-made" topiartist. "A Man Named Pearl" recently played at "The Grand Cinema" theatre in Tacoma. Pearl Fryars lives in South Carolina and created a fabulous topiary collection with throw-away plants, all in the evenings after work. He had no formal training in topiary but does have a great sense of what to remove and what to leave. I've been to Levens Hall, Cumbria, England several times and seen that fabulous topiary garden. His is equally interesting but completely different and totally commendable. The movie was made in 2006, and The Grand is an art theater, so

the movie may be in very limited release. But, try to find it elsewhere some time. It will make you want an electric hedge trimmer and begin to consider what you could do with the shrubs in your yard.

• **From Peter Blau:**

⇒ Edward D. Hoch ("The Hoch") wrote a dozen excellent Sherlockian pastiches since 1973 which are all collected in "The Short Stories of Edward D. Hoch" (\$20, Gryphon Books), .

⇒ The pastiche "Wilde About Holmes" by Milo Yelesiyevich (\$19.95, Comic Masque) brings Sherlock Holmes, Oscar Wilde and Lillie Langtry to New York in 1884 during Grover Cleveland's run for the presidency. There is a lot of dialogue lifted from the Canon, though Watson does not appear at all.

⇒ "The Chronicles of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" at www.siracd.com is a website created by Marsha Perry, which offers some amusing games and a way to create and send Sherlockian greeting cards.

• **Things You Didn't Know About Rathbone and Bruce:** In 1918 Basil Rathbone was awarded the military cross for exemplary gallantry while serving on The Western Front. Nigel Bruce was so severely wounded by machine-gun fire in 1915 that he was discharged from the army in that year as no longer fit for service—the next year he enlisted again.

• **From Roger Johnson:** The Television and Radio Industry News reported that Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss are writing an updated Sherlock Holmes drama serial for Hartswood Films. When Matiss was guest of honour at a Sherlock Holmes Society event, he mentioned he had an ambition to do something like this.

Two Sherlockian Plays to See!!

⇒ Federal Way's Centerstage Theatre is showing "The Crucifer of Blood" February 27 through March 15, 2009. Tickets: (253) 661-1444 or www.centerstagetheatre.com.

Can we get a group together in Federal Way on: February 28, March 1, March 7, March 8, March 14 or March 15?? Depending on the date chosen, Al & Marge Nelson may host a tea or dessert the day of the performance!!

⇒ The Bellingham Theatre Guild is presenting "The Penultimate Problem of Sherlock Holmes" January 30 through February 15, 2009. Tickets: (360) 733-1811 or www.bellinghamtheatreguild.com.

Can we get a group up to Bellingham on: January 31, February 1, February 7, February 8, February 14 or February 15??

⇒ These items from Treasurer Al Nelson ⇒

Brass in Pocket

The money in your pocket is changing. The back of the 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 pence pieces and £1 coins have been redesigned.

The main change in the design of competition winner Matthew Dent is that the coins all feature different parts of a single image, the Royal Shield of the U.K. The size, shape, material and weight of the coins remain the same, but there are subtle and significant differences in the designs.

Philip Mussell of Coin News magazine, and Philip Nathan, sculptor and numismatic designer, responsible for numerous commemorative British coins, give their observations on the new designs.

• **Spread Design** The old coins all showed a single image. The portcullis on the 1 penny piece, the crowned lion on the 10 pence, or the Tudor rose on the 20 pence piece are all very recognisable images. These will now disappear from the nation's coinage.

• **Odd Positioning** The innovative design concept of the coins can have a strange effect when the coins are taken in isolation, as can be seen with the new 20 pence piece (right). Because of the way the shield is divided a fleur-de-leis appears pointing diagonally downwards at the top of the coin.

• **Numerals** Nathan was quick to spot that the other major difference is the absence of numerals. In a nation visited by so many non-English speakers, this is an interesting choice, suggests Mussell.

• **Britannia** (T)he major news was the absence of Britannia from the 50 pence piece. But this motif is not a constant of British coinage. Introduced by the Romans, it fell out of favour after their departure, and was reintroduced by Charles II in 1672, says Mussell.



BBC NEWS



JOEL RYAN/The Associated Press

Elementary, my dear co-stars

Robert Downey Jr. poses with Canadian actress Rachel McAdams, left, and British actress Kelly Reilly in London on Wednesday for the movie "Sherlock Holmes." Downey plays the title sleuth.

Source: The News Tribune, 10/2/08

Reminder

Beaten's Christmas Annual submissions are due on or before the November Meeting!!

2nd Annual Writing Contest!!



The rules:

- The first 645 words of the unfinished essay should not be altered in any way, but your final product (*of no more than 1,500 words*) may complete the mystery in whatever fashion you wish.
- Your completed essay should not show your name—your identity should be provided separately to Editor Terri.
- **The deadline for submitting your essay has been extended to November 10, the date of the November Meeting!!**
- Judging will be anonymous, as essays will be identified by number only when provided to our judges.

The winning entry will be prominently featured in our 2008 *Beaten's Christmas Annual*, and the author may be privy to other material rewards.



The Sound of the Baskervilles
By appointment of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria

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The Sound of the Baskervilles is a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, serving the greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, U.S.A., and has met monthly since March 31, 1980.

\$20 per year brings Members the monthly newsletter "Ineffable Twaddle", a copy of Beaten's Christmas Annual, and the incalculable benefits of association with a group of certifiable Holmes aficionados.

Meetings are held at 6:00 p.m., the 2nd Monday of each month. Location of the meetings may vary. Regularly scheduled additional events throughout the year include: "The Master's Dinner" celebrating Holmes' birthday (January), "The Annual Wreath Throw" commemorating Holmes' loss at Reichenbach Falls (May), "The Dr. John H. Watson Picnic" (July), and "The Will Crakes Memorial Jollification" (December). Other activities—book crawls, teas, plays and gaming events—are as announced.

To join, send your check for dues—\$20 for individuals, \$30 for families (U.S. funds only)—to the address shown at left.



Dates of Interest

- November 10**
Regular Monthly Meeting,
T.S. McHugh's;
Beaten's submissions are due!!
- December 8**
Regular Monthly Meeting,
T.S. McHugh's
- December 13**
The Will Crakes Memorial Jollification,
1:00 p.m., at the John Nelsons' home.
- January 3**
Our Annual Master's Dinner,
2:00 p.m., at Barnaby's in Tukwila; dessert buffet follows immediately at Jean Macdonald's.

Member News & Updates

Those attending the October Meeting, presided over by **PFL David Haugen**, were:

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| Al Nelson | Jean Macdonald | Barbara Nelson |
| John Nelson | Lauran Stevens | Terri Haugen |
| Margie Deck | Hank Deck | Verne Johnson |
| Herb Leake | | |

News & Notes:

- The intimate group at the October Meeting enjoyed a rousing discussion of LAST, which **Jean** declared is her favorite story. The group agreed it was a great one and an excellent way to close our chronological study of the Canon.
- Herb** gave **Jean** a run for her money, but she inched her way ahead of him, winning the story quiz to **Herb's** 2nd place.
- David noted another vote was needed for our next study of the Canon. Recall that we will now go in *order by publication date* with our source being The Oxford Sherlock Holmes. The group this night decided *we will include the novels in this study*, so be prepared to read the four novels as they come up. Leaving out the LBPs (long boring parts) may occur, as may a dividing up into 2-parts the longer novels—but we'll deal with those decisions as timing dictates. Remember, if you use the single volume or 2-volume Doubleday or the single volume Barnes & Noble version of the Canon, you won't be far off in being able to read the stories from start to finish in your volume's order.

- Happily, our resident librarian **Verne** was back with us after a too-long absence!! He says his family is finally settled into their new home on Vashon Island! And, he brought along some great Sherlockian magazines for borrowing!
- News from the **Romneses**: a) They missed our Watson Picnic because James and Bryan were at a shooting event. Said James, "I now own a Watsonian period pistol and have fired it with period ammunition. If Tonga was hit with such a Webley, it's no wonder he fell into the Thames." b) They missed the September Meeting because Bryan is now a working man even though he doesn't drive...yet! Said James, "By the time we worked our way through home schooling glitches and getting Master Bryan to work...well, there went the meeting! Hope all went well, and congrats David on serving the Master's memory for so many years!" Also, sadness hit their family in August, when James' 92-year-old Mom died in Minnesota.
- Kudos to **Margie** who took on a new job on October 1, as Director of the Job Carr Museum in Tacoma's Old Town District. To learn about the Museum, see: <http://www.jobcarmuseum.org/index.html>. Hubby **Hank** is working again too in security for sporting events (Seahawks games) and concerts (at the Tacoma Dome); he doesn't carry a sidearm but loves being a bouncer!
- Herb** said **Carol Lindenmeyer** continues to suffer the effects of her stroke. Get well cards would be most welcome!!

