



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



Holmes on the Radio, Part II

By SOB & Playwright John Longenbaugh

In the first episode of "Holmes on the Radio" (see *Ineffable Twaddle*, Vol. 29, Issue 3), Longenbaugh told us about the golden age of American Radio Drama. In this episode, he takes us across the pond for a look at things in Britain!

In Britain the first great Holmes and Watson were Carleton Hobbs and Norman Shelley, who played the roles in several series running from 1952 to 1969, including excellent multi-part versions of the Holmes novels, whose length generally precluded them from adaptation. The series has fine audio quality and the scripts are tremendously faithful to the stories. Both actors are solid, but to my mind Hobbs is too gentle and genial as the sometimes unbearable detective, and while Shelley is an improvement over Bruce's blustering caricature, the template is the same: a well-meaning but slightly dim sidekick who's as English, and as unimaginative, as a bulldog.



My own favorite radio incarnation is a 1954-55 collection of twelve episodes featuring two great British actors, John Gielgud as Holmes and Ralph Richardson as Watson. To me the most successful aspect of this series is the deep and undeniable quality of mutual warmth that the two actors, life-long friends in real life, bring to the roles. The series also benefits from a solid supporting cast, excellent production quality, and in the episode of *The Final Problem*, an outstanding performance by Orson Welles as Professor Moriarty, the Napoleon of Crime. (Welles had himself played Holmes on radio once before, when he'd adapted the William Gillette Holmes play as one of the episodes on his celebrated Mercury Theater program. There's also a wonderful 1943 episode of "Suspense, The Lost Special", adapted

from a Conan Doyle short story that features Welles as Herbert de Lernac, a villain of Moriarty-like brilliance.)



Various other notable radio productions include British actors Clive Merrison (as Holmes) and Michael Williams (Watson) who managed to complete a special BBC series between 1989 and 1998 of every Holmes story Conan Doyle ever wrote, and radio adaptations of stage plays by William Gillette and Conan Doyle himself, produced under the title *Sherlock Holmes Theater* by Blackstone Audio Books (and incidentally available as a free download from the Seattle Public Library!). There's also an ambitious BBC original special from 1981 of *Sherlock Holmes Versus Dracula* which with a bit of internet sleuthing you can find for download—in fact, most of these series can be found here and there on the internet or via the audio library of the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound (<http://reponline.homestead.com/>).



Today actor/author/radio impresario Jim French continues to present *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, a series he began several years ago as part of his *Imagination Theater*, and which recently published its 13th collected CD set. French's series remains the only radio incarnation of Holmes officially authorized by the Conan Doyle estate. First with the late John Gilbert and more recently with John Patrick Lowrie as Holmes, the series features the star of the *Harry Nile* series, Larry Albert, as Watson. French's adaptations tend more to the police procedural than some of the melodramatic cliff-hangers of the Rathbone/Bruce days—not surprising from the creator of *Harry Nile*. But it's still Holmes—eccentric and infuriating, cold yet capable of surprising emotion, and practically always not just one step ahead of poor Watson, but of us as well.

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More Great Reviews of our 2009 *Beaten's Christmas Annual*

☛ **SOB Manson Polley** wrote to say, "Super great job on *Beaten's!*!"

☛ Our friends **Joel & Carolyn Senter** said: "Those great SOB's have done it again!...*The Annual* contains a hard-to-put down collection of selected pastiches, quizzes, commentary, research reports, puzzles and other assorted pieces of their innovative handiwork...Indeed we think the cover art alone is worth the price of this issue!" See Classic Specialties entire advert at www.sherlock-holmes.com!!





T.S. McHugh's Public House is at 21 Mercer Street, Seattle, (206) 282-1910. **Come early, order dinner and catch up with other SOB's!**

Rules for "The Tournament"

- Six rounds.
- Ten questions per round.
- Teams: 1 to 4 members.
- Plan your team ahead or decide on the spot.
- One minute to answer ten questions.
- Prizes for the most correct answers. Prizes are mostly calorie-laden.
- Questions may come from any of the short stories or novels, *excluding the LBPs.*



NOTE THE RULES

Join The Sound of the Baskervilles on Monday, April 12, at 6:00 p.m. at T.S. McHugh's as they present "The Great Art of Detection Trivial Pursuit Tournament"

"I play the game for the game's own sake." Sherlock Holmes, BRUC

- Round One—"...it is my business to know what others do not know..."
- Round Two—"...it is a hobby...to have an exact knowledge of London..."
- Round Three—"...occasionally he is the British Government..."
- Round Four—"I am lost without my Boswell."
- Round Five—"...a small monograph on the subject..."
- Round Six—"...hear of Sherlock everywhere..."
- Tie Breaker *if needed*—"...he is the Napoleon of crime..."

Our Mistress of Ceremonies for the Tournament is Margie Deck aka The Pawky Puzzler; Our own PFL David Haugen will otherwise preside. We will return to our study of the Canon on May 10!



One Man's Insights

An Essay by SOB Dr. Henry Ernst

Since I could not bear to see another travesty on Sherlock Holmes, I have deliberately stayed away from the new film. Even so, I thought you might have a mild personal interest in my reactions to what I have read and the photographs I have seen.

Holmes was clearly depicted as being unusually tall for his time and excessively thin, with a curved beak of a nose. He remarks of himself that he is a brain; the rest of him, mere appendages. Watson writes of his cat like neatness in dress. Downey who appears to be shorter than Watson sports a heavy stubble and is in dire need of a haircut.

The great brain has been replaced by a martial arts practitioner with one reviewer commenting that it is a serious drag to see how the director "has turned Holmes and Dr. Watson into a couple of garden variety thugs." The reviewer goes on to complain that the film "is dependent on nervous, zero attention span cutting and erratically shifting film speeds..." A more generous assessment of Holmes speaks of his being "a crowd pleasing man of action who leaps out of buildings, dodges explosions, and engages in the occasional ultra violent bare knuckle brawl."

Leslie Klinger, who served as technical adviser on the film, defends it by saying there has not been one single accurate portrayal of the detective on the big

screen to date, and this is supposed to make the reduction of Holmes to nothing more than a martial arts jockey acceptable.

A capsule review in the Baltimore Sun (January 8) sums it up. "Director Guy Ritchie's trademark slicko sadism is all wrong for these characters. It's heart-breaking to see Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's legends messed up this way."

Most people will know no better. Sherlockians who know Holmes to be other than a 19th century version of Indiana Jones should not be beguiled into thinking that this will necessarily bring new Sherlockians into the fold. If this is their conception of Holmes, the neophytes may not appreciate the subtle interplay of a number of factors to create the undeniable appeal of Holmes and Watson in the Victorian era and end up disappointed by the actual stories told by Watson. Downey's understanding of Holmes, despite his professed desire to portray Holmes as Doyle wrote him, bears the same relation to Holmes that Indiana Jones bears to real life archeologists. Nor is Holmes Sexton Blake or Nick Carter or James Bond or for that matter any of that legion of would-be rivals of his time, now long forgotten save by period specialists. He is the brilliant reasoner who can fight and shoot if he has to, but these are not his claim to fame.



"The Places I've Seen"

Excerpted from Newsweek

"Long before I ever set foot in London, I formed an impression of the British capital based entirely on the movies I'd seen. Mary Poppins left me with a rather outdated image of a city full of black umbrellas and dapper chimney sweeps. Tourism officials from Manchester to Mumbai are waking up to the fact that vacationers are drawn to the places they first get to know through films. And no one is better at luring film buffs than the Brits...In recent years, British tourism agencies have begun arming visitors with maps of famous London film settings, and have launched campaigns around blockbusters like "The Da Vinci Code". Now the British are banking on a slew of new movies—including fresh adaptations of "Sherlock Holmes", starring Robert Downey Jr., and "Robin Hood", featuring Russell Crowe—to help fill the country's empty hotel rooms."

Contributed by SOB Karen Murdock

Our 30th Anniversary Tea & Auction is March 27

Join us on
Saturday,
March 27 at
1:00 p.m.
when we'll
celebrate
the Club's
30th Anniversary!



There will be lots of time for silent bidding and live auctioning, for tea and food, and for yakking and celebrating at *this* our Spring Tea / Annual Book Sale & Auction!!

Your contributions of food (*cakes, cookies and savories*) will be most appreciated!!!

The location is PFL David & Terri's home in Gig Harbor!

Driving Directions to David & Terri Haugen's Home: Drive I-5 to Tacoma. Take Exit #132—"Highway 16" westbound. Drive west 12 miles (across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) to the "Gig Harbor City Center" exit (Pioneer)—it's the exit *after* Olympic Drive. At the light at the top of the exit ramp, turn right onto Pioneer and drive north (*down the hill*) into town where it T's with Harborview Drive (3-way stop). Turn left onto Harborview Drive and follow it around the Harbor (*keep bearing right*). At the second 3-way stop, take the free right turn onto **North** Harborview Drive. Follow this along the water until you're on the northwest side of the harbor. Watch for Finholm's Market on your left and Anthony's Restaurant on your right. Take the first left turn after Finholm's Market (there's a left-turn-lane) onto Peacock Hill Avenue N.W. and climb up the hill. When you get to the flat (top) of the hill, watch on your right for 101st Street, then 102nd Street, then HarborCrest Court. You'll see a red brick entryway and gate. **Turn right!** Go half-way down the hill, to the *second cul-de-sac* on your right. Haugens' is the first unit on the left: 3606 HarborCrest Court N.W. The phone is (253) 853-5187.

Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

• **From PFL David:** Wessex Press/Gasogene Books has announced publication of [Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle and The Bookman](#), edited and annotated by S.E. Dahlinger and Leslie S. Klinger (\$29.95, HC, 271pp). *The Bookman* was a heavily illustrated monthly journal which appeared from 1895 to 1933 and was one of the finest literary magazines of the 20th century. Much of the delight found in the American edition of *The Bookman* comes from the amazing amount of material dealing with Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle—articles, reviews, letters, and chatty commentary—which all found its way into its pages. Collected here for the first time in one volume is all of the Sherlockian and Doylean material which appeared in *The Bookman*.

• **From Peter Blau:** "[The Sherlock Holmes Collection](#)", a two-sided DVD (Echo Bridge Entertainment, 2009) with three of Matt Frewer's TV films ("The Hound of the Baskervilles"/"The Case of the Whitechapel Vampire"/"The Royal Scandal") in a box with artwork echoing the colors of the posters for Guy Ritchie's "Sherlock Holmes" is being sold on discount racks at Target for \$5. A variant with artwork in black & white is being sold on discount racks at Walmart for \$5.

• **From SOB Bill Seil:**

⇒ The new "Sherlock Holmes" movie (Downey Jr. / Law) will be available **on DVD on March 30** (\$16.99 on amazon.com).

⇒ "[The Crucifer of Blood](#)", starring Charlton Heston as Holmes and Richard Johnson as Watson is also available **on DVD on March 30** (\$13.49 on amazon.com). Bill says, "As I recall, it was a nice adaptation of the play. And, did you know, Charlton Heston and Richard Johnson co-starred in another movie with a Holmesian connection—"Khartoum",

where Heston played General Gordon."

• **From SOB Stu Shiffman:** For those who want to know **more about the Empire in which Holmes and Watson lived**, this is the website for you: www.british-empire.co.uk/index.htm. One fascinating page lists all the places that were once a part of it.

• **From Roger Johnson:**

⇒ [The Sherlock Holmes Companion: An Elementary Guide](#) by Daniel Smith (Aurum, London, £20.00) is very good indeed! Like others with similar titles, it neatly summarizes each of the 60 stories—without giving away the endings. But it also contains well-researched and well written profiles of Conan Doyle, Holmes, Watson, Mrs Hudson, Joseph Bell, Professor Moriarty and Sidney Paget. Included are equally good essays on Holmes as a scientific detective, Holmes' pleasures, the literary lineage, women in Holmes' life, his politics, his legacy, and Holmes on stage screen and radio. Plus interviews with Caleb Carr, David Burke, Edward Hardwicke and others. This [Companion](#) is exceptionally well illustrated, and is available at amazon.com.

⇒ [The Norwood Author: Arthur Conan Doyle & the Norwood Years \(1891-1894\)](#) by Alistair Duncan (MX Publishing, 335 Princess Park Manor, Royal Drive, London N11 3GX; £9.99/\$16.95/€14.99). Doyle's time in South Norwood has been largely neglected by the major biographers, even though it was then that he became truly famous, thanks to *The Strand Magazine* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. He threw himself into local affairs, quickly becoming active in the Upper Norwood Literary & Scientific Society and Norwood Cricket Club. He also, no less significantly, joined the Society for Psychical Research. I'm delighted to recommend his book.

"The membership of Holmes societies around the world is of high intellectual caliber," Theodore Dalrymple suggests in a piece on "*The Eternal Detective*" in the National Review (Dec. 31, 2009). "*Their publications are learned and ingenious. Never is pedantry more joyously or innocently employed, for example, than in the ferreting out of the details of the biography of Sherlock Holmes (and Dr. Watson, of course).*"

Thanks, Peter Blau!

Just a Bit More on "Sherlock Holmes", the film:

From SOB David Smith:

The NY Times ran a review



of the new "Sherlock Holmes" film on December 24 titled, "**He's Not Your Father's Sherlock Holmes**". The two opening lines pretty much sum it up: "*You and I, the villain of 'Sherlock Holmes' tells the detective, 'are bound on a journey that will twist the very fabric of nature.' His understatement is of a piece with the rest of Guy Ritchie's film, which twists, stretches, knots, tangles, distorts, bleaches, smudges and sometimes tears the very fabric of Arthur Conan Doyle's Victorian canvas.*"

From our Aussie Friend Steve Duke (President of the SH Society of Victoria / The Elementary Victorians): "*This is neither a kid's film or a teen one, yet the cinemas in Sydney were awash with teens watching the film and it was all we could do to find seats. Indeed a strong stomach is needed to watch this film. It was good to see many Canonical themes treated—the relationship with Watson, the singlestick and boxing abilities of Holmes, and how he thinks. The Woman could have been done better, and the wardrobe department muffed Watson's uniform. Fans of SIGN will be very pleased, and it was wonderful to see Tower Bridge get a go for once. The sinking ship was a novel idea. As Holmes would have pointed out, Jordanian dates are inferior to Iraqi ones. However the unkempt Holmes swanning about London left one wishing for Jeremy Brett. I give it a 6 out of 10.*"



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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

- **March 27**
Our 30th Anniversary Tea & Auction
1:00 p.m. at Haugens' in Gig Harbor
- **April 12**
Regular Monthly Meeting,
5:00 p.m. at T.S. McHugh's
- **May 1**
Our Annual Wreath Throw, Tumwater, meet at 11:30 a.m.
- **May 10**
Regular Monthly Meeting,
5:00 p.m. at T.S. McHugh's

Member News & Updates

Those attending the March 8 SOB Meeting, presided over by **PFL David Haugen**, were:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Al Nelson | John Nelson | Joyce Funk |
| Terri Haugen | Barbara Nelson | Ed Funk |
| Stephen Adkins | Lauran Stevens | D.C. Smith |
| Sheila Holtgrieve | Ann McElvaney | Herb Leake |
| Peter Chelemedos | Michael McElvaney | Margie Deck |
| Jean Macdonald | Hank Deck | |

News & Notes:

- Profuse apologies to **D. C. Smith**, a fairly new Member who came to the February Meeting, but whom we forgot to acknowledge in the March issue in our listing of those attending!!! Mea culpa!!
- **Herb Leake** (aka Lord Backwater) said, as the weather gets better and the days longer, he'll be hopping the bus to join us again at Meetings! Surprisingly, he says, he's "pushing 90 pretty hard!" You could have fooled us, Herb!!
- Congrats to **Stephen** who will graduate from SPU in June with his degree in addiction counseling! That's two whole quarters early!!! Woo-hoo!
- **Sheila** took 1st place in the story quiz on COPP, with **Jean** in 2nd and **Treasurer Al** a close 3rd!!
- **SOB Terry Burns**—in his quest of acquisition—tells us his Barnes & Noble offers a 2-vol. PB of The Complete SH for only \$7.⁹⁵; and when they restock shortly, they'll offer their 1-vol. leather-bound for only \$19.⁹⁵. Both are good buys!!
- **Minnesota SOB Karen Murdock** tells us, "This

is the year my first big book of Vincent Starrett's writings will appear!" Kudos, Karen, keep us posted!

• **SOBs James, Ginie and Emily Romnes** went out for Valentine's Day tea at The Elizabeth and Alexander Tea Room in Bothell.



"It's a small but pleasant establishment,"

said Dad. "Poor **Bryan** had Daddy's cold."

• Here's a first: **Becky Geis'** kids—**Katherine & John**—were SOBs at birth and are now grown, on their own and have their own SOB memberships!

• We added **10 new SOBs in 2009**, and now we have our first in 2010! He's **Bill Mason** of Greenbrier, TN, who told us he'd "be delighted and honored to join The Sound of the Baskervilles." We didn't think to tell him in advance that joining would make him an "SOB", but we suspect he won't mind!! We hope one day he'll make a visit to our area! Welcome, **Bill**!!



• Kudos to these SOBs whose dues payments included *a little bit extra*—naturally Treasurer Al was thrilled: **Sheila Holtgrieve, Thomas & Nina Daly**, and **Ann Deussenberry**!! Thanks a bunch!!!

• **Gayle Holmes** sent us our first royalty check...a percent of her "Sherlock's" sales!! WOW!!

