



## **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

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## Join The SOB's Next Zoom Meeting, Sunday, November 17, 2024!

12:00 (Noon) to 12:30 p.m. Pacific time Social Time!!

12:30 p.m. Pacific time—Structured meeting with discussion & quizzing on "ILLU"

SOB Naching Kassa will conduct the story portion of this meeting, at which we'll study "The Illustrious Client." Adds Naching: "Hello SOBs! Naching Kassa here, and I have some exciting news for you. On November 17th, I'll lead The Sound of the Baskervilles Zoom story discussion! The featured story is "The Illustrious Client," so you're bound to have a little fun and quizzical mayhem. Maybe a prize too! Come join us!"



## Says Program Chair Sunny Even

## "The Beautiful Life and Illustrious Reign of Queen Victoria..."

The above title is from a biography by the Reverend Dr. John Rusk, published within the year of Victoria's death (and in reprint!). "Illustrious" echoes in many follow-on references to the late queen, and perhaps influenced Conan Doyle's title choice for "The Adventure of the Illustrious Client." The reader is certainly led to believe that Holmes's anonymous client is British royalty, if not Victoria herself.

In comparison with other rulers of her time, Victoria's reign was indeed illustrious, in both the meaning and etymology of the word. Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most monarchies across Europe suffered enormous changes, while her own rule in Britain and abroad remained stable and relatively secure. In some ways, England already had had it's "Glorious Revolution" (1688-89) with its consequent Bill of Rights (1689), the British monarch's legal powers and Act of Settlement (1701). By Victoria's ascendancy to the throne, the British

## Meeting Content for 2024 SOB Meetings

We move forward in our New 5-year Cycle—on the theme, "The State of Royalty and Aristocracy" with ILLU & BERY

November 17 The Illustrious Client via Zoom, SOB Naching Kassa will lead our story

We interrupt our Canonical study—returning as we do each year—to our visit of "BLUE"

December 15 The Blue Carbuncle In-person meeting, SOB Alexander Snow will lead our story

monarch's legal powers and limits were defined and balanced by Parliament's, with a scant century of constancy to withstand the coming Industrial Revolution and domestic and economic changes that transformed life everywhere. In hind sight, it's difficult to say whether England was better prepared for the turbulence of this era, or just lucky. The Hapsburg monarchy makes for an informative contrast.

The Habsburg monarchy was an umbrella term for the union of crowns of partially shared laws and institutions, which encompassed most of Europe at various times under a shifting patchwork of territorial crowns, hereditary lands and marriage alliances. For Victoria and those monarchs before her, the Hapsburg Imperial ideal that had lasted over six centuries was the model for steady and sustained governance by a "single metropolis of culture and society" united by their inter-related courts across Europe. This noble perspective was certainly incomplete, ... Continued on Page 2



### Says Program Chair Sunny Even...

**Continued from Page 1** 

...and in hindsight appears more as a "single island" unconnected to the inexorable cycles of revolution and reaction that wracked 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. While the 1815 treaty system temporarily returned control of Central Europe (and influence over Germany and Italy) to the Hapsburgs, nationalist pressures and agitation were already poised to remake their governments across all of Europe.

It was into this confluence of aristocratic privilege and waning power, that the 18-year-old Victoria ascended her throne in 1837. Less than a decade later Francis Joseph I was summoned to the Habsburg throne, also only 18 years of age. Ill-prepared for his complicated duties, Franz Joseph suffered a long record of misfortune, politically and personally. And yet through his position and his personal qualities, he probably did more than anyone to hold the Hapsburg empire together until it was swept away by World War I. His dignity and unwavering sense of duty made him the embodiment of the imperial ideal. During the 68 years of his reign, and like Victoria, he won and retained deep personal loyalty among the many peoples of his empire. Victoria is said to have admired him greatly, for his fortitude in the face of one tragedy after another. In very many ways, these two long-reigning monarchs shaped the 19<sup>th</sup> century, yet it is Victoria whose name embodies the Era.

### "It can't hurt now,"...

A Quiz by: SOB Charlie Cook

Answers may be found on Page 7



- 1. How many years had to pass before Holmes allowed Watson to air this tale?
- 2. Where did Watson find Holmes to be less reticent and more human than anywhere else?
- 3. Who did Holmes say was a man of the world with a natural turn for diplomacy?
- 4. Who did Holmes's client say was the most dangerous man in Europe?
- 5. What two ways did the client tell Holmes he could be reached?
- 6. What former criminal acted as Holmes's agent in the underworld of crime?
- 7. Name the woman the agent brought to 221B!
- 8. What was that woman's nickname for Holmes's agent?
- 9. What newspaper headline alarmed Watson so greatly that he forgot to pay for the paper?
- 10. What axiom about safe plotting did Watson recall?
- 11. Name the fiancée of the most dangerous man in Europe!
- 12. On what subject did Holmes ask Watson to spend 24 hours in intensive study?

This Quiz originally appeared in *Ineffable Twaddle* for November 2022.

### The SOBs' 2024 Holiday Card Exchange!

We will be doing our 4th annual Holiday Card Exchange among the Members! And, our Philadelphia SOB Jamila Robinson has again volunteered to take on the coordination of the mailing list this year by taking your names and snail-mail addresses if you send them to her at: jamilaowilson1@gmail.com, with the phrase "2024 SOB Holiday Card Exchange mailing list" in the "Subject:" field. She'll then organize the list and send it to all participants!



A few tips gleaned from previous years:

- The majority of participants want to receive their holiday greetings from you by snail-mail.
- You'll choose what sort of "greeting" you want to send out: Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Christmas, Kwanza, and/or New Year's.
- If your holiday greeting is Sherlockian, great!! But if you use traditional format holiday cards, recipients
  will be just as happy to hear from you!! ...

  Continued on Page 3

### SOB Kris Hambrick's Sherlock on Screen:

#### The Adventure of the Illustrious Client

I am always delighted when one of the very few stories filmed by Douglas Wilmer for the BBC comes up on the docket. Partly, because I really enjoy his interpretation. Partly, because it usually gives excellent scope for comparison. In this case, while both Wilmer and Brett stay fairly true to the dialogue, there are some interesting alterations when it comes to blanks left by Doyle to be filled in by the adaptation.

In the original, it's not necessary to provide more than a sketch of Kitty Winter, arguably one of Doyle's more interesting heroines. We know she was Baron Grüner's mistress, and we know that she is "what he made" her. What that is, exactly, is left up to the reader's imagination. But when you're casting, costuming, and setting the woman into a visual adaptation, choices must be made. In this, the BBC and Granada took two different roads.

In the 60's version, she is portrayed as considerably downtrodden, though it's unclear where she started. By the time we meet her, however, she appears to be working in a place of ill-repute, an undefined establishment with liquor, bawdy songs, and women who offer themselves to sailors.

By contrast, the Miss Winter of the Granada series takes pride in her former position as an artists' model; not a high-class form of work but artistic and skilled. She is brought low, not because she is no longer fit for anything but the implied sex work of the BBC version but because her body, her livelihood, has been ruined by Baron Grüner's attack upon her person with acid.

While the original acid attack is not Doyle's invention, it's an interesting touch in an otherwise almost entirely faithful accounting, giving Kitty a solid reason for revenge and rendering said revenge poetic justice. In addition, the portrayal of the Barons Grüner in both paint very different pictures; in the BBC, the man is already abusive towards his fiancé, leaving one in no doubt that he will likewise be the ruin of her. In the Granada version, he is genteel and civil, two-faced and utterly believable as a man who could convince a woman he'd forsworn his troubled past.

Thus, while both are extremely canonical, the overall tone they strike when it comes to the portrayal of women is very different, and it's illustrative of what difference just a few notes can make in the overall message.

**Note 1:** The three **black & white** photos below are from the 1965 TV play. The **color** photo of Kim Thomson is from Granada's production.

Ed. Note 2: This Essay originally appeared in Ineffable Twaddle for November 2022.









### The SOBs' 2024 Holiday Card Exchange!

Continued from Page 2

- Not knowing yet who'll sign-up this year, the majority will be U.S. residents, but you might
  need a couple of international stamps that will cost you \$1.65 per ounce at the USPS; U.S. 1st
  class postage now runs \$0.73 per ounce.
- Jamila will put the mailing list together in a Word "label" set up...3 columns, 10 rows...which uses a 30-label sheet...if you have them!!
- Don't go to a lot of trouble! Just have some fun!









## "Miss Holmes" Opens at Federal Way's Centerstage Theatre January 31, 2025

A dozen SOB Members were able to attend the closing performance of "Miss Holmes" at the TPS Center Theatre in Seattle in August. Perhaps we can gather another group of SOBs Members to attend together again...on the same day?

Perhaps a meal out together before or after?

Here's their web link—<u>Miss Holmes – Centerstage Theatre Arts Conservatory</u>—and the summary of "Miss Holmes" reads,

"Join Holmes and Watson on the foggy streets of London as they track a killer whose list of victims seems to be growing, even as the authorities seem unable—or unwilling—to intervene. This twisty, intriguing mystery takes the most iconic detective pairing in literary history and delivers everything you want in a mystery while turning one thing on its head: what if Sherlock and Dr. Watson were women? Rating: Recommended for ages 14 and up due to murder mystery mayhem!"

Centerstage Theatre in Federal Way, WA will present "Miss Holmes" from January 31 to February 23, 2025. Ticket are now available (updated from our previous announcement):

- ♦ Adult: \$38 in advance; \$41 at the door
- ♦ Senior (65+) & Military: \$33 in advance; \$31 at the door
- ♦ Student (22 and Under): \$15 in advance; \$18 at the door

The Theatre is located at 3200 SW Dash Point Rd, Federal Way, WA 98023 [(253) 661-1444]. Driving direction are provided at the link above

Performances occur each Friday, Saturday & Sunday from Friday, January 31 through Sunday, February 23, 2025. Evening performances—on Friday & Saturday nights—begin at 7:30 p.m. Matinee performances—on Sunday afternoons—begin at 2:00 p.m.

Which date works for you? What else do you have to do in the doldrums of February anyway!?





# SOB Margie Deck Featured in September 2024 Issue of *Strand Magazine!*

My Sherlock Holmes pastiche, "The Case of the Pensive Poet" was published by the Strand Magazine the last week of September, pages 22-31, with an original illustration by Jeffrey B. McKeever of screamingceltstudio.com.

The story includes a little nod to our **SOBs Geoff Jeffery and Cara Cross**, as the cast of characters includes Publisher G. Jeffries (with my apologies to Geoff as this is how I wrongly spelled his name for at least a decade) and housekeeper Mrs. Cross.



#### More About New Member Mona Morstein

We introduced new **Member Mona Morstein** to members in last month's newsletter, but we've learned lots more in the meantime! First, she has selected as her Canonical alter-ego "Mary Morstan"—a wise choice, don't you think, based on her real name!

Second, she did publish The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes: The Butler's Tale, which is available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon. As Mona has added, "My book is also available through AbeBooks (Galde Press, SBN 10: 1880090791, 2000, new \$39, used \$10) at this link: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetails PL?bi=31985101469&searchurl=an%3DMorstein%26ds%3D30%26rollup%3Don%26sortby%3D17%26tn%3DThe%2BChildhood%2Bof%2BSherlock%2BHolmes&cm\_sp=snippet-\_-srp0-\_-title1. It got good reviews, so at some point I need to write the sequel, some 25 years later...".

In researching the synopsis and reviews of <u>The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes:...</u>, we stumbled on Mona's personal biography as well! Seems she's a long-time Sherlockian, as we learned:

"Mona Morstein is a family practice physician. She graduated summa cum laude from Arizona State University with a B.S. degree in Foods and Nutrition. She took her medical training at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine and graduated in 1988 as speaker of her class. She has contributed two articles to the Baker Street Journal, regularly attends Sherlockian conventions, and has recently formed a Montana Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars called the 'Altamontanans.' In her free time!!... "She has parachuted and bungee-jumped, is certified as a scuba diver, and has obtained a black belt in karate in Japan.

In his (excerpted) 4-star review of Mona's book on Amazon, Canadian Sherlockian Expert Charles Prepolec (author, writer, reviewer) said this:

The wild and wonderful world of pastiches can be a very repetitive place. We've seen it countless times and are now quite familiar with the standard drill...relative discovers long lost unpublished manuscript of Dr. John Watson. Now the story can finally be told...blah, blah and most emphatically blah. Once again we end up wading through an author's off the mark attempt to give voice to dear old Watson, and once again we give up in despair when we discover that yet again we are facing an author who can't find their own voice, much less give voice to our old favorite...shaking our collective heads, we vow to stop reading these shallow imitations. Then, and only rarely so, do we find the one that stands out as being different, charmingly written and best of all...interesting!

Mona Morstein's The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes: The Butler's Tale is one of those rarities (based on the difficulties I had procuring this book, I use the word "rarities" advisedly). Yes, there is a long lost manuscript...but surprise, it's not a Watson MS. As a matter of fact, Watson is barely mentioned at all in this book, and Holmes? Well, he's been reported dead at Reichenbach. The manuscript is actually the work of one Josiah Cobbett, crime reporter for The Guardian. Cobbett has set himself the daunting and dangerous task of documenting the elusive childhood of the great detective. After reaching a dead end with both Watson and brother Mycroft, Cobbett gets his first break from Wiggins and heads north to the Yorkshire riding of Wensleydale. There he discovers a village bound to silence by a strange and curious pact. After some careful legwork in the local pubs he discovers old Percy Brewster, who was butler to the Holmeses of Hillcroft House, and he is ready to break the pact and tell his tale. At this point we leave Cobbett's quest and instead read the butler's story of those remarkable Holmes boys and their family history.

Mona Morstein has my admiration for actually stitching together a coherent and perfectly acceptable background for the Holmes family that embraces, without contradicting, the scant clues to be found in the Canon. She manages to present a fairly believable back-stories that seek to explain Holmes interest in crime, the violin and chemistry. An attempt, if not wholly convincing, is made to illuminate the formation of Holmes' later opinions of the fairer sex. We are also given a rather good look at brother Mycroft and the specifics of his relationship with his younger and more outgoing brother. Quite frankly I found the Mycroft elements far more intriguing than the story of young Sherlock. The family story is a tragic but gripping read that is told quite well and utilizes a solidly Victorian vocabulary without seeming too overdone or labored. Full marks are awarded on the readability scale!...

**To read Prepolec's full review**, and others, go to <u>The Childhood of Sherlock Holmes: Mona Morstein:</u> 9781880090794: Amazon.com: Books



### **SOBs Host 6<sup>th</sup> International Summit**

While he was unable to attend, SOB Al Nelson sent his written welcome to attendees of the 6th "the International Summit of Sherlockian Societies of British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest."

Chaired by SOBs VP Kashena Konecki and Judy Lyen, our new venue was The White Branches Tearoom & Theatre in Mt. Vernon, WA—it was a fantastical and eclectic site and a refreshing surprise throughout!

The refreshments included scrumptious tiers of tantalizing tea sandwiches, homemade scones, fresh fruit and decadent desserts, complimented with a wonderfully delicious personal pot of their signature "Sherlock Holmes" tea, as Kashena and Judy challenged us with two completely different but neither less laborious trivia quizzes! Some threw up their hands in frustration while others actually won great prizes!

We then moved to the Cabaret where speakers included **SOBs Margie Deck** and **Dan Polvere, BSI.**Attendees included Members of The Sound of the Baskervilles, The Dogs in the Nighttime (Anacortes, WA) and The Stormy Petrels (Vancouver, BC).

We share with you here photos by SOBs Ann Milam, Webmaster Shannon Wallace and Editor Terri.



### Things to See, Buy, Do and Know

#### ⇒ PFL David notes these items:

to treating rare disorders.

- 'Sherlock' Producer Sue Vertue Says Benedict Cumberbatch Brand Has "A Future" After Co-Creator Mark Gatiss Raised Hopes For Film: Benedict Cumberbatch's "Sherlock" could be about to dust off his magnifying glass. <a href="https://www.msn.com/en-us/tv/news/sherlock-producer-sue-vertue-says-benedict-cumberbatch-brand-has-a-future-after-co-creator-mark-gatiss-raised-hopes-for-film/ar-AA1rwX8N?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=ffb531cd53514de38cef350939e0bcd8&ei=12</a>
- CBS' Sherlock-Free *Watson* Scores Post-AFC Championship Premiere, *Watch A Sneak Peek*: Morris Chestnut's *Watson* will take the handoff from this season's AFC Championship Game, when it debuts on CBS in January 2025. ◆ The freshman medical mystery series will premiere after the AFC Championship Game on Sunday, Jan. 26, 2025 (at 10 p.m. ET, 9 p.m. CT, 8 p.m. MT, and 7 p.m. PT). ◆ Chestnut stars as Dr. John Watson, who resumes his medical career as the head of a clinic dedicated
  - "Watson's old life isn't done with him, though," the series synopsis warns, for "Moriarty and Watson are set to write their own chapter of a story that has fascinated audiences for more than a century." For more: <a href="https://www.ya-hoo.com/entertainment/cbs-sherlock-free-watson-scores-160000482.html">https://www.ya-hoo.com/entertainment/cbs-sherlock-free-watson-scores-160000482.html</a>
- As you sit back and enjoy some time at home, how about watching Sherlock Holmes television for free:
  - ◆ If it is *Jeremy Brett* that you want to see, go to this YouTube site to see all 41 adventures (they state 42 because SCAN is done twice): https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLe4nxylNvRwfBW 6paWe 1fPtB85tPMizu.
  - ◆ If it is *Basil Rathbone* you would rather see, go to this site to see all of his 14 films in black and white: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list = PLWUaNQdgky69fP0 H2UQ5JLro8VU98XGr.
  - ◆ If you would rather watch 13 of *Rathbone's* films in color "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" is not included—then go to: https://www.you tube.com/playlist?list=PL8Iqmc2ZGfwvXG3M 10e5loudqvdiOZZXm.

- Sherlock Holmes vs. Knives Out's Benoit Blanc? Real Private Investigator Picks Who Is The Better **Detective:** Real-life private investigator settles the debate regarding whether Sherlock Holmes or Be**noit Blanc** of the *Knives Out* franchise is the better detective. • Murder mystery movies and TV shows have been popular for decades, and the character of Holmes, created by Arthur Conan Doyle, has remained a fixture of the genre in various incarnations. Recently, a new detective has emerged onto the scene in the form of Daniel Craig's Benoit Blanc, who has now used his genius to solve murders in Knives Out (2019) and Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery (2022). 

  In a recent video for Wired, private investigator Mike LaCorte answers a question from the internet regarding whether Holmes or Blanc comes out on the top as the more effective detective. LaCorte reveals that, while Blanc has the edge in a modern setting, if both were put back in Holmes' era in the late 19th century, it's Holmes who is the better investigator due to his fieldwork and interviewing skills. Check out LaCorte's comment here: https://www.msn. com/en-us/tv/news/sherlock-holmes-vs-knives-out -s-benoit-blanc-real-private-investigator-pickswho-is-the-better-detective/ar-AA1rznhS?ocid= msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=64e266ca9b8c4e688f 27338f2e5c7e68&ei=30
- ⇒ From Peter Blau's newsletter, Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press:
- Registration is now open for "221B Con: A Fan Con For All Things Sherlock Holmes" in Atlanta, April 11-13, 2025. More: <a href="www.221bcon.com">www.221bcon.com</a>. Many Sherlockians have attended, and I don't know anyone who didn't have a good time.
- Sherlock @50: The University of Minnesota Libraries posted a nicely illustrated article about the "Sherlock Holmes @ 50" conference held in Minneapolis in July; read all about it at <a href="https://www.tinyuel.com/4c5526z4">www.tinyuel.com/4c5526z4</a> ★



#### **Answers To Cook's Quiz on Page 2:**

- 1. Ten.
- 2. At a Turkish bath.
- 3. Sir James Damery.
- 4. Baron Adelbert Grüner.
- 5. The Carlton Club or by phone at XX.31.
- 6. Shinwell Johnson.
- 7. Kitty Winter.
- 8. Porky.
- 9. "Murderous Attack Upon Sherlock Holmes."
- 10. The only safe plotter is he who plots alone.
- 11. Violet de Merville.
- 12. Chines pottery.





# The Sound of the Baskervilles

By appointment of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria

#### Ineffable Twaddle

A monthly publication of The Sound of the Baskervilles

A Scion Society of the Baker Street Irregulars since March 31, 1980

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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 the 3rd Sunday 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.

#### Another View on the Summit!

After a 4-year hiatus, October brought The SOBs and other PNW Sherlockians to a face-to-face event. But it was held nowhere near Seattle. Instead, thanks to the hard work of Club VP Kashena Konecki and member Judy Lyen, we met in Mount Vernon—about midpoint between Seattle & Vancouver, BC—for the 6<sup>th</sup> International Sherlockian Summit.

Conceived and first chaired by SOBs Al & Margaret Nelson back in 2015, our gathering with a broader group of Sherlockians from the Northwest and Canada had to stop because of Covid. Kashena and Judy felt it was time to try it again.

Our previous meetings were in a Pub that had a large upstairs area where Sherlockians could eat, drink, quiz, and not disturb other patrons below us. This year's gathering was at the White Branches Tearoom & Theatre just around the corner from the Pub, where we had the place to ourselves.

After noshing on our choices of teas and "High Tea" delectable edibles, the quizzing began. Both Kashena (verbally) and Judy (via pictures) gave us facts and then asked what story they came from. At our table we even stooped to comparing answers to try to come up with solutions; much of our efforts were failures.

We then moved from their Tearoom to their Cabaret where quizzing continued, and where we were entertained by SOB Margie Deck's reading of one of her newest published essays, and SOB (& Dog) Dan Polvere, BSI gave us a talk about Vincent Starrett. Wrapping things up was the presentation of prizes to quiz winners and our always-free raffle, in which the biggest winners appear to have been—based on numbers and sizes of their winnings—Bob Coghill and VP Kashena.

We had in attendance dear friend Bob C. from Vancouver, BC representing "The Stormy Petrels" who rode south from Bellingham with Dan Polvere, BSI, and his wife, Ellen. Representing "The Dogs in the Nighttime" (& SOBs) were Dan & Ellen and friend Barbara. SOB Members rounding out the attendance (not already mentioned) were Larry & JoAnne Raisch, Ann Milam & friend Rosey, PFL David & Secretary Terri, Webmaster Shannon Wallace, columnist Kris Hambrick, Alexander Snow, Treasurer Melinda Michaelson, Margie Deck, and, of course, our hosts Kashena and Judy!!!

Thank you again to all who contributed their time and efforts to make this gathering a success, especially Kashena and Judy.

