



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



Volume 44 Issue 3 ■ March 2025

Story & Meeting Content for 2025 SOB Meetings:

★ *We continue our 3rd year in this 5-year Cycle with 2 stories on the theme, "Empire and Race" — with...YELL & 3GAB ★*

March 16 The Yellow Face
via Zoom

April 13 **Note these changes, please!**
* This In-person event will now be on the 2nd Sunday of the month and a combined celebration of our 45th Anniversary, with a shorter discussion of "The Three Gables."

Time: 1 to 5 p.m., Potluck, please!
At Haugens' Home in University Place
See further details on Page 3.

★ *Our 5-year Cycle continues on the theme, "The American Reader" —with... ★*

May 18 The Valley of Fear
via Zoom

We will leave out the "long boring American part" in discussion!

★ *We continue our 5-year Cycle with 4 stories on the theme of, "Medicine" with ... DYIN, RESI, DEVI, & CREE ★*

June 15 The Dying Detective
In-person meeting

July 13 John H. Watson Picnic, In-person
Seahurst Park, Burien, WA

July 20 The Resident Patient
via Zoom

↪ Two events in July!!!

August 17 The Devil's Foot
In-person meeting



Please note that we are continuing with our pattern of rotating our meetings—with Zoom meetings occurring in odd-numbered months and In-person meetings occurring in even-numbered months—with **MOST** meetings & events occurring on the 3rd Sunday each month.

Story & Meeting Content for SOB Meetings (Sept. 2025 to Feb. 2026):

Sept. 21 The Creeping Man
via Zoom

★ *We move forward in our 5-year Cycle—with the first 2 of 4 stories on the theme, "Leisure and Entertainment"—with the first two in 2025... VEIL, SCAN ★*

October 19 The Veiled Lodger
In-person meeting

November 16 A Scandal in Bohemia
via Zoom, Quiz by Naching T. Kassa!!

★ *We'll interrupt our regular study with the Annual Return to our Christmas favorite... ★*

December 21 The Blue Carbuncle
In-person meeting

★ *We wrap-up our study of the 3rd & 4th stories on the theme, "Leisure and Entertainment"—with these two in 2026...MISS, SUSS ★*

January 18, 2026 The Missing Three Quarters
via Zoom

February 15, 2026 The Sussex Vampire
In-person meeting

You'll find programming & details of our March 16, 2025 Meeting, beginning on Page 2

Remember:

*Dues are due
by March 31!!*





Join The SOB's Next Zoom Meeting

★ **Sunday, March 16, 2025** ★

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

Social Time!!

12:30 p.m. Pacific time—Structured meeting

with discussion & quizzing on “YELL”

Says Program Chair Sunny Even...

Wrapping up “Rule Britannia”

“Robbers of the world, having by their universal plunder exhausted the land, they probe even the sea. If the enemy has wealth, they have greed; if he be poor, they lust for dominion. East nor West has glutted them; alone of mankind they covet with equal eagerness from poverty to riches. To ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles— this they name empire; and where they make a desert, they call it peace.”

— Tacitus (quoting Calgacus), Agricola 30

The above quote feels agreeably ironic since the Calgacus’s insight into Roman occupation of the British Isles holds such commonality with Britain’s own occupations in India and Africa. The Romans defended their empire by pointing to the order and civilization it brought to the world, portraying their political system and culture to be superior to those they conquered, including religious justifications to legitimize their conquests. Perhaps due to a Victorian education that idolized the Greek and Roman classics, “*Pax Britannica*” was closely modeling “*Pax Romana*” in all its glory and frailties. (“*Pax Britannica*” is a theme for stories we’ll cover in 2027.)

Calgacus goes on to say, “*Nature has willed that every man’s children and kindred should be his dearest objects. Yet these are torn from us by conscriptions to be slaves elsewhere....Our goods and fortunes they collect as tribute, our harvests for the granaries. Our very hands and bodies, under the lash and in midst of insult, are worn down by the toil of clearing forests and morasses ...Britain is daily purchasing, is daily feeding, her own enslaved people.*”

Continued on Page 4

“ ‘My dear Mr. Grant Munro—’ began Holmes. Our visitor sprang from his chair. ‘What!’ he cried, ‘you know my name?’ ”

A Quiz on YELL by: SOB Charlie Cook

- 1) What did Watson observe about the cases which Holmes was unable to solve?
- 2) What kind of pipe did a visitor leave on the table of 221B, and what was its value?
- 3) Name the tobacco in the pipe, its cost, and the item in the stem said to be a sign.
- 4) Why did Holmes know the client’s name before being told?
- 5) Name Holmes’s client and his wife’s name before they were married.
- 6) What item did the client find in the house his wife was secretly visiting?
- 7) Where did the client’s wife live before he met her, and why did she leave?
- 8) Why did Holmes think the client’s wife needed £100?
- 9) What famous place did the client visit the day he became upset with his wife?
- 10) What was in the wife’s locket?
- 11) What did the client say to his wife about his character?
- 12) What one word did Holmes tell Watson to whisper in his ear if he ever



Solution may be found on Page 6



SOB Kris Hambrick's Sherlock on Screen: THE FACES OF HOLMES AND WATSON

Spoiler alert: I am not going to talk about this month's story in this column. Problematic as "The Yellow Face" is, with Black History Month upon us and the release of the CBS TV series Watson, I want to talk about something more important: Race and the treatment of casting in Sherlock Holmes adaptations.

One of the things most remarked upon about the new series is the casting of Morris Chestnut as Watson. Like its sister show *Elementary*, it's modern day, and Watson is not only not British, but not White; *Elementary* famously cast Lucy Liu as Dr. Watson. The Japanese show *Miss Sherlock* re-envisioned both Holmes and Watson as Japanese women. The ill-fated *The Irregulars* (RIP) cast Royce Pierreson, of Jamaican descent, as a version of Watson explicitly in love with Holmes. The Watson who shows up at the end of the second *Enola Holmes* film is played by Himesh Patel, British son of Gujarati Indians.

But the history of Black representation goes back a lot further, as I discovered when I went digging. While no high-profile film work depicting Holmes and Watson explicitly ever went outside the "traditional" casting, the earliest film I've found so far is 1918's *A Black Sherlock Holmes* produced by Ebony Film Corp, in which a character named Knick Garter is dressed as Sherlock Holmes and solves a mystery. Other works are being done on this topic, such as by British literary scholar Ann McClellan, but throughout history Sherlock and Watson have been reimagined as robots, Christian vegetables, and talking mice.

So why has it taken this long to start seeing them as, well, Black?

I think there are a lot of lazy answers to this. But most of them add up to the sort of excuses people are making to not give *Watson* a chance—and let's not mince words, they're the same people who think mermaids or *Star Wars* characters can't be Black, either.

I think it is telling that, while I've noted several recent instances of non-White Watsons above, with the exception of *Miss Sherlock* no one has yet dared to make Holmes himself anything but a White man.

This needs to change. Holmes has transcended time, space, and genre. I'm looking forward to our first Black Holmes, our first lesbian Holmes, our first Holmes in a wheelchair. In the meantime, I'm going to give *Watson* a fair shake, and I'm going to push back against those I see complaining that "he's not MY Watson," an obvious dog whistle for "he's not White." A given version of a character does not need to be 'your' version to be valid, interesting, and important. Holmes and Watson are, and always have been, whatever we need them to be. All of us. ★

With the Close of Our 45th Year on March 31...Let's Party!

**The SOBs' 45th Anniversary of continuous operation...even through the pandemic (!)...is
March 31, 2025!**

**So join us Sunday, April 13 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. as we celebrate at our Anniversary Tea on
at PFL David & Terri Haugen's home in University Place, WA.**

Bring a friend...everyone is welcome!

**We will announce the name of our very worthy 2024 "Footprints of a Gigantic Hound" winner,
and a couple of Gigantic Hound Citations will also be bestowed!**

- **It's a potluck, so please bring finger-food**—sweets or savories—to share ■
(and any unusual serving pieces or utensils your food might require)!

Haugens will provide the non-alcoholic beverages! In addition, there will be an always-free raffle.

Look for cake and good food, fun, and lots of time to visit with your fellow Sherlockians!

- **Further details and driving directions to Haugens' home will be supplied in our April issue!** ■

Says Program Chair Sunny Even...

Continued from Page 2

Wrapping up “Rule Britannia”

...This level of institutionalized theft takes powerful cultural justifications, and few have been more pernicious and devastating as the idea of worthiness, and conversely, inferiority based on skin color. While the idea of “*otherness*” is a natural consequence of one’s sense of identity, assigning moral value brings about a highly destructive cultural valence. Our next two stories wrap up the overview on “*Rule Britannia*” with a focus on race and racism, perhaps the single most harmful effect of empire building.



Victorian attitudes toward race were complex and sometimes contradictory. Race issues remained vitally important throughout the era, and developed gradually based on several interconnecting factors: slavery and its abolition, empire, science and evolution, religion, and social class. Prior to the expansion of the British Empire, prevailing attitudes were generally ones of sympathy toward enslaved peoples, in need of rescuing, combined with a certain complacency at Britain’s own enlightened outlook.

Over the course of the Victoria’s reign, the dominant view gradually became more reactionary and intolerant, as the pressures of empire combined with pseudoscience such as polygenesis, phrenology and social Darwinism to justify classification and discrimination according to looks. Arthur Conan Doyle’s casually erroneous assumption about Lucy’s skin tone in “*The Adventure of the Yellow Face*” is a standout example, amongst his otherwise frequent use of phrenology and physiognomy to ascertain and describe character. By the late Victorian Era views on race and racism had hardened to repressive paternalism in some cases, to outright xenophobia and fear in others. In all cases, some variance to appearance justified this cataloging of humans into levels of inferiority—and an underpinning of fear and self-interest is to be found throughout the development of these racist ideas. Next month, more on *that* theme. ★

Give “Watson” a Chance!

By: Editor Terri Haugen

As SOB Matt Stout informed us in our February 2025 issue, “*I know (the new “Watson”) is not part of the Canon, however, the concept is definitely intriguing. I’m interested in what Watson’s life would be like after the incident at the Reichenbach Falls. However, I will reserve judgment until I watch at least three (3) episodes. I have the feeling that the show could end up being a version of “House” set in the Sherlock universe.*”

And, as SOB Jamila Robinson offered, “*I did watch the pilot of ‘Watson.’ It wasn’t bad! It reminded me of the other doctor show Morris did called “Rosewood” and, of course, had sprinkles of “House.” But it was a much better watch than the “Matlock” reboot.*

And, as SOB Patt O’Neil provided, “*I was on the fence about watching as I did not like ‘Elementary,’ but that was more for the actors than the story. In this case, Morris Chestnut is one of my favorites from his ‘Rosewood’ days.*

And, as SOB Kris Hambrick suggests in her current essay (see Page 3 of this issue) “*A given version of a character does not need to be ‘your’ version to be valid, interesting, and important...Holmes and Watson are, and always have been, whatever we need them to be. All of us.*”

And, to paraphrase SOB Geoff Jeffery, “*Any Sherlockian book, play, film or show is better than none, if it keeps Holmes & Watson before the public!*”

On the next Page find further on this topic; and if you’d like to provide your critique of this new TV show, please send us your comments for our April issue!

More on 'Watson' from PFL David *and More!*

⇒ [Mystery, Medicine, and Morris Chestnut: Why Watson Is Your New Obsession - MSN](#) *"It's probably not hard to guess what inspired the title character in CBS's latest primetime drama, 'Watson.' But between the showrunners and Morris Chestnut's brilliant adaptation of the iconic Sherlock Holmes character, the show is unlike any other adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 19th Century classic."*

⇒ <https://www.cinemablind.com/shows-like-watson/> If you loved the thrilling mysteries, medical drama, and compelling characters in 'Watson,' here are some similar shows you should check out next. *"10 Best Shows Like 'Watson' To Watch If You Love the Series"*

ALSO...

⇒ [Sherlock Holmes Is Getting an Animated Spinoff Series](#)

Per Deadline, the aptly titled, **"Baker Street Four will follow a ragtag trio of street urchins and a cat called Watson, who acts as legendary detective Sherlock Holmes' eyes and ears on the ground."** The project is based on the French comic book series called Les Quatre de Baker Street from writers Jean-Blaise Djian and Olivier Legrand, with illustrations by David Etien. The show, which has entered production, is aimed at children aged between 6 & 10 years.

⇒ [Benedict Cumberbatch Explains What it Would Take to Return as Sherlock Holmes](#)

After joking about needing "a lot of money," Cumberbatch explained that for him to return to the role that launched him into super stardom, "the story would have to surpass the original." ***"It would take it to be better than it ever was. You leave them or yourselves wanting more. There's always that itch to scratch, but I think it would have to be the superlative version of what we've already achieved."***

Time Sensitive Info!

News from SOB Margie Deck

Belanger Books is currently running a campaign on Kick Starter for the new book, *Sherlock Holmes into the Fire*, edited by Margie Deck. **The book includes new Holmes stories from three SOBs: Deck, Naching Kassa and Nancy Holder.** The campaign is offering a special 2-volume edition of the book, which will not be available once the campaign ends on March 18. (A different version will be available in retail outlets at a later date.)

What the collection is about—*One of the most popular collections of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's works is the one he specifically created to be read "...round the fire upon a winter's night." His classic "Round the Fire" collection is concerned, he said, "...with the grotesque and with the terrible." These stories never go out of style or lack for an audience, but they may leave their audience perplexed. Cue Sherlock Holmes! Who to better explain and contain these inexplicable others?*

Each volume of *Sherlock Holmes Into the Fire* pairs the original tales from *Round the Fire* with a new Sherlock Holmes adventure, thrusting the Great Detective into these worlds of mystery, adventure, and gothic horror. Seventeen writers have pooled their talents to accept this literary challenge... do you dare to read on?

Find all the info at: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/belangerbooks/sherlock-holmes-into-the-fire/description>

All the contributors: DJ Tyrer, Paul Hiscock, Rebecca Buchanan, Mike Adamson, David Marcum, John Linwood Grant, Carla Kaessinger Coupe, Liese Sherwood-Fabre, Katie Magnusson, Chris Chan, Nancy Holder, Derrick Belanger, Naching T. Kassa, Stephen Herczeg, Will Murray, Katy Darby, Margie Deck.

Kick Starter Status at 3/1/2025 ■ Deadline 3/18/2025

\$5,118 = Pledged of \$500 goal ■ Backers = 94





The Sound
of the
Baskervilles

By appointment
of Her Majesty,
Queen Victoria

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A monthly publication of
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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.

\$25 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. Traditional events scheduled through the year may include: "The Master's Dinner" celebrating Holmes' birthday, "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—films, teas, plays and gaming events—are as announced.

To join, send your check for dues—\$25 for individuals, \$35 for families (U.S. funds only)—to the address shown at left. ←

Renew Your Dues...

Everyone's Annual Dues—**\$25 for individuals, \$35 for families (U.S. funds only)**—is renewed during March of each year, accommodating our April 1 to March 31 fiscal year.

Mail your check—payable to "The Sound of the Baskervilles"—to our Club Treasurer at:

Ms. Melinda Michaelson
P.O. Box 7633
Tacoma, WA 98417

To renew using PayPal, go to our website at:
<http://soundofthebaskervilles.com/news/join/>
No forms to complete, just a few clicks away!



May We Just Say That...

Our February 16 Meeting was a rip-roaring success!! Our nearly 20 members who attended experienced discounted tickets, a great luncheon at Applebees, with their great service and hospitality (and anonymous donation for our entire tab!), and a great performance of "Miss Holmes" at the Centerstage Theatre!!

We must try doing this again!!!



Answers To Cook's Quiz on Page 2: "The Yellow Face"

1. No one else could solve them either.
2. An old briar with an amber stem; 7 shillings and 6 pence.
3. Grosvenor mixture of 18 pence an ounce; a fly in the amber.
4. Grant Munro; Mrs. Effie Hebron.
5. It was written in the lining of the man's hat.
6. A full-length portrait of his wife on the mantelpiece.
7. Atlanta, in America; her husband and child died of yellow fever.
8. She was being blackmailed.
9. The Crystal Palace.
10. A portrait of her first husband.
11. That he was a better man than she gave him credit for being.
12. Norbury.

