



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



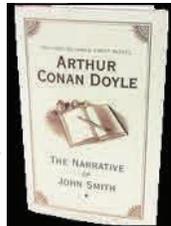
London Times Reviews

The Narrative of John Smith by Arthur Conan Doyle, Edited by J. Lellenberg, D. Stashower, Rachel Foss, British Library, £10, 9/18/2011

The announcement of "a previously unpublished novel by Arthur Conan Doyle" is bound to cause some excitement. Could this be a further Sherlock Holmes adventure, perhaps one of those bizarre cases teasingly mentioned by Dr. Watson...? Alternatively, could it be a science-fiction fantasy featuring Professor Challenger?

Alas, "The Narrative of John Smith" falls into neither category. Written in 1883, a few years before Holmes' debut (1887) and many years before Challenger's in "The Lost World" (1912), it comprises disconnected musings by a middle-aged man being treated for gout. Science, religion, historical speculation—all are included in John Smith's "rambling notes", as are reflections on painting, boxing and why we spend a third of our lives asleep. From its downbeat opening to its unfinished close, it lacks any kind of plot. Its characters are stock Victorian types...Apart from Smith, the most prominent character is a doctor whose medical observations allow the 23-year-old Doyle to off-load his recent learning...

"The Narrative of John Smith" merits publication not as an unfairly neglected novel but as an oddity that sheds fascinating light on the mind of its creator. Equipped with an informative introduction and notes, it raises one question not persuasively answered by the otherwise excellent editors. Why was the book not published when written? According to Doyle it was lost in the post. Later he reconstructed it from memory—hence the existence of the manuscript. Some biographers have cast doubt



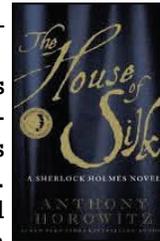
on this account, arguing that Doyle decided not to publish and then constructed a cover story. The current editors believe Doyle's version. Sherlock Holmes, one suspects, might not have.

The House of Silk by Anthony Horowitz, Orion, £18.99, 10/23/2011

It is 1915, a year since Holmes died peacefully in the farmhouse on the Sussex Downs where he retired to keep bees. Lonely and weary and still plagued by the wound in a shoulder from the second Afghan war, Dr. John Watson...sits down to pen a final tribute to him. To complete the canon of the great detective's adventures, he has decided that...he should add the story of "The House of Silk": a case so scandalously horrible that there was no question of its being made public at the time...From the nursing home where he is now confined, he sends his memory back to the Baker Street of 1890. As he climbs the 17 stairs to the door of 221B, Holmes, pipe in hand, turns to greet him.

From parody...to respectful pastiche and inventive reworkings, so many authors have tried ways of writing their own Holmes stories that finding a fresh angle nowadays constitutes a three-pipe problem in itself. Horowitz's approach is to replicate the style, suspense and atmosphere of the original stories while adding new facets. Familiar characters are given aspects beyond their customary roles...As a longtime Holmes aficionado with a close, alert knowledge of the stories, (Horowitz) is in his element plausibly inserting this new adventure among them...

Brimming with informed enthusiasm, this skillfully crafted homage to Doyle is so enjoyable that you're sorry when it fades away to the strains of Holmes playing his Stradivarius.



Volume 30, Issue 12
December 2011
OUR 30TH YEAR
OF PUBLICATION

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Happy Holidays to One & All!!



Just before Christmas, an honest politician, a generous lawyer and Santa Claus all got into an elevator. As the elevator transported them from the 5th down to the ground floor, one-by-one they noticed a \$500 bill lying on the floor. Which one picked up the \$500 bill and turned it in to the lost & found?

Santa, of course, the other two don't actually exist!





T.S. McHugh's Public House is at 21 Mercer Street, Seattle, (206) 282-1910. **Come at 5:00, order dinner and catch up with other SOB's!**

The SOB 2011 Great Goose Hunt

The December 12, 2011 Business Meeting of The Sound of the Baskervilles will begin at **6:00 p.m.** at T.S. McHugh's Public House in Seattle. **The social hour starts at 5:00 p.m.!**

Says Margie Deck: SOB's will test their knowledge of our venerable Christmas story, *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*, and win tasty prizes by way of a challenging quiz about the story and an accompanying game of chance. The goal of the game is to collect as many geese as possible; prizes will be awarded in a variety of ways, all dependent on the geese in hand. See more detail on the enclosed flyer!



Anyone who read SOB Charlie Cook's article in our 2010 *Beaten's Christmas Annual*—

"The Sherlockian Pastiche of Edward D. Hoch"—will agree that Charlie is very much a fan of Hoch's short stories. The *Beaten's* article gave Charlie's capsule summary of a dozen Hoch stories.

In this—the 2nd in this series—Charlie gives his full review of Hoch's "The Christmas Client"!! ⇨⇨⇨

From SOB Jean Macdonald

I spied The Seattle Times' November 14 article *A Megafan's 'Love Letter' to Arthur Conan Doyle* and passed it around at the November Meeting. Here are some excerpts:

- Michael Dirda who writes a weekly books column for the Washington Post, says he's not so much a critic as an "old time bookman", who indulges his passion for Conan Doyle in his spare time.
- He's just published "**On Conan Doyle: Or, the Whole Art of Storytelling**" (Princeton University Press, \$19.95), a brief but insightful look at a man Dirda says was the greatest storyteller of his age.
- Says Dirda, "I wanted to talk about Holmes but to get beyond 221B Baker Street to discover Doyle's other works and his life as a public intellectual...Holmes (though) is a perennially fascinating character...Holmes lives precisely the life he has chosen...It comes down to magic...Holmes touches all the right buttons for people."
- Dirda discussed his book on November 15 at Elliott Bay Book Company.

The Christmas Client

It's Christmas Day 1888 at 221B and Watson is reading his *Christmas Annual* (which we can only assume is *Beaton's*) eagerly awaiting a splendid goose dinner which Mrs. Hudson is preparing, when the landlady bursts in to tell Holmes that he has a visitor. Watson is perturbed but Holmes suggests it must be a matter of extreme urgency for someone to seek his advice on this of all days, and agrees to see him.

A handsome man in his fifties enters, apologizes and introduces himself as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. Holmes does his usual magic and deduces the gentleman to be a mathematician and a reverend at Christ's Church in Oxford. Amazed by Holmes's wizardry, Mr Dodgson tells Holmes of his dilemma. Years ago he dabbled in photography, clicking on adults and often children, sometimes in an unnatural state. (Watson is shocked!) Criticized by some, Dodgson gave up his hobby. Later he became good friends with a fellow mathematician, who was also interested in photography, so Dodgson shared his own history with his new friend. Back in 1879, Dodgson befriended a young girl and one day, while innocently pinning up the girl's skirt, his "friend" photographed him in the act and now, years later, is blackmailing him. He

wants £100.

On his way to see Holmes, Dodgson was accosted by a beggar who took nothing, but left him a cryptic message: a poem! Holmes asks the name of the blackmailing colleague and is told "James Moriarty"! The detective agrees to help Dodgson.

Mrs. Hudson enters the room to announce dinner and, while closely scrutinizing the Reverend, she realizes that he is none other than the author of "Alice in Wonderland".

After dinner, Holmes analyzes the poem, believing it to be Moriarty's little game and deduces that the blackmail must be paid on Boxing Day in front of Big Ben. When Dodgson is placed in the position Holmes deduces from the poem, Watson finds a bomb and Holmes throws it toward the river, but it falls short, injuring a couple of people. The police come and Holmes informs Dodgson that the blackmail was a hoax and that Moriarty has bigger plans. He tells Lestrade that the bomb was nothing but misdirection. More analysis of the poem leads to the true meaning of Moriarty's caper. Lestrade manages to catch several villains, but not You Know Who! Holmes assures Dodgson that he has no more to fear from Moriarty.



The Mystery of Poe's Death

Edgar Allen Poe, referred to in CARD and elsewhere in the Canon, received attention on Garrison Keillor's "Writer's Almanac" on October 7, because on that date in 1849 Poe died under very strange circumstances.

On October 3, 1849, Edgar Allan Poe was found unkempt and delirious outside a pub in Baltimore. He stopped off in Baltimore on September 28 for reasons known only to him. He was found outside Ryan's Tavern, and was taken to Washington College Hospital, where he lapsed in and out of consciousness until he died four days later. He was never able to tell how he came to be in such a state; newspapers

reported "congestion of the brain" as the cause of death, but there was no death certificate, and the reason for his demise remains a mystery, though his biographers have put forward several theories. Because he was found outside a tavern, many assumed he'd gone on a bender, even though he'd sworn off alcohol six months earlier. Another theory holds that Poe was the victim of "cooping," in which political gangs would kidnap people and force them to vote repeatedly at polling places all over the city, wearing an assortment of disguises...

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Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

● **From SOB Margie Deck:** Check this out: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJrEvOlbXuE. It's

a bio of ADC combined with an explanation of the creation—and the killing-off—of Holmes. It tells a long-winded version of the famous “tent” joke, which ends in the punch line, “Somebody has stolen the tent!” View it through YouTube, but it's from www.linguaspectrum.com. It's being used to teach English and gets a great laugh from students.

● **From SOB Stu Nelan:** For years I have ordered **Sherlock Holmes wall calendars** from: Mark Alberstat, 46 Kingston Crescent, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3A 2M2 and been very happy with the product. Calendars are on heavy paper, about 8” by 20” when hung, with Paget illustrations on the top page. Dates of the Adventures are marked on the bottom half, as well as other pertinent Sherlockian dates. It's \$15.00 U.S. postpaid. I would recommend this to any Sherlockian!

● **Received at our website e-mail:** **Sherlock Holmes experts and William Gillette biographer Henry Zecher spoke at Chicago's Newberry Library** at their Arthur Conan Doyle/Sherlock Holmes symposium in October. The program highlighted the collection of written works and memorabilia held in the Newberry's C. Frederick Kittle Collection of Doyleana. Other featured speakers included Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Jacquelynn Morris.

● **From District Messenger Editor Roger Johnson:** A few years ago an essay in the SHJ, ‘Time Lines and the Trust’ by John E Weber, identified both place and time of “The Musgrave Ritual”. In ***Under the Darkling Sky: A Chrono-Geographic Odyssey through the Holmesian Canon*** (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, PO Box 50, RR #4, Eugenia, On-

tario, Canada N0C 1E0; www.batteredbox.com/index.html; Cdn\$40.00), Weber applies the same meticulous research, rigorous logic and common sense to the entire Canon. He is the first to give equal emphasis to both chronology and topography in all sixty stories. He's familiar with every important commentary, and happily accepts a predecessor's conclusion if it seems right. Moreover he explains why he agrees or disagrees, and his standards are high. *Under the Darkling Sky* is an outstanding work of Holmesian scholarship.

● **From Peter Blau:** “**The Sherlock Holmes Daily**” is one of the many interesting features found at www.bakerstreetblog.com; it's a summary of what's being said about Holmes on Twitter in the style of a daily newspaper.

● **From PFL David:** Sherlockian websites that Roger Johnson deems essential: 1) **The Best of Sherlock Holmes** by Randall Stock at www.bestofsherlock.com/index.htm; and 2) **Sherlockian Net** by Chris Redmond at www.sherlockian.net. And, don't forget our own website: www.soundofthebaskervilles.com which is up-to-date, thanks to the efforts of our new **Webmaster, Stu Nelan**.

● **From SOB Ann Deussenberry:** For those who want to see what was in the forefront of Victorian Art, then you want to go to the Legion of Honor in San Francisco between Feb 18-June 17, 2012. The exhibit is entitled “The Cult of Beauty: The Victorian Avant-Garde, 1860-1900”. The website to view an example is: [http://legionofhonorfamsf.org/legion/exhibitions/cult-beauty-victorian-avant-garde-1860-](http://legionofhonorfamsf.org/legion/exhibitions/cult-beauty-victorian-avant-garde-1860-1900)



...Poe's Death

...Ryan's Tavern was also a polling place, and Poe was found on Election Day, his clothes ill-fitting, dirty and threadbare, which didn't jive with Poe's reputation as a natty dresser.

Rufus Griswold, literary rival and subject of one of Poe's scathing reviews, spread rumors about the recently deceased Poe in an attempt to scuttle sales of Poe's books, but the rumors had the opposite effect. Griswold is now remembered as Poe's first biographer; his own literary output has long since been forgotten.

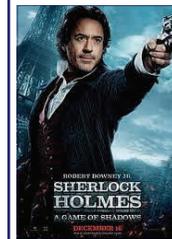
Poe was buried at the Westminster Hall and Burial Ground in Baltimore. In 1949, 100 years after his death, a stranger paid a visit to the cemetery in the wee hours of January 19, Poe's birthday. The stranger, presumed to be a man, was dressed in a black coat and hat, and

his face was obscured with a scarf; he drank a cognac toast to Poe and left the rest of the bottle, along with three meticulously arranged red roses, on his grave. Thus began a tradition that lasted 60 years. The “Poe Toaster,” as he became known, would slip in surreptitiously, leave his tribute, and disappear into the night; his identity was never revealed. He died in 1998, after passing the tradition on to his son, according to a note that was left with the bottle and roses. The last visit by the Poe Toaster was in 2009; he may have died or perhaps the ending was planned to mark the 200th anniversary of Poe's birth in 1809. Other fans, known as “faux Toasters,” have carried on the tradition for the last two years.



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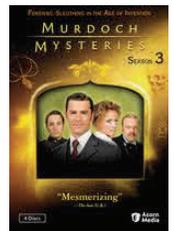
SOB Manson Polley sent news clippings about Herberger Theater Center's (Phoenix) production of “**Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club**”, based on R. L. Stevenson's “The Suicide Club”. The Arizona Republic's coverage is thorough but not laudatory. Alas, **SOB Bill Seil** wrote to say he found a Phoenix paper's review that said it was not very good.



For those who have not yet seen the new trailer for “**Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows**”, you can view it at the following YouTube address: <http://youtube/ZCDIYTY7VvQ>.

Thanks, Margie Deck

On Netflix there is a series called **Murdoch Mysteries**, written by Maureen Jennings, set in Toronto in the early 1900s. William Murdoch is a police detective using the methods of Holmes. Arthur Conan Doyle shows up as a character in two episodes. There were two versions of the stories done: a UK series with only a few episodes, and a UK/Canadian series with many episodes where you'll find the ones with Doyle. They are interesting, and worth a watch.



Thanks, Thom Walls

Wondering what forms Sherlock has taken by the **Muppets**, see: [http://muppet.wikia.com/wiki/Sherlock Holmes](http://muppet.wikia.com/wiki/Sherlock_Holmes)

Thanks, Bill Seil





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By appointment of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria

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Member News & Updates

SOBs attending the November Meeting, presided over by **PFL David Haugen**, were:

Stephen Adkins	Pat McIntosh	Terri Haugen
Sheila Holtgrieve	John Nelson	Becky Geis
Barbara Nelson	John Longenbaugh	D.C. Smith
Michelle Poitevin	Lauran Stevens	John Geis
Jean Macdonald	Marge Nelson	Al Nelson
Margie Deck	Stu Shiffman	Hank Deck
Thom Walls	Lloyd Hedberg	

News & Notes:

- **Treasurer Al** noted that our “website is fabulous! The links to the actual stories—WOW!” (If you haven’t seen our website recently, check out the path “Club Events & Meetings” to “Upcoming” to the description of the “December Meeting”; click on “The Blue Carbuncle” and be linked directly to a PDF file containing the entire text and pictures from the story! **Kudos to Webmaster Stu Nelan!** ★ **Al** attended the London Society’s Meeting while there in October ★ **Marine John G.** says he reports to his next duty station on Oahu, HI on November 22!! ★ **Stephen’s** parents Bob & Cathy Adkins came to observe his marvelous presentation “Was Sherlock Holmes a drug addict?” (See the write-up on our website for more! ★ Look for “Seafair Pirates” and Benaroya Hall on YouTube to see a song the Pirates performed recently, featuring our own **D.C. Smith!** D.C. also gave us a quick explanation of how to recognize a proper Inverness cape!
- **PFL David** reminded all of our **Master’s Din-**

Dates of Interest

- **December 3**
Our Annual Will Crakes Memorial Jollification, 1:00 p.m.
- **December 12**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Social = 5:00 p.m.; Business = 6:00 at T.S. McHugh’s
- **January 7**
Our Annual Master’s Dinner 1:00 p.m.
- **January 9**
Regular Monthly Meeting —Cancelled
- **February 13**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Social = 5:00 p.m.; Business = 6:00 at T.S. McHugh’s

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 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.

ner on January 7 and that he is **seeking toasts** from those who would like to read (or have read) a toast to anything or anyone in the Canon.

- There will be a **cookie exchange** at the December Meeting, when **Margie Deck** gives us her take on our annual study of The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle!!
- **SOB Manson Polley** wrote in October from Arizona to say he & Nancy are slowly getting settled into their new digs, but that he misses the *bon homme* of the SOBs and is anxious to visit again next summer.
- **SOB Henry Ernst** wrote from Maryland in November to tell us of a horrible flood in his home that destroyed about 100 of his books and took 6 weeks of complicated home fixes to repair the damage! We feel your pain, Henry!
- **Remember:** The January 9 Regular Monthly Meeting will not occur, due to darkness, inclement weather and nearness to our Master’s Dinner!!

See the enclosed flyer for details of the **Will Crakes Memorial Jollification** being held Saturday, December 3 at the home of **John & Barbara Nelson** in Shoreline.

Weather Alert: If you have a question about whether a scheduled SOB event will occur, please call the planned location or event host. For example, if a Monthly Meeting is in doubt, PFL David will have notified T.S. McHugh’s of any cancellation; so call McHugh’s at (206) 282-1910. **But** if two or more SOBs do make the trek, be sure to take notes!!!