



# 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



## About Friendship

By: SOB William Mosteller of Falls Church, VA

Whenever a new take on Sherlock Holmes appears, be it written or portrayed on stage, large or small screen, we often focus on whether that rendering is "true to the Canon." I'm here to suggest an alternate question we should be asking: does this new work tell us something about the Canon?

Sherlockians would probably agree that the Canon is a story of a friendship. If that's true, then one question we might ask is what's Watson getting out of that friendship? Being Sherlock Holmes' best friend can be challenging: The frustrations of his being so much smarter than you; of long, seemingly pointless stake-outs; and his flair for the dramatic could all get old.



This question is answered in "A Study in

Pink" in the Cumberbatch/Freeman series on PBS. Watson, when we first see him, has returned from duty in Afghanistan, a broken man. He's had a "bad war". He has a limp (from a wound in his shoulder?). His sleep is troubled with nightmares of combat. He has a hand tremor. And psychiatric help isn't working very well.

He meets Holmes and the first thing we see is that he starts forgetting his cane, and his limp. Running around with Holmes leaves him so exhausted he sleeps easily and peacefully. And finally, in the closing scene of the episode, he shoots a man at 50 paces, through two panes of glass. What hand tremor? Being with Holmes gives Watson back himself: He is again a brave man of action.

I believe that Watson's having a bad war is present in "Study in Scarlet," although not highlighted. Indeed, perhaps this is a clue to what Watson means when he says he keeps a bull pup.



## Book Review

By: SOB Charlie Cook of Sumter, SC *The Strange Return of Sherlock Holmes* by Barry Grant (Severn House, 183 pages, \$15.95)

Having been shot in 2007 in Afghanistan, war correspondent James Wilson retires and travels to Hay-on-Wye in Wales seeking the quiet life and inexpensive lodgings. There he encounters an old school friend of his who mentions that he met an odd but harmless old fellow, Mr. Cedric Coombes, who needs someone to share the expense of a cottage. In addition to moodiness, the old boy's only annoying characteristic is that he buys wheelbarrows full of used books and applies DNA tests on pages turned by previous owners in order to deduce their history.

The two agree to share lodgings, and Wilson notices that the old fellow looks very familiar and keeps calling him "Watson".

A local police sergeant is asked by a high ranking Scotland Yard detective, the grandson of one Inspector Lestrade, to seek Coombes' assistance in solving a very bizarre murder in the Hay-on-Wye district. Coombes agrees and asks "Watson" for his assistance. After various observations of the old boy's habits and logical analyses, Wilson realizes the characteristics and appearance of Cedric Coombes reminds him of Doyle's famous detective.

After hearing Coombes' incredible tale of espionage in WWI, Wilson succumbs to being...

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Volume 30, Issue 11  
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OUR 30TH YEAR  
OF PUBLICATION

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### Happy Thanksgiving to All!!

**Doublegobble:** verb, to eat two Thanksgiving meals, with both one's own family and that of one's partner.



Source: [Addictionary.org](http://Addictionary.org)



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!

Our 3rd Victorian-Era Discussion!!

The November 14, 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.!

As promised (see Ineffable Twaddle, Vol. 29, October/November 2010, Issue 10/11, Page 4, "Changes on the Horizon for 2011"), we will make our 3rd quarterly digression from our current study of the Canon (in order by publication date) and devote the Meeting to an informative presentation of an aspect of life in Victorian England.

SOB Stephen Adkins—a professional drug counselor—will, in his presentation titled, "Is Sherlock Holmes a Drug Addict", attempt to prove that theory via use of an official drug addiction intake form!

It should be a very informative and entertaining presentation! Come, participate in the discussion, or just listen, learn and kibitz!!



NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

Our Aussie friend Steve Duke (President of the SH Society of Victoria—Elementary Victorians) sends us this news:



The good news is several Tassie Devils have been bred in captivity on the mainland (Victoria) and they'll be able to bring the populace back up to scratch despite the "devil facial cancer" which has been killing them.

The bad news is I had to fly to Brisbane to recover my health after 5 months of the flu...A break was what was needed and it worked!

Swam at Spring Hill pool—oldest baths in Queensland. Architecture a bit like Northumberland Avenue Turkish Baths with cubicles around plunge pool. Swimming did me a lot of good (Yes, but no jellyfish [LION]!!)

Had my head down to write quiz for October Meeting. Instead of hard slog, was doing one of my fave stories from Canon, LION. Quiz is oral but someone has to write the questions!!! And test out the method of delivery complete with answers!!

News from Omaha!

By: SOB Carl T. Wirth of Omaha, NE

Used Bookstores: Please pass on to Stu Nelan my jealousy of his used bookstore hunts in Dallas (see Ineffable Twaddle, Vol. 30, October 2011, Issue 10, Page 1).

Here in Omaha, within the last year, we have lost three really nice little used bookstores—each one special, as I was good friends with the owners. If something Sherlockian came in to any of them, it would be put aside until I had the chance to see it and decide if I wanted it for my own collection or as a trivia prize for my Sherlock Homes book discussion group.

While we do have a Half-Priced Books here in Omaha, it is not the same as when you walk into a small shop, are greeted by your first name, and told to wait...there might be something you're interested in. In fact, even after one

store closed this May, I received a call saying they had found an LP record of Sherlock Holmes radio shows, got it for me, and gave it to me for free because I was such a good customer and friend. I know that most of the good used Sherlockian books I own came from these wonderful friends.

We now have only one REAL used bookstore left: Jackson Street Books in the Old Market area downtown.

As I travel I like to see if there are used bookstores in the locale. Sadly I think they are becoming fewer and fewer except in large cities. I should say our Friends of the Public Library have some great sales too (and not because I'm a past President).

I had once planned to own a bookstore...WIRTH REREADING...but with the economy as it is... Continued on Page 3



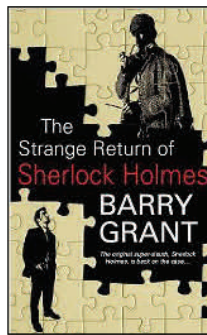
John Longenbaugh's play "Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol"

runs November 15 to December 24, 2011 at Portland's Artists Repertory Theatre. If you missed it here in Seattle last December, now's your chance to combine a shopping trip to Portland with an evening of fun!

Call (503) 241-1278 or e-mail boxoffice@artistsrep.org for tickets.

Book Review

...called Watson and begins to call Coombes "Holmes". He even takes him to London where a Holmes museum now occupies 221 Baker Street. When the attendant asks their names, Coombes replies that he is Sherlock Holmes and the girl says, "Of course you are, Sir, and like so many of our visitors you even look like him."



Back in Wales, Coombes—whom I'll now call Holmes—investigates the origi-

nal and now a second murder, both of which seem to be connected to crimes related to the modern Afghan war. There's even a beautiful woman, a hint of adultery, a haunted house, a mysterious villain (perhaps) in a monk's hood and robe, and some danger to our intrepid investigators.

There are some political issues here that might annoy some readers, but being a well written adventure which Wilson/Watson believes will lead to more pleas of assistance from Lestrade III, avid Sherlockians, with their insatiable lust for more, may find this pastiche worth the effort.



## Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

● **From PFL David:** **Sherlockian things at the World Science Fiction Convention** in Reno in August:

⇒ At a panel titled “Geek as Hero”, the British member of the panel mentioned BBC’s “Sherlock” as a perfect example.

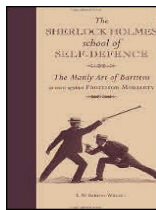
⇒ At the Hugo Awards, **SOB Stu Shiffman** gave out the Hugo for best fan artist (an award he has won previously); and writer Steven Moffat got the Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation Short Form for a “Doctor Who” script. (He is a co-writer for the BBC’s “Sherlock” series).

● **From District Messenger Editor Roger Johnson:**

⇒ **Derek Jacobi** is one of our great readers. A critic has rightly said that, as narrator, ‘he can capture the attention so fully that a listener is immersed in the story’, and as actor he defines each character, creating an entire cast with apparent ease. AudioGO, formerly BBC Audio Books, is issuing what looks to be the entire Holmes Canon, read unabridged by Sir Derek.

⇒ For full-blooded excitement, it would be hard to beat the **Young Sherlock Holmes novels by Andrew Lane**. “Black Ice” is now out and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Lane’s series. It’s fascinating to see Sherlock, who at fourteen has no real plans for a career, learning the skills that will make him an outstanding detective and undergoing experiences that shape his personality—making him in time the man we know.

⇒ E.W. Barton-Wright’s work “The Art of Bartitsu”, as detailed in the series of articles authored between 1899 and 1902, has been reissued



under the new title, “**The Sherlock Holmes School of Self-defence: The Manly Art of Bartitsu, as Used against Professor Moriarty**” (Ivy Press, 128 pages, 2011). You may recall that “bartitsu” was misremembered (and misspelled) by Doyle as “baritsu” in FINA.

⇒ In “**No Place Like Holmes**” by Jason Lethcoe (Thomas Nelson, 224 pages, 2011), young Griffin Sharpe arrives in England to stay with his uncle the Baker Street detective. He’s disappointed to learn that said uncle is not Sherlock Holmes but the occupant of 221A, a rather more erratic and socially inept sleuth named Rupert Snodgrass, who resents his neighbour’s success. The plot is wildly fantastical, involving a scheme by Prof. Moriarty to kill Queen Victoria, destroy the Houses of Parliament and ruin Sherlock Holmes. It would make a great cartoon film and may well have been written with that in mind, as Mr. Lethcoe is an award-winning animator. Don’t expect much fidelity to history or to the Holmesian Canon. Just enjoy the ride.



● **From Peter Blau:** “You don’t happen to have a Raphael...without knowing it?” Holmes asked (in 3GAB). Having a Vernet would be almost as nice: The Wall Street Journal said (April 29) that **Claude-Joseph Vernet’s painting A Grand View of the Sea-Shore Enriched with Buildings, Shipping and Figures** was auctioned at Sotheby’s in NYC with an estimated sale price of \$1.5 to \$2 million and sold for more than \$7 million, with 20 bidders dueling for the painting.

## News from Omaha!

...and seeing three stores go under, I just couldn’t.

**Book Discussion Group:** The monthly discussion group I lead is going well. We meet at The Bookworm, the last independent, non-themed bookstore in Omaha at Countryside Village. Our attendance is good with about 12+. We have a great age range...from a sweet female freshman in high school to a couple of dear gentlemen who have been around the block a few times. Most are just into the Canon but I am teaching them everything I can, from pastiches to the joys of Sherlockian movies—depending on the age we go from Rathbone to Brett to Downey Jr.

Each session begins with my sharing my latest Sherlockian finds—last month

on comics and graphic novels—and then a silly trivia contest (dealing with Holmes in a roundabout way). This month we are reading “The Greek Interpreter”, so I’ll ask them to name the actor who will play Mycroft in the new Downey Jr. movie, and the prize will be some type of Holmesian item, from a pastiche to a VHS tape of an old Sherlock Holmes movie. Then we’ll have an hour’s discussion on the story, historical trivia around the time period, and whether Holmes was at his best or was he just phoning it in.

If any of the SOBs or your other readers are ever in Omaha on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month, we start at 10 a.m. and get done when Watson finally puts his pen down.

Continued from Page 2

### From Editor Terri:

While driving through Reno in

August (where we attended the World Science Fiction Convention), we spied this marvelous



Holmesian image above a shop. On further investigation, we found “**Scotland Yard Ltd.: The Spy Shop**”, which deals in

“...surveillance, counter-surveillance, self-defense, audio/video, hidden cameras, spy equipment and tracking equipment.”



Check them out at: www.thespyshop.com, or stop in at 1085 South Virginia when you’re next in Reno!!

### From SOB Webmaster Stu Nelan:

I started going to the BSI Weekends 3 years ago when my daughter moved to NYC... a place to stay, a guide, see her, a friendly face in the big city—what’s not to like? (Then she moved to DC a year ago.) Now I have a routine: I fly in Wednesday afternoon for the ASH dinner; Christopher Morley Walk Thursday morning; lunch at McSorley’s; Strand Bookstore Thursday evening; Otto Penzler’s bookshop Friday; Gaslight Gala that evening; and dealer’s room for more books Saturday; back to Dallas Sunday. The theme of the last Gaslight Gala was “Stately Homes of the Canon”, and I was asked to give a toast to Arnsworth Castle from SCAN.



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 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.*



## Member News & Updates

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

Stephen Adkins	Ann Milam	Terri Haugen
Sheila Holtgrieve	Joyce Funk	Ed Funk
John Nelson	Barbara Nelson	Jim Nagle
John Longenbaugh	Jon Strandberg	D.C. Smith
Michelle Poitevin	Lauran Stevens	Pat McIntosh

### News & Notes:

- **Stephen** mentioned our Club to an acquaintance, so we welcomed guest **Laura Robinson**, who did quite well in the story quiz! ★ **Joyce** said that back surgery will probably be in her future, as soon as December; we wish her well!
- ★ **Lauran** was back after the mishap she had in her home, sporting just a sling on that broken arm! ★ **Lauran** and **Jon** tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place in our quiz on Part II of HOUN! There was a vast amount of silliness going on that night! ★ **John L.** said his "new job" as a full-time writer has been productive! ★ **Michelle** said she and her son were going to the Steampunk convention in Bellevue on the weekend! ★ **D.C.** and **Stephen** said when going to Portland, you must stop at Voodoo Donuts at 300—2nd Avenue, as they are the world's best!
- **PFL David** reminded all of our **Master's Dinner 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. (Just let him know in advance your subject, please, so there's no duplication!)

- There will be a **cookie exchange** at the December Meeting, when **Margie Deck** will give us her take on our annual study of The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle!!

- **SOB Becky Geis** phoned with grand news: Daughter/**SOB Katherine Geis** and her husband Daniel are expecting their first child in March!!!! And Son/**Marine/SOB John Geis** is still in Texas, awaiting his orders; his next possible posting could be Hawaii, California or Virginia! (*PFL David expressed concern to Becky that John may have learned to speak Chinese these last months with a Texas drawl!*)

- From **SOB Charlie Cook**: "I saw 19 plays in Canada at the Shaw and the Shakespeare festivals in August. Then went to Alaska to visit one of my daughters and her husband the first week of September. The time consuming math papers I write with colleagues and the refereeing of articles I do for a couple of my math journals interfere with my reading. But at least I don't have to go to work anymore. I can't remember how I found time to work before I retired. So many trips, so many plays, so many books, so LITTLE time!!"

- Being so very close after our Master's Dinner on Saturday, January 7, we will **dispense with our Monday, January 9 Meeting!**

**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!!!

**Dates of Interest**

- **November 14**  
Regular Monthly Meeting...Sherlock Savings Time...  
Social = 5:00 p.m.;  
Business = 6:00 at T.S. McHugh's
- **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
- **January 9**  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
—Cancelled