



# INEFFABLE TWADDLE



*"It is my business to know what other people don't know."*

*—The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*

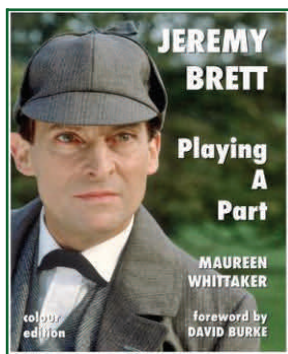
Volume 39 Issue 11 • November, 2020

The 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, USA

## A Few Reviews...and More!

### A Review from SOB Sonia Fetherston, BSI

#### "Jeremy Brett: Playing A Part"



For so many fans, the Granada Television episodes starring Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes were unsurpassed—the penultimate portrayal of our hero.

A new book, **Jeremy Brett: Playing A Part** (Maureen Whittaker, MX Publishing, 2020, 466 pages) is, likewise, the con-

summative volume for those who want to learn more about Brett's career and life. While a multitude of Brett's stage, TV and film appearances are covered, the emphasis is on his role as the Great Detective. We learn lots of interesting details. For example, every working day Granada's make-up department had to glue Brett's straight eyebrows into a Holmesian arch. In a similar vein, costumers had to take in the shoulders of every jacket and coat Brett wore (uncomfortably so!) to achieve Holmes's much narrower profile. And drawing, on his earlier training with giants like Gielgud and Olivier, we see how Brett *crafted* Sherlock Holmes, "the most complex, isolated creature."

Generously illustrated with family photos and production stills, many rarely seen, and with a foreword by Brett's first Watson, actor David Burke, the book is available via [www.MXPublishing.com](http://www.MXPublishing.com), between \$34.<sup>95</sup> and \$94.<sup>95</sup> (depending on whether you want black and white or color, hardback or soft-bound). Pricey, but a treat!

### A Review from SOB Stephen Adkins

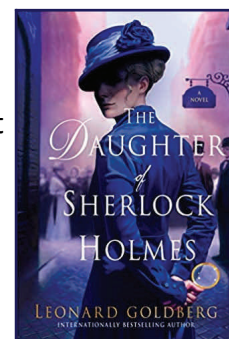
#### "The Daughter of Sherlock Holmes: A Mystery"

I found this book in a "Little Library" on a recent walk in my neighborhood.

Reading **The Daughter of Sherlock Holmes** (Leonard Goldberg, Minotaur Books, 2017, 320 pages) was like reading a second generation kind of tale, with a junior Watson, a junior Moran, and a singular Woman named Blalock who it turns out is his daughter—the result of a liaison between Holmes and...wait for it...Irene Adler!

There is a section where Mr. Holmes and Ms. Adler "repeatedly injected each other with cocaine." It seemed written as a slightly light-hearted inclusion. This for me (as a former I.V. drug user, having known several parents and children, partners/spouses, mainlining drugs with and for each other) was a memory trigger, and I do not believe Mr. Holmes would willingly have engaged in such behaviour—even as he enquired if Watson would care to try "a seven per cent solution"—let alone with someone else who had actually made a significant impression upon Holmes.

It is not a bad read but, in the end, I found myself rather turned off by the book.



### Review: **Sherlock Holmes Magazine**, Summer 2020

#### "The Curse of Sherlock Holmes, The Basil Rathbone Story"

History Press, publishers of **The Curse of Sherlock Holmes, The Basil Rathbone Story** (David Clayton, 2020, 192 pages) claims it is "the first definitive account of Basil Rathbone."

Appearing in fourteen Sherlock Holmes films, Rathbone made the role his own, and every actor who has since played the great detective has been compared to him. This book spans Rathbone's journey from the trenches of the First World War, when he was awarded a Military Cross for bravery, through to a Hollywood career that earned him three Walk of Fame stars.

**Continued on Page 7**

## ★ Zoom Meeting ★ Sunday, November 15, 2020

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

**Free-form chatting and visiting!!**

**12:30 p.m. Pacific time—Structured meeting with discussion & quizzing on “The Second Stain”**



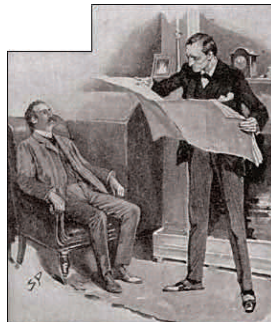
**SOB Program Chair  
Sunny Even on:**

**Secrets and Sensibilities of the Second Stain**

Victorian secrets and sensibilities once again are showcased in “The Adventure of the Second Stain.”

Premier Lord Bellinger and the Right Honorable Trelawney Hope, Secretary for European Affairs, want Holmes to recover a missing letter—a letter containing “a State secret of the utmost importance.” Evidently its provocative contents would stir such dangerous feeling in the country, that “peace or war may hang

*“My friend has so often astonished me in the course of our adventures that it was with a sense of exultation that I realized how completely I had astonished him. He stared in amazement, and then snatched the paper from my hands. This was the paragraph which I had been engaged in reading when he rose from his chair.”*



upon the issue.” Shortly after their visit, Holmes receives Lady Hilda Trelawney Hope who implores Holmes to reveal her husband’s worries. Between she and her husband there is “perfect confidence on all matters save one,” since evidently politics is too coarse a subject for their refined marriage. She is in the dark on everything to do with his career, so one wonders how perfect confidence on other matters in their life together can exist in that vacuum. Not very effectively, since she has her own secrets. I won’t say more, so as not to ruin a lovely ending to this dilemma—save to tell you Holmes finds the perfect way to resolve the matter, and protect the Trelawney Hope’s (and England’s) Victorian secrets and sensibilities.

**Who’s Who Really in SECO?? Clear it up with SOB Charlie Cook’s Quiz! ➤**

1. What adventure had Watson intended to be the last of his recorded exploits of Sherlock Holmes?
2. Who was the Secretary of European Affairs who accompanied the Premier of Britain to 221B?
3. Where was the European Secretary’s house located?
4. What was stolen from his home?
5. Who, in Holmes’ opinion, were the only three men capable of such a theft?
6. Which of the three was murdered in his home?
7. Who was originally arrested for the murder but subsequently released?
8. What was the occupation of the person in 7. (above)?
9. By what name was the murdered man known in Paris?
10. Was the Scotland Yard detective in charge of the case Hopkins or Gregson?
11. Who was the actual murderer?
12. What did Holmes tell the Premier that he and the government had in common?

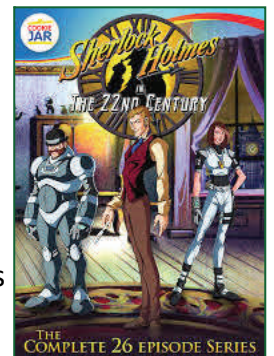
Answers may be found on Page 5



**SOB Kris Hambrick’s  
Sherlock on Screen:  
“The Second Stain”**

Despite one of the most dramatic reveals in any Sherlock Holmes case, once again our primary source here is Granada Studios. Actors Eille Norwood, Alan Wheatley and Peter Cushing have made “The Second Stain” as part of their respective series, but none are available to view. Elements were included in the Lenfilm movie *The Twentieth Century Approaches*, but combined with ENGR, BRUC and LAST, it creates a pleasing tangle of references to work something new out of familiar material.

“*Sherlock Holmes in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century*” uses plot and character elements, working them into the more action-heavy format of the show and, amusingly, casting Watson as the befuddled man who lets “Trenton’s” wife into Lucas’ apartment. It’s well-done and a nice melding of the original and classic story styles. But for authenticity, we have Granada Studios, and Brett’s energetic *as always* performance... **Continued on Page 5**





## Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

⇒ **From PFL David:** Robert Downey Jr. announced recently the possibility of a **SHERLOCK HOLMES CINEMATIC UNIVERSE!!**

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZk89xMf4cM> to view "What the Sherlock Holmes Cinematic Universe Will Look Like."



⇒ **From SOB Lauren Messenger, Associate Editor, as mentioned in our September 20 Zoom Meeting:** Here's the link for **BOOK-IT'S PRODUCTION OF THE "MANDALA OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES"** by Jamming Norbu: <https://book-it.org/events/the-mandala-of-sherlock-holmes> @ The whole series of plays this year is going to be audio productions you can enjoy from home. The 2020-2021 season looks amazing, featuring adaptations of stories by N. K. Jemisin, Pam Munoz Ryan, Oscar Wilde, and Octavia Butler! @ Ed. Note: "Mandala of the Sherlock Holmes" will run May 15–June 30, 2021; the summary at their website is quite intriguing!

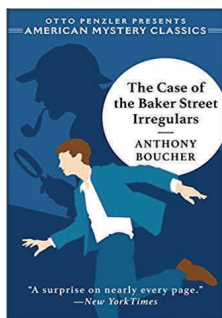
⇒ **SOB Charlie Cook recommends:**

• **LOOKING FOR A LIST OF A FAVORITE AUTHOR'S WORKS?** Try <http://www.stopyourekillingme.com>. Search by author or by lead characters; even search by various award categories (Agatha Awards, Shamus Awards, etc.), by hardcover vs. paper, by large print and audio!!

• **CHECK OUT THE ARTICLE "WHAT MAKES SHERLOCK SO SPECIAL"** from *The Strand Magazine*. The essay is by Leonard Goldberg, author of "The Daughter of Sherlock Holmes: A Mystery"—reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *Twaddle* (see Page 1). The essay is interesting, though somewhat repetitive. [https://strandmag.com/what-makes-sherlock-so-special/?goal=0\\_82d6dad834-b5c44a00cd-285617817&mc\\_cid=b5c44a00cd&mc\\_eid=ecfb2dd1b1](https://strandmag.com/what-makes-sherlock-so-special/?goal=0_82d6dad834-b5c44a00cd-285617817&mc_cid=b5c44a00cd&mc_eid=ecfb2dd1b1). Shop The Strand's "Shop" for tons of Sherlockian-themed face masks and "Teddy Bears" at: <https://strandmag.com/shop-new/>



• In October Otto Penzler (on his American Mystery Classics imprint) **RE-ISSUED ANOTHER CLASSIC: 1940's "THE CASE OF THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS" BY ANTHONY BOUCHER**, available from Amazon on Kindle (\$7.<sup>99</sup>) and hardback (\$19.<sup>69</sup>), but cheaper, older, used copies of the novel are also available. My copy (1980, Gregg Press) has an introduction by Penzler, founder of the



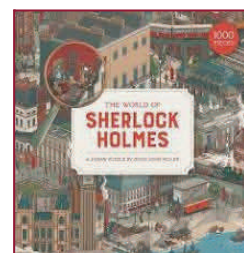
Mysterious Press (1975), Mysterious Press.com (2011) and New York City's Mysterious Bookshop (*Opened in 1979 by Otto Penzler, The Mysterious Bookshop is the oldest mystery specialist book store in America. Previously located in midtown, the bookshop now calls Tribeca its home.*).

⇒ **Jean Upton of the London Society's District Messenger reports:**

• **THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CARD IS NOW AVAILABLE TO ORDER.** "One Winter's Night," designed by Swiss artist Laurence Pernet, was chosen from a competition held earlier this year. Title is taken from a quotation in "The Musgrave Ritual." Go to: <https://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk/product/christmas-card-2020/> The price is £7.50 + postage.



• Now available **"THE WORLD OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: A 1000 PIECE JIGSAW PUZZLE"** (Laurence King Publishing). Spot famous characters, crime-solving clues, and historical figures as you build the puzzle. Includes a poster featuring fun Sherlock facts. Sturdy, attractive box perfect for gifting and storage. Piece together the world of Sherlock Holmes in this detailed jigsaw puzzle depicting the London of his day. On Amazon, \$21.<sup>08</sup> + postage. **Ed. Note:** SOB Linda Robinson did a show & tell at the October 18 Zoom Meeting of several 1,000 piece puzzles she and housemate Resa H. have completed!



• Nicky Bird has produced a **VERY HANDSOME SET OF FULL COLOUR SHERLOCK HOLMES PLAYING CARDS**. The site says: Classic *Holmesiana*—a celebration of the Master Detective in brilliant covers, photos, illustrations and posters. A tribute, in often rare ephemera, to 'the most perfect reasoning and observing machine the world has seen.' *A collector's dream.* Go to: <https://www.birdplayingcards.com/product/sherlock-holmes/> Cards are £6.00 + postage.



### ☆ **WRITING OPPORTUNITY** ☆

Back in the 1980s, Kelvin Jones edited **THE HIGHLY REGARDED JOURNAL, THE SHERLOCKIAN**. There are now **PLANS AFOOT TO REPRINT THE ORIGINAL** contents of the journal in book form, **ALONG WITH NEW MATERIAL**. Kelvin is inviting new contributions as follows: "Scholarly articles on *The Canon*, any aspect, any theory, however outrageous, absurd or outré. No length limit, except submissions over 10,000..."

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## Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

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...words. Also utterly Doylean/Holmesian style pastiches, but please NO American style dialogue, aliens or supernatural explanation tales. Please submit brief outline in first instance to: Kelvin I. Jones (ed.), [sherlocks.irregulars@gmail.com](mailto:sherlocks.irregulars@gmail.com) or my Facebook page @Siger Holmes."

⇒ **Says SOB Dawn Jaekel:**

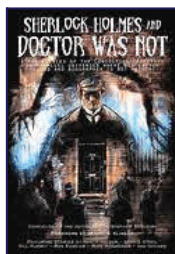
**"SHERLOCKATHON" CONTINUES THROUGH NOVEMBER 15!**

Read ten books & watch-a-long events between Oct. 19 through Nov. 15 and you could win! Register at <https://www.sherlockathon.com/about>. "SHERLOCKATHON" is a challenge to read up to ten (10) books between 19<sup>th</sup> Oct. and 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. Prompts are themed around characters from the original series, but readers of all types of Holmes-ian experience are welcome." @ Chat with other Sherlockians in their "Discord Server," and update your progress for a chance to win original character art from "Samantha Alice Art." @ Watch-A-Long movies began with "The Great Mouse Detective" on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2020, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.; subsequent Saturdays will be given over to versions of "The Hound of the Baskervilles," both reading and then the Brett TV version.

⇒ **From Peter Blau's Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press:**

- Sherlockian Christopher C. Courter has launched a **FACEBOOK GROUP CALLED "THE SHERLOCK HOLMES EXCHANGE,"** billed as "a free and open place for everyone to sell, purchase, or trade all things related to the great detective or the Victorian era." Many people already have signed up for what appears to be a Sherlockian combination of Craigslist and Etsy. **Ed. Note:** SOB Beth Gallego reported at our **October 18 Meeting:** "I've visited this site! There was a flurry of activity when it first went up, but things are kind of quiet now. Their prices did seem reasonable."

- **SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DOCTOR WAS NOT**, edited by Christopher Sequera (IFWG Publishing International, 2019, \$17.<sup>99</sup>) is an anthology offering a dozen new pastiches that involve Holmes with *doctors other than Watson* and, in cases of "mind-bending multi-versal mayhem," full of fantasy, metaphysics and the supernatural.



- **"THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN WATSON" IS A NEW COMPUTER GAME** from ArmiGames for Android phones and tablets; the first adventure can be played without charge, and there are four more games you can play after a single in-app purchase (\$3.49/£2.99). They expect to have a version for iPhones and iPads available by the end of November. **Ed. Note:** As noted in our Septem-

ber 15 "Great Hiatus Update #8," click on this link for more details and to install the free game: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ArmiGames.JohnWatson>

- **VIDEO OF THE RED CIRCLE OF WASHINGTON D.C.'S (SCION SOCIETY) TWO VIRTUAL MEETINGS** are available at [redcircle.dc.org](http://redcircle.dc.org). Tune in to see Laurie R. King and Nicholas Utechin.

**A FEW FINAL WORDS FROM PETER BLAU ON "ENOLA HOLMES"**

- **NETFLIX UK PUBLICIZED THE "ENOLA HOLMES" FILM** by installing statues of sisters whose lives were overshadowed by their more famous brothers; e.g., Frances Dickens. One of them was Enola Holmes, in Baker Street, next to the iconic statue of Sherlock Holmes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tufayelahmed/2020/09/23/netflix-celebrates-enola-holmes-release-with-statues-of-sisters-overshadowed-by-famous-brothers/#170181f516ef>



- **IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ENOLA HOLMES** now that you have seen the film, Scott Monty and Burt Wolder have an interesting interview with Nancy Springer—author of the series of books about Enola—at their "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMBtrj0MXw>. With six books in the series, more films are possible.

- Earlier this year **THE CONAN DOYLE ESTATE LTD. (CDEL) FILED AN APPLICATION FOR A TRADEMARK FOR THE WORDS "SHERLOCK HOLMES" IN THE CATEGORY "ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES."** The application was published in September and in October, attorney/Sherlockian Les Klinger, BSI formally filed opposing the application (as he did in 2018 when the CDEL applied for a trademark in the category "printed matter" and then withdrew the application). The documents in the case also are available at [www.free-sherlock.com](http://www.free-sherlock.com)

**And, from PFL David...**

- **ROTTEN TOMATOES'** ([www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)) "tomato-meter" had "Enola Holmes" at 92% favorable for top critics, 91% favorable for all critics in late October.

Also in late October, **IMDB'S** rating ([https://www.imdb.com/find?q=enola+holmes&ref=nm\\_sr\\_sm](https://www.imdb.com/find?q=enola+holmes&ref=nm_sr_sm)) for "Enola Holmes" was 6.6 out of 10 with 90,835 folks voting.

- **8 MOVIES AND SHOWS TO WATCH IF "ENOLA HOLMES" HAS YOU READY FOR MORE SHERLOCKIAN ADVENTURES** (Pop Sugar): In order they are: "Elementary," "Holmes & Watson," "Mr. Holmes," ...

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## Sherlock on Screen: "The Second Stain" ...

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...as he goes from languid and uncaring to bloodhound on the scent *in a split second*. It's always a delight to see Brett's haughty dealings with heads of state, and this episode it's brilliantly contrasted with his crawling about on the floor. I will say that, while Stuart Wilson acquits himself well as Trelawney Hope, the casting directors *did* have an opportunity here to find someone "endowed with every beauty of body and mind," according to Watson's account. We also get some fun from Brett, as he demonstrates his glee at McFarlane's predicament, his approval of Watson's application of his methods, and his one-upmanship of Scotland Yard. In its second season, the Granada series has hit its stride (aside from a blunder or two such as visible electric wiring and what is demonstrably not a shark's tooth) and brought us what I think still stands as the definitive portrayal of Inspector Lestrade.



There is the one moment of what might be considered overdone emotion from Holmes, in his triumphant leap from the steps outside, which I'm not sure fits with the staid manners of the time and his general closeness. However, it does the trick of displaying the ways in which that emotion must find an outlet. Otherwise, I believe Brett and Hardwicke to be a well-oiled machine at this point, with a lot of lingering camerawork on Brett's face as Holmes works through the clues. It's an excellent rendering of the internal process from the outside, and one of the things I think Granada does particularly well.

All in all, I'm glad we have this adaptation, but it's a shame so many of our Sherlocks have been lost. It's a dynamic story with a lot of interest considering how little real action there is, and a good exercise for anyone playing Holmes as he moves through various modes of interaction and energy.

## Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

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...*"Sherlock Gnomes," "Sherlock Holmes" (2009), "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows," "Sherlock,"* and *"The Great Mouse Detective."* To view Pop Sugar's "slides" and reasoning, go to: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/tv/news/8-movies-and-shows-to-watch-if-enola-holmes-has-you-ready-for-more-sherlockian-adventures/ss-BB19msYn?li=BBnb2gh&ocid=msedgdhp> Adds PFL David: *I'm troubled by the fact that this list is in descending order!!*



• Saw this on the web, a look at BestLife's list of **"THE 20 MOVIES EVERY WHODUNNIT FAN NEEDS TO SEE."** And, yes, a Sherlock Holmes movie is included! @ Their first pick is the Jimmy Stewart / Kim Novack-starring, Alfred Hitchcock film "Vertigo." Their second choice is the first iteration of Robert Downey Jr. as "Sherlock Holmes" (2009). *I leave it up to you to decide whether that's good or bad!* <https://www.msn.com/en-us/movies/news/the-20-best-mystery-movies-that-every-whodunnit-fan-needs-to-see/ss-BB1agCMc?li=BBnbcA0&ocid=msedgdhp#image=21>



## Joining The SOBs...

### Also joining in October 2020 were...

- **Joy Lee Barnhart**, a Seattle-area attorney, first joined The SOBs in May 1985 and had accumulated 14 years membership when she left us in 2004. But she's back again!!
- **Michael "Mickey" Coonan**, who's from Chico, CA, joined through PayPal on October 20 then emailed Editor Terri the same day to find out where to send his 2020 Writing Contest entry!

**A hearty welcome to you both, and we hope to see you at the November 15 Zoom Meeting!**

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

1. "The Adventure of the 7. John Milton.
2. Trelawney Hope.
3. Whitehall Terrace.
4. A secret document.
5. Oberstein, LaRothiere.
6. Eduardo Lucas.
7. Valet to Eduardo Lucas.
8. M. Henri Fournaye.
9. Neither, it was Lestrade.
10. His wife.
11. Diplomatic secrets.
12. Eduardo Lucas.



## Imagination Theatre: “Movies For Your Mind”

A Report from  
PFL David Haugen

*If you'd like to hear Holmes & Watson's adventures and use your own imagination to create the settings, then **Imagination Theatre** is the place for you. Their motto is “Movies For Your Mind.”*

Imagination Theatre was begun in 1996 by Jim French, American radio personality and producer, who wrote and produced over 803 radio shows, including *The Adventures of Harry Nile* and *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* series.

French became morning DJ on KIRO-AM in Seattle in 1959. He later began production of *Imagination Theatre*, which in 2003 moved to KIXI-AM. His syndicated programs are still broadcast on over 120 stations in the U.S. and Canada, and are also heard on the XM Satellite Radio system all over North America. A former SOB Member, Jim French died in December 2017.

In 2019, actors/producers on *Imagination Theater*, Larry Albert and John Patrick Lowrie launched a successful crowdfunding campaign to produce further episodes under the name "Aural Vision, LLC." An announcement about a new website was released in July 2019.

They have now done full cast recordings of all four novels and fifty-six short stories with writer, M. J. Elliott having dramatized them all, with the same major actors including the same Sherlock Holmes, **John Patrick Lowrie**, the same Dr. Watson, **Larry Albert**. In addition they have done more than 140 further adventures of the great detective. In the Seattle area, you can listen on Saturday and Tuesday nights at 8:00 p.m. on KIXI-AM radio (<https://kixi.com/>).

They not only do Sherlock Holmes, but also a series about detective Harry Nile and others—“*Murder! Suspense! Drama!*”—as their website declares!

I particularly like the description of *Imagination Theatre* that John Patrick Lowrie gave me: “*Giving your eyes a rest*”.

*Imagination Theatre's* website is: [harrynile.com](http://harrynile.com). Their Facebook page lists what story will be broadcast on any given date (<https://www.facebook.com/lm>) ↗

[aginationTheatre](http://aginationTheatre)). Purchase downloadable MP3 recordings of individual adventures at their website. Go to “Radio Spirits” ([radiospirits.com](http://radiospirits.com)) to order CDs of the classic adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

★ On Saturday, October 31, they will begin a five part Holmes adventure—“*Children of the Night, Part One*.” KIXI-AM will air an “*encore broadcast*” on Tuesday, November 3 at 8 p.m. (<https://kixi.com/>)

## “The Adventure of the Traveling SOB Mug!”

### Episode #2, by SOB Sunny Even:

At 10,335' Mt. Holmes (arrow) is the highest peak in Yellowstone National Park. At the same time Holmes was building his career in London, a contemporary (*and possible distant cousin*) of the Great Detective was exploring the American West. **William Henry Holmes** (1846-1933)—geologist, anthropologist, archaeologist, cartographer and mountain climber—ascended this peak in 1878 as part of the third Hayden Geologic Survey. The peak can be reached via a 10.8 mile trail near Apollonaris Spring.



*Here's Seattle SOB Ann Milam in the Library at her retirement community—with the piece she donated by artist Ryan Molenkamp* (<https://www.ryanmolenkamp.com>).

*Here's SOB Jerry Thorpe's display of new Royal Mail stamps! “The staff who work in Michael's framing department in Federal Way were very interested in the project. A very nice lady spent time with me to pick out just the right background color. The stamps were interesting and, PFL David, the coin that you donated to me added just the right touch of class.”*





## A Few Reviews...and More!

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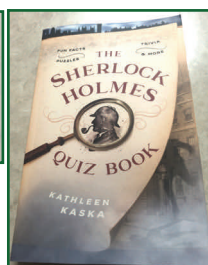
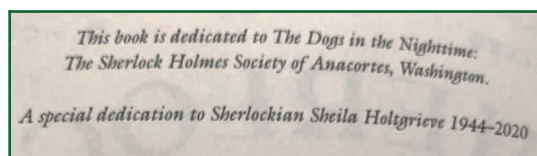
It also takes in his life away from the silver screen, which included his life-long friendship with Nigel Bruce, his trusty sidekick Dr. Watson.

**Ed. Note:** This item was contributed by SOB Geoff Jeffery. Anticipated in August, this new biography actually reached publication in November 2020.



From SOB Margie Deck

### The Sherlock Holmes Quiz Book



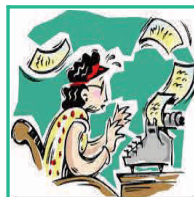
Author & Sherlockian Kathleen Kaska, President of The Dogs in the Nighttime, Anacortes, WA, published a new edition of her book, **The Sherlock Holmes Quiz Book** (Lyons Press, 2020, 320 pages), and it is dedicated to SOB Sheila Holtgrieve, who passed away on May 1, 2020.

A Report from SOB Nancy Holder, BSI

### The 2020 Richard Lancelyn Green Lecture— “Advising Government: Fiction and Fact in United Kingdom History”

On October 15, 2020, I attended the Sherlock Holmes Society of London’s annual Richard Lancelyn Green Lecture on Zoom. Richard Lancelyn Green was a British Sherlockian scholar who bequeathed his enormous collection of Sherlockiana to the City of Portsmouth, England, where Sir Arthur Conan Doyle lived for eight years and wrote *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of (the) Four*. The Portsmouth library has an impressive sampling of titles from the collection on display. The archives are open to researchers who apply in advance.

For the lecture, Sherlockian Zoomers beamed in from all over the globe: the US, Canada, Japan, Italy, Australia, and, of course, the U.K., among other countries. The speaker was Dr. Andrew Blick, a Reader in Politics and Contemporary History and Head of Department of Political Economy at King’s College London. He has written many books, essays and pamphlets about the U.K. constitution (the United Kingdom does not have a written constitution), and biographies of special advisers to ministers



From the Editor

**Calling all Writers,  
Puzzlers, Poets, Illustrators,  
Cooks, Reviewers and  
Jokesters!**

**Serious or silly, it’s all good!**

*Would you like to see your essay,  
story, review, pastiche, illustration,  
cartoon or research published?*

To contribute to our **Beaten’s Christmas Annual**, there’s much wider latitude than for our monthly newsletter (which is limited to 350 words).

Submissions to *Beaten’s* are taken in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the year, with a December 31 deadline.

Please send any queries and submissions to  
Editor Terri at:

**terri@soundofthebaskervilles.com**

*Surely you’ve got something to say about Holmes,  
Dr. Watson, Doyle, the Canon or Victorian-era  
England...about our Club, books, movies, TV shows or  
audio materials! Please share it with us!*

and of aides to prime ministers. Thus he was the perfect speaker to talk about **“Advising Government: Fiction and Fact in United Kingdom History.”**

One of the most fascinating facts of Dr. Blick’s lecture was that the “birthday” of the British Civil Service coincides with another birthday near and dear to all our hearts—1854, the year of the Master. Taking a cue from the Chinese system of “Mandarins,” the idea of holding specific exams to enter the Civil Service took root that year. Previously, governments (*i.e.*, *monarchs and their surrogates*) doled out positions in the government to people they knew and trusted. The earliest Anglo-Saxon kings did not have a specific home residence, but traveled constantly. Those who traveled with them served as their counselors and functionaries. In an effort to appease the raiding Vikings, they raised protection money, and tasked individuals with collecting money for the payments (*which, unfortunately, did not persuade the Vikings to stop pillaging, and resulted in the Viking King of England, Canute*). Once monarchs settled in one place, they developed privy counsels, and from that group sprang even more private “cabinets.”

Those known to these elite individuals on the privy councils and cabinets obtained other positions in government, but once the examination system opened entry into Civil Service by anyone who could pass the test, the convention began...

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The Sound  
of the  
Baskervilles

By appointment  
of Her Majesty,  
Queen Victoria

## Ineffable Twaddle

The 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, USA

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## A Report from SOB Nancy Holder, BSI

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....to change, but it was not an easy, overnight process. Two authors who opposed this new organization were Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens. Trollope asserted that there were jobs such as diplomacy best left to gentlemen. Dickens delivered a lecture on the subject at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1855, in which he decried the creation of "the Circumlocution Office" and pointed out that the slow, inefficient reliance on bureaucracy would have resulted in Parliament being blown up by Guy Fawkes—because no one would have been able to act fast enough to stop him!

After giving us a sense of the history of civil service, Dr. Blick moved on to the circumstances of Mycroft and Sherlock working for the government. We wondered aloud how many times Mycroft deputized Sherlock, and how often Sherlock was approached directly (*as, for example, in "The Adventure of the Second Stain"*). The thought of Sherlock Holmes as a civil servant rang differently to my American ears, but when he worked for the government, as in "His Last Bow," that's exactly what he was. The term "civil service" was originally coined to contrast with "military service" during the British occupation of India. So when Holmes worked for a "certain gracious lady"—Queen Victoria—he was indeed a civil servant.

We also talked the conventions of different countries regarding changing ministerial positions and cabinets ➦

### *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 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. Location of the meetings may vary.

Regularly scheduled additional events throughout the year include: "The Masters' Celebration" honoring the meeting of Holmes and Watson (March), "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, or to renew your membership, send your check for dues—\$25 for individuals, \$35 for families (U.S. funds only)—payable to The Sound of the Baskervilles—to:

SOB Treasurer  
P.O. Box 7633 • Tacoma, WA 98417

when there was a change at the top (the prime minister in the case of the U.K. and the president in the case of the U.S.). Career paths can be dependent on entering civil service and then moving around in different departments to gain expertise, and so civil servants can be regarded as, and trained to be, "generalists." Which then raised the question—was Holmes actually a generalist, or a specialist who specialized in many different fields?

All in all, it was a fascinating lecture, as well as an opportunity to connect with Sherlockians not only across the pond, but all over the world. I highly recommend joining the Sherlock Holmes Society of London to my fellow SOBs. Here's more information:

**The Sherlock Holmes Society of London was founded in 1951 and is open to anyone who is interested in Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.**

**A "literary and social Society," they are currently holding Zoom meetings, and during "normal times," folks who live too far away to participate in the Society's physical/social events may join as Associate Members for \$30 a year.**

**Adult memberships are \$45 dollars a year.**

**The Society usually organizes lots of events, including a weekend jaunt and a winter dinner held in the House of Commons. Their next event (already full up!) will be the Annual General Meeting, followed by a group viewing of a 1932 film, *A Study in Scarlet*, starring Reginald Owen.**

**For more information on the Society, see: <https://www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk>**