



Ineffable Twaddle

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

The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

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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



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Dynamic Doyle and Big Ben Share 150th!!

2009 marks the anniversary of the birth of two greats: Arthur Conan Doyle arrived on this planet and, while sources differ on the exact date, Big Ben began to chime.

Doyle's origins are easily traced via birth records...to May 22, 1959, in Edinburgh to an English father of Irish descent, Charles Altamont Doyle, and an Irish mother, née Mary Foley, who had married in 1855. It's said that Doyle's father was a chronic alcoholic and that he was the only member of his family who—apart from fathering a brilliant son—never accomplished anything of note in his life.

Jack Tracy, in his *The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana*, describes Doyle as "the famous English physician, novelist, patriot and literary agent...From 1882 to 1890 he practiced medicine at Southsea, but the success of some early attempts at fiction led him to give up his profession for a literary career. He is known to have acted as literary agent for Dr. John H. Watson in the placing for publication of Watson's adventures with Sherlock Holmes. It is generally agreed that he also wrote the American retrospectives in *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Valley of Fear*, and possibly the third-person narratives 'His Last Bow' and 'The Adventures of the Mazarin Stone.'"

Big Ben's "birth" is not so easily tracked. First, it should be noted that "Big Ben" is a bell, not a clock. It is, in fact, the great bell of the clock housed at the north-eastern end of the Palace of Westminster in London. The clock was installed in May 1859 and, a mere 9 days after Doyle's birth, that clock began ticking.

The White Chapel Bell Foundry, which cast the bell—at 9'-0" diameter, 7'-6" high and weighing at 13,760 kg—did so on Saturday April 10, 1858 but its story began more than two decades earlier: On October 16, 1834, fire destroyed the Palace of Westminster, but there are...

long the seat of the British government, and in 1844, Parliament decided that its new buildings, by then under construction, should incorporate a tower and clock. Yet it was 1851 before the clock's

designer, Edmund Beckett Denison, came up with a design which would meet the exacting specifications placed upon him.

According to White Chapel Bell Foundry, the bells of the Great Clock of Westminster rang across London for the first time on May 31, 1859—see news release above, which conflicts with that date. Parliament is said to have had a special sitting (the date of which we are unsure) to decide on a suitable name for the great hour bell. During the course of the debate, and amid the many suggestions that were made, Chief Lord of the Woods and Forests, Sir Benjamin Hall, a large and ponderous man known affectionately in the House as "Big Ben", rose and gave an impressively long speech on the subject. When, at the end of this oratorical marathon, Sir Benjamin sank back into his seat, a wag in the chamber shouted out: "Why not call him Big Ben and have done with it?" The house erupted in laughter; Big Ben had been named...or so one story goes.

As to Doyle, there is much that we do know, but there are...

Big Ben Marks 150 Years

Britain's Big Ben marked

its 150th birthday, with a celebration in London on July 11. The booming bell first pealed that same day in 1859—a few weeks after the clock in the famous tower above the Houses of Parliament began keeping time. Ben's bongs, marking the hour, are a cherished feature of life in The City and are still carried globally by the BBC.

Source: *The News Tribune (Tacoma)*



Inside this issue:

- Dynamic Doyle and Big Ben Share 150th!!* 1
- Simple Yet Difficult... The Man with the Twisted Lip* 2
- Things to See, Buy, Do & Know* 3
- Member News & Updates* 4



New Members!!

Treasurer Al Nelson tells us we have two new

Members in

David & Carol Smith of Tacoma.

Al met the Smiths at the local "Richard the Third" club, and encouraged them to join us!!

Welcome, David & Carol!

Continued on Page 2

Simple Yet Difficult...The Man with the Twisted Lip

The August 10, 2009 Meeting of The Sound of the Baskervilles will begin at 6:00 p.m. at T.S. McHugh's Public House, 21 Mercer Street, Seattle, (206) 282-1910.

Come early, order dinner and catch up with other SOBs! Many arrive as early as 5:00.

Our 6th adventure first appeared in the *Strand* for December 1891 and is dated by Watson as having taken place in June 1889.

Says PFL David: Watson begins this account by telling the sad story of Isa Whitney, an opium addict. In trying to save the unfortunate Whiney, Watson finds himself in the Bar of Gold, an opium den wherein he stumbles upon Holmes! Assuring Watson he's not become an opium fiend, Holmes explains that he's searching for the missing Neville St. Clair.

All signs point to St. Clair's having been murdered, and beggar extraordinaire Hugh Boone is duly arrested. But is Boone really guilty of killing St. Clair?? Unravel this desperate tale by reading "The Man with the Twisted Lip"!



Dynamic Doyle and Big Ben

some lesser-known, *non-fiction* related, yet interesting factoids as well.

For example, after his medical training at the U of Edinburgh, Doyle served as a ship's doctor on a voyage to the West African coast. He then studied the eye in Vienna and moved to London in 1891 to set up a practice as an ophthalmologist.

While practicing in Southsea, Doyle played football as a goalkeeper. He was also a keen cricketer, an occasional bowler, and a practiced golfer, being elected captain of Crowborough Beacon Golf Club in East Sussex for the year 1910.

Following the Boer War and the condemnation from around the world over the UK's conduct, Doyle wrote a short pamphlet titled, *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct*, which justified the UK's role. He believed that it was this pamphlet that resulted in his being knighted in 1902 and appointed Deputy-Lieutenant of Surrey. During the early years of the 20th century, Sir Arthur twice ran for Parliament as a Liberal Unionist, once in Edinburgh and once in the Hawick Burghs, but although he received a respectable vote, he was not elected.

Unlike Holmes—whose obituary has never appeared in *The Times* and who, some say, "never lived and so can never die"—the mortal Doyle has passed. He suffered a heart attack at age 71 on July 7, 1930, having been found clutching his chest in the hall of Windlesham, his house in Crowborough, East Sussex.

To learn more about Doyle and his real persona, check out some of the many biographies of his life—

some you'll find in the SOB Library, from several of which these facts were gleaned.

In January and May each year, we SOBs pay special homage to our beloved Holmes. Though rightly titled "The Dr. John H. Watson Picnic", **don't miss our annual get-together in Burien on Saturday, July 25, when we'll lift a glass and enjoy some cake in memory of both our 150-year-olds: Sir Arthur and Big Ben.**



Continued from Page 1

The Astronomer Royal, George Airy was appointed to draft a specification for the Palace of Westminster's clock. One of his requirements was that: "the first stroke of the hour bell should register the time, correct to within one second per day, and furthermore that it should telegraph its performance twice a day to Greenwich Observatory, where a record would be kept."

"He is a professional beggar."



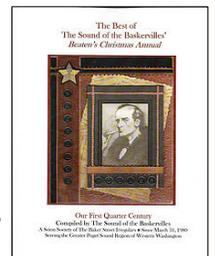
The Man with the Twisted Lip

Interesting Facts From TWIS:

- ☞ Laudanum is a tincture (alcohol solution) of opium.
- ☞ Hugh Boone showed uncommon acumen for a beggar, setting up his trade in Threadneedle Street, the centre of London's financial area.
- ☞ Wax vestas are waterproofed matches.

Another Great Review of Our "Best...of Beaten's"

Roger Johnson, Editor of The London Society's District Messenger,



sent a missive to his e-address list titled "I Am an Omnivorous Reader". In 6 pages of book reviews by Roger and 6 others, our 25th anniversary edition of *Beaten's Christmas Annual* got a great review from Audrey Jones, who said—among other glowing remarks—"This compilation by The Sound of the Baskervilles has eclectic charm, wit and tongue-in-cheek humour. A pleasant addition to any Sherlockian bookshelf."

From Margaret Nelson's Notes... on their recent trip to the U.K.

"...went to Kenwood House for lunch and a Victorian fete where we learned a lot about Victorian lady riders' dress and sidesaddles, and saw riders take jumps (*successfully*) over a set table, and even Queen Victoria who was also there."

That's AI at left with Herself!!!

Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

● **This came to us via our website:** Eureka Productions has published "Science Fiction Classics: Graphic Classics Volume Seventeen", the first full-color volume in the Graphic Classics® series of comics adaptations of great literature. "Science Fiction Classics" presents comics adaptations of stories from the original creators of science fiction including "The War of the Worlds" by H.G. Wells and "A Martian Odyssey" by Stanley G. Weinbaum. Also featured are "In the Year 2889", a rare short story by Jules Verne, "**The Disintegration Machine**", starring **Arthur Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger**, and E.M. Forster's only SF tale, the poignant "The Machine Stops". Graphic Classics are available in bookstores, comics shops, or from the publisher at www.graphicclassics.com.

● **From SOB Stu Shiffman:** Here's a cool resource—www.postercheckout.com/PictureGroup.asp?SearchString=sherlock&x=14&y=9. There are copies of movie posters, dust jacket covers and photographs. Order \$35 or more, and postage is free.

● **From SOB Geoff Jeffery:**

⇒ The latest issue of **British Heritage** has a nice 6-page article on SH and ACD. Nothing we haven't seen before really, but nicely done. You can probably get a copy at Borders or Barnes and Noble.

⇒ **The Royal Mail is doing a series of stamps** commemorating eminent Britons in October and one of them is going to be ACD. If Club Members would like, I would be happy to order extras for anyone who wants them. As we get closer, I will give you information as to the different items available and the cost. There will be Presentation Packs, stamp post cards and even first day covers that can be addressed to specific Club Members if they like.

● **Holmes and Watson crest sweatshirts are available from Classic Specialties** at \$35.99 each plus postage. If you wear size XL, you can also get a full colour sweatshirt from these same folks with the quote from our newsletter, "*It Is My Business To Know What Other People Don't Know.*" for \$28.99 plus postage. Look at these and more items at: www.sherlock-holmes.com/wear.htm#indytie

● **"The Remarkable Characters of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle"** is an all-day symposium on September 29, 2009 jointly presented at the Lilly Library at Indiana University by the Friends of the Lilly Library and The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis, a scion society of The BSI. "Remarkable Characters..." will be presented in conjunction with a major Doylean exhibit at the Lilly Library in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Conan Doyle's birth in 1859, and will explore the characters less-often studied by the Doylean and Sherlockian faithful. The symposium has a full roster of expert speakers including: Nicholas Meyer on Sir Nigel Loring, Les Klinger on Sherlock Holmes, Clifford Goldfarb on Brigadier Gerard, Roy Pilot on Professor Challenger, and Susan Rice on Ladies of the Doylean Canon. A buffet lunch is included, as is a

catered dinner at the IU Art Museum. Cost is \$95. For details and registration, go to: <http://lillylibrary.holmesconference.ning.com/>

● **From Seattle Mystery Bookshop:** We've acquired someone's **Sherlock Holmes collection**. If you have an interest, contact: Seattle Mystery Bookshop, 117 Cherry St., Seattle, WA 98104, 206-587-5737, www.seattlemystery.com

● **From Peter Blau:**

⇒ Unveiled at the Harvard symposium "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: A Sesquicentennial Assessment" is the **latest volume in The BSIs' Manuscript Series, "So Painful A Scandal"**, which has a facsimile of the manuscript of "The Adventure of the Three Students", and commentary on the manuscript and the story by Sherlockian scholars, edited by John Bergquist. There's also an attractive full-color dust-jacket showing a previously unpublished Frederic Dorr Steele drawing for the story. The cost of the book is \$35 (\$38.95 ppd to North America) from The BSI (3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953); or order on-line at www.bakerstreetjournal.com.

⇒ The papers presented at the Harvard symposium (above) will be published as "**Papers At An Exhibition**", and you can pre-order this item from The BSI; cost will be \$35 plus shipping. There'll also be a limited-edition boxed set in 3 volumes, that will include both "So Painful A Scandal" (ibid) and "Papers At An Exhibition" in a uniform Harvard crimson cloth binding stamped in gold, and "Ever Westward: Arthur Conan Doyle and American Culture", the annotated catalog of the exhibition in a special soft-cover binding. You can pre-order the boxed set now only by mail, by sending checks (\$203.95 to North America and \$229.50 elsewhere) to The BSI (3040 Sloat Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953).

⇒ Ever wondered what happened to the **film starring Sasha Baron Cohen as Holmes and Will Ferrell as Watson**? Ferrell (has) said that they have a script and are still talking about the film, but realize that Guy Ritchie's film (with Robert Downey Jr.) is likely to be a hit, and might start a franchise, and they don't want to appear to be copying that film.

● **From Roger Johnson:** Until recently the most accessible account of the "fatal battle" at Maiwand was Leigh Maxwell's excellent *My God—Maiwand*. Now we also have Richard Stacpoole-Ryding's engagingly written book, ***Maiwand: The Last Stand of the 66th (Berkshire) Regiment in Afghanistan, 1880*** (*The History Press* 2008, 224 pp. £19.99), the first to consider Maiwand specifically in relation to Watson's regiment. We follow the Berkshires from Ireland to India in 1870, and then through the next decade, so that when the cataclysmic battle breaks out we feel we know the men who fought against Ayub Khan's army. Signed copies are available from The Rifles (Berkshire and Wiltshire) Museum at The Wardrobe, 58 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EX; www.thewardrobe.org.uk

Last Survivor of 'Unsinkable' Titanic Dies



Millvina Dean, who as a baby was wrapped in a sack and lowered into a lifeboat in the frigid North Atlantic, died at 97 on May 31, having been the last survivor of the 1912 sinking of the RMS Titanic. Initially scheduled to travel on another ship, the family was transferred to the Titanic because of a coal strike. Dean said her father felt the ship scrape the iceberg and hustled the family out of its third-class quarters and toward the lifeboat that would take them to safety. "That's partly what saved us because he was so quick," Dean told the BBC in 1998.

Thanks to Bill Seil for this!



Lead Soldiers & Other Figures

Margaret Nelson reported at the July Meeting of their recent visit abroad, where they looked in on "The Guards Toy Soldier Centre" in Wellington Barracks, Bird Cage Walk, London.

"It's down the block from Buckingham Palace, has a super display of soldier figures set up in battles, and is free. I had never seen casualties portrayed in toy soldiers before, but there they were.

Most of the models are Britains, some are original lead toy soldiers, and many, if not all, were for sale. If you like lead figures or collect toy soldiers, you would like this. They even had Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth's coronation coach, and reviewing stands for a medieval joust, with the ladies in one stand and the men in the other.

Al got a Watson and Holmes made in Wales there. If you've seen the displays at the Magic Mouse in Seattle, you will have a very small idea of what this centre was like."

Email: www.mklmodels.co.uk.



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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 at 6:00 p.m., 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.



- Dates of Interest**
- [July 25](#)
Annual Dr. John H. Watson Picnic
Seahurst Park,
Burien, 12:00 p.m.
 - [August 10](#)
Regular Monthly Meeting,
T.S. McHugh's
 - [September 7](#)
Labor Day (USA)
 - [September 14](#)
Regular Monthly Meeting,
T.S. McHugh's
 - [October 12](#)
Regular Monthly Meeting,
T.S. McHugh's

Member News & Updates

Those attending the July SOB Meeting, presided over by **PFL David Haugen**, were:

Lauran Stevens	Stephen Adkins	Terri Haugen
Al Nelson	Margaret Nelson	Barbara Nelson
John Nelson	Becky Geis	John Geis
Ginie Romnes	James Romnes	Joyce Funk
Ed Funk	Nancy Polley	Manson Polley
Peter Chelemados		

News & Notes:

- It was great to see **Nancy & Manson** again, as part of their stay and visit on Vashon with their daughter. They both looked terrific, though Nancy was recovering from shoulder surgery.
- **Stephen** had just come from his first day of interning as a chem-dep professional trainee, and passed around the May 27 issue of *Country Life*, which featured an article titled "What's the Clue to Holmes's Survival? It's Elementary". In it, author Mark Griffiths notes that Holmes' and Watson's "...popularity is greater than ever on Conan Doyle's 150th birthday".
- **Margaret** said she and **Margie Deck** had visited Nacho Ospina's widow, **Ligia**; she is doing well and wishes us all the best.
- Regarding the Toy Soldier Center (see Page 3), **Manson** said The Guards' Chapel is nearby, across the street from "The Mews" at Buckingham Palace and is a great place to attend Anglican mass. "We were totally awed by the pageantry and

music and all. Would love to go again someday."

- There was a 3-way tie, as determined by PFL-ess Terri, for the quiz/discussion of FIVE amongst Barbara, Ginie and Lauran. We decided that Watson's phrasing, "...the wind cried and sobbed like a child in the chimney" must have related to youngsters who had to work as chimney sweeps, since we couldn't imagine loving Victorian parents shoving their kids up a chimney for any other reason!!
- A get-well card was circulated at the June Meeting for **Paul Williams** who had suffered a setback in his recovery and ended up at the ER just prior to his call. As Paul so eloquently told PFL David, "It's the first time I have been there in seven months!" He's feeling much better and is now back at work.
- **Don Mathews** called to let us know he has retired—a bit earlier than planned—and moved to Idaho, settling near his cousin. He will send us his new contact info soon.
- From **Dwight Holmes**: *Saw this bear (in late May) in Manning Park in British Columbia while on a motorcycle ride. It was pretty big!! I see bears all the time at Whistler but not usually this close.*



Members decided we should revisit the "Dogs of The Canon"!!! So bring your ideas and be ready to vote at the August Meeting!! PFL David will bring along **both** our prior list of "Dogs" and the list of ACD's own favorites, which we may or may not want to violate!