

Ineffable Twaddle

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



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



Masters' Celebration!

Our celebration of Holmes & Watson's meeting in March 1881 is:

Date: Saturday, March 11, 2017

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: The Olive Branch Café & Tea Room

2501 East D Street, Tacoma

You'll have your choice of lunch or high tea! Complete details—including costs for each option and what's included in each option—can be found in the enclosed flyer.

The Olive Branch is an excellent new venue for The SOBs, located near the Tacoma Dome, with plenty of parking directly across the street.

Several SOB Members are quite familiar with The Olive Branch, having already enjoyed the fine food, drink and hospitality of owner Terry Waller!



Please be sure to return the "clip-off" coupon on the flyer—by USPS or email—by March 3rd to reserve your spot!

A Word about Completing the "Clip-Off" Coupon:

When choosing between the "Lunch Option" or the "High Tea Option", please insert the number of people in your party choosing each of the 2 options; for example, if there are 4 in your party, 2 may want lunch, 2 may want high tea:

Lunch Option at \$18.10 2 High Tea Option at \$45.00 2

If the "Lunch Option" is your party's preferred choice, insert the number of people choosing each of the 3 sandwich options:

Sandwich selection: 2 Almond Chicken

1 Turkey Lover 1 Grilled Veggie

If questions develop, contact Terri H. at: (253) 460-2753 or terri@soundofthebaskervilles.com

"I Say, Watson, That's a Cute Baby!"

Excerpted from New York Times, December 30, 2016 May contain spoilers!

If Arthur Conan Doyle were writing it, he might call it "The Adventure of the Changeable Detective."

"Sherlock" arrived on BBC and PBS in 2010, a fresh and frantic reinvention of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales that focused on the pure joy of intellect. Holmes, played with a waspish glee by Benedict Cumberbatch, delighted in solving puzzles no one else could solve, and we delighted along with him. The bromance between Holmes and John Watson (Martin Freeman) added some emotional texture but didn't get in the way of the fun.

Then came the show's third season in 2014. A little of the air went out of the writing, which was disappointing but not too surprising—Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, the show's creators, had set themselves a very high standard. More ominous, though, was their introduction of a girlfriend and then wife for Watson, Mary (Amanda Abbington), who turned out to have a hidden past as a spy. Her function, it seemed, was to generate situations that would draw out Holmes's protectiveness on Watson's behalf-to humanize Holmes. But being inhuman. in a witty and almost balletic way, had always been the best and most interesting thing about him.

Which brings us to Season 4. It comes after a three-year layoff, except for a Christmas special last year, and begins with... Continued on Page 4

Volume 36 Issue 2 February, 2017

Inside this issue:

- Masters' Celebration is 1 March 11!
- "I Say, Watson, That's a 1
 Cute Baby"
 Submitted by
 SOB AI Nelson
- New, New, New for 2017! 2
 - "Millennial Holmes" 2
 Submitted by
 SOB Ann Milam
 - Another New Member 2
 - Sherlock Seattle: 3 To Be, or Not to Be?
 - Sherlock Holmes: 3
 The Thinking Engine
 A Review by
 SOB Charlie Cook
 - Things to See, Buy, 4 Do & Know
- Two New Books On Victoria, 5 Queen of All She Surveyed Submitted by SOB Bill Seil
 - BSI Weekend News 5
 - Member News & Notes 6





The Seattle **Public Library** on Queen Anne Hill is at **400 West** Garfield



Library opens at 1:00, closes at 5:00. Come early, and catch up with your fellow SOBs!

Getting there:

From north- or southbound I-5, exit at Mercer Street and head west. Turn right on Queen Anne Avenue and head up the hill. At the 3-way stop sign at the top, turn left onto West Galer Street. At 4th Avenue, turn right. The library is one (1) block north on the northwest corner, at the cross with Garfield Street.

Another New Member!!

Joining us in late December



♦ Elinor Gray, who's been an irregular attendee at our meetings of late and is a Sherlockian of some renown who, when she lived in the UK. cofounded and is still co-President of The Retired Beekeepers of Sussex! Welcome, Elinor!!

Please Note:

Standard distribution of our monthly newsletter is now by email! Those with NO email and those who "opted out" of receiving *Ineffable Twaddle* by email will continue to receive it by snail-mail!!!

If you need to make a change, please contact Editor Terri:

Call: (253) 460-2753 Email: terri@soundofthe baskervilles.com

New, New, New for 2017!

The February 19, 2017 Regular Monthly Meeting of The Sound of the Baskervilles will begin at 1:30 p.m. at The Seattle Public Library (Queen Anne Branch) at 400 West Garfield, Seattle (driving directions at left).

If you have a favourite snack or non-alcoholic beverage you'd like to share, please feel free to bring it along!! Says program-runner SOB Margie Deck:

"New Year, new president, new BBC Sherlock (finally)—the theme for 2017 appears to be New. However, one thing is constant in all this newness: The SOBs will meet regularly in 2017 to discuss the sixty Sherlockian tales penned by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

What will be new is the chronology used to determine a discussion schedule.

Leaving behind what one critic called "the training-wheels" of chronology (that is, the sequence used in Baring-Gould's The Annotated Sherlock Holmes), the SOBs will in 2017 approach the chronology with a different method—a sequence new to this group's discussion calendar.

At the February meeting, the sequence—modified somewhat from Leslie Klinger's The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes—will be briefly reviewed and, hopefully, some Members will be recruited to lead some of the upcoming discussions."

In addition, SOB Lauran Stevens will have a new quiz for us: Identify the story from which her famous Holmes quotes come!!

Then, the prepared segments will close with some slight entertainment, about which PFL David is being quite mysterious!! Fun, fun, fun!!

"Millennial Holmes"

Book review by Louisa Stein: excerpted from Middlebury Magazine, Fall, 2016

Authors other than Arthur Conan Doyle have been writing stories about Sherlock Holmes and John Watson since the early years of Holmes' popularity. Into this well-trodden but still rich ground enters Middlebury alumna Brittany Cavallaro with A Study in Charlotte. The book's tagline reads,



"You've never seen Watson and Holmes like this before," and, given the innumerable incarnations of Holmes, that's a tall claim. And yet it's one I'm inclined to go along with, because I found Cavallaro's offering both charming and disarming, precisely in the personal and intimate way it brought me into teenaged (Jamie) Watson and (Charlotte) Holmes' world, while interweaving nods explicit and implicit to the many versions of Holmes, as well as to other detectives that have followed in his footsteps. The book takes on issues of gender, violence and peer social negotiations, class and family, issues one can recognize in Doyle's Holmes stories, but that here play out with a contemporary millennial resonance.

Within the longstanding world of Sherlockiana, there is a shared investment in the

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson meet in this first book of a new trilogy.

The descendants of notion that Holmes and Watson were indeed real, historical figures, and Doyle was only Watson's editor. A Study in Charlotte takes this "grand game" as its starting assumption, but focuses on the current generation of Holmes and Watson, who meet (as in the namesake story, "A Study in Scarlet") for the first time when they find themselves exiled from London to Sherringford prep school in

Connecticut. I won't say too much about the plot that unfolds, but I found that A Study in Charlotte offers a Holmes and Watson who feel like a synthesis of some of my favorite interpretations yet who also coalesce as individual characters whom I came to care for quite a bit. I wanted to see how they worked through their internal issues and their issues with one another and, of course, I wanted to find out how they solved the mystery within which they inevitably found themselves embroiled. I guite... **Continued on Page 4**



Sherlock Seattle: To Be, or Not to Be?

Source: http://sherlockseattle.tumblr.com/page/4 **Tumblr posting January 6, 2017**



It seems appropriate to write this post today of all days: January 6th, Sherlock Holmes' birthday. The guestion in this case is whether the "Sherlock Seattle" convention will continue to exist or if "Sherlock Seattle 2016" will have been our last year.

The biggest challenge that we face is having enough staff to make the convention happen, such that no one person is carrying too heavy a burden, and it is a challenge that we have yet to meet. As such, we've decided to put the fate of Holmes vows to solve the crime and plans to stay in Oxford Sherlock Seattle in the hands of the Fandom. If we can find enough people to make the convention happen, then we will put on "Sherlock Seattle 2017". If we cannot, then we will shelve the convention for a year, or possibly forever.

We already have a fantastic Guest of Honor lined up: Rachel Talalay, who directed The Six Thatchers from BBC Sherlock, Series 4, and we would love to find someone else that Holmes solved. But Watson tells us in the same field—perhaps a writer or director from "Elementary".

So here is our challenge to you all:

- * If you have a passion for ALL the iterations of Sherlock Holmes: and
- * If you want there to be a "Sherlock Seattle 2017"; and
- * If you are willing to put in the time and effort to make it happen,

then send us an email at sherlock.seattle@gmail.com and put CONCOM in the subject line.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The "GoFundMe" project for the *Sherlock* Seattle Convention (see Page 4, Ineffable Twaddle for January 2016, https://www.gofundme.com/help-sherlockseattle) exceeded the requested goal of \$3,500 for paying off 2016 expenses—in 1 month with 104 contributors. So think about getting involved! As SOB VP Kashena Konecki said in last month's issue, "Sherlock Seattle been a cornerstone of good Sherlockian times in Seattle for the last four years!"

Sherlock Holmes: The Thinking Engine

by James Lovegrove, Titan Books (2015) A Review by SOB Charlie Cook

After quickly solving a mystery in a museum and a brief encounter with a young thespian named Erik Weisz (stage name "Harry Houdini"), Holmes is greatly insulted as he reads in a newspaper that an Oxford professor, one Malcom Quantock, has built a Thinking Engine which can outdo Babbage's Difference Engine at mathematics and

can even solve crimes quicker than the police or even Sherlock Holmes, a detective of "modest repute", whom he challenges to a "contest".

A large reward is offered, by a newspaper supporting the "TE", to anyone who can beat the machine in solving a crime, and Holmes takes up the challenge. He is not only assisted by Watson, but also by Inspector Tomlinson of the Oxford Police who admires the great detective and is also furious over the claims of the police being less competent than the "TE" at solving crimes.

Both the machine and the detectives work to solve the grisly murder of a woman and her two children; both arriving at the same conclusion. The machine actually spits out an additional bit of information which, along with another murder that soon follows, has both "investigators" baffled. until he does. By doing so he is introduced to several other minor mysterious events requiring his skills, of which the professor and his "TE" are unaware.

One of these, Watson tells us, is the case he entitled "The Adventure of the Three Students", which readers of the Canon know that he kept back the real reason for their sojourn to Oxford for a quarter of a century for the usual reasons. Furthermore, since neither man nor machine is making any im-

mediate progress on the murder, Watson shares some of these lessor cases with the reader and informs us that Holmes may be having second thoughts about the skills of the "TE", as it has been successfully solving very minor problems brought to it by the students of the University. Even Lewis Carroll has brought a matter to the machine, which it successfully solved.

But Holmes investigates a more serious matter as the coach of one of the College's rowing teams informs the detective that their captain and best rower has disappeared. Some of the team members want the "TE" to deal with the problem. However the Coach prefers a human investigator and the sleuth amazes everyone by quickly reaching the correct solution as to the location of the missing oarsman and what happened to him. Unfortunately more disaster confronts the Oxford scene as another murder is committed.

The detective decides to seek help from the "TE" and uncharacteristically goes berserk, verbally attacking the "TE", Watson and Tomlinson. He then goes into recluse taking drugs. Is all of this a ploy to get Watson to save him and unmask a killer? Sound familiar? (See "Sherlock", series 4, episode 2.)

Some would abandon a person after such a diatribe, but Watson is no wimp! There are times,... Continued on Page 5



Things to See, Buy, Do & Know



⇒ SOB Cameron Brandon emailed: a huge array and variety I saw this billboard a few times on my of Sherlockian items. He's trip to London over the holidays and at: was finally able to pull over and get a RealWoodCrafts. shot. It looked much better at night, ⇒ Remember: The though, as it was beautifully lit up. It "Masterpiece" 2017 reminded me that I should try to find Sweepstakes continues the episode on the net somewhere.

one. Wish I was there to talk about it with the group!

- ⇒ From SOB Jean Macdonald: Thought this "classic" comic might be something an SOB might want—"The Hound of the Baskervilles" by Arthur Conan Doyle, David Mann, (illustrator), Pulp! The Classics, (paper, imported, \$4.98)
- ⇒ SOB Judy Lyen tells us that SOB Jim French's last performance of Imagine Theater was on January 30 (sold out!); the March and April performances had to be cancelled due to Jim's poor health. We wish him well!!!
- ⇒ SOB Ann Milam: Attempting to learn more about Holmes and the Catholic Church. Read both of these; first one's pretty interesting, the other's a dud. • The Death of Cardinal Tosca (The Dispatch Box of John H Watson, MD Book 3) (Kindle; \$3.49) • The Sudden Death of Cardinal Tosca: A Sherlock Holmes Adventure (Kindle edition: \$3.49)
- ⇒ The next two items are from SOB Bill Seil:
- Saw this at Sherlocktron: "Arthur and Sherlock, and the creation of Sherlock Holmes, by Michael Sims, \$27.80 is a wonderful, fascinating book, a really good read, and a valuable future reference. I would call it a focused biography about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle paying exceptional attention to those influences in his life that led to the creation of Sherlock Holmes...The depth and detail presented in this book is amazing, and I think this book is for everyone and it belongs in every Sherlockian's library!"
- Heywood Hill Bookstore, London: If you would like to read about an old fashioned bookstore in London go to the following site: http://www.vanityfair.com/style/2017/01/how-heywood-hillbookshop-is-surviving-in-the-digital-age. Once you read the article, though, you will understand that you may not walk out with any books: They create (and sell) private, personalized libraries based on specific requests and "reading consultations"! If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it!!
- ⇒ Look what SOB Al Nelson got for Christmas: This customcarved, real wood desk decoration from Real Wood Crafts! The crafter says at his website that he specializes in "puzzles." signs, guitar table ornaments and signs, western signs, and wood ornaments that make great display pieces". The price for a piece similar to mine is only \$18. The flyer that came with my gift shows

www.etsv.com/shop/



daily through January 31, 2017. It's a chance to win the Emmyand I did! So I have seen the first episode already; pretty good Award winning script for last year's special, "The Abominable Bride"—signed by Cumberbatch, Freeman, Scott and Gatiss.

Continued on Page 5

..."That's a Cute Baby!"

Continued from Page 1

...an episode called "The Six Thatchers," based on the Doyle story "The Adventure of the Six Napoleons." As in the story,

someone is seeking out and breaking plaster busts of that titular historical figure.

It's a transitional, fragmented episode built around narrative red herrings...Holmes invokes "the game" that's afoot, but the episode's real through line is a repeated analogy to the tale of the appointment in



Samarra and its theme of the inescapability of death. If there's a game being played, it's a grim one.

The BBC made only the first of the season's three episodes available for review. So there's no knowing whether the show will get its verve on again after this middling start. (Some major events in the premiere are meant to be shocking but when it comes down to it, don't carry that great an emotional charge.)

Draw what conclusions you will from the season finale's title, "The Final Problem", which is the Doyle story in which Moriarty and Holmes plunge into a waterfall together. In the meantime, watching "Sherlock" is like dropping in on old friends who are as smart and sarcastic as ever but don't seem to have as much joy in their lives anymore.

"Millennial..." **Continued from Page 2**

...enjoyed this angular and edgy yet surprisingly self-aware (for Holmes, at least) Charlotte and this highly self-critical James Watson, who dreams nonetheless of having adventures and living through them to become an author like his great-great-grandfather. It is this web of history and contemporary resonance, both within the narrative and at a meta level, that I found most compelling, and I find myself looking forward to the next book in the series so that I can spend more time not just with Holmes and Watson but with Charlotte and Jamie, too.



Things to See, Buy,...

Continued from Page 4

From Peter Blau's "Scuttlebutt": The Washington Consumer's Checkbook had an interesting item in August 2013 explaining how to "eRead for Free" (www.tinyurl.com/j6ombba). The options include web-sites such as ManyBooks, Open Library, and Project Gutenberg, all of which offer much more than the text of the Canon. Search for [sherlock holmes] and [conan doyle]; you'll find surprises, old and new, among the results.

Two New Books On Victoria, Queen of All She Surveyed

by Moira Macdonald, Seattle Times, 12/27/16

Excerpt provided by SOB Bill Seil

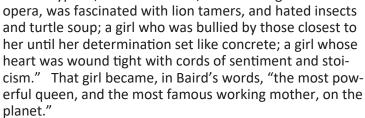
Two new books, a novel and a biography, illuminate the life of Queen Victoria, who ruled much of the world in the 19th century. Julia Baird's biography "Victoria: The Queen" is the best companion to the upcoming PBS series.

- Victoria: The Queen by Julia Baird, Random House, \$35
- Victoria by Daisy Goodwin, St. Martin's Press, \$26.99

Should you wish, in these times of political turmoil, to step away from the present day and immerse yourself in the life of one of history's most powerful women, opportunity abounds in both fact and fiction. Julia Baird's new biography <u>Victoria</u>: <u>The Queen</u> is just out, as is Daisy Goodwin's novel <u>Victoria</u>, based on the young English queen's early years on the throne. The latter appears in tandem with the TV miniseries "Victoria", created and scripted by Goodwin and airing on PBS.

And while I'll definitely be watching the series, Goodwin's novel feels pale alongside the biography, in which the woman herself emerges. <u>Victoria</u> the novel is pleasant enough but a bit plodding; the dialogue often stilted; the central character sweet but unformed.

Far livelier is Baird's biography, which in a single sentence creates a character more intriguing than the one sketched in Goodwin's entire book: Victoria, at 18, was "[a] girl who read Charles Dickens, worried about the welfare of Gypsies, adored animals, loved to sing



<u>Victoria: The Queen</u> walks us through the milestones of that long, remarkable life: the happy yet stifling marriage to Albert (to whom she was, awkwardly, both sovereign and subservient); the many prime ministers; the nine chil-

dren; the dramatic, lengthy mourning upon Albert's death at the age of 42; the astonishing transformation of a civilization during her 64-year reign, from 1837 until her death in 1901.

Like the best biographers, Baird writes like a novelist, and her book is crammed with irresistible detail and description. Most fascinating: Victoria's relationship with Melbourne —"one of the great platonic romances of modern history"—and, later, her close friendship with her ghillie John Brown.

Upon her death, a nation mourned; most of its citizens (like those of England today, where Victoria's great-great-granddaughter reigns) had never known another monarch. Henry James, marveling at the crowds gathered for the funeral procession, summed up the feeling: "We all felt, publicly, at first, quite motherless."

Editor's Note: And, don't miss PBS's series, "Victoria", which began on January 15, 2017. Check local listings for times and dates. You can also view full episodes on the web at: http://www.pbssocal.org/programs/masterpiece/full-episodes/?gclid=CJ6cr ZOrzNECFZ-SPfgod8kIDyg

... The Thinking Engine Continued from Page 3

...of course, when he takes Holmes' chastising with a pinch of London fog, but also times when he can be as ferocious as a seasoned rugby player treating his friend as an opponent. But when really needed, he does the detective's bidding as they work together to resolve all of the dilemmas confronting them at Oxford. It's the journey that's worth the ride rather than, perhaps, the destination but what follows is an interesting twist involving some of Holmes' old foes as well as some new ones.

There are enough cleverly presented references to the Canon for the reader who enjoys pastiches to find this novel to be one of the better ones. It is very well-written with a variety of tidbits of arcane information to make it both interesting and entertaining. Give it a try.

BSI Weekend News (sort of!)

- ⇒ From Newer SOB Nancy Holder: BSI weekend has been wonderful! Many people here have heard of how many events The SOBs have and the Norwegian Explorers here said to say "Hello!" to you all. ★ MX Publishing is offering the following 20% discount promo code: bsi2016 ★ Mark and I are planning to be at the February meeting.
- ⇒ From SOB Sonia Fetherston, BSI: Fell on an icy patch; ankle broken in a couple of places. ★ Had to stay home from BSI weekend; a wise choice, as there's no way I could have hobbled around the airport let alone those long, long city blocks in New York!





The Sound of the **Baskervilles**

By appointment of Her Majesty, Oueen 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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University Place, WA 98467-2287



Regular Monthly Meeting, Sunday, February 19, 1:30 p.m. at Queen Anne Library, Seattle See details on Page 2!

Masters' Celebration! Saturday, March 11, 1:00 p.m. at The Olive Branch Café in Tacoma

Regular Monthly Meeting, Sunday, March 19, 1:30 p.m. at Queen Anne Library, Seattle

Anniversary Tea! Saturday, April 1, 1:00 p.m. **Location TBA**

Regular Monthly Meeting, Sunday, April 23 * 1:30 p.m. at Queen Anne Library, Seattle * This is a change, as Easter falls April 16—3rd Sunday!

Member News & Notes

SOBs attending our January 15, 2017 Meeting, presided over by PFL David Haugen, were:

Sheila Holtgrieve Sonny Even **Airy Maher** Vivika Sundavist Pat McIntosh Judy Lyen **Francis Bond** Terri Haugen Al Nelson Lauren Messenger Chris "Bear" Berwald

• Vivika put off her "Shanksnag..." talk again (though she did tell us a Maroon-Party was a Victorian-era, American custom of camping out, with all the rich folks' regalia brought along by their servants). Instead she educated us all with her fascinating talk on "The Lost Rivers of London", using as her source the book of the same title by Nicholas Barton & Stephen Myers (Historical Publications, Revised/Extended Edition, 2016) and London's Lost Rivers by Paul Talling (Random House, 2011). Conversation extended to library—I designed the room to have more the "Rivers of London" book series by Ben Aaronovitch (Gollancz, 2011), described as a Neil Gaiman- from my Vietnam war protesting days, so I style of entertaining fiction, which Airy, Lauren and guess I could use that. Be prepared for a few Sonny all recommend. We also diverted to discus- posts claiming people did not wear arm sion of Domesday Book (commissioned in December 1085 by William the Conqueror), which Al noted is available for online access at the British Library! ☆ Club Librarian Sheila suggests Members preorder books from our reference library, so she can bring them to the next meeting for you; also, priority for borrowing from the library goes to our JHWS Treasure Hunt Team during August each year! Sheila also noted that she and Margie Deck have begun to reform our 2017 Treasure Hunt Team; contact them to participate on the SOB Team! * A Member will, at our February Meeting, hold a "freewill-donation-to-the-Club" auction for his/her person-

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 3rd Sunday of each month. Location of the meetings may vary. Regularly scheduled additional events throughout the year include: "The Masters' Dinner" celebrating 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—\$20 for individuals, \$30 for families (U.S. funds only)—to the address shown at left.

- al, 29-volume collection of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and reference materials related to Tolkien's works. Sonny will add the single volume missing from that collection...bringing the total to 30 volumes! All the Donor asks is that, "You read and enjoy them all!"
- Seen by our PFL David: Mental Floss (http://mentalfloss.com/article/61819/42-oldenglish-insults) lists the word "Cumberworld" as #5 under the heading "42 Old English Insults". "Cumberworld"-or Cumberground—means someone who is so useless, they just serve to take up space.
- From Omaha SOB Carl Wirth. re: Loss of Cumberbatch: On the oversized bulletin board that makes up part of one wall in my than 4 walls—I have the arm band left over bands after reports of Holmes' death but, as true Sherlockians, we know that they must have. Just as youngsters would do if they learned that Harry Potter died or Katniss lost in the Hunger Games. As the report of Holmes' death has never appeared in The London Times, so BBC can't "kill" him off! A little food for thought.
- Jerry Margolin, BSI, speaker at our October 2016 meeting, is offering to sell some artwork from his collection; e-mail him at 221bee@com cast.net to request images and details. Thanks. Peter Blau.