



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



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The Adventure of the Deadliest Weapon: Part 4

An Original Pastiche by
SOB James Romnes aka Constable John Rance

We continue where we left off last month (see *Ineffable Twaddle*, Vol. 32, Issue 5, May 2013, Page 1), with Holmes & Watson hearing the sad tale of Contessa Sylvius. And, now the exciting conclusion to "The Adventure of the Deadliest Weapon"!

Again, her black eyes flashed with amazement, "You are wonderful! Paolo Venucci is my cousin and a better man has never walked the earth.

"My family and most of our village are dead from sickness and so Paolo became my protector. He followed us to this country and met with me secretly. I told him to beware of the Count, but he laughed and said here men didn't have to die like unarmed peasants. Then I knew I must act before Paolo did.

"It was part of my humiliation to always carry the Count's sealskin tobacco pouch and vestas. He would snap his fingers and I would fill his pipe and light it. But my weakness became my weapon."

Holmes tapped the now cold bowl of his pipe on the hearth and said, "This isn't without precedent: There was the 1828 assassination of the so-called Black Duke, Augusto IV by Terroza. Pray continue."

"Yes, even the youngest child in my village knew how Terroza drilled the hole of a pipe's stem wider so that a lead ball fit; how he packed gun powder, tissue paper, and then the lead ball and sealed it with wax. To save Paolo I prepared such a weapon. My only fear was that the Count would begin to carry his amber-stemmed pipe."

"Of course, you couldn't hide the lead ball in a translucent amber stem," Holmes said.

She nodded. "But the holy angels did not allow me to fail. Still, when the time came my will almost betrayed me. For a woman to kill her husband, even such a husband as



the music hall and so went there to confront this supposed rival.

"When we arrived, he insulted me and struck me more than once with his riding crop. Then a devil's smile came to his face. He snapped his fingers for his pipe because tobacco calmed him and helped him think his devil's thoughts. My hand hesitated in the tobacco pouch until I saw Paolo.

"Brave Paolo was marching towards our cab. So I handed the pipe to the Count, lit it, and I left him to his fate."

"Why Holmes," I exclaimed, "the remark 'this is a bitter business' was the Count tasting tissue paper packing just before the gunpowder exploded, wasn't it?"

"Excellent, Watson, you began slow on the cricket field but your game performance is steadily improving."

"But how did you know of this Venucci's ties to the Contessa?"

"The answer lies in a heap on my bedroom floor. The discarded porter's clothes and greasepaint are all that remains of one Giovanni who has been of use to Scotland Yard's investigations into subversive Italian societies.

"Now, I believe, Contessa, the medical inquest will show that the ball recovered from the malignancy that was the Count's brain could not have come from Venucci's Number 2 Webley. A .317 diameter bullet from Eley Brothers Ammunition would be too large for any pipe stem."

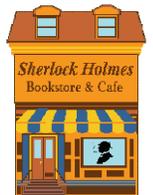
Holmes placed the French briar pipe back in the piperack and... **Continued on Page 2**

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From Classic Specialties

For our remaining tenure as vendors of Sherlockian memorabilia, ephemera, and general stuff, we will from time to time offer some items for your consideration as we go about our final inventory reduction. First, some lapel pins—all of which, for this beginning offering, are the fewest-of-a-kind which we have remaining on our shelves—some are quite rare. Go to http://www.sherlock-holmes.com/special_order.htm to view great lapel pins priced from \$19.95 to \$21.50 from the Watson's Tin Dispatchers, the Parallel Case of St. Louis, and the Baker Street Pages.





T.S. McHugh's Public House is at 21 Mercer Street, Seattle, (206) 282-1910. *Come early, order a meal, and catch up with the other SOBs!*

Librarian's Corner

"It is a great thing to start life with a small number of really good books which are your very own."—

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

As mentioned in past "Librarian's Corners", our Club purchased four books last year for the library. I've already written reviews of three of them. The fourth is **Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle Locations: A Visitor's Guide** by Allan Foster (2011). Interestingly enough, the dedication is to the author's mother—the granddaughter of a hansom cabbie. This book is divided into two parts: Scotland and England. Each entry in the many sections in each part is about places related to Doyle and Holmes. An example from Edinburgh is 61 York Place, St. Mary's Cathedral, where Doyle's parents were married and he was baptized. One could read a full biography of Doyle just in the entries here. The section on England is extensive, and one could also read an excellent biography of SH and JHW in its pages. An example is the entry for Simpsons-in-the-Strand with a quote from "*The Adventure of the Dying Detective*" and comments about Sherlock's dining habits from information in other stories. Many places highlighted relate to the history of the area, tidbits about other famous residents, architectural sites, statues (even Fanny Pankhurst makes an appearance) and railway stations. Each entry has the history of the place, its relation to Doyle and Holmes, interesting side-lights and reference for further information. There are wonderful illustrations throughout. What an entertaining and rich resource for SOB Members. And there is lots of information for quizzes and puzzles. As you might expect, Lauran Stevens has already checked out this book.

*Sheila Holtgrieve, SOB Librarian,
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Fetherston Treats SOBs to An Evening with Barrymore

The June 16, 2013 Regular Monthly Meeting of The Sound of the Baskervilles will begin at **4:00 p.m.** at T.S. McHugh's Public House. **The social hour starts at 3:00!**

As noted in our March 2013 *Ineffable Twaddle* (Vol. 32, Issue 3), **SOB Sonia Fetherston of Salem, OR** was editor and sole contributor to the **2012 Christmas Annual edition of The Baker Street Journal**, a publication of the Baker Street Irregulars. Released in January to BSJ subscribers—available by purchase to others online at bakerstreetjournal.com—the pamphlet is about the 1922 film, *Sherlock Holmes*, starring John Barrymore...a kind of behind-the-scenes look at how and why the movie was made, and how Barrymore stacks up against other Holmes actors.

At this Meeting, Sonia will treat the SOBs to an oral presentation of her thesis!! Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime event!



BSI Weekend, 2013

By SOB Webmaster Stu Nelan

I attended my fifth BSI Weekend in New York City this past January 9 to 12, and each one is better than the previous!

I arrived Wednesday afternoon for the evening ASH Dinner at O'Casey's, a short walk from the Roosevelt Hotel. I had the distinct pleasure of sitting between George Vanderburgh (Ontario) and David McAllister (Florida) and hearing them tell of their first BSI Weekends in the early 90's. Both men are extraordinary raconteurs, and I was enthralled listening to them.

Thursday morning was the Christopher Morley Walk, led by Jim Cox (San Francisco) and Dore Nash (NYC). We started from the lobby of the Roosevelt and walked up and down half of Manhattan viewing Christopher Morley haunts. A surprise first was a stop at the Argus Bookstore, a traditional used bookstore the type of which are now too few in NYC. Many of us found something there to carry around with us the rest of the day!

Lunch after the Morley walk was at McSorley's Tavern, a traditional Morley haunt. And after McSorley's was the usual stop at the Strand Bookstore for a few more books, one of which for me was Christopher Morley's "Ex Libris".

Daughter Kamela came up from D.C. for Thursday evening, Friday, and Saturday activities. Thursday evening was non-Sherlockian, where she and I had a fine dinner in Little Italy and a rap/hip-hop concert in Chinatown! (*It fit in perfectly at the concert, with all the other young, athletic, rhythmic, stylish people! Kamela had told me I had to be a real "hipster" to get in!*)

Friday morning was devoted to Otto Penzler's Mysterious Bookshop, where I purchased far too many books! I did the penitence for them, though, by lovingly carrying them for the rest of the day and on the plane back to Dallas Saturday evening. A particular highlight there was finding 15 of the small red volumes "Mysterious Sherlock Holmes" published by the Mysterious Bookshop!

The Gaslight Gala was Friday evening—the highlight event of the weekend. Becky Robare organized her first Gala this year and did a fine job! There were toasts, music, a learned paper from Nick Martorelli, a reading from "Mastermind" by the author Maria Konnikova, and more! Dean Clark (Tulsa) wrote a funny radio script "Reichenbach Reconsidered", where I was honored to read the part of Dr. Watson.

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The Adventure of the Deadliest Weapon

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...reached for the meditative clay, "It wasn't the 'too ready availability of firearms' which caused this death. The infantile fear of objects obscures the deadliest weapon, which is the human mind. We must not forget all the good firearms offer, or we will ultimately suffer a misguided curtailment of liberty. Perhaps our Union Jack might learn something here from the Stars and Stripes.

"Now, if you would be so kind, Contessa, as to accept the loan of Dr. Watson's bedroom slippers, we will visit a soon-to-be-embarrassed Scotland Yard inspector who would be only too happy to consider leniency for any insights you might offer on your late husband's involvement with at least a dozen murders. And, Doctor, here's a first for your medical journals, a man killed by smoking a pipe."



Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

● **From SOB Webmaster Stu Nelan:** Met a new connection at BSI Weekend, "Brenda"—one of the Chicago Sherlockians with some interesting Sherlockian info:

⇒ During the BSI junket...I (Brenda) toured the Teddy Roosevelt house (from which 2nd floor, Teddy watched Abraham Lincoln's funeral cortege). There is hanging at the exhibit a *Puck* magazine cover page from February 3, 1909, illustrating TR's relationship with Congress, and entitled "The Adventure of the Crooked House." **Teddy is wearing a deerstalker**, kneeling and peering through the Congressional keyhole. He says to Uncle Sam/Watson standing behind him, "Something devilish has been going on, Watson!" Peering above the transom, trying to get a look-see as to what TR is up to, is an elderly Congressman representing special privileges, aka earmarks. This was a slight diversion from the excellent Morley Walk, but will no doubt appear on the 2014 itinerary.

⇒ **The Violin, by David Schoenbaum, features Sherlock Holmes** in the book's exquisite collection of violin-related photos, and the caption reads: "*Sherlock Holmes and the Alderney Street Mystery*, chapter 74, 'Pipe and Violin' illustrated by Sidney Paget. *Courtesy of the Sherlock Holmes Collection at the University of Minnesota Library*". The brief reference in the text of the book reads,

"...the solo violin exercised a gravitational pull no other instrument or combination of instruments could match. Tropes devised triumphantly for the lending library, for ladies magazines, and for the Yiddish theater were just as adaptable a century later to movie, TV, and computer screens, airport bookstores and e-book readers. Professor Moriarty came and went. Sherlock Holmes, an 'eccentric' but 'very capable performer of no ordinary merit,' proud owner of a Strad 'worth at least five hundred guineas,' acquired 'at a Jew broker's in Tottenham Court Road for fifty-five shillings,' and a fan of Sarasate and Neruda, was still standing." (Citing Ted Friedman, "Music of Sherlock Holmes," *Topical Time*, Nov.-Dec. 1998, www.trussel.com/detfic/friedmus.htm; Carl Heifetz (late of "The Pleasant Places of Florida scion society. ed), "The Case of the Jewish Pawnbroker," *Plugs and Dottles*, Jan. 1996, www.sherlock-holmes.com/featur5.htm.)

⇒ In the winter 2013 issue of *Fine Books & Collections*, appears the article, "**No Mystery for Holmes Records**", which reads: "ACD's *A Study in Scarlet* sold for \$51,863 at Swords of Stansted Mountfitchet, UK and the manuscript of "Mr. Sherlock Holmes to his Friends," sold for \$80,500 at Freeman's in Philadelphia. What does this depletion of the purse to the auctioneer mean to Sherlockians? *STUD* was originally published in the 1887 *Beeton's Christmas Annual*, and rare copies have sold... **Continued on Page 4** ⇒ ⇒

BSI Weekend, 2013

...Saturday morning was the Vendor's Room at the Roosevelt, where quite a few book dealers and others brought in their wares. Vinny Brosnan (SherlockinLA) was there from Oceanside; Steve Doyle (Gasogene Books and Wessex Press) from Indianapolis; Gary Lovisi (Gryphon) from Long Island; Peter Stern from Boston; and quite a few others in a room that quickly became quite crowded with enthusiastic buyers. I picked up a locket with the profile of Sherlock Holmes for Kamela—something I'm just sure she has wanted for years!

And I attended my first Junior Bloodstain ("The Clients of Adrian Mulliner"—see *visual at right*) meeting for those interested in both Holmes and P. G. Wodehouse later Saturday morning. I played Dr. Watson (*I'm being typecast!*) in a delightful puppet show "The Riddle of the Starving Swine", written by Gayle Lange Puhl. The play was both Sherlockian and very funny, featuring the Empress of Blandings (a pig). Imagine a typical Wodehouse play with Sherlock Holmes

thrown in and you will be pretty close!

My schedule had me leaving NYC Saturday evening, so I missed the "Lost in New York with a bunch of Sherlockians" dinner

Saturday night—a mistake I will not make next year! And although I've only been back home now a few days, I'm already looking forward to BSI Weekend 2014!



Kamela and me, holding puppet Dr. Watson from Saturday morning



Me with the other radio script readers Friday evening

Continued from Page 2

From SOB Jim Nagle

You might be interested in this blog: <http://peterhousehold.blogspot.ie/2013/01/janeshlock.html>.

Mr. Household says, in part:

"Re-reading *Pride and Prejudice* last month, my interest was piqued by something I had previously missed. The reprobate Wickham having eloped to London with Lydia, Mr. Bennet attempts to track them down. He traces them from Brighton as far as Epsom, where, he finds out, they had transferred to a hackney-coach. Now comes the interesting bit: Mr. Bennet's next move is attempting to discover the stand and number of the hackney-coach



Wickham had hired, in order to get what information he could from the driver. (Sadly this initiative was not crowned with success...) I was full sure that **Sherlock Holmes** was the first fictional character to detect using this method. But no, almost 90 years before the great detective tracked down a villain by means of a hackney carriage number, in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Jane Austen anticipated this detection technique."

The Clients of Adrian Mulliner Flyer



The Clients of Adrian Mulliner

A reminder for those attending the BSI Sherlock Holmes Birthday events in New York City and for anyone else who might be able to attend—

A Junior Bloodstain will be held at The Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, on Saturday January 12, 2013 from 11:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. It will be held in the Park Suite directly after the Beacon Society meeting.

Featured will be the premiere performance of *The Riddle of the Starving Swine* by Gayle Lange Puhl with hand puppets by Ken Vogel.

Our beautiful new pin, designed by Laurie Fraser Manifold, will be on sale for \$10. For avid collectors, there are a few of the old pins left and they will also be available for \$10.

All are welcome to attend!

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The Sound of the Baskervilles
By appointment of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria

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Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

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...for \$130,000+. The one here, itself a scarcity, was the first full book-form, with wood-engraved Charles Doyle illustrations. It was first purchased in 1952 at Sotheby's for about \$100 (post-WWII poverty). It showed a light foxing and had been rebound, but the original wrappers were pasted to the covers. The manuscript essay was written in a 1927 *Strand Magazine* issue, prefacing a competition in which readers were challenged to match Sir Arthur's selection of what he regarded as the 12 best Holmes short stories."

• **From SOB Elliott Black, Lincolnwood, IL:** The British Library's current featured exhibit (through May 12) is **Murder in the Library: An A-Z of Crime Fiction**. Says the website (<http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/murder/index.html>) Classic locked-room mysteries, tales of murder and mayhem in quaint villages or gritty adventures on mean city streets. Crime fiction, which currently accounts for over a third of all fiction published in English, holds millions of people enthralled. Murder in the Library will take you on a fascinating journey through the development of crime and detective fiction, from its origins in the early 19th century through to contemporary Nordic Noir, taking in the adventures of **Sherlock Holmes**, the first appearance of Miss Marple and the fiendish plots of Dr. Fu Manchu along the way. Reported The Telegraph



Dates of Interest

- **SUNDAY, June 16**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Social = 3:00 p.m.;
Business = 4:00 at T.S. McHugh's
- **SATURDAY, July 20**
Annual Dr. John H. Watson Picnic 9:00 a.m.,
Seahurst Park, Burien
- **SUNDAY, July 21**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Social = 3:00 p.m.;
Business = 4:00 at T.S. McHugh's

The Sound of the Baskervilles is a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars, serving the greater Puget Sound Region of Western Washington, U.S.A., and has met monthly since March 31, 1980.

\$20 per year brings Members the monthly newsletter "Ineffable Twaddle", a copy of Beaten's Christmas Annual, and the incalculable benefits of association with a group of certifiable Holmes aficionados.

Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday 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.

(telegraph.co.uk) in January, "The most thrilling exhibit for many crime aficionados will be the original manuscript of the Sherlock Holmes story **The Retired Colourman** by the Shakespeare of crime fiction, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle—and it is interesting to note that, like Shakespeare, he wrote fluently with scarcely any blots or corrections."

• **From SOB Ann Deussenberry of Benicia, CA:** Check out this website, where you'll see 20 fonts and the cats that clearly inspired them: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/paws/cats-as-fonts>. The 20th one is our own favorite, "Baskerville Old Face".



• **From Wessex Press:** **The Strand Magazine and Sherlock Holmes: Two Fixed Points in a Changing Age** by Robert Veld (Gasogene Books, \$24.95) is now available. In 1891, this first magazine of its kind began to publish the greatest detective stories of all time, inextricably linking them in the minds of Sherlockians forever. "Waste no time...plunge into the first in-depth history of what Robert Veld calls "possibly the greatest partnership in the history of literature!"—**Leslie S. Klinger**. It "is a detailed and carefully researched exploration of the many Sherlockian aspects of *The Strand Magazine*, including its publisher, editors, and illustrators; it's a grand story, and told well indeed."—**Peter Blau**.

