



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



Volume 31, Issue 3
March 2012

Tea is Served: If Inconvenient Come All the Same!

Our Anniversary Tea is Saturday, **March 31**, at Haugens' in Gig Harbor! **Tea will be served at 1:00, and your contributions of snacks and sweets will be most welcome!**



Our annual auction will be only a part of the festivities—so we can concentrate on socializing and celebrating our Club's 32nd anniversary!!

We hope to have about ten quality items for a live auction. So, bring some ca\$h but by all means, have some fun!!

As the PFL likes to remind you, though, the Narrows Bridge makes it easy to come see us, but it'll cost you \$4 to get home!!

Our annual tea is a great way to spend your Saturday afternoon: visiting, eating, imbibing, bidding, and welcoming springtime!! So come on out of your hibernation! We'd love to see **YOU** there!!

Driving Directions to Haugens' Gig Harbor Home

From I-5 in Tacoma, take Exit #132—"Highway 16" westbound. Drive west 12 miles across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to the "Wollochet Drive / City Center" exit. At the light at the top of the exit ramp, turn right onto Pioneer and drive north (*down the hill*) into town where it T's with Harborview Drive (3-way stop). Turn left onto Harborview and follow it around the harbor (*keep bearing right*).

At the next 3-way stop, take the free right turn onto **North Harborview Drive**. Follow along the water until you're on the northwest side of the water. Watch for Finholm's Market on your left; take the first left-hand turn *after* Finholm's Market onto Peacock Hill Avenue N.W. and climb up the hill.

When you get to the flat, top of the hill, watch on your right for 101st Street...then 102nd Street...then **Harborcrest Court**...a red brick entryway and gate. **Turn right!** Go half way down the hill, to the **2nd cul-de-sac** on your right. Haugens' is the first unit on the left: 3606 Harborcrest Court N.W. **Please park on the west side of the street!** The phone number is (253) 853-5187.



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SOBs Weigh-In on "A Game of Shadows"



The response to our request for your opinions of "**Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows**" was, in a word, underwhelming!! But, here three SOBs weight-in:

From Charlie Cook: Lots of action, including a train escapade to die for, as our heroes pursue our favorite arch-villain; and plenty of laughs with Sherlock's many disguises as he spies on the lovely Irene Adler and the nefarious Professor Moriarty. Even on Watson. And only Robert Downey Jr.'s Sherlock would have the effrontery to interrupt Watson's honeymoon for "one last adventure". HA!

And, guess in which country our two heroes finally catch up with the nasty professor? There's even an ending that should delight every true Sherlockian addict!

Now eat your hearts out, my dear Sherlockian colleagues! After I saw it the first time (the very first showing in our berg), my wife asked the ush-

ers in the lobby what they were going to do with the ten foot, 4-sided cardboard promo displays for the movie, which had Sherlock, Watson, Moriarty, and the gypsy girl each pictured on a separate side. They said they'd be thrown away after the run ends. I asked if they would throw one of them my way, and they did! Now it's in my garage awaiting a decorating decision. Try getting that for your collection!!

From Bill Seil: I really enjoyed it. I thought it was better than the first one. It had a stronger plot with more elements from the Canon. I also liked the pre-World War I environment.

From Club Historian Lloyd Hedberg: As we know, all things are relative and should be taken for what they are, rather than what they are not. Certainly, this is the case with "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows". There is little about the movie that is Canonical, though there are enough situations and phrases from the Canon, and enough characters involved, to give it a "familiar flavor."

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We've Got 2 New Members for 2012!!

⇒ **Danny**

Michalak of New Lenox, IL is SOB Charlie Cook's

cousin! Charlie gifted Danny with a surprise membership in The SOBs!

⇒ **Don Hobbs of Flower**

Mount, TX is a pal of SOB/Webmaster Stu

Nelan! Don is also a new BSI and the cartoonist

providing works to us at the new "Sherlocking"

page on our website!



T.S. McHugh's Public House is at 21 Mercer Street, Seattle, (206) 282-1910. **Come at 5:00, order dinner and catch up with the other SOBs!**



Kudos to Blau!

Peter Blau reported in the December 2011 issue of his "Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press" that it's been 40 years since the founding of his newsletter! When we sent congrats to him, he responded with this:

Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press has been published monthly ink-on-paper, with occasional illustrations and enclosures, for forty years. Much of the gossip is quite trivial, but most of it is Sherlockian or Doylean. And the subscription price will increase whenever postage rates increase.

The newsletter started in 1971 as sheets of paper, kept by my typewriter, so that I could write paragraphs of minor news for my friend John Bennett Shaw. Eventually

others found out about what I called "information sheets" and asked for photocopies, and the number of copies required soon reached the point where I started charging for them to recover out-of-pocket costs. When I acquired my first computer in 1985, things became much easier and the format more consistent. I finally named the newsletter, starting with the January 1988 issue.

Scuttlebutt is an appropriate pun, since it means gossip, and comes from the barrel (butt) of water used to provide drinking water for the crew of whalers and other ships. Gossip was as common around the scuttlebutt then as it is today around office water-coolers. I must confess that if I had realized how long it took to explain the name of the newsletter, I might have named it simply Gossip, but what's done is done.

The Meaning of Being British Revealed!

The **March 12** Business Meeting of The Sound of the Baskervilles will begin at **6:00 p.m.** at T.S. McHugh's Public House. **The social hour starts at 5:00 p.m.!**

It's time for another of our Victorian-era discussions!! SOB David Smith, history professor at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, will present his paper titled, "Empire and Monarchy", which asks the question, "What does it mean to be British?"

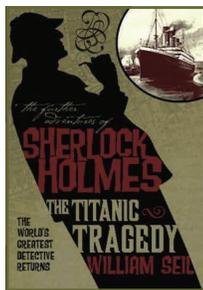
Please join us and prepare to be enlightened and entertained!



Seil's Book Sails Again!

Our own **Bill Seil**—local author and longest-term SOB—will sign his ***Sherlock Holmes and the Titanic Tragedy*** (Titan, \$9.95) on Saturday, April 7, from 12:00 until 2:00 at Seattle Mystery Bookshop (117 Cherry Street, Seattle)!

First published in 1996, Bill Seil's book is being reissued as part of Titan's Sherlock Holmes series just in time for the 100th Anniversary of the Ship's maiden and final voyage.



Holmes and Watson are on board to protect a young British agent who carries blueprints for a new submarine devel-

oped by the Royal Navy. Plenty of trou-

ble is afoot, for Col. James Moriarty sails with them. Also on the cruise is Jacques Futrell, creator of The Thinking Machine—real-life mystery puzzle writer who did go down with the ship.

There will be lots of hoop-la around this time (*Cameron's "Titanic" will be re-released in 3D that weekend*) so come and help Bill celebrate and pick up a **new** copy of his extraordinarily enjoyable adventure. **To assure adequate quantities, please contact Seattle Mystery Bookshop ([206] 587-5737, www.seattlemystery.com) in advance to reserve your copy of Bill's book!**

PFL David & Terri will host appropriate refreshments—cake and bubbly—during Bill's signing. Afterwards, those remaining may wish to join us for further refreshment at Collins Pub (526—2nd Avenue).



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

Just finished organizing my taxes, so now I can get back to something really important such as Sherlock studies and writing this column. It is a rainy day, too, so that makes staying at home even better.

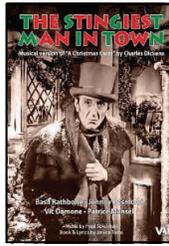
In early 2009, when I had been an SOB for just a few months, I went to the luxurious Pan Pacific Hotel to hear a talk by David Grann about his just-published, ***The Devil and Sherlock Holmes***, subtitled *Tales of Murder, Madness, and Obsession*. Of course, the title was what intrigued me. It's a series of essays about real-life situations that do indeed entail murder, madness and obsession. The title essay, "Mysterious Circumstances", concerns the strange death of Sherlockian scholar and collector Richard Lancelyn Green, of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and a player of the "great game". Grann summarizes his interviews with John Gibson, one of Green's closest friends; Owen Dudley Edwards, a Scots Doyle scholar; ACD's daughter Dame Jean Conan Doyle; and Green's sister, Priscilla West. Scotland Yard attributed Green's puzzling death to suicide, but friends, his sister, and fellow Sherlockians question this. And there's a locked room issue to boot!

The book is still in my library until I've read some other essays, but you are welcome to borrow it. Find out the strange circumstances of Green's death and apply some of the Master's techniques to form your own solution to the mystery.

Sheila Holtgrieve, SOB Librarian, sheilaholtgrieve@gmail.com

Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

- **From SOB Bill Seil:** Have you heard of “**The Stingiest Man in Town**”, a Basil Rathbone film from 1956? It’s being sold at Amazon along with other “Christmas Carol”-type movies. The cast includes Vic Damone and Patrice Munsel.



- **From PFL David:**

⇒ The Sherlock Holmes Society of London describes “**The Punishment of Sherlock Holmes**”, edited by Philip K Jones & Bob Burr (MX Publishing, \$18.95) this way: “*These selected Sherlockian puns are a deliberately and successfully funny assemblage of what must be several hundred short shaggy dog stories about Holmes and Watson.*”

⇒ For differing reasons, Roger Johnson of the London Society’s District Messenger did not recommend either of these books: “**Introducing Sherlock Holmes: The Great Detective According to Doyle**” by William Hyder and “**A Brief History of Sherlock Holmes**” by Nigel Cawthorne”.

- **Received at our website e-mail from Martin Cage:** I make custom **12” figures** of various characters and have just released a “**Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes**” from Hammer’s classic 1959 Hound of The Baskervilles. If your members are interested, it can be viewed at: www.distinctivedummies.net/the_hammer_collection.html. If successful, I hope to follow with Basil Rathbone and Jeremy Brett figures.

- **From Peter Blau:**

⇒ There is a lot of info about “**Sherlock**” at www.sherlockology.com; the folks who maintain it describe it as “a fan-site dedicated to the BBC drama ‘Sherlock.’”

⇒ **A Study in Celluloid: A Producer’s Account of Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes** by Michael Cox (\$28.95, Gasogene Books) is a reprint of the long out-of-print book by the producer of the Granada series from 1984-91. This version offers a new introduction by the author including an account of Brett’s memorial service.

⇒ **A page from “The Hound” was auctioned** off on December 3, 2011. Its estimated value was \$115,000 to \$125,000. Its current owner is David Karpeles, who has established a number of manuscript museums throughout the U.S. **Editor’s Note:** *There is a Karpeles Manuscript Museum located in Tacoma across from Wright Park; ask PFL David or Treasurer Al for details, as both have been there!*

- **From SOB DC Smith:** Saw a piece in the NY Times Book Review section on January 13 titled, “**Means of Delivery**”. After I get past the novelty of the electric book, I come to a full stop. Unless I had a need to transport a young library with me, what use are they? (*I read several hundred books a year, but I have no desire to lug them around with me.*) As the writer notes in describing his trip to a German book fair, “*One installationist said, ‘Americans like e-books because they’re easier to buy.’ A performance artist said, ‘They’re also easier not to read.*”



...“A Game of Shadows”

Continued from Page 1

The good news is that at no time has its marketing made an attempt to present it as trying to follow an established story—in this case, “The Final Problem,” which it resets into entirely different though vaguely familiar form. What the movie is and has: A fine adventure with good actors, good acting, a lot of semi-martial arts action and some nice work on the “period” setting. Well worth the viewing, for those who can separate themselves from a purist’s need to have things match the original somewhat closely.

What the movie is not and has not: The original work as written, in almost any form. Characters (e.g., Irene Adler) and props (e.g., an automobile) are misplaced, character traits are ignored, and events, situations and circumstances are reworked or rewritten entirely. It entirely lacks that presentation of the Holmes we know and hold dear...namely, any presentation of those scintillating powers of logic and deduction that came to make him the world’s only consulting detective. In addition,

some character development and background is lacking (e.g., Moriarty), leaving me to wonder about things that could have been covered and developed, with little inconvenience.

All in all, the movie is well worth the watch, as was the first. It is for those looking for a good action/semi-martial arts flick with a familiar flavor. My concern is that this could lead some among the uninitiated astray from the real Sherlock Holmes, if they later come to the Canon looking for a Sherlock thus presented. Hopefully they will come recognizing that the movie is rarely the same as the book and never improves on it. Long live the movie industry. It provided us with a pleasant afternoon.

For results of the straw poll taken on exiting our attendance at the Seattle premiere of this film on December 16, see our website at http://www.soundofthebaskervilles.com/2011/Writeup_of_Downey_Jr_Film_Premiere_12_20_11.pdf.



Benedict Cumberbatch’s “Sherlock” Boosts Conan Doyle Book Sales

“*Sales of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s original Sherlock Holmes*

stories are enjoying a resurgence thanks to the popularity of BBC’s TV show “Sherlock”...In 2010 sales of Sherlock Holmes books increased by 53%—from around 57,000 copies to 88,000—compared with 2009. 2011 saw a further increase as fans looked ahead to the second series...”

For the full article, go to:

www.radiotimes.com/news/2012-01-17/benedict-cumberbatch-s-sherlock-boosts-conan-doyle-book-sales

Thanks, SOB Margie Deck!

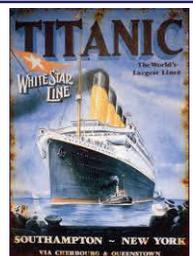
From SOB Bill Seil

Mystery Writers of America has announced the nominees for the 2012 Edgar Awards, honoring the best in mystery fiction and nonfiction. The winners will be announced at a gala banquet on April 26 in New York. The only Sherlockian item is in the Best Short Story category: “The Case of Death and Honey”—*A Study in Sherlock* by Neil Gaiman (Random House Publishing Group—Bantam Books). For the full list, go to: www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/book-news/awards-and-prizes/article



From SOB Margaret Nelson

Somewhere In Time Unlimited will host a Titanic Centennial Celebration luncheon on Sunday, April 15 at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel in Seattle. For tickets and info, go to: www.situseattle.com.





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By appointment of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria

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Dates of Interest

- **March 12**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Social = 5:00 p.m.;
Business = 6:00 at T.S. McHugh's
- **March 31**
Our 32nd Anniversary Tea at The Haugens' = 1:00 p.m.
- **April 7**
Seil book signing, Seattle Mystery Books = Noon
- **April 9**
Regular Monthly Meeting, Social = 5:30 p.m.;
Business = 6:30 at T.S. McHugh's
- **May 5**
Our Annual Wreath Throw in Tumwater = 11:30 a.m.

Member News & Updates

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

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Sheila Holtgrieve | Barbara Nelson | John Nelson |
| Margie Deck | Hank Deck | Terri Haugen |
| Stephen Adkins | Thom Walls | Lloyd Hedberg |
| Jon Strandberg | Stu Shiffman | Ed Funk |
| Jean Macdonald | Ann Stevens | Joyce Funk |
| Michelle Poitevin | Margaret Nelson | Al Nelson |
| John Longenbaugh | Lauran Stevens | DC Smith |

News & Notes:

- PFL David reported that we are looking for a **volunteer to host the 2012 Will Crakes Jollification**. If you're willing and can offer your home on Saturday, December 8, please let him know! Many kudos were offered to **Barbara & John Nelson**, who've hosted it for many years!!
- **Sheila** took 1st place in our story quiz on FINA, with **John L.** and **Jon S.** tying for 2nd!
- **From SOB Charlie Cook of Sumter, SC:** "We had an incredibly wonderful week in NYC over the holidays...saw 7 plays in 7 days, splurged on the best tickets we could get ("Spiderman", "Wicked", The Rockettes' Christmas show, "Hugh Jackman Back on Broadway" and more)...along with quality family time with one of our daughters and 2 of our grandchildren, including SOB Nadia. It was worth every penny. Now we have to fill that little piggy bank back up so we can do it again!"
- **From Kathleen Dunlap of Lexington, VA:**

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

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

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month. Location of the meetings may vary. Regularly scheduled additional events throughout the year include: "The Master's Dinner" celebrating Holmes' birthday (January), "The Annual Wreath Throw" commemorating Holmes' loss at Reichenbach Falls (May), "The Dr. John H. Watson Picnic" (July), and "The Will Crakes Memorial Jollification" (December). Other activities—book crawls, teas, plays and gaming events—are as announced.

To join, send your check for dues—\$20 for individuals, \$30 for families (U.S. funds only)—to the address shown at left.

"Whenever I do get back to Seattle, I will plan to be there around an SOB meeting or event. I love hearing from you all and receiving my newsletter. The pix that come from Bill are also great fun."

• **From Carl Wirth of Omaha, NE:** "What a joy to come home and find my copy of Beaten's Christmas Annual! I will play "show & tell" with it at my next Bookworm discussion group. For Christmas I presented everyone with a copy of "The Seven Percent Solution", gave a talk on its importance to pastiche history, and we are taking a Canonical break to read it for our next gathering. They were warned to READ first, then watch the movie and stay with movie to the end of the credits...a friend who didn't learned a lesson in movie watching! I was also taken back that my ramblings on used bookstores led to a toast...as well as my toast."

• **From Paul & Macia Naher of KC, MO:** "Big news is that daughter Jessica is expecting twins, and her husband Pat has been named principal of a 1,000 student high school!"

• Here's **SOB Katherine Geis**, with hubby Daniel Grivalja. Many old timers will remember "Katie" when she was an infant! Well, she's having a baby of her own...due in mid-March! Lucky Grandma & Grandpa Becky & Bob!!!



• **Washington State SOBs:** Please respond to the **enclosed survey** regarding the location of our Monthly Meetings, returning it to Secretary Terri Haugen by March 31, 2012. *Thanks!*

