



INEFFABLE TWADDLE



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

—*The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*

Volume 42, Issue 3 • March 2023

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

Join The SOB's Zoom Meeting

★ **Sunday, March 19, 2023** ★

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

Social Time!!

12:30 p.m. Pacific time—Structured meeting

with discussion & quizzing on **"MAZA"**



Says Program Chair Sunny,

It's taken five years and almost sixty stories, to finally arrive at...**"The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone."**

Whew, this was a tough one, and clearly earns a place on most "Worst of" lists. Examining the attributes of good Sherlock Holmes stories, I can find...seriously... nothing to recommend here. Nothing. I got nuthin'.

The action is lack-luster and disjointed, the villain stupid, the mystery non-existent, Sherlock alternately coy and snarky, and the ending is just plain silly. A secret passage in 221B? *Really?* There's no point to even discussing nuances, like writer's point of view or the absence of Watson. I. Can't. Get. Past. The. Awful. Story. Goodnight!

"I think he's in bed and asleep,"...

A Quiz by: SOB Charlie Cook

1. Upon visiting 221B Watson is informed by whom that Holmes is working on what case?
2. What two disguises had Holmes used when following a suspect for the last few days?
3. What was hidden in the alcove behind the drapery in the bow window?
4. What characteristic of Holmes did he admit was limited?
5. Who did Holmes suspect was planning to murder him?



6. Name the man working with the villain and what was his profession!
7. Who was Straubensee?
8. Holmes sent Watson to Scotland Yard with a message for whom?
9. Holmes could have had the villain arrested, but why didn't he?
10. Name the man who made the facsimile of Holmes and what was his nationality?
11. Who refused to cut the stone for the villain?
12. What violin piece did Holmes say he would play while the villains discussed their options?

Answers may be found on Page 2



SOB Kris Hambrick's *Sherlock on Screen:*

The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone

When I wrote about "The Three Garridebs" last September (Vol. 41, Issue 9), I mentioned that that story had been meshed unsatisfyingly with **"The Mazarin Stone"** in the Granada series, a choice made all the worse for the fact that neither mystery actually featured an ailing Jeremy Brett. I also mentioned a lost television broadcast of the story.

Oddly enough, we are faced with a similar situation here, where an episode of the BBC...

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"...what is that curtain for across the window?"

"Mr. Holmes had it put up there three days ago. We've got something funny behind it."

Sherlock on Screen: MAZA

Continued from Page 1

...program "For the Children" adapted the story in 1951 starring Andrew Osborn as Holmes and Philip King as Watson. No footage is known to have survived, which is a pity because I would dearly love to know how you choose *this* story with people shooting at dummies as the one you want for after-school programming.



That said, we **DO** have a version in young persons' television format from the series **"Sherlock Holmes in the 22nd Century,"**

a program available on YouTube and worth checking out if only for the cleverness with which they weave canonical plot elements into a fanciful, futuristic setting.

In this case, the Mazarin "chip" is capable of creating virtual environments (though, as Watson observes from a jail cell thus produced, "there's not a terrible lot about this that's virtual") and it's rather pleasant to see the villain's efforts to obtain this 22nd century-tech thwarted by the old school ruse of the wax dummy. There's also some in character humor from Holmes *and* a reference to "Star Trek," so all in all this is yet another case in which something need not be precisely adapted to retain the spirit and entertainment of the original and be worthy of attention.

Answers To Cook's Quiz on Page 1:

1. Billy the page; the burglary of the crown diamond.
2. A workman looking for a job and an old woman.
3. A full facsimile of Holmes, dressing-gown and all.
4. His sense of humor.
5. Count Negretto Sylvius.
6. Sam Merton, the boxer.
7. The man who made the air-gun.
8. Youghal of the C.I.D.
9. His first need to recover the crown gem, known as the Mazarin Stone.
10. Tavernier, the French modeler.
11. Ikey Sanders.
12. The Hoffman Barcarolle.



Story & Meeting Content for 2023 SOB Meetings:

March	Laid-up with COVID, SOB Nancy Holder missed our January Meeting. She has agreed to attempt her talk titled, <i>"Spooky Sherlock: Real Creepers, Canonical and Otherwise"</i> at the March Meeting. PFL David will follow with discussion of The Mazarin Stone (MAZA) Zoom
April	The Creeping Man (CREE) In-person
May	Editor Terri will attempt to host the discussion of The Lion's Mane (LION), in hopes of doing as good a job as Associate Editor Lauren did in February!! Zoom
June	His Last Bow (LAST) In-person
July	To Be Announced, as we begin a new 5-year cycle of Canonical study! Zoom
August	IBID In-person
September	IBID Zoom
October	IBID In-person
November	IBID Zoom
December	The Blue Carbuncle In-person

Romnes Rhyming!

*From the unofficial Hound of the Sound,
James's dog Moselle!*

"Sigerson's Adventures"

In Reichenbach
never wet,
But traveler
to Tibet.



"Mycroft's Weight"

For each stone of gain,
Add half a pound of brain.



"The Hat of Mr. Henry Baker"

Oh, waxy bowler hat
you said no gas laid in the flat,
And your circumference
an essay on intelligence.

Member Reviews Book!

By: **SOB Nancy Holder, BSI**

Palaces of Pleasure:

How the Victorians Invented Mass Entertainment

By Lee Jackson, Yale University Press, 2019

Palaces of Pleasure is a fun and enlightening read for Sherlockians who want to learn about the amusements available to Holmes and Watson. Author Lee Jackson traces the history of “mass entertainment” in Victorian England and the tensions that the class system both created and eased as pleasure-seekers rubbed elbows with their betters and their inferiors in search of a ripping good time.

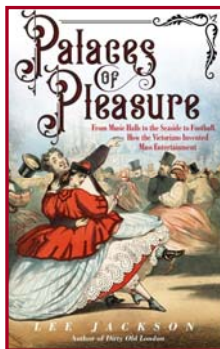
Georgian England (the period before the Victorian era) was dotted with taverns and ale houses, which these “public houses” provided beer and food (or offered to cook yours for you, if you brought it in). Due to a change in taxation laws, gin became very cheap, and entrepreneurs built extravagant “gin palaces” glimmering with chandeliers and gleaming brass fixtures, even in impoverished neighborhoods. The old-style tavern keepers, religious leaders, and temperance advocates pressured magistrates to deny licenses to these dens of iniquity, arguing that people frequented gin palaces for two reasons: to get drunk and meet up with “ladies of the evening.”

To combat their bad reputations, gin palaces offered spaces for amateur singalongs and hired professional entertainers, morphing into music halls. In addition to the bawdy songs and slapstick comedy acts we see in our Sherlock Holmes movies and TV shows, “respectable” operas and ballets were performed at music halls.

Music halls became “halls of varieties,” dance halls, and amazing pleasure gardens featuring Moorish cities, panoramas of Venice, imaginings of Africa, Arctic sea disasters and much, much more. They brought in Coney Island-style amusement park rides such as roller coasters and Ferris wheels. These pleasure gardens also moved to the seaside. (The custom of the day was for men to bathe in their birthday suits!) These seaside resorts added fun piers, some of which are still in existence to this day.

Author Jackson also covers the creation of professional sports in England, a subject Sir Arthur was passionate about (he was opposed). She also talks about the British Ladies Football Club—teams of female football players—which was formed in...guess when...1895.

I highly recommend this fun, informative book!



If you are among the current and former SOB Members who received an e-mail message on January 10, 2023 from Board Secretary Terri announcing the 2023 “dues holiday,” please note this:

Our *inflation-fighting offer* is being made to those below, renewing for the 2023/2024 membership period; that is,

1. ALL currently active Members who plan to renew;
2. Any currently active Member who has already renewed their 2023/2024 dues; and,
3. Any lapsed member who was on our membership rolls during the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022 **and** wishes to rejoin.

Our annual dues remain the same, at \$25 for individual members and \$35 for families (2+). Our annual dues normally cover membership from each April 1 to the following March 31, so that all members renew every year during March.

For *this 2023 inflation-fighting offer*, however, if you renew prior to April 1, 2023 you will be rewarded with **two (2) years membership**—meaning your membership will run from April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2025.

Renewing (or rejoining) prior to April 1, 2023, means:

- Your electronic payment via PayPal at the “Join” page on our website must be made by March 31. Here’s the link: [Join – The Sound of the Baskervilles](#)
- If paying by check (U.S. funds only), your check must be postmarked by March 31 and mailed to Treasurer Melinda at: **SOB Treasurer, P.O. Box 7633, Tacoma, WA 98417**

Any questions about this one-time deal? Email Treasurer Melinda at sobtreasurer1980@gmail.com or Terri at terri@soundofthebaskervilles.com

And, thank you!

Things to See, Buy, Do & Know

⇒ SOB James Romnes sent this:

Here's a photo of me sizing up QUEEN VICTORIA'S STOCKINGS as seen in the Lady Diana exhibit when Ginie & I last visited Las Vegas.



⇒ Smart Minds think alike—received this first from SOB Cara Cross and then from SOB Ann

Milam: DAILY CARTOON: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH - THE NEW YORKER: Cara sent this link—<https://apple.news/AQCK86ndLTdW2N7YFB1Wv8g> and suggested that other SOBs enter the daily contest. Ann, on the other hand, sent this link—https://www.newyorker.com/cartoons/daily-cartoon/wednesday-february-15th-sherlock-smartphone?utm_source=onsite-share&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=the-new-yorker—remarking upon



the image itself...of Holmes holding a Smartphone!

PFL David sent out an E-blast using Ann's link with the encouragement to enter, and we heard back from several of you who said you had! Mazeltov!

⇒ Says SOB Margie Deck, "In case you haven't seen this...": CHECK OUT THIS "COLLECTIBLE ART TOY" at <https://www.collectablecities.com/shop/p/sherlock-art-toy>. There you'll find "Sherlock" for £26, described this way: *First Edition Collectable London Art Toys - Sherlock comes beautifully packaged along with his magnifying glass (yes, it works!), measuring 10cm tall and ready to brighten up your bookshelf. Includes a limited edition collector card.* (Material: PVC, Made in China)



⇒ SOB Bill Seil (Member #1) sent this link—[Death Of Queen Victoria — Mystic Stamp Discovery Center](#)—FOR OUR PHILATELIST MEMBERS who are looking to acquire postage stamps with Queen Victoria's image! Many shown are Canadian, but there's a link at the bottom ⇒

A Conversation with SOB John Longenbaugh, PFL David, and Sherlockian expert Peter Blau

Playwright John Longenbaugh to PFL David: I recently had a note from my friend **Larry Albert** that next month marks the 25th Year of him playing Dr. Watson in Imagination Theatre's run of The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, first with John Gilbert until his death in 2006 and subsequently with John Patrick Lowrie. ♦ This has included them doing ALL of the Conan Doyle stories and quite a library of original Sherlock Holmes scripts too. ♦ I'd love to help spread the word on this significant anniversary to any and all Sherlockians.

PFL David to Peter Blau, BSI, editor of "Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press: I received this email from one of our SOB members, John Longenbaugh. **Larry Albert** reaching 25 years playing Dr. Watson should make this event a rare occurrence, if not unique. I am in hopes that you will consider mentioning Mr. Albert in your February Scuttlebutt.

Peter Blau to PFL David: I'd already heard from (M.J.) Elliott...planned for the next issue of my newsletter is this:

"The late Jim French's 'Imagination Theatre' radio series "The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" began 25 years ago, and is still on the air. **Larry Albert** has played Dr. Watson on every program, and you can hear recent shows at YouTube (www.tinyurl.com/2p88z22j). ♦ You can also purchase MP3 downloads of the 'Further Adventures' (and all of the Canonical stories as 'The Classic Adventures') at www.tinyurl.com/28a8tfj6. ♦ M. J. Elliott has been writing scripts for about 20 years, and has done the entire Canon, as well as many other stories."

to get you "more Great Britain stamps, including many early issues that picture Queen Victoria."

⇒ From Forner SOB Thom Walls: Left Coast Crime is coming to Bellevue, WA next year—at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue, April 11 to 14, 2024. That is all the info I have so far.

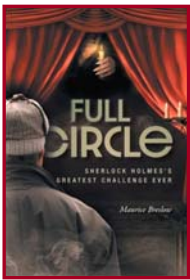
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Things to See, Buy, Do & Know...

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⇒ A Plethora from Peter Blau:

- Sherlockians (and Holmesians) gathered in New York City to celebrate the **GREAT DETECTIVE'S 169TH BIRTHDAY** during the (very) long weekend from Jan. 4 to 8, 2023. Reports on many if not most of the goings-on are posted at the Baker Street Irregulars' website at: [The 2023 BSI Weekend Report | The Baker Street Irregulars](#) ♦ A discussion of the festivities can be found at: <https://www.ihearofsherlock.com/2023/01/episode-256-bsi-weekend-in-review.html#.Y-VkH3bMLAw> ♦ Next year will be Holmes' 170th Birthday and the 90th for the BSIs. If you want to keep up with what they are doing, go to: <https://bakerstreetirregulars.com/bsi-news-via-email/>
- As noted in last month's issue (of Scuttlebut), **ALL OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES NOW ARE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.** You can visit Scott Monty and Burt Wolder's "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" blog to listen to them interview Les Klinger, Betsy Rosenblatt, and Ashley Polasek in their episode 255 about the significance of the end of Canonical copyright protection. Go to: <https://www.ihearofsherlock.com/2022/12/episode-255-sherlock-holmes-in-public.html#.Y-ftKXbMLAx>



- Maurice Breslow's *FULL CIRCLE: SHERLOCK HOLMES'S GREATEST CHALLENGE EVER* (Altona: Friesen Press, \$14.99) presents Holmes with a dire problem: Conan Doyle has decided to dispose of Holmes at the Reichenbach Falls. Their worlds collide, and overlap, and the novella provides an intriguing solution.

- The next **221B CON (A FAN CON FOR ALL THINGS SHERLOCK HOLMES)** will be held in Atlanta, GA, on Apr. 14 to 16; go to www.221bcon.com for more, and you are welcome to apply to be on one or more of their panels.
- **THE PARALLEL CASE OF ST. LOUIS** has announced their "Holmes in the Heartland" conference on July 28 to 30; more information is available at their website at: www.parallelcasestl.wixsite.com/home/holmes-in-the-heartland

⇒ **SOB Norman Foster shares this info:** PBS has released **SEASON 3 OF VIENNA BLOOD**. I strongly recommend this. It's set in early 1900 Vienna with a police inspector and an unlikely partner, a Freudian Psychologist. I'm watching Season 3; the first two seasons were great too. A very good period mystery of a contemporary of Holmes.



"The Survey Says...!"

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- Reasons people don't participate regularly at **Zoom meetings:** (34 responses, reasons in order of importance)
 - ★ Schedule Conflicts
 - ★ Technology/Don't like Zoom
 - ★ Length of Meetings
 - ★ Geography/Time Zone*
- * We have many members located in all four (4) U.S. time zones; and those in England and Wales are 8 hours ahead of Pacific time.
- On the issue of "**Length and Format of Meetings,**" it wasn't as easy for me to group this feedback into themes but...it seems that several of the responses revolved around the desire to have shorter meetings and maybe a slightly altered format.
- I will echo the thoughts I just re-read in the freeform additional comments: 'I love the SOBs.' 'I truly love this group and appreciate all of you who do so much to keep it such a strong and healthy group for so many years.' "
- Adds Editor/Secretary Terri:
 - ★ I was thrilled to see—of 34 respondents—thirteen (13) giving an unqualified Yes, Yea, Sure, or I will to the question, "Would you be interested in contributing to the Twaddle?" Some suggested topics: your favorite story or character, a book review, something about Sherlock Holmes, Watson or ACD, British history, or something about England.
 - ★ I was even MORE thrilled to see—of 30 respondents—another dozen Members giving an unqualified Yes to the question, "Would you be interested in contributing to the 2024 Beaten's Christmas Annual?" *Suggested topics are as above in the previous bullet.*
 - ★ In the freeform additional comments segment, in addition to Melinda's comments above, these are amazing to hear!
 - ◇ "I can't say enough how very much I love The SOBs and the passion not only for all things Sherlock but for the true comradery members have for one another."
 - ◇ "I am very impressed with the group and the information that is shared with newer members."
 - ◇ "Everyone in leadership is doing a great job!"
 - ◇ "I find the comradery of The SOBs comforting."



The Sound
of the
Baskervilles

By appointment
of Her Majesty,
Queen Victoria

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"The Survey Says...!"

Many thanks to the fifty (50) SOB Members who responded to our recent 2023 Member Survey! Your comments and responses were as varied as any two families appearing on The Family Feud!

The Board Members add super-Thanks! to Treasurer Melinda Michaelson, who is responsible for the ultimate product that you received and for the E-blasting she did—both initially and in follow-ups—and for her analysis below.

First in with Board response to the analysis was Webmaster Shannon, who said, "What incredible results. Thanks to Melinda and all who gave feedback so that the questions were just right to be thought-fully answered. Now to figure out what we do with this info. It is so clear how much everyone loves being an SOB!!"

Next to comment was Editor/Secretary Terri, who said, "One of my biggest take-aways is that the Zoom format is disliked by a third (32%) of those responding! This has already been modified with our 2023 Meetings being in-person six (6) times and via Zoom six (6) times (see detailed 2023 meeting calendar on Page 2).

Now on to Melinda's Analysis:

"I agree with Shannon. My first thoughts when I reviewed the responses were very affirming. The SOBs are a valuable and valued group, and responses indicated that people appreciate the content and those who produce the content, both written and at the meetings. Things to note about the survey:

- We had a healthy cross-section of respondents who have been members for varying lengths of time...from over 35 years to one year or less.

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 3rd 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 Wrath 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

- Fifty (50) people participated in the survey
- When free-form responses were requested, on the data I provided to the Board, I tried to delete any that stated "N/A" or anything similar that didn't provide data.
- Raffles are generally enjoyed.
- Zoom may not be the favorite meeting format but 64% of the respondents *always or often* participate in them as opposed to in-person meetings where only 32% of the respondents always or often attend them.
- Reasons people don't participate regularly at **in-person meetings**:
(40 responses, reasons in order of importance)
 - ★ Geography*
 - ★ Schedule Conflicts
 - ★ Driving in Seattle/Transportation/
Driving in the dark or rain
 - ★ Health/COVID
 - ★ Other

* We have many members located in the Midwest and in the East (e.g., Texas, Missouri, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Montreal), even two in the U.K.