



# For the Sake of the Trust

The Baker Street Irregulars Trust Newsletter

Fall, 2014

ISSUE NO. 14

## Evolutionary, My Dear Sherlockian: The BSI Trust Online

BY RANDALL STOCK, BSI

When the BSI Trust was established back in 2003, the Trustees knew that they needed an online presence to help let the world learn about it. Glen Miranker developed the Trust's first website, which explained the Trust's mission, provided a wish-list of materials for the archive, and highlighted a couple of the items already held at Harvard's Houghton Library. Three years later, I modestly expanded the site to provide electronic (PDF) versions of the BSI Trust newsletter, *For the Sake of the Trust*. The site now offers the complete run of these newsletters and is updated whenever a new one is published.

In July 2011, the Houghton Library completed the first phase of the BSI Archive cataloging project and produced an online finding aid. The website provides links to this finding aid, the result of which is that a world-wide audience can now access the master catalogue of the Trust's holdings. In late 2013, Harvard completed a pilot digitization project which allows online users to view more than 600 pages of BSI materials, all from the comfort of their own home. As much as that may seem to be, it still represents only a small portion of the archive's current holdings, which continue to grow on a regular basis.

As you can see, the scope of the Trust's online efforts has expanded dramatically over the course of its first ten years and it can only be expected to continue to expand in the years to come.

It seemed only natural, therefore, that the Trust's website needed to be redesigned. Earlier this year, Trust Chair Andy Solberg asked me to do just that, both so that the website more fully reflected the depth and wealth of the Trust's current activities and holdings and so that it was more user-friendly. That redesign is now underway, and if all goes well, you should see a new website with new material sometime in early 2015.

Among other things, the Trust wanted the website to be able to showcase some of the Trust's holdings so as to share them quickly and efficiently with Sherlockians

and researchers the world over. For example, the new website will eventually have a separate page for each annual BSI Dinner. Each page will include the Dinner group photo (if one was taken), along with a key to identify all the attendees depicted in the photo, a link to the Houghton's digitized copy of the menu, and certain standardized information about what took place at the Dinner, such as who was The Woman, who was invested, who earned Two-shilling awards, who won the Morley-Montgomery Prize that year, and who was mentioned in the traditional "Stand on The Terrace" ceremony. Assuming they are available, we hope to even have recordings of the more recent Dinners up there for people to stream. And, naturally, there will be links to all other relevant digitized material currently available in the BSI Trust Archive.

But wait! There's more! The new website will eventually also have Oral History Project interviews. Many BSI have agreed to allow their interviews to be made available on the Internet, and you will be able to listen to all of those from the Trust website. Of course, all recordings will also be available at the Houghton Library.

Adding all this material necessitates a larger and more complex website. That meant we needed to rebuild it from the ground up, and to use a layout and features that will make it easy to find all this new information. After

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consulting with Scott Monty, who with Burt Wolder produces the excellent "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" website, [www.ihearofsherlock.com](http://www.ihearofsherlock.com), we decided on a new framework that will allow us to expand and enhance the site for all visitors, including people accessing it on tablets or smartphones.

Another goal of this project is to save the Trust as much as possible on the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, costs which show no sign of going anywhere but up. To that end, the Trust has been actively soliciting hard copy readers of the newsletter to receive it via email instead. To encourage more people to do so, we are – beginning with this issue -- making the electronic

PDF version easier to read by reducing the amount of skipping around between pages needed to read an article straight through. We are also making it more attractive by having as many photos as we can in color in the PDF version. (The printed newsletter remains grayscale).

If you are still in doubt about switching, please visit our current website, [www.bsitrust.org](http://www.bsitrust.org), and download the issue of this newsletter (Fall, 2014) posted there and try it out for yourself. We think that you will like it enough to be willing to switch. And, of course, you can easily print the PDF version if you want to retain a hard copy.

## Memories are Made of This: The BSI Trust Oral History Project

BY MARSHA POLLAK, BSI

I love listening to stories. As a librarian I was fortunate to hear many throughout my career -- from my colleagues enthralled children during story time, from the children themselves, and from authors at conferences.

Not long after I joined my first Sherlockian scion society in 1976, I met the storyteller of all storytellers: John Bennett Shaw. I was lucky enough to visit his home in Santa Fe a few years later, and I cherish a picture of myself sitting on the floor in John's library, looking up and listening to him tell us about how the screenwriter Chris Columbus had just sent him the script to the movie *Young Sherlock Holmes*. He was supposed to read it for accuracy before filming started, and I think he had a day or two to give his input.

I wish John were still alive so we could have his voice telling us stories for the Oral History Project (OHP). Since we don't, it's all the more important not to miss the stories of current BSI members. That's why the Oral History Project continues to be so essential.

I began doing interviews in 2007 when Don Terras first led the project. Don got things off on solid ground and set up the basic template that we're still using. I'll let you in on a little secret: it was fun! How often can you be the first one to hear the memories and anecdotes of someone you know and admire, or perhaps don't know well? But now you have a rare insight into their life.

In 2009 when Don found his work requirements were limiting his time on the project, Andy Solberg was asked to be the new leader, and he ably picked up the baton. I continued to be involved and watched as it grew to the point that the BSI purchased digital recorders for the interviews.

When Andy was tapped to be the new Chair of the BSI Trust and had to give up running the Oral History Project, he asked if I would lead it. Since I've loved the project from the beginning, I said "yes."

The OHP started by trying to interview BSI who were invested prior to 1970, but that method didn't always work in reaching those who needed to be interviewed most quickly for health and age reasons. Now, as "Wiggins" has said, the goal is "to have all living Irregulars included in this oral archive." High priority will, of course, still be given to those in declining health.

There has been a focus on geography this year. Interviews have taken place in the North, South, East and West of the United States. My thanks go out to interviewers Francine Kitts, Julie McKuras, Sonia Fetherston, Dorothy Stix, and Greg Darak for their help.

Now we're also going international with coordinators in Canada, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe conducting and arranging interviews for BSI members there. My thanks to Peggy Perdue, Nicholas Utechin, and Mattias Bostrom who have volunteered to lead the charge to get those interviews. Next we'll have to move on to Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, though we have a start there with Rosane McNamara's interview!

There is still much to do, and just like Don and Andy, I would appreciate your help. If I write or call and ask if you'd like to be interviewed or interview someone, please say "yes." If you know of a BSI member who should be interviewed sooner rather than later, please let us know at either [mlpollak@icloud.com](mailto:mlpollak@icloud.com) or [asolberg@earthlink.net](mailto:asolberg@earthlink.net).







# A Matchless Journey

BY ROBERT KATZ, BSI

The Sherlockian world is full of wonderful coincidences and twists of fate. One of these unexpected bits of destiny is demon-

strated by a rather ordinary appearing piece of cardboard packing box that is now part of the BSI Archive.

As is discussed in the accompanying note (reproduced below) from the summer issue of the 1959 *Baker Street Journal*, Tom Stix, Jr., future “Wiggins” of the BSI, provided matchbooks at each place setting at the 1959 BSI Annual Dinner.

One of the hits at the B. S. I. dinner in January, thanks to Tom Stix, Jr., and George Hourwich, was the souvenir found by each attendant beside his place-card: a handsome caddy of matches, in handsome gaslight-red covers, bearing the famous Frederic Dorr Steele profile of Sherlock Holmes on the back

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and the B.S.I. insignia on the front, thus:



By arrangement with the Diamond Match Company, we can supply you with these pleasing souvenirs, specially packed for mailing, at \$1.00 per caddy - each caddy containing 50 books of matches. What better way can you think of to amaze and gratify your friends, and shed light upon a subject that might otherwise remain for ever dark?

Order as many caddies from us as you want: the Diamond Match Company is in business to stay, and if our initial order for 300 caddies is exhausted, there can be refills. But I am going to be away from Baker Street during the whole month of April (that is why this issue of the JOURNAL is being sent out a little earlier than usual), so send your orders in, but don't expect shipment until some time along about the 10th of May.

Baker Street Journal, Volume 9 Number 2,  
New Series, 1959, 125-126

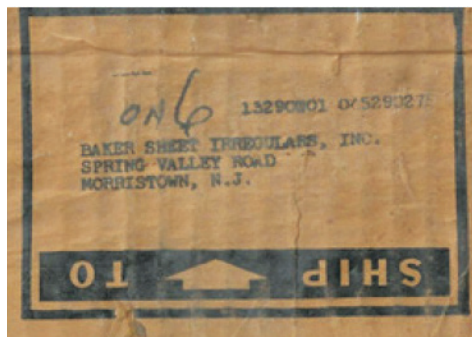
cardboard packing carton. The carton was shipped to Edgar P., who lived in Morristown, NJ, on the other side of town from his father, Edgar W. The box eventually made its way from Edgar P.'s home on Spring Valley Road to Tom Stix and eventually to Tom's new home in Norwood, NJ.

After Tom became “Wiggins”, he decided to sell various items at the Merchants Room in January to help support the John H. Watson Fund. At about the same time, I had moved from Baltimore to Morristown, and was living with my growing family in a townhouse on Dorado Drive. Tom asked me to help out with the BSI table, and, for a few years, I sold many of the boxes of matches. I eventually went to Tom's home and was given the remaining matchbooks, which were still in the original cardboard shipping box. At some point, the box had become water damaged, and the lower portion of the box had begun disintegrating.

I salvaged whatever matchbooks were still intact. The box itself was in bad shape, but the shipping label on the upper flap was still intact. For some reason (collector that I am), I removed it and stored it away. But I didn't give it any more thought.

In 1992, I moved from Dorado Drive to Van Beuren Road, a bit farther away from the center of Morristown. Van Beuren leads into a larger connecting thoroughfare, Spring Valley Road. The side yard of my new home adjoined the backyard of a large 19th-century home that fronts on Spring Valley. When we purchased our home, I obtained the standard property survey, which demonstrates adjacent lots and lists their current and prior owners. I was well and truly stunned when I saw that a previous owner of the home on Spring Valley Road was none other than Edgar P. Smith. I knew that his father, Edgar W., had lived on the other side of town and I had visited that street with its famous “Baker Street” road sign. I knew that Edgar P. had lived in the area but did not realize that he had, until just a few years before I moved to the neighborhood, owned a house around the corner from me and whose back yard adjoined mine. I had completely forgotten about the matches by then.

Sometime after Tom passed away in 1998, I was going through some of my Sherlockian “stuff” and came across a box of BSI matchbooks and the shipping label from the packing crate. It was, as is illustrated below, sent to “Baker Street Irregulars, Inc., Spring Valley Road, Morristown, NJ”.



Again, I was stunned. I suddenly realized that this box of BSI matchbooks and shipping label had made its way from the manufacturer to the home of

Edgar P. Smith, to Tom Stix, and then to my home on Dorado Drive. They then journeyed to my new home on Van Beuren Road and were only a few feet from their original destination, a house that still stands today on a lot adjoining mine. To complete the circle, I took the box of matches and the label and walked across my backyard onto the former Smith property. Through the most circuitous of routes, the matchbooks had come home.

The Chair of the BSI Trust, Andrew Solberg, BSI, recently visited my home. I was able to show Andy the house of Edgar P. Smith, around the corner, and present to him, for preservation in the BSI Trust Archive, the box of BSI matchbooks and the shipping label from the original packing carton. They have made a remarkable journey, but I know they have arrived at their final, and appropriate, destination.

# From the Chair

BY ANDREW SOLBERG, BSI



Andrew Solberg, BSI

*"I have been too busy to think of food, and I am likely to be busier still this evening."*

Sherlock Holmes in "A Scandal in Bohemia"

The Trust has accomplished so much in the past eleven years. It has proven to be a good steward of our Irregular history and it is taking steps to make the collection even more accessible to the greater Sherlockian community. In the minutes to the 1942 Annual Dinner (<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.HOUGH:11354171?n=30>), Edgar W. Smith made the first reference to the BSI archives.

Mr. Earle Walbridge presented a scholarly treatise on the Baker Street Bibliography for 1941 which is invaluable as reference and research material, and which has been duly preserved in the archives.

To the best of our knowledge, unfortunately, there were no actual archives in 1942. If there were, they did not survive. But beginning in 2003, the Trust Board has actualized what Edgar Smith apparently only alluded to. Today, the BSI Archive is a vibrant collection of Irregular memory spanning the past eighty years. It includes letters, Dinner menus, photos (of Dinners and other events), correspondence, presentations, memorabilia, business records, recordings, videos, interviews, and many other items. It has been able to amass these items through the generosity of our membership which has donated (and continues to donate) these pieces of our history. And we continue to be busy collecting Irregular material on a regular basis.

Not only are we receiving contemporary material, but we are grateful that we are still receiving historical material as well. For example, a few weeks ago, Bob Thomalen donated (among other important items) the only handwritten draft of Bill Schweickert's classic "A Long Evening with Holmes." Of course, that should be in the BSI Archive! Earlier this year, we obtained one of the BSI Stock Certificates issued to William S. Hall in 1948 and signed by Christopher Morley as the "president" of the BSI, Inc. These are only two examples of the material we have recently received. Not a month goes by that I don't

receive a packet (or package) of material that reflects our historical or more recent history and that gives texture to the extraordinary character of our membership. Thank you, everyone. Please keep them coming.

What a busy six months it has been for the Trust, as you can see from this newsletter, so busy, in fact, that we are dispensing with our regular half-page department of "BSI Trust News". There is just too much to write about.

First there are the BSI Dinner group photos. In the Spring issue we asked readers if they would be so kind as to donate their bought and paid-for copies of the official BSI Dinner photos from 19 "missing" years so that the Trust could have a complete set that it could then digitize and make available to everyone on our website. Not surprisingly considering the audience, the response was singularly overwhelming: ten BSI (Susan Diamond, Ralph Earle, Bob Katz, Ken McQuage, Hartley Nathan, Richard Olken, James Saunders, Andy Solberg, Bill Vande Water, and Ira Wolff) kindly parted with their prized dinner souvenirs, and we now have at least scans of every BSI Dinner picture that we know was taken. (We believe that no group photos were taken in 1934, 1936, 1941-1945, and 1948.) While Bill Vande Water was able to provide us with scans of 1951 and 1957, the Houghton still does not have original photos for those years. So if you have them, please consider donating them to the Trust so that the Houghton will have a complete set of originals. As you can see from the 1940 photo below, they present some of the clearest and best visual evidence of who we were and how we grew.



The Baker Street Irregulars Dinner, January 30, 1940

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As our webmaster, Randall Stock reports elsewhere in this issue, he is implementing a complete redesign of the Trust website ([www.bsitrust.org](http://www.bsitrust.org)). This came about because the Trust wanted to be able to showcase some of its holdings and share them with Sherlockians and researchers the world over. The new website will eventually have a page for every annual BSI Dinner, with the Dinner group photo (if taken), some information about the Dinner including listing the menu (if avail-



*continued from page four*

able), Investitures, Two-Shilling Awards, The Woman, "Stand on the Terrace" mentions, Morley-Montgomery winners, and links to the relevant digitized material in the Archive. We hope to even have recordings of Dinners up there for people to stream for those dinners for which recordings are available.

The website will also have Oral History Project interviews to listen to (if interviewees agree to have their interviews made available on the Internet) as well as other highlights of the Trust's collection. It is all very exciting, but it has been an extraordinary amount of work. Luckily, we have an extraordinary group of people who are assisting us. Randall has been wonderful about designing the website and working out any glitches posed by Moriarty. I can't thank him enough.

Scott Monty has been generous in sharing the experience he has gained from the "I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere" website design. (Highly recommended at <http://www.ihearofsherlock.com/>) A young professional archivist, Tamar Zeffren, has volunteered to help write the information for each Dinner page and has provided tremendous advice on what should be on those pages. Chris Music has agreed to load the content of the pages onto the website. Burt Wolder has volunteered to prepare the audio files and load them onto the audio server for listening over the Internet. The new website will be rolled out slowly beginning in early 2015, and we will be adding pages and audio files to it on an irregular basis. Once it debuts, you will want to check back often.

In addition, the Trust hopes to soon place another order for the Houghton to digitize even more of its cataloged holdings. As we mentioned in the Spring newsletter, more than 600 items from the BSI Archive have already been digitized and made available on the Houghton website. You can find these by going to the BSI Archive Finding Aid (<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.Hough:h02178>) and scrolling through the cataloged holdings until you find items marked "Click for color digital images." (The first one is item #148, Morley, Christopher, 1890-1957. Letters to Edgar Wadsworth Smith, 1939-1955.) We hope to at least double the number of digitized items so that they, too, can be viewed online.

In the meantime, we keep sending more and more material to the Houghton. Prior to sending it, we review each piece and "pre-catalog" it by completing a form that includes basic information about the item. Bob Coghill has been doing a remarkable job on this for the Trust since its inception. The Houghton Library greatly appreciates our doing the pre-cataloging, which also lowers the overall cost of cataloging for the Trust. Terry and Linda Hunt have recently volunteered to augment Bob's efforts. Terry is a historian, and, like Bob, Linda is a professional archivist. Their efforts will greatly enhance the ability of the Trust to convey our Irregular history to the Houghton.

We still have other tasks to accomplish. For example, we would like to have "keys" to all of the BSI Dinner photos. A key is a means of identifying the people in the photo. Whenever I mention the Dinner photos, the question that I am most frequently asked is whether we have keys to the photos. We have some, and we have some attendance lists, but we need people who will take this task on and put them in a format that we can then make available on both the Houghton and Trust websites.

I mentioned Bob Thomalen earlier. Among the items Bob generously donated were thirteen scrapbooks of photos from BSI and other Sherlockian events, such as Autumn in Baker Street, going back to 1982. Sue Vizoskie has kindly taken one of the scrapbooks in order to identify the events and people captured in the photographs.

If you would like to help on these projects, or if you would like to join the growing army of volunteers who are working on other Trust projects, please email me at [solberg@bsitrust.org](mailto:solberg@bsitrust.org).

As I said previously, we still need more of our history for the collection. For example, I note from the Finding Aid cited above that the Archive does not have Dinner menus for 1941, 1942, 1944, and 1945. If you have these menus, please consider donating them to the Trust so that we can complete the menu collection. If you have information about the menus, such as whether or not they were even printed, please email me to share that information as well.

And, of course, please keep donating your BSI-related correspondence, papers, photos, videos, recordings, and memorabilia to the Trust so that they can be preserved for future generations of researchers and Sherlockians. Your items give context and texture to our history. The Archive is being used by researchers. Recently, Peter Accardo informed me that a Harvard student was using the Archive for his thesis.

Oh that those archives that Edgar mentioned in 1942 had been preserved for us through the years! But at least the BSI Trust has implemented Edgar's intent. Please support it with your donations of money and memories. A heartfelt thank you to all who do.



## Added to the Archive

The following material donations have been received since the publication of the Spring, 2014 newsletter.

- From John Stevens Berry, the program of the Golden Anniversary of the Maiwand Jezails, a booklet about Richard Lesh and the Maiwand Jezails in the 1960s, and a Victoria Cross Medal.
- From Ralph Earle, a file of miscellaneous papers and handouts.
- From Robert Katz, one box of BSI matchbooks distributed at the 1959 BSI Dinner plus the original address label from the shipping carton. (see Bob's article in this issue)
- From Francine Kitts, two letters from Fred Kittle to Francine dated August 21, 1988, (regarding slides about *The Strand Magazine*) and August 27, 1988 (regarding a book about *The Strand Magazine*).
- From Les Klinger, a file folder relating to the 1998 CIA West Dinner "Dining with Sherlock Holmes," containing a check register, expense lists, the invitee list, and photo copies of related press articles.
- From Hartley Nathan, "Sherlock Holmes in Canada" (his speech delivered at the 2002 BSI Dinner) and "Dr. Mortimer's Penang Lawyer 1884" (his speech delivered at the 2010 BSI Dinner).
- From Andrew Peck, approximately 85 letters of correspondence between and among Andrew, Peter Blau, Ron DeWaal, and George Vandenburg (mostly during the 1990s), primarily on the subject of DeWaal's *The Universal Sherlock Holmes*.
- From Robert Thomalen, a laminated, early handwritten draft of "A Long Evening with Holmes" signed by author William Schweickert; an August 29, 1989, handwritten letter from Dame Jean Conan Doyle to Bob thanking him for his appreciation of her father; and thirteen scrapbook binders of photographs of BSI and related events (including Autumn in Baker Street) from 1982 through more recent years.
- From Nicholas Utechin, his correspondence with Ron DeWaal (1969-1987), Bruce Kennedy (1967-1977), Jon Lellenberg (1976-1988), Jack Tracy (1975-1983), Michael Harrison (1974-1976), Nathan Bengis (1967-1976), Luther Norris (1969-1977), and Julian Wolff (1967-1985), and his papers related to the writing of "Disaster at the New Century," the 2013 *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual*.
- From Ira Wolff, BSI Dinner Packets from 1973, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1989, and two envelopes containing various other years' contents. Also, a 10"x 11" coin tray which housed coins belonging to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and a pair of cufflinks with "221B" inscribed on them.

## About Donations to the Trust

The Trust seeks primary materials about the history of the BSI and the Irregulars. These may consist of correspondence, photographic and audio materials, manuscripts of historical documents, biographical material, newspaper clippings, and magazine articles. It can also accept valuable Sherlockian books that can be sold to raise funds for the Trust.

The Trust does not intend to create a collection that duplicates the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota or the Arthur Conan Doyle Collection of the Toronto Metropolitan Reference Library, and so does not actively seek editions of the Canon or scholarly works unless the material has a direct bearing on the history of the BSI or the Irregulars.

The Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization, and contributions are tax-deductible under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

To deduct a non-cash donation of \$5,000 or more, the owner must arrange and pay for a qualified appraisal. Contributions of \$250 or more will be publicly acknowledged; for non-cash items, however, tax regulations prohibit the Trust from acknowledging the dollar value of the donation in this newsletter or *The Baker Street Journal*.

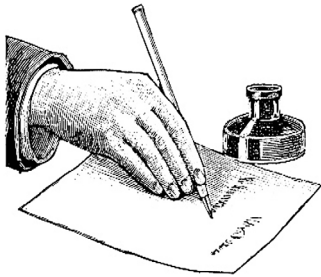
The initial step in making a donation is to contact one of the trustees. You can find contact information on the Baker Street Irregulars Trust website: [www.bsitrust.org](http://www.bsitrust.org).



## About this Newsletter

You received this copy of *For the Sake of the Trust: The Baker Street Irregulars Trust Newsletter* because you have been on the mailing list of *The Baker Street Journal* or are a member of the Baker Street Irregulars. (Please see page two of this issue regarding our transition to an electronic format for future issues.) If you are not interested in receiving

further issues, or have any comments or suggestions, please contact:



**Marshall S. Berdan, Editor**  
2015 Main Street  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Or send an e-mail to:  
**editor@bsitrust.org**

You can access links, current events, and back issues of the newsletter any time at our website: **www.bsitrust.org**

## BSI Trust Officers

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Bob Coghill, *Archivist*  
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Michael F. Whelan, *Wiggins*



## ❖ For the Sake of the Trust ❖

The Trust is a special part of the Baker Street Irregulars, the literary society dedicated to the study of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. The Trust is the repository of the Irregulars' collective memory, and its purpose is to collect, archive, and preserve historical documents, correspondence, papers, photos, recordings, and memorabilia relating to the BSI and its members and friends.

The Trust Archive is located in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The archival material may be used by any qualified Sherlockian, subject to the normal rules and regulations of the library. The BSI Trust welcomes all monetary gifts as well as material contributions to the archive.

**Monetary donations** should be sent to:

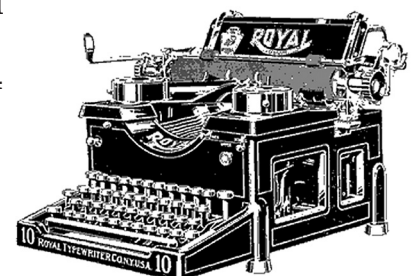
**Leslie S. Klinger, BSI**  
10866 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite # 1500  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

If the financial donation is in honor of someone, please indicate the appropriate name.

If you are passing along a contribution from a third party, please include the name and address of the donor so that we can acknowledge the donation with a thank-you letter from the BSI Trust.

Questions regarding **material contributions** to the archive should be directed to:

**Andrew Solberg, BSI**  
5612 Thicket Lane  
Columbia, MD 21044





# The Cardinal Points

BY MARSHALL S. BERDAN, BSI



Marshall S. Berdan, BSI

## At Home at the Houghton

In this space in the last issue I reiterated that while the BSI Trust was doing its best – via the magic of digitization – to bring the BSI Trust Archive to you, it was still well worth your while to come to Cambridge to see both the Houghton Library and the BSI Trust Archive in real time and in all their physical glories. As the Master was wont to say “[t]here is nothing

like first-hand evidence” and for Sherlockian scholars and aficionados, that means handling and studying the originals for yourself in the Houghton’s eminently dignified main reading room.

I am lucky enough to live within two hours of Boston, and hence within relatively easy striking distance of the Houghton, which I had the opportunity to visit again earlier this year. It truly is a wonderful edifice with a celebrated history – one, which I will suggest – is perfectly in keeping with the role it has served the BSI Trust for the past decade.

Dedicated and opened in 1942, the Neo-Georgian style library was named in honor of bibliophile philanthropist Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., Harvard Class of 1929, and the great-grandson of Amory Houghton, Sr., the founder of the Corning Glass Works in Corning, NY. Young Arthur (the appropriateness of his first name needs no comment) was a bit of a chip off the old glass block. After graduation, he joined the family business and in 1933, took over the reins of Steuben Glass, a division of Corning. As legend has it, the new president was determined to produce high-quality – and only high-quality -- products. A month after his accession, he and a confederate, armed with gloves and lead pipes, entered a Steuben warehouse in Corning and destroyed some 20,000 pieces (net worth over \$1 million) which he considered to be of inferior quality and workmanship.

In 1938, just before the start of the war, Harvard decided that it desperately needed a separate research facility for the housing and study of rare books and manuscripts. Until then, those volumes had been on rather unceremonious and unprotected display on the ground floor of the main Widener Library in what had become known colloquially as “The Treasure Room” (now the periodicals reading room). Naturally, the proposed library, which was to be adjacent to the Widener in Harvard Yard, was to be of the highest quality itself. In addition to being outwardly and inwardly handsome, with plenty of display and meeting space, it was also to possess the absolute latest in library science amenities, including climate-control, air filtration, and enhanced security systems.

One of the people that Harvard approached to help fund the new library was Houghton, who had cultivated a fondness for English literature while an undergraduate and had already begun collecting original works and manuscripts himself, especially those of Victorians Robert Browning, his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Romantic John Keats. But Houghton was more than just a collector, he was also an active preserver. In 1941, he accepted an offer from Archibald MacLeish, then serving as Librarian of Congress, to come to Washington and serve as the library’s curator of rare books.

The rest, as they say, is history, and Arthur Houghton’s generosity allowed it to become his story, or at least “his” library. Within a decade, the size of the collection doubled

and the Houghton was well on its way to fulfilling its ambitious mission. By the 1970s, the Houghton itself was well on its own way to becoming full. When the new Pusey Library was built next door, one of its underground rooms was given to the Houghton. It is in that room that the BSI Trust Archive is physically located – and fortuitously blessed with plenty of room to grow. If you make prior arrangements, you can see it when you come to Boston. As much as we at the Trust welcome this brave, new world of digitization, there are just some pleasures that cannot be replicated electronically. As that great American celluloid classic concludes, there is indeed, “no place like home.”



Arthur A. Houghton  
photo by Steuben Glass