



## Visit Denny Dobry's Basement of Books

*Sales benefit BSI Trust*

Not long ago, Denny Dobry (“A Single Large Airy Sitting-Room”) was stunned when a member of the Baker Street Irregulars had more than 60 boxes of books sent to him. The Irregular was downsizing and simply didn't have the space for the collection she had put together over her lifetime.



*Denny Dobry's basement has more than 3,000 items ready for sale.*

Like all the books he's received, Denny began cataloging them and finding space for them in the part of his basement that's become an informal bookshop. Proceeds from those sales benefit the Baker Street Irregulars Trust.

The donation was one of the largest he's received since he began informally selling books on behalf of the BSI Trust in 2016. And whether it's six books or 60 boxes of books, Denny still gets a thrill when they arrive.

“I love doing this, hunting through the boxes to see what's in there. I've been doing this for years and I still get excited,” he said. Then he added with a smile, “The only drawback is that when someone else wants it, I have to sell it.”

## From Woodshop to Bookshop

Denny didn't plan on having thousands of books in the basement of his Reading, Pennsylvania, suburban home.

For many years, that area of the basement was his woodworking shop, a hobby that kept him quietly busy for decades. Some of the items he fabricated went no farther than a few feet away, to another part of the basement where he has a meticulously detailed recreation of Holmes' sitting room at 221B.

Everything from Col. Sebastian Moran's air gun, to Dr. Watson's stethoscope and the VR bullet pocks in the wall are present. Visitors have come from all over the world—including Canada, Australia, England and Denmark—to take in the Baker Street scene and soak up the closest they will ever get to "the" sitting room.



*Denny in his detailed recreation of 221B Baker Street.*

Denny thought that the sitting room was his major Sherlockian accomplishment until he approached then-BSI Trust Chairman Andrew Solberg ("Professor Coram") about some books that had been donated by the late Gerry Wachs ("Sir James Saunders"). Denny offered to price the books for sale, then took it one step further by agreeing to sell them himself.

From that modest start, the books poured in. He estimates there are more than 3,000 books and thousands of magazines, comics and journals in his inventory now, priced and ready to go to good Sherlockian collector homes.

Donations also keep coming in. Several years back, Denny was contacted by the late Phil Jones, a member of the Amateur Mendicant Society of Detroit. He wanted to pare down his collection.

Denny acquired a healthy bookcase of volumes from him. After Jones' death, his family contacted Denny about the remainder of the collection. So Denny and Jeff Decker ("Dr. Grimesby Roylott") drove from Pennsylvania to Detroit, and came back with more than 2,000 books!

### **Something For Every Sherlockian**

Today, Denny's inventory spans dozens of small and large shelves that continue to take up an ever-growing portion of his former woodworking shop. By far, the biggest category in his inventory is pastiches. Because there are so many, they are also some of the best bargains on the shelves.



“General scholarship is the biggest demand, especially things from H.W. Bell, Edgar Smith, Michael Harrison, and the like,” he said. “There’s also a big demand for out-of-print books by the BSI Press.”

Most of the sales Denny makes are either via email, selling at Sherlockian events, or when folks visiting his 221B room wind up buying a box of books. But he has also created special Open House opportunities for folks to go through the shelves in person. Keep

reading for more details.

While books are the bulk of what you’ll find there, Denny has also acquired other kinds of Sherlockian items. You can find favorites from stuffed animals in deerstalkers, to statues, dishware, dolls, playing cards, games, walking sticks, movie posters, LPs, and CDs. There are even cassette tapes, for those who love throwback items. And for that collector who wants to start their own recreation of 221B, Denny has a gasogene.

He also has a section devoted to the non-Sherlockian works of famous Irregulars, like Christopher Morley and Vincent Starrett.



*Books are stacked to the ceiling, with some sections devoted to the non-Sherlockian works of well-known Irregulars.*

“I tell people that if they’re looking for something, to try me first. You can’t believe some of the things I’ve had in here over the years,” he said.

“The best part is knowing these are going to good homes and will make Sherlockian collectors happy—and that the proceeds go to support the BSI Archive.”

### **Your Guide to Great Book Bargains**

If you’re in the market for some great deals on Sherlockian books, there are several ways to find the items you want, while helping the BSI Trust at the same time.

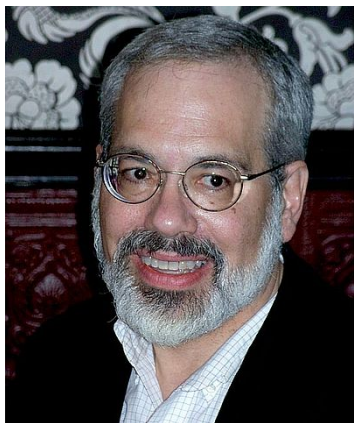
If you are able, head to Denny Dobry’s Open House on Saturday, September 30, 2023. The events starts at 10 a.m. and goes until the last Sherlockian leaves. Denny lives at 5003 Stony Run Drive in Reading, Pennsylvania. Reading is about 100 miles from Manhattan and 80 miles from Baltimore.

If you can’t make the Open House, you can send want lists to Denny via email at [<dendobry@ptd.net>](mailto:dendobry@ptd.net). It’s a great way to fill that gap on your shelf!



## Rothman to Give 2023 BSI Trust Lecture

The third annual BSI Trust Lecture will be delivered via Zoom webinar by Steven Rothman (“*The Valley of Fear*”), editor emeritus of the [Baker Street Journal](#).



Steven will discuss the correspondence between Christopher Morley (the founder of the Baker Street Irregulars in 1934) and Edgar W. Smith (the BSI’s second leader).

Steven has a superlative collection of Sherlockiana, with a special emphasis on the writings of Christopher Morley. He is also editor of *The Standard Doyle Company: Christopher Morley on Sherlock Holmes*

(1990). Among his other works was co-editing *To Keep The Memory Green: Reflections on the Life of Richard Lancelyn Green, 1953-2004* (2007) with Nicholas Utechin (“The Ancient British Barrow”).

You will be able to sign up for the lecture at the end of August via the [BSI Trust website](#). The event will take place on Saturday, September 9, 2023 at 2 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The lecture will be held via Zoom, is free and open to all Sherlockians and the public. Registration in advance is required



### From the Outgoing Chair

By Thomas A. Horrocks, BSI

There have been some major changes in my life that have affected my participation with the Baker Street Irregulars Trust. In late June of this year, I underwent emergency quadruple bypass open heart surgery. Since I experienced only minor symptoms, I was stunned at the seriousness of my heart disease. My recovery is going well, and I feel very lucky.

The next 12 months are a critical time for the Trust and requires a committed and energetic leader to manage and oversee the various initiatives in which the board is engaged. Our third BSI Trust Annual Lecture is scheduled for September 9, and the deadline for BSI Trust/Lilly Library Research Fellowships is approaching. Most importantly, the

initiative to review and revamp the BSI Trust's online materials is now underway and moving full steam ahead.

It quickly became clear that I would not be able to continue as chairman while recovering from surgery. As a result, I have retired from the chairmanship.

I am delighted that Ray Betzner has agreed to serve as the new chair of the Trust board. Ray is an appropriate choice for the post, since he has been a driving force in the communications strategy initiative from the beginning. I pledge to do all that I can to assist Ray as he assumes the chair.

As for myself, I'm not going anywhere. Our Wiggins, Michael Kean, has asked that I remain a member of the board and I am pleased to do so.

It has been a real honor and pleasure to work with the Trust board over the last five years. The transition to our new home at the Lilly Library is complete and there are great things ahead. I am proud of all that we have accomplished "for the sake of the Trust."

I am determined to see you in New York City in January. Until then, take care of yourselves.



## From the Editor & Incoming Chair

By Ray Betzner, BSI

I know all of you join with me in thanking Tom Horrocks for his tremendous efforts on behalf of the BSI Trust. I'm delighted that Tom will remain on the board and will continue to be a source of information and support in the future.

Tom left some big shoes to fill. (For the record, I wear an 11.) I look forward to completing the initiatives he started, particularly those that update our website, enhance our engagement with the Lilly Library, and gain greater awareness about the Trust and its activities.

One singular point is already clear to me in these early days: The Irregular community is made up of individuals who donate thousands of hours of their time, energy and talents to benefit us all. I thank the Trust board for their messages of support and look forward to working with you all.

In my role as newsletter editor, I also have one Norbury moment to report: In the last issue, I failed to note that Jean Upton's investiture is "Elsie Cubitt." Thanks to Jean for being so understanding



*The shelves are packed for Denny Dobry's Open House!*

## Support the BSI Trust!

Thank you for donating to support of the Baker Street Irregulars Trust. Every tax-deductible dollar helps to collect, maintain and disseminate our Irregular history. By making a tax-deductible contribution, you can help ensure that BSI history will be available to historians, researchers, and the Sherlockian community. Please donate now by filling out the form below and mailing it to:

Leslie S. Klinger, BSI, c/o Kopple, Klinger & Elbaz LLP, 10866 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1500, Los Angeles, CA 90024-4357

You may also donate using a credit card or PayPal via the BSI Trust website at <<http://www.bsitrust.org/2015/01/donations.html>>.

### Please select your gift:

\$25     \$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     \$1,000

Other

### Donation frequency:

One Time     Two Years     Three Years     Five Years

BSI Trust Endowment     General Fund

Donation Enclosed     Please Bill Me

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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