



Honorary Member, Emeritus



photo courtesy of Bill Vande Water

William Stuart Baring-Gould
1913-1967

William S. Baring-Gould was a Time executive whose contributions to the literary world (and especially to Sherlockians) are manifest. Mr. Baring-Gould was a descendent of the well-known author and archivist Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) who was a featured character in Laurie King's book *The Moor*. He was the author of numerous important Sherlockian works including, *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*, *The Chronological Holmes* and the famous *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* is considered by many Sherlockians as his crowning achievement and is a must in every Sherlock Holmes Collection. He authored other works, including *The Lure of the Limerick: An Uninhibited History*, *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-fifth Street* (a work about the detective whom some speculate is the "son" of Sherlock Holmes) and collaborated with his wife, Ceil, on *The Annotated Mother Goose, Nursery Rhymes Old and New*. All of these works are important volumes in their respective literary worlds. Mr. Baring-Gould was BSI and invested as "The Gloria Scott". Julian Wolfe said at his passing:

"In the true Irregular tradition, and in accordance with the precepts of

*Christopher Morley, he was always ready to encourage young Sherlockians,
many of whom owe much to his valuable assistance."*

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Sherlockian.Net: William S. Baring-Gould

Bill Baring-Gould, 1913-1967

W. S. Baring-Gould was an executive of Time Inc. and a distinguished though modest Sherlockian (invested in the Baker Street Irregulars as "The Gloria Scott", 1952). On his death, Julian Wolff wrote in the *Baker Street Journal* that he was one of our most knowledgeable Sherlockians and a scholarly, prolific writer. When one adds to this that he was a close personal friend of everyone in our far-flung group, it will easily be understood why it is truly impossible to put into words just how much he meant to us all and how great is our sorrow.

His major works:

- *The Chronological Holmes*, 1955 (with revisions from an earlier edition that appeared in the *Baker Street Journal* in 1948)
- *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*, 1962
- *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, 1967
- *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-Fifth Street*, 1969



William S. Baring-Gould at the 1950 Baker Street Irregulars dinner. Photo by Standard Studios, as reproduced in *Irregular Crises of the Late 40's*, courtesy of Bill Vande Water.

The chronology of Holmes's life

All of Baring-Gould's work is based on his reconstructed chronology of Sherlock Holmes's life and work, as first expressed in his 1955 (privately published) book. Among its key features:

- Holmes was born January 6, 1854, at "Mycroft" in the North Riding of Yorkshire.
- *The Hound of the Baskervilles* takes place in September-October 1888 -- which means that it overlaps the Jack the Ripper murders, a matter of some importance to Baring-Gould. (Most other chronologists have set *The Hound* in either 1889 or 1900.)
- Watson was married three times.
- Holmes died January 6, 1957.

The Irene Adler affair

The idea that Holmes had an affair with [Irene Adler](#) in Montenegro in 1892, and that their son was the detective Nero Wolfe, was first presented by John D. Clark in the *Baker Street Journal* in 1956, but Baring-Gould seized on it with enthusiasm, in *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-Fifth Street* as well as in his Sherlockian writings. According to his narrative, Holmes's last words were "Irene. Irene."

Other novelties in Baring-Gould's narrative

Baring-Gould seems to have invented several features of Holmes's biography that have been accepted by later writers and Sherlockians -- in some cases, readers actually assume that the original Holmes stories somehow confirm them.

- Holmes spent his childhood travelling through Europe with a cultivated but unconventional family.
- [James Moriarty](#), later his great antagonist, was his mathematics tutor.
- As a young man, he toured America as an actor.
- In addition to Mycroft Holmes, there was a second older brother, Sherrinford. (The name comes from Arthur Conan Doyle's earliest notes for *A Study in Scarlet*, which gave the great detective's name as "Sherrinford Holmes" and that of his medical companion as "Ormond Sacker".)
- Watson, meanwhile, spent some of his early years in San Francisco, and married a girl named Constance Adams. (This plot point may be based on events reported to be included in Arthur Conan Doyle's unpublished play "Angels of Darkness", which borrows some of the plot of *A Study in Scarlet*.)
- Someone close to him was Jack the Ripper.
- His brother Mycroft Holmes was head of British intelligence.
- Holmes lived to a great age by feeding on "royal jelly" or some other product of the bees he raised at his Sussex farm.

"If that isn't pastiche, I don't know what is," Sherlockian scholar Jon Lellenberg has commented.

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