

# *Meeting Notes*

*October 3, 2026*



## **Reported by Carla Kaessinger Coupe**

The Red Circle of Washington, DC gathered in the warm and welcoming back room at J. Hollinger's Waterman's Chophouse for an afternoon of camaraderie and Sherlockian fun. As usual, the first hour was filled with friendly greetings and chatter as attendees arrived, ordered libations, and found their places.

Peter E. Blau called the meeting to order at one p.m., and we were quickly served our choices from the lunch menu. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food and appreciated the attentive staff. Once the tables were cleared, Peter introduced Julie McKuras, who spoke on "Writing the History of the BSI."

An active member of The Norwegian Explorers, Julie has also helped organize many of the Sherlockian conferences in Minneapolis, as well as editing the newsletter of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota. Her BSI investiture is "The Duchess of Devonshire" and in ASH she assumes the mantle of "The Compliments of the Season."

Julie and Bill Mason are co-authoring the BSI archival history of the 1950s. For Julie, Jon Lellenberg was a major influence as well as a friend, and his five-volume archival history of the BSI from 1934 through 1950 inspired both Julie and Bill.



Their biggest initial question was how to structure the books. Lellenberg's running narrative wouldn't work, so they decided to break each book into topical sections. For her research, Julie and her husband Mike accessed materials from the Anderson Library at the University of Minnesota and then traveled to consult the BSI Trust's papers at the Lilly Library at Indiana University, along with Bill Mason. They visited Yale's Beinecke Library and she also searched newspaper archives to find biographical information on various early members and guests at the BSI dinner.

Volume 1 has already been published, and volume 2, covering the years 1956 through 1960, will be available in January 2028.

After a lively Q&A session, Peter thanked Julie and welcomed the return of members Ken and Carol Adelman. Ken's book *The Brink of War: Inside the Reagan-Gorbachev Weekend that Changed the World* is now available. A companion film starring Jeff Daniels and JK Simmons is also streaming on Prime.

Larry Miller shared a mystery artefact: a genuine piece of the Lyceum Theatre's third pillar from the left, as referenced in SIGN. Visiting London in 1996, he decided to make a pilgrimage to the theatre. Unfortunately, it was undergoing renovations and was fenced off. However, being an ardent Sherlockian, Larry didn't let a mere fence stand in his way. He slipped inside and found the referenced pillar. It sported some minor damage, possibly from a piece of construction equipment, and a chip from the pillar lay on the ground. Larry snatched it up and added it to his collection. The chip is laminated wood and shows several of the paint colors used over the years.

Puzzle-master extraordinaire Dana Richards provided a fiendishly clever quiz based on the word Washington. Emily Miranker and Susan Jewell took first place, and Grace Cho came in third.

Raffle winners were Toby Favin, Grace Cho, Marguerite Harris, and John Lockwood.

Peter reminded everyone of our winter meeting on Sunday, December 6, at the Gaithersburg Arts Barn. We'll be attending a matinee of "A Sherlock Carol," with (hopefully) a talk-back afterward. There will be a casual meet-up at Burton's Grill and Bar for those who wish to continue the fun.

And in late-breaking news, the Red Circle has been designated the co-presenter of a gala 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary screening of *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* in the familiar and friendly confines of The American Film Institute's Silver theatre in Silver Spring at 5:45pm on Sunday, November 22. Our friends at the AFI have invited our own Alan Rettig to introduce the film, and Hollinger's restaurant across the street will welcome The Red Circle for a post-screening dinner. All the information is on the front page of the website. Come one, come all to both of these holiday theatre treats.

Another delightful and informative afternoon with The Red Circle!