

## Beacons of the 2018 BSI Weekend

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Beacon (noun)- a person or thing that illuminates or inspires

From January 10-14, 2018, Sherlock Holmes devotees descended upon Manhattan to celebrate the 164th birthday of Sherlock Holmes. The long weekend included social gatherings and formal presentations attended by Sherlockians from around the world (Denmark, Australia, Great Britain, Spain, Japan, and more). This BSI Weekend was uniquely remarkable and memorable because of its beacons.

The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes (ASH) are *beacons* of fellowship.

“I was adopted into a troupe of clever, curious, and exuberant women who weren’t afraid of being bright,” recalled M.E. Rich (Couchon) as she shared her initial thoughts of the group for the article “Dubious and Questionable Memories: A History of the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes” (Baker Street Journal’s Christmas Annual, 2004). My weekend was bookended by ASH hosted events- ASH Wednesday, at Annie Moore’s, and Sunday Brunch, at The Long Room. While attending these events, I quickly learned that M.E.’s initial impression of the ASHes continue to ring true today. Today’s troupe of women and men are enthusiastic about Holmes and overflowing with camaraderie.

Dore Nash and Jim Cox are *beacons* of Christopher Morley’s history in NYC.

On Thursday, Dore and Jim led the 17th annual Christopher Morley Walk which highlighted locations of the BSI founder’s work and social life in Manhattan. The walk ended at McSorley’s Old Ale House which proved to be another opportunity for fellowship with Sherlockians that had traveled to the Big Apple. While touring St. Paul’s Chapel and the Woolworth building, Dore recounted her September 11, 2001, experience. Although we deviated from the tour’s focus, her tale was poignant. It highlighted the bravery and courage of our first responders and the many citizens in the area that day.

The BSI are *beacons* of Holmesian scholarship.

Friday’s BSI Dinner attendees learned about Holmes’s wartime efforts. Ross Davies explained how petite Sherlock Holmes books made their way to the soldiers and sailors in boxes and tins. Whitman’s was one such company that helped send greetings and goods to the troops. Whitman’s Soldiers’ and Sailors’ assortment was advertised to be the “most effective ‘ammunition’ for carrying brightness and pleasure.” Maria Fleischhack highlighted German villains in the Canon that proved to be nemeses to both Holmes and Britain. In addition, Will Walsh wondered if Mycroft and Conan Doyle knew each other and shared and acted upon the fear of a secret attack on Britain during the Great War. As a part of his presentation, he shared his father’s watercolors of the ships mentioned in the Canon.

The Beacon Society is a *beacon* of the great detective for students of all ages.

On Saturday, during the society’s general meeting, multiple programs were highlighted. To increase familiarity with the Canon, Sherlockians are encouraged to complete the Fortescue

Scholarship Honours Program. After completing the three part open book assessment, participants earn their Doctorate in Sherlockiana- Sh. D. degree. An overview of the Junior Sherlockian Society was also presented. We celebrated the fact that after a year of creating and collecting content and building the site, juniorsherlockian.com launched on the 221st day of this past year (August 9, 2017). Those in attendance were encouraged to participate in the promotion of the program by sharing JSS wooden nickels, bookmarks, and posters with children and youth eager to learn more about Holmes's character traits, observational skills, capacity for critical thought, and inductive and deductive reasoning. Also, Bill Mason and Marino Alvarez were recognized for their years of service.

As always, I am grateful for the beacons I encounter during my Sherlockian adventures. The beacons of the 2018 BSI Weekend both *illuminated* the great detective and his enthusiasts and *inspired* me to continue to keep his memory green.