



Friends of Gillette Castle State Park

Memorable Dates in William Gillette and Sherlock Holmes History
Organized by John C. Sherwood

FEBRUARY 2021

The text **in boldface type** highlights the answer to this month's trivia questions.

Feb. 4, 1933 - In the wake of the **destruction by fire of William Gillette's houseboat “The Aunt Polly”** in December 1932, Gillette publishes a note in the regional Connecticut press “to express publicly my sincere appreciation of the kindness of those in this vicinity and also through out the United States and abroad who have written me sympathetically.” He adds “the report circulated by dear friends in Hadlyme to the effect that I set fire to the yacht myself in order to get the insurance on her, is a trifle incorrect, owing to the fact that **there was no insurance. I did not think of it in time.**”

Feb. 15, 1882 – **The birth in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, of John Barrymore**, the widely regarded stage and screen performer. Barrymore was a member of a performing family that persists through his granddaughter, actress-producer Drew Barrymore. In 1922, Goldwyn Pictures will release a motion picture called “Sherlock Holmes,” a revision of William Gillette's famous play scripted by Earle Browne and Marion Fairfax. The film stars Barrymore in the title role with Roland Young as Dr. Watson.

Feb. 27, 1907 - Editions of the **U.S. periodical “Vanity Fair”** include what will become a famous caricature of William Gillette portraying Sherlock Holmes, wearing an ornate dressing-gown as he takes up a gun from a table in his Baker Street rooms. The image – which may be viewed at tinyurl.com/y69355zq – is drawn by Sir Leslie Ward, who signed his work as “Spy.” The magazine will publish one of Gillette's theatrical essays in 1916, this time featuring one of Frederic Dorr Steele's illustrations of Gillette as Holmes.