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THE TIMES

OBITUARY

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the well known novelist whose sad death in his seventy-second year we announce this morning came from a family who were famous in the world of art and humour. His grandfather was John Doyle, the well known portrait painter and his brother Richard was a famous illustrator.

Arthur Conan Doyle was the eldest of three sons and was born in Edinburgh on May 22nd 1859. He received his education at Stonyhurst and later at Edinburgh University. Doyle initially chose a career in medicine, practising in Southsea from 1882 to 1890.

Though it was not to medicine that he owed his fame; his rich experiences in the field gave him much material for his novels.

He was a fiercely patriotic man and put himself at the disposal of his country during the Second Anglo Boer War, serving as a senior physician in the army field hospital at Bloemfontein.

In 1902, Doyle was responsible for writing and distributing an important leaflet on the war called *The War in South Africa*, in which he responded to all the charges levelled against the British for their conduct during the conflict. Doyle fiercely defended the British position in the war and the government were so impressed and grateful that they rewarded him with a knighthood in October, 1902.

Doyle's public career included two unsuccessful attempts for a seat in parliament, the first for Central Edinburgh in 1900 and the second for the Hawick Burghs in 1906.

It is, however, as a writer of fiction that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was most widely known. The stories which his name brings instantaneously to the mind are those of which Mr. Sherlock Holmes is the central figure. The personality of the eccentric amateur detective - with his fiddle, his dressing gowns, his really strong tobacco,

and his courage - and above all, his sheer genius for the unravelling of mysteries which no mere professional detective could hope to possess captured the public's imagination.

And it cannot surely be by luck or accident that the character of Holme's friend and assistant, Dr. Watson, has been no less famous and even more beloved than Sherlock Holmes himself.

Doyle's later work for the stage was much less successful than his books, but having made a huge fortune from his Sherlock Holmes mysteries, he was able to lend his sympathies and support to some political issues of the day that were dear to him. These included Home Rule for Ireland and prison reform.

Fond of travel and adventure, Doyle visited Australia in 1921 and also made a three month trip to South Africa when he was 70 years old.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was twice married, first to Miss Louisa Hawkins, of Gloucester - who died of tuberculosis in 1906 - and secondly to Jean, only daughter of Mr. Joseph B Leckie, of Crowborough.

Comprehension

1 Why was Arthur Conan Doyle awarded a knighthood?

- A For his staunch support of the role of the British in the Second Anglo Boer War.
- B For his important charity work in South Africa.
- C He was nominated for a knighthood by the public who loved his books.
- D For his part in improving conditions in prisons.

2 In later life, in which political debate was Doyle involved?

- A The abolition of public executions.
- B The reforms of the workhouses.
- C Reforms to child employment laws.
- D Irish independence.

3 Which member of Doyle's family was a well known cartoonist?

- A His father, John.
- B His first wife, Louisa.
- C His brother, Richard.
- D His second wife, Jean.

4 What most attracted the reader to the Sherlock Holmes mysteries?

- A The eccentricity of the central character.
- B The fact that Sherlock was more gifted at solving crimes than the police.
- C The fact that the central figure dressed so flamboyantly.
- D They loved the character of Sherlock's friend and assistant, Dr. Watson.

5 How many younger siblings did Arthur Conan Doyle have?

- A Three.
- B One.
- C Four.
- D Two.

Comprehension

6 In which year did Doyle travel to South Africa for the second time?

- A 1929.
- B 1931.
- C 1919.
- D 1890.

7 What did Doyle write that wasn't nearly as profitable as his Sherlock Holmes books?

- A He wrote articles for magazines and periodicals.
- B He wrote plays.
- C He wrote poems.
- D He published guide books.

8 Which career did Doyle pursue immediately after graduating from Edinburgh?

- A He became a dentist.
- B He enlisted in the army.
- C He became an author.
- D He became a doctor.

9 What was the cause of death of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's first bride?

- A She died of a sudden heart attack.
- B She was involved in a boating accident and died from her injuries.
- C She never recovered after developing tuberculosis.
- D She died naturally of old age.

10 How many times did Doyle stand as a prospective Member of Parliament?

- A Once.
- B Twice.
- C Three times.
- D Four times.

Comprehension

1	A
2	D
3	C
4	B
5	D
6	A
7	B
8	D
9	C
10	B