

SAMPLE of Database Record:

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Doyle, Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan (1859–1930),
writer
by Owen Dudley Edwards
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Doyle, Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan (1859–1930), writer, was born at 11 Picardy Place, Edinburgh, on 22 May 1859, the eldest son and third of the nine children of Charles Altamont Doyle (1832–1893), an artist and draughtsman in the Edinburgh office of works, and his wife Mary, *née* Foley (1838–1921), daughter of Catherine Foley, *née* Pack. Mary and her mother were immigrants from Ireland and were descended from landed Irish Catholic and protestant stock. They supplemented their meagre income by taking in lodgers, one of whom was Charles Doyle. In 1864 Charles's growing alcoholism led to a temporary breakup during which Arthur was domiciled at Liberton Bank with sisters of the historiographer-royal for Scotland, John Hill Burton, who influenced the young Doyle's development as historian and bibliophile.

Early life and education

In 1867 the Doyle family reunited and inhabited the overcrowded tenement flats at 3 Sciennes Place, Edinburgh, the poorer half of a Newington cul-de-sac. Arthur headed a local street gang of boys, from whom he later evolved Sherlock Holmes's youthful allies, the Baker Street Irregulars. Funded by wealthy uncles, he attended Hodder preparatory school from 1868 to 1870 and then its senior school, Stonyhurst College, from 1870 to 1875. He was happy at Hodder, less happy at Stonyhurst, but developed talents as a story-teller and sportsman.

Conan Doyle, as he became known, entered Edinburgh University medical school in 1876 and witnessed a variety of medical characters, chief among them his mentor, Joseph Bell. Bell was a master of deduction from minutiae of evidence, such as gravel on a shoe conveying a patient's route to work, the better to impress the patient and his own attendant students. Otherwise, Bell was austere and scientific with students and patients, in contrast to Sir Patrick Heron Watson, of whom it was said that 'nobody in Scotland was ready to die until they had first seen Watson'. The contrast between Bell's and P. H. Watson's manners survives in Holmes's cold-bloodedness contrasted with John Watson's humanity.

First writings and medical practice

During his student days Conan Doyle sent his earliest surviving fictional work, 'The Haunted Grange of Goresthorpe' (unrelated to a similar title published in 1883), to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, but it was not used. His first published story was a mock-authentic South African yarn, 'The Mystery of Sasassa Valley', which appeared in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* on 6 September 1879. Later that month, on 20 September, he published his first non-fictional article, 'Gelsemium as a poison' in the *British Medical Journal*.

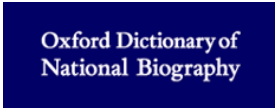


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Oxford Dictionary of
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Search for biography of person

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When you have selected criteria for your search, in this case, Arthur Conan Doyle, click on the 'Go' button.

- Advanced search options**

 - People** - Places, dates, fields of interest
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If you do not know the full name of the author you are looking for you may have to choose from many more results. In this case, we select the first link with the biography of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who we know is a writer.

Your search returned **2** results. 1 - 2 shown in alphabetical order, ascending
 Searching for subjects: called *conan doyle*

[Doyle, Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan](#) (1859–1930), writer

[Doyle, Dame Jean Lena Annette Conan](#) [*married name* Dame Jean Lena Annette] director of the Women's Royal Air Force

The link will take you to a screen split into two frames. The right side of the frame has the actual information on the person you are looking for, the left side allows you to navigate between different sections of the information on the right. When you click on a left link you will jump to that section of the information on the right side.

↑
navigation

↑
information

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Search Tips

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