Welcome to 1985.

For those who were following, with baited breath no doubt, the Mysterious Affair of the Two Authors, I am now able to reveal that Matthew Lang, author of Sherlock's Last Case (first performed in London, 1974), and Charles Marowitz, author of Sherlock's Last Case (first performed in Los Angeles, 1984) are indeed the same person. Marowitz says that the revised version is in nearly all respects a new play, so he feels the time has come to acknowledge authorship. How you can all breathe again.

I hope you all enjoyed The Masks of Death (Channel 4, Sunday 23rd December) as much as I did. The plot was not brilliant, but certainly no worse than many apocryphal tales, while the acting, direction, design and dialogue were excellent. It's nice to know that Peter Cushing's Holmes has at last found a production worthy of him.

Now available from Kelvin I. Jones is his new book Sherlock and Porlock: a study of literary influences in the Sherlock Holmes stories. It consists of five essays, which investigate the influence on the Canon of such writers as Coleridge, Winwood Reade, Wilde and R. L. Stevenson. There's an enthusiastic introduction by the well-known American writer Edward D. Hoch. This is a quality production, in strong black covers, by Magico Magazine, who have established themselves as a name to be reckoned with in Sherlockiana. The price is £7.50, which includes postage and packing, and the address to write to is 18 Ross Street, Rochester, Kent. Please make cheques or postal orders payable to Kelvin I. Jones.

Forthcoming from Mr Jones is The Making of Sherlock Holmes, which studies the background of criminal detection against which the Master worked. The price will be about £10 - £12. Advance orders will receive a discount, but please do not send money yet. You will be invoiced.

The new "Young Sherlock" novel by Gerald Frow is in the shops now, published at £4.50 by Granada/Dragon paperbacks. The title is Young Sherlock; The Adventure at Ferryman's Creek, and if you like a pastiche that's well-written with knowledge of the Canon, but throwing a slightly different slant on things, then you should find it worth reading.

The Walt Disney Studios are currently making their 26th (count 'em!) full-length cartoon film: Basil of Baker Street, from the children's novel by Eve Titus, (if you haven't yet discovered Basil, then do so. Basil and his friend Dr Dawson are mice, who live in the cellar at 221B and apply the Master's methods to cases of murine crime. The only "Basil" book at present in print is Basil & the Pigmy Cats ((Hodder & Stoughton, £2.95)), hut your local public library should be able to help you with the others. Back to the film...) The voices to be featured in the film include those of Vincent Price, Barry Ingham, Val Bettin and Diane Chesney; there will be a musical score by Henry Mancini. The tentative release date is mid-1987.

(I do hope this will all turn out well, but the Disney Studios have been responsible for some miserable vulgarisations over the years. What's the betting that we'll be deluged with cute "Basil of Baker Street" dolls and "Walt Disney's Basil of Baker Street" comic strips in the Sunday papers?)

Aficionados of pastiche may like to know that Kingsley Amis's sole venture into Sherlockian territory, Dr Watson and the Darkwater Hall Mystery, is included among Amis's Collected Short Stories (Penguin, £2.50). The story derives from Amis's television play of some years back, in which Edward Fox played Watson, left without Holmes for a while and invited to investigate the strange events at Darkwater Hall. As you'd expect from Kingsley Amis, sex and drink play quite a. large part in the tale. Though this suited admirably his James Bond pastiche Colonel Sun, which is by far the best of the post-Fleming Bonds, I'm not so sure that it suits dear old Watson. These are Darkwaters indeed...

Many thanks for your Christmas cards. A Happy Hew Year to you all.