

The District Messenger

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

6th July 1986

Through the kindness of Michael Cox, I attended the press preview last week for Granada's THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES and can report happily that there's no falling-off from the high standards of THE ADVENTURES. Edward Hardwicke fits so naturally into the role of Dr Watson that you wonder whether David Burke ever played the part. (There was effort involved; Jeremy Brett told me that making the transition from one Watson to another was perhaps the most difficult job of his acting career.) Look out on Wednesday the 9th for Patrick Allen as a magnificent Colonel Moran in THE EMPTY HOUSE (but what happened to the line "You fiend! You clever, clever fiend!") and for the delightful Patricia Hodge as Lady Hilda in THE SECOND STAIN. The casting director has a wonderful knack of finding unexpected or unknown faces that fit perfectly.

From Jon Lellenberg and John E. Stephenson the news that filming has indeed finished on BASIL OF BAKER STREET, and it will be on release this week in America, but with a change of title to THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE. (How many people will think it refers to Mickey Mouse?) Anyone who remembers my dire prediction back in January 1985 of "cute Basil of Baker Street dolls" will not be surprised to learn that the Smuckers Jam Company of Medina, Ohio is offering just that, for 12 dollars 95 plus 2 labels from any 18 oz jars of their produce.

Jon L. tells me that Alan Eyles' SHERLOCK HOLMES: A CENTENARY CELEBRATION will be a big book, not unlike Haining's SHERLOCK HOLMES SCRAPBOOK but with more emphasis on "the cultural phenomenon of Sherlock-Worship". Publishers will be John Murray and Harper & Row. No further news yet on Graham Nown's SHERLOCK HOLMES CENTENARY BOOK from Ward Lock.

John S. reports that Target (an American firm, I take it, rather than the W.H. Allen subsidiary?) have five books out by Stewart Cowley featuring Holmes Mouse and Watson Mouse. Titles include WHO ATE THE CAKE?, WHO STOLE THE PRIZE? and WHO BROKE THE MIRRORS?

A new comic book is out in America, called CASES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, published by Renegade Press, 10408 Oxnard Street, North Hollywood, California 91606. Not the first time it's been tried, of course, but ought to be worth a look at least. John says that the first issue, THE ADVENTURE OF THE BERYL CORONET is "extremely well done". There should be 12 in the series, published bi-monthly.

Finally from John, American video fans should note that Granada's ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES will shortly be available on video from Simon & Schuster at 39 dollars 95, while Classics Express has released the Arthur Wontner SILVER BLAZE at 14.95 and MURDER AT THE BASKERVILLES at 24.95. No mention of format, which in any case won't be compatible with the British systems. (Yes, I thought that MURDER AT THE BASKERVILLES was the American title of SILVER BLAZE)

Bill Michell has passed to me a letter from one I.M. Doyle of the Spare Parts Theatre Company, which will be touring Lancashire this month with a new, non-canonical Sherlock Holmes play. No title is mentioned, but you can get details from Mr (Ms?) Doyle at 7 Stour Lodge, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire PR2 3EY. Dates and venues as follows: 21st July at the Charter Theatre, Preston; 26th July at Bury; 31st July at Skipton (Yorkshire); 3rd August at Albert Dock, Liverpool; 13th August at Nelson.

On the subject of plays, a reminder that Terence Mustoo's SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE DEERSTALKER with music and songs by Doug Flack, will be at the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, Essex on the 17th, 22nd and 25th of July. For details and bookings, phone the box office on 04024 43333.

Nicholas Utechin tells me that Granada TV are planning a major documentary to celebrate the centenary of A STUDY IN SCARLET in 1987.

Thanks also to Catherine Cooke for help with this issue. News is always welcome!

