

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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THE SECRET FILES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (Constable, £11.95) by June Thomson is splendid stuff. The idea isn't new; giving us in full some of those cases to which Watson merely refers in the canon was the basis for both THE EXPLOITS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES and for SHERLOCK HOLMES REVISITED. Here we have seven of the untold tales. The first, "The Vanishing Head Waiter", is perhaps the least exciting, because this account of the disappearance of Mr James Phillimore bears a close and probably accidental resemblance to Conan Doyle & Carr's masterly treatment. Even here, though, we see Miss Thomson's strong points: elegant, convoluted plotting and apparently effortless pastiche of the Watsonian style. All the stories are good, but the last, "The Abandoned Lighthouse", tells the tale of the politician, the lighthouse keeper and the trained cormorant so completely satisfactorily that one wonders how anyone could have dismissed Watson's reference to the case as a joke. Highly recommended.

Clive Brooks' SHERLOCK HOLMES REVISITED vol. 2 will be published on 1st November (SpyGlass Books, Special Order Dept, 23 Sylvan Avenue, Bitterne, Southampton SO2 5JW). Copies may be ordered now; cost is £11.99 (+£1 postage UK or £4 overseas) for a copy inscribed by the author. Mr Brooks hasn't quite got June Thomson's touch with the Watsonian style, but his plotting is superb. Also published in November is SHERLOCK HOLMES IN GIBRALTAR ("The Abandoned Brigantine" and "The Gibraltar Letter") by Sam Benady, published by Gibraltar Books Ltd (38, Main Road, Gendon, Northampton NN7 1JW). Last issue's information about THE UNTOLD CASES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES no. 1, by Tom Bullimore & Ian Anderson, was premature. Ravette Books Ltd tell me that publication has been postponed till further notice. Glen Petrie's second Mycroft Holmes adventure MONSTROUS REGIMENT was published by Bantam Press last month at £12.95; the first, THE DORKING GAP AFFAIR, comes out in Corgi paperback on 7th December at £3.50.

The current issue of W.H. Smith's INSIGHT magazine (no. 22) contains a good article about the Brett/Burke/Hardwicke videos from Hendring. Stephen Farrell notes that WITHOUT A CLUE is expected to be available on sell through around the end of the year "at a price of approx. £10". Francine Swift sends a cutting to the effect that Engelbert Humperdinck will star in a syndicated mini series SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE LEADING LADY; don't worry though - he won't be playing Holmes (phew!) as this is a part of the series announced as THE GOLDEN YEARS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, with Christopher Lee & Patrick Macnee. Michael Cox reports good progress on the latest Granada series, with the exciting news that Anthony Valentine plays Baron Gruner in ILLU casting that should rival my happy memories of Peter Wyngarde in the mid 60s. John Brazzill notes that one of the STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION episodes will be "Elementary, My Dear Data", with strong Holmesian echoes.

Catherine Cooke tells of a forthcoming treat at Victoria Library in Buckingham Palace Road. On Tuesday 27th November, at 6.30 pm, Stanley MacKenzie will present a showing of THE TRIUMPH OF SHERLOCK HOLMES on the big screen. Admission £2 (£1.50 concessions). Also from Catherine news of a curious book, SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE GREAT DETECTIVE IN PAPERBACK by Gary Lovisi (Gryphon Books, on sale at Murder One for £7.60. Marc Bourdet passes on information: a young Sherlockian society issues an interesting, varied bulletin (M.A.G., 10 rue Jean Baptiste Bandin, 21000 Dijon, France - write for details). Claude Lefrancq Edition (386 chaussee d'Alseberg, 1180 Bruxelles, Belgium) has published a strikingly good graphic novel, LA SANGSUE ROUGE (I hope I've spelt that right), telling the story of the red leech.

A reminder that the Northern Musgraves' Christmas card is available from David Stuart Davies (Overdale, 69 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4ER) at £3.50 the pack (overseas £6*50 or \$14 US). The very nice illustration shows Holmes & Watson on the trail of a snowman that bears a suspicious resemblance to the Napoleon of Crime. The Musgraves also offer handsome bookplates at £2 for 20. Finally, Lou Novacheck (Hohenweg 10, D 7184 Kirchberg Lendsie West Germany) is an agent for several different companies that can supply lapel pins, T shirts and other advertising novelties at competitive prices for custom designed items.

