

THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON: GRAPEVINE

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The big news this time is of the forthcoming Granada television series, called The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and comprising 13 episodes up to "The Final Problem". The Press Office at Granada was unable to give me a definite date for transmission, but thinks early April is likely. Tim Owen, who (lucky dog) has seen a preview of a couple of episodes, tells me that Jeremy Brett and David Burke are pretty near unbeatable as Holmes and Watson, and that the adaptations are probably the most authentic he's seen on British TV. Certainly advance publicity suggests something quite exceptionally good. The series will be broadcast nationally, of course.

Triangle productions, an unusual theatrical company, is preparing stage adaptations of The Valley of Fear and A Study in Scarlet, the former to be produced in March-April-May and the latter in September-October-November. The singular feature of the company is that it consists of only three people, led by the actor and playwright John D. Vincent. I've not seen any of their Sherlockian plays but was most impressed by their adaptation of Oliver Twist, a production I enjoyed immensely. The company is based near Colchester, and I presume that performances of VALL and STUD will be mounted in and around north Essex. I'm currently awaiting definite details from Mr Vincent.

New subscribers may like to know that later this month, on the 23rd and 24th, a theatrical group called The Chameleons will perform an original Sherlockian musical entitled Deerstalker. The action takes place in a London Music Hall, which rather neatly excuses the musical content of the play. I am told that the authors have made good use of several lengthy discussions with the late Martin Dakin, author of A Sherlock Holmes Commentary. Performances will be held at the Windmill Hall in Upminster, which is about 5 minutes' walk from Upminster station; the station serves both British Rail (Fenchurch Street line) and the London Underground (District Line). Booking details may be had from Catherine Cooke, at the Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5FT.

There are some new books out of Sherlockian interest. Leslie Halliwell, author of Halliwell's Film Guide and others (he buys the films that are shown on Independent Television and Channel 4) has just published his first work of fiction, entitled The Ghost of Sherlock Holmes: 17 supernatural stories. Only the title story has much Sherlockian relevance, but it's an excellent creepy collection of ghost stories, and I highly recommend it. It's a Granada paperback, priced at £1.95.

I can't say much about the other two books, as I haven't yet seen copies, but what details I have follow:-

Cambridge University Press publish a series of "choose your own plot" books aimed at 10 to 14 year olds, of which one is The Unsolved Case of Sherlock Holmes by Allen Sharp. Price £1.10. More substantial is a new Holmes-versus-Jack-the-Ripper novel by Ray Walsh, entitled The Mycroft Memoranda, published by Andre Deutsch at £7.95.

Still on books: Mrs Sylvian Hamilton's latest catalogue, "S.H.8" is just out, and is full of goodies (not only books), all relating to Holmes and Conan Doyle. The catalogue may be had from Mrs Hamilton at Parc, Caio, Llanwrda, Dyfed, SA19 8PF, Wales. A stamp would probably be appreciated. Also recommended is the new catalogue from Geoff Bradley of 9, Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex, SS5 1PA. Mr Bradley specialises in crime fiction generally, not just Holmesiana.

Finally, for insomniacs, the BBC World Service is currently repeating a series of the classic Carleton Hobbs/Norman Shelley radio adaptations of the Canon, at 2.30 a.m. on Wednesdays. These are still the best radio versions.

Please let me know of any Sherlockian events, local or national.

