

The District Messenger

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

31st December 1985

Geoff Bradley's new list of Crime & Detective Fiction is now out - a brief list, but full of interest. The 2nd issue of Geoff's deservedly well-received magazine CADS ("Crime And Detective Stories") is also now available - 64 A4 pages for £2.50 including postage, and well worth it. Geoff's address is 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA.

Denis Smith has not one but TWO new Sherlockian pastiches out for Christmas and another scheduled for the new year. THE SECRET OF SHORESWOOD HALL costs £2.95 plus 25p postage, as does THE ADVENTURE OF THE CHRISTMAS VISITOR. Each runs to 60 pages, quite a bit longer than his earlier brochures. Forthcoming is THE ADVENTURE OF TEE OLD SCHOOL FRIEND. These are among the best pastiches ever. Please make cheques out to Diogenes Publications and send your orders to Diogenes Publications, 24 Filgrave, near Newport Pagnell, Bucks. MK16 9ET.

Another first-rate pastiche is recently out from Magico Magazine of P.O. Box 15.6, New York, NY, 10002, U.S.A. This is SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE WOOD GREEN EMPIRE MYSTERY, in which Holmes is lured out of retirement in 1918 to investigate the mysterious death of the magician Chung Ling Soo. The editor, W. Lane, not only knows his canon but is thoroughly au fait with the history of stage magic (I know something about the Soo case and can vouch that every detail is strictly accurate). I'm currently awaiting a copy of Magico's latest catalogue and can't at present give a price for THE WOOD GREEN EMPIRE MYSTERY, but it would be worth your while to contact Magico for details.

David Ashford reports that the Webb & Bower dossier edition of A STUDY IN SCARLET is now to be found in the bargain bookshops, reissued in what he calls book form (what else can you call it?), by Peerage Books at £5.95. I'll just add that a month or so ago, in a seedy bookshop in Charing Cross Road, I saw copies of the original issue on offer at £4.95.

The new film YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES (you read about it here first) promises to be vastly better than I'd feared. This is the one in which the young Holmes and the young Watson are, quite uncanonically, boys together at public school... Well, the writer & producers admit freely that they've started with the premise "what if Sherlock and John were at school together..." And two independent reports from impeccable American Sherlockians (Jon L. Lellenberg and Ted Schulz) are most enthusiastic. "An affectionate and highly enjoyable fantasy," says Ted. The film should be out at any time now, as should a novel based on it, to be published by Grafton Books.

How many of you got up early on Boxing Day to watch SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE BASKERVILLE CURSE? It's a cartoon version of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, with Peter O'Toole apparently talking in his sleep as the voice of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Charles Baskerville variously addressed as "My Lord" and "Your Grace"... It was rotten.

Anyone who haunts the sort of bookshop that imports American paperbacks may be able to find a new pastiche by Frank Thomas, author of SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE GOLDEN BIRD and SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE SACRED SWORD. This is SHERLOCK HOLMES & THE TREASURE TRAIN, published by Pinnacle Books at 2 dollars 95. The first two sentences will give something of its flavour: "When my friend Sherlock Holmes and I were finally ushered into the conference room of the Birmingham and Northern Railroad, I must have shown surprise. The building that housed the great transportation company shared the yellow brick sameness of its neighbors in the Waterloo area..." For completists only, I think.

Back to the quality stuff. Now, available from Kelvin I Jones of 18, Ross Street, Rochester, Kent ME1 2DF is his new book THE SHERLOCK HOLMES MURDER FILE, an exhaustive study of canonical homicide, with an introduction by Dr Marvin Aronson, BSI, Chief Medical Examiner to the City of Philadelphia, PA. The price is £12. Samuel Gringras, proprietor of Magico Magazine tells me it's the Sherlockian volume that he's most proud of having published.

A happy new year to you all.

