

THE DISTRICT MESSENGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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Two excellent Sherlock Holmes stories have just been published. **THE GLENDOWER CONSPIRACY** by Lloyd Biggle Jr (Council Oak Books, 1428 South St Louis, Tulsa, OK 74120; \$14.25) is a full length novel, the second "memoir of Sherlock Holmes from the papers of Edward Porter Jones, his late assistant". Porter, a former Baker Street Irregular, became Holmes' main helper in the late years after Dr Watson's second marriage, and because of his Welsh ancestry he rather than Holmes is despatched to rural Montgomeryshire to investigate two curious murders. The investigation reveals something much bigger, and even darker than murder. Fortunately, the combined efforts of Porter Jones and Sherlock Holmes are enough - just - to defeat the monstrous Glendower Conspiracy. All too often the reader has to make allowances for anachronisms and (especially with American authors) incongruities in new Holmes stories. Not so in the case of Mr Biggle's tales. His research is immense and his use of it impeccable. Everything rings true, whether in London or in remotest Wales. Further (and this is all too rare), he creates mystery and excitement without an excess of blood and shock-horror. Highly recommended - as is Mr Biggle's first Holmes novel **THE QUALLSFORD INHERITANCE**.

Ron Weighell's "The Case of the Fiery Messengers" appears in Richard Dalby's splendid anthology **MYSTERY FOR CHRISTMAS** (Michael O'Mara, £12.95). It's not only a very good Holmes pastiche (yes, Watson is the narrator this time), but the only story I've read which convincingly involves Holmes with the supernatural. The detective's client is one Dr M.R. James of King's College, Cambridge; others involved include Aleister Crowley and Dr John Dee - but this is something much better than the usual Sherlock-Holmes-meets-all-sorts-of-famous-people effort. For this story and many others, **MYSTERY FOR CHRISTMAS** is a first-rate seasonal purchase.

Studio Gallery Decorative Editions (50 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DP), responsible for the magnificent "Portrayals of Sherlock Holmes" plate, have just produced "The Sherlock Holmes" - a sepia pictorial plate, showing the Sherlock Holmes pub in Northumberland Street. If you order this 8" plate before 30th November it will cost £19.95 inclusive (\$45.00); after that the price will be £20 + £1.95 postage (\$40 + \$10). Charles Hall (12 Paisley Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 7JW; phone 031-661 2822) has a catalogue available of Sherlock Holmes Collectables including theatre programmes, stamps, cassettes, postcards and metal & earthenware sculptures. Fascinating stuff at reasonable prices. Granada Studios Tour Ltd has issued a mail order gift catalogue, with a very tempting Sherlock Holmes section in full colour (Sales Department, Granada Studios Tour Ltd, Quay Street, Manchester M60 9EA). The magnificent T shirts from Tinderbox are now available (in decreasing numbers) only from Jane Sayle (6 Bramham Moor, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants PO14 3RU). The three designs are of Paget illustrations in black on a white background: a) the railway carriage (SILV) in large only; b) the slogging ruffian (SOLI) in large and extra large; c) the Reichenbach struggle (FINA) in large and extra large. Prices: (UK) £7, (EEC), £8 or \$18, (rest of world £9 or \$18. Make sterling cheques payable to The Franco-Midland Hardware Company; US dollar payments in cash only, please. (These prices include a donation to The Samaritans.)

Currently filming at Pinewood is **THE CRUCIFER OF BLOOD**, starring Charlton Heston. The director is Charlton's son Fraser Heston. Pam Clarke & Yvonne Parkin have just published the 2nd in their series of theatrical interviews (after the success of "Partners in Crime", interviews with Jeremy Brett & Edward Hardwicke): this is "Beauty, Royalty & Genius, a rare interview with Derek Jacobi". Price. £2.50 (+ 40p UK, 70p Europe, £1.80 elsewhere). Cheques payable to P.M. Clarke (in sterling, please); proceeds go to the British Diabetic Association. Newly available is a 4½-hour cassette set from **ISIS: THE SIGN OF FOUR**, unabridged, read by Patrick Tull (£21.50 + VAT). From the Warrens comes news of a weekend course on **SHERLOCK HOLMES & HIS WORLD** (19-21 April 1991 at Westham House College, Barford, Warwicks. CV35 8DP, phone 0926 624206), cost £62. Geoffrey Stavert passes on news of an IBM PC disc with associated search programme (sic) featuring **THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** and **THE CASEBOOK**. Details from Patterson & Co., Brable Cottage, Briar Way, Berkhamstead, Herts. HP4 2JJ.

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