



A Sort of Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

Issue 65

February 2016

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22 Sept – 25 Sept 2016

WEB SITE

Do not forget to visit the
website of the Trust, at
www.grahamgreenebt.org

Editorial

Happy New Year.

Last August we revealed that David Cameron's favourite author is Graham Greene. Now we can further reveal more specifically that his favourite Greene novels are *Our Man in Havana* and *The End of the Affair*. Sadly, we still have no more information about when and in what circumstances he first read them, and what he likes about them.

That got me thinking. For many years I reckoned the first Greene novel I read was *The Human Factor*, and that I liked it so much that I kept on reading his work. But then I discovered a fragmentary reading log I kept in the 1970s which suggests the first one was *Our Man in Havana*. Oh well, such is memory. But I've no idea what led me to read the novel in the first place.

This in turn prompts me to ask a series of questions of you, our readers. What was the first Greene novel you read? And why did you read it – was it something recommended by a friend, a set book for an exam, perhaps, or merely a chance discovery? What age were you then? (Do many people first read Greene in their late teens? I often vaguely assume so, though that wasn't true for me.) What did you like about the novel (if you did like it), and what made you continue reading Greene (if you did)?

I'd love to hear your responses to these questions, so do get in touch, and I'll print a selection of the responses in *ASON*.

Mike Hill

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ARTICLES

After Twenty-Five Years

Can it really be a quarter of a century since Graham Greene died? In some ways, 1991 seems such a long time ago: the eviction of Iraq from Kuwait, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the repeal of the apartheid laws in South Africa. Yet it still seems so close: I remember hearing the news that Greene had died, and my feeling of sadness that now I would read no new fiction from his pen.

It is common for the reputation of recently-dead authors to decline – perhaps then to recover, perhaps not. How has Graham Greene fared over those years? I may not be the best person to give an objective answer to that question, but it does seem to me that at the very least interest in Greene is still strong. Those twenty-five years have seen a number of biographies (and another in preparation), books by those who knew him, several book-length critical studies, and more films of his work (again perhaps with more to come). There has been posthumous publication of some of Greene's writing, including dream diaries and an unfinished novel. There is too, of course, a Graham Greene Birthplace Trust with its support for research on Greene, its own excellent website, a quarterly Greene newsletter (you are reading Issue 65) and an annual festival in Berkhamsted which dates back to 1998.

Most of all, it's worth pointing out that so much of Greene's work is still in print. With the exception of two early suppressed novels, his longer fiction is still all out there on sale, including these days in electronic form. Also in print are his short stories, his essays, much of his journalism and many of his book reviews, his 'film reader', his travel writing, his two volumes of autobiography, his plays (though it's less easy these days to see them staged), a collection of his letters, even his books for children. Some few items have gone out of print – the volume of his letters to the press, for instance – but the fact remains that people still do want to read what Graham Greene wrote.

I'm delighted to add to this very general review of Greeneland twenty-five years on a specific bit of news about an upcoming development. In the not too distant future the University of North Georgia Press will be publishing a journal dedicated to the study of the works of Graham Greene. The project is the brainchild of Professor Joyce Stavick, Department Head, English, at the university's Dahlonega Campus which is situated amidst the mountains of North Georgia, USA. Professor Stavick's successful



mission to get the go-ahead for this project is based on an ongoing concern that there is at present no academic journal dedicated to this major twentieth century writer.

The journal, which will carry the title *Graham Greene Studies*, will be published on a yearly basis. It will contain peer-reviewed papers as well as other 'feature' articles. The intention is to provide a forum for academic study and at the same time to appeal to as wide an audience as possible which reflects the very active, international interest which continues to be shown in Greene's work. *Graham Greene Studies* will be published as an online journal but readers will also be able to purchase print copies on a 'print-on-demand' basis.

Professor Stavick is a regular at the Graham Greene International Festival, of course, both as speaker and festival-goer. In recognition of the quality of the many talks given at past festivals it has been decided that the first journal should comprise a selection of past papers. Thereafter the format will be as described above. Further news about the venture will be made during 2016 including the likely date of publication of the first edition as well as information about accessing the relevant section of the University of North Georgia University website. ASON and the Trust's website will keep you informed.

One final thought on this year's anniversary. We are used to many of Greene's titles existing in the cultural bloodstream (*The Third Man*, *The End of the Affair* and so on), but I also see now that name recognition of Graham Greene is assumed by Thomson Holidays. Their recent advertisement for holidays in Cuba is headlined by a quotation from Greene: 'As long as nothing happens, anything is possible.' As Graham Greene also wrote in 1939 on hearing that a new shade for knickers and nightdresses had been named 'Brighton Rock': 'Is this fame?'

Mike Hill

'Treating the Contemporary World with Poetic Realism': Graham Greene and *It's a Battlefield*

Greene wrote *It's a Battlefield* in just under eleven months – an extraordinary achievement when compared, for example, with the twelve years he took to write *The Human Factor* (1978). Naturally, circumstances were very different in the late nineteen sixties and seventies when the wealthy novelist could afford the time to labour over what he freely admitted was a very difficult book to complete. By contrast, Greene describes 1932 and 1933 as a period of great personal anxiety. *The Name of Action* (1930) and *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931) had lost money and *Stamboul Train* (1932) was still in manuscript form. His biography of the Earl of Rochester had been rejected, he had just twenty pounds in the bank and his wife Vivien was expecting their first child.

Although Greene recalls *It's a Battlefield* as making 'slow progress', examination of the original holograph shows comparatively few changes made. This fact, together with the very short time spent writing, might well be explained away as a combination of the urgency he felt about his precarious financial situation and a youthful absence of inhibition. On the other hand this novel shows the writer experimenting with an ambitious shift in style. More so than its immediate predecessor *Stamboul Train*, the novel moves dramatically away from the imagined world of *The Name of Action* and *Rumour at Nightfall* he came to deplore to one firmly grounded, in the case of *It's a Battlefield*, in the London of the 1930s. He had partially achieved the realism he was seeking in *Stamboul Train* through the experience of travelling as far as Cologne by train. Greene notes in *Ways of Escape* that the allotments outside Bruges really existed in April 1931. On the other hand, he adds, his readers should not have any confidence in his description of Subotica on the Yugoslavian border.

He was able to draw on recent experience of living in the capital city when writing *It's a Battlefield*. He moved from Nottingham to London early in 1927 having secured a job with *The Times* and found lodgings in South London. Although other locations in London feature frequently in the novel: Soho, Trafalgar Square, Camden Town, Greene's descriptions of the neighbourhood around his flat in Battersea stand out. This was blue-collar London, its narrow streets full of densely packed, terraced houses. Thus Candahar Road, Kabul Street (now Cabul Road) and Khyber Terrace (now Khyber Road), each name proclaiming the era in which it was built, are not figments of Greene's imagination. In one episode in the novel Conrad Drover, whose brother is facing a death sentence for killing a policeman, walks from Central London to Battersea. The precise details of his route from Oakley Street in Chelsea, along the Thames Embankment and over 'the curve of Battersea Bridge' are described with the compression yet minute attention to detail for which the writer subsequently became famous. Greene would have passed that way on countless occasions. In a passage in an early typescript of *A Sort of Life*, later deleted, he describes 'escaping' the newspaper offices around ten o'clock, spending some time in the West End before hopefully catching the late bus back to Battersea. Otherwise he faced the long walk home which would have certainly taken him along the same route described in the novel.

Greene mentions in his 1932-33 diary that he paid research visits to two London prisons, Wormwood Scrubs and Wandsworth, in October and December 1933. The establishment described in the episode where the Commissioner visits Drover is unmistakably Wandsworth Prison with its 'square buildings' and 'tall hexagonal tower'. Greene was familiar with this area too as it would have been a short walk across the northern edge of Wandsworth Common from his lodgings in Lurline Gardens. His eye for verisimilitude is impeccable as in the phrase, '... a train went by unseen past the allotments, and the nursery gardens'. The overground line to

Victoria Station runs in a cutting alongside the prison; the plant nursery has probably swallowed up the land previously occupied by the allotments which were certainly in use in the 1960s.

The only feature in the Battersea area which seems not to have existed was the match factory off Battersea Rise. Research fails to reveal a factory in the locale with a high tower which might fit Greene's description. However, the first Bryant and May factory in Bow in the east end of London did feature a tall, square tower. The knowledge of the interior workings of such a place where the character of Kay Rimmer endures the long hours until her shift ends was gained through Greene's visit to a match factory in Gloucester while he was living in nearby Chipping Campden. He was invited to the Bryant and May factory following a letter of complaint about a box of the firm's products which had 'exploded' in his hand.

The building exists to this day in the Bristol Road, an unadorned district of Gloucester, yet still within sight of the gothic splendour of the city's medieval cathedral. The sprawling former factory is now the 'Moreland's Trading Estate'. Although a brand-spanking new Aldi Supermarket stands opposite, the smashed upper windows of the Trading Estate bear familiar hallmarks of urban decay. The current tenants which include a bargain carpet trader, a 'close quarter combat' business and in Unit 54B an evangelical church, ensure that the ghost of Greene still haunts the area.



In 1913 Bryant and May took over the business previously owned by S.J. Moreland and Sons whose distinctive red, white and blue 'England's Glory' matchboxes featuring the pre-dreadnought HMS *Devastation* had been a household brand for a number of years. Greene describes in the novel how the 'hundred blue-and-white match-boxes jumped from the machines on to a great moving stair'. The Gloucester factory closed in the 1980s. The illuminated sign at the corner of the building (only lit rarely nowadays) and the reinstatement of a famous local name serve as poignant reminders of its past.

In *Ways of Escape* Greene admits that, following the two notable failures mentioned above, he needed to escape the influence that Joseph Conrad had imposed on his writing. He expresses embarrassment at his weak imitation of Conrad's style and particularly his clumsy over-use of metaphor and simile. But what drew him to experiment instead with an entirely different approach to novel writing: to conveying realism in the way which is characteristic of *Stamboul Train* and *It's a Battlefield*? In September 1965 Greene was asked by Michel Droit to write a tribute to François Mauriac. A typescript copy of his short essay has survived. He notes that in 1932 he had read Mauriac's novel *Le Noeud de Vipères* (*The Knot of Vipers*) when it first appeared in translation, 'with an excitement which I can remember to this day'. It was not the religious theme which had stirred his imagination but rather, 'the possibility of treating the contemporary world with poetic realism, the poetic realism which I had admired in the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists'. Greene writes that Mauriac's novel had enabled him to find a fresh purpose which aided him in the arduous task of writing.

In 1934, a few months after *It's a Battlefield* was published, Greene wrote an essay entitled 'The Seed Cake and the Love Lady'. It was published in *Life and Letters* magazine as a riposte to the writer Charles Morgan whose own essay championing the virtues of the aesthetic novel had appeared in the previous issue. Quoting Henry James who had said that the object of novel writing was about, "catching the very note and trick ... the strange irregular rhythm of life", Greene argues the case for a middle course to be set between what he describes as 'extreme aestheticism' and the kind of 'extreme social preoccupations' to be found in overly politically focussed novels. He makes an oblique reference to that exchange of views in *Ways of Escape*, describing himself as 'a reformed rake' when he had attacked Morgan – barely three years after *Rumour at Nightfall* had been published with its disastrous and false obsession with style.

It's a Battlefield is certainly not written as straightforward narrative; in places Greene adopts what was at the time the fashionably modernist style. Yet Roger Sharrock in *Saints, Sinners and Comedians* considers the novel's themes to be the closest Greene came to writing a political novel in the inter-war years. Taken together, these two elements suggest that the writer was indeed trying to adopt the 'middle course' he had advocated in 'The Seed Cake and the Love Lady'.

It is frequently claimed that in Greene's fourth published novel, *Stamboul Train*, the writer had 'found his voice' thus implying that thereafter his unique style became fixed. There is enough evidence to show that this was not the case. Rather the period between 1932 and 1936 should be regarded as a time of experimentation. *Stamboul Train*, *It's a Battlefield*, *England Made Me* (1935) and *Journey Without Maps* (1936) together with the short stories 'A Day Saved' (1934) and the startlingly different yet

strangely neglected 'The Bear Fell Free' (1935), all attest to this fact in varying degrees. It is also interesting to note that before Greene became a published writer he was already experimenting with the novel form. *The Episode*, which most likely dates from 1925-26, was a historical novel based on the Spanish Carlist Wars whereas the fragment of *Fanatic Arabia* (c.1927-28) which survived is firmly set in current-day 'Boxstead' which, with its canal, common, and castle, is unmistakably Berkhamsted.

Jon Wise

[An exhibition loosely based on *It's a Battlefield* is to be held at the Pump House Gallery, Wandsworth, London, from 7 September to 23 October 2016. More news as we get it.]

James Mackay is an ASON reader and Festival regular, and he is also the compiler of a new publication of The Penguin Collectors Society, *Maigret and the Penguin Books*, which James tells me will be published very soon. His researches for that book have produced this little gem concerning Graham Greene ...

Jealousy and Sin at the French Embassy

Hamish Hamilton became the London publisher for Georges Simenon in 1954. That autumn, Jamie Hamilton arranged much of the programme for a visit to Britain by the author and his wife Denise. Their correspondence, on this and on much else, is held in the University of Bristol Special Collections.¹

On 15 October 1954, Jamie Hamilton wrote to Denise at the Simenons' home in Connecticut, telling her about the 'forty admirers' whom he had invited to a grand welcoming dinner. They included, he explained - the list is given in full as a guide to literary London in that year -

the Kordas, T.S. Eliot, John Hayward, the Alan Mooreheads, the J.B. Priestleys, the Malcolm Muggeridges (he is the editor of "Punch"), the Carol Reeds, Moura Budberg, the Alan Hodges (one of your translators²!), the Beaumarchais (French Embassy), Raymond Mortimer, the Leonard Russells (he is literary editor of the "Sunday Times"), the Terence Kilmartins (ditto of "The Observer"), Eunice Frost,³ the Malcolm Thomsons (Critic of "The Evening Standard") ... The most disappointing refusals have been from Nicolson, Peter Quennell, Graham Greene and Alan Pryce-Jones.

¹ File reference DM1952/62. The quotations are quoted with the kind permission of Penguin, the owner of the Hamish Hamilton archive, of John Simenon, the son of Georges and Denise, and of the University of Bristol.

² Moura Budberg also translated Simenon for Hamish Hamilton.

³ Eunice Frost was a senior Penguin editor, and had been working with Hamilton on Penguin getting paperback rights.

Air Mail was quick enough for Denise to reply just four days later:

... you can be at peace about the refusals when I inform you that both Graham Greene and Alan Pryce-Jones were next to me at the French Embassy last time we were in London and that would suffice to discourage them from coming. Especially Greene with whom I had an ardent discussion about jealousy and sin. As he relishes both and I dismiss them, he probably is afraid to come back for more.

She concluded with the suggestion that 'The other two are probably dining a blonde that night!' It is not clear whether she actually knew either of them, Nigel Nicolson and Greene's childhood friend Peter Quennell.

Graham was not included in this suggestion. He might have excused himself not for fear of resuming hostilities with Denise Simenon but because he had more important preoccupations. Letters in Richard Greene's edition suggest that at the time he was probably in Haiti, or imminently going there, and trying to complete *The Quiet American*.

James Mackay

Graham Greene Reading Circle: *England Made Me*

The New Year meeting of the Book Group discussed *England Made Me*. It provoked a lively discussion among the seven who attended. All the characters in the novel were seen to a greater or lesser degree contemptible from Anthony Farrant the sponger, to Minty in his squalor, to Kate attaching herself to a crook, and to Krogh a crook using others to do his dirty work. Loo (Lucia) was also seen as a particularly worthless character. This led to a discussion on whether a novel had to have a balancing good character. Some felt that the narrative left them depressed. It was suggested that Greene's disgust for his wastrel brother Herbert (on whom Anthony was based) influenced the tone of the book.

Greene also trod warily round the subjects of incest and homosexuality. Kate's love of her twin brother went beyond normal family affection. Minty's hatred of women and his friendship with a younger colleague hinted at something more. Also Hall's unthinking devotion to Krogh led him to murder Anthony. These ambiguities added to the moral desolation of the novel.

The details of Krogh's fraud were not convincing (pre-dated cheques etc.) but this did not harm the narrative.

It was recognised that this book written in 1935, still had traces of the Bloomsbury Group which Greene had not yet quite escaped. Also much of the imagery was extravagant and unconvincing. It was suggested that when Greene moved to more important topics (e.g. religious persecution) his language changed appropriately.

Some of the group had read the novel again and understood more as a result. The general view was that this was not Graham Greene at his mature best.

Finally the group discussion turned to the future of the festival. The broad consensus was that the scope needs to be widened to a broad literary festival.

John Partridge

[A list of the Reading Circle's full programme for this year can be found later in this issue.]

IN THE PRESS

Graham Greene's Pope

A long and interesting article with this title appeared in November in *America, the National Catholic Review*. It was written by Heather Moreland McHale, who lives and teaches near Washington, D.C. The article begins:

Graham Greene, one of the most outspoken Catholic writers of the past century, had one consistent belief about the church, no matter how much his depictions of it might vary in other respects: When the church does its job, it serves the poor, the sick, the underprivileged, the disenfranchised, the despairing. Greene was intensely populist and self-consciously radical. His political views were very simple: support the underdog. Through his Catholic characters and his depictions of the church, Greene advocated for a more socially and economically engaged Catholic practice. Though he did not live to see it, the election of Pope Francis gives the church a public face that more closely resembles Greene's vision.

The article considers the nature of Greene's Catholicism and suggests that 'Pope Francis is the pope that Greene was waiting for'. The full text of the article can be read at http://americamagazine.org/issue/graham-greene-pope?utm_content=buffer8dbd

Overleaf: an illustration by Sara Ogilvie from the Folio Society edition of *The Comedians*.

It relates to an event in Part Two, Chapter Two of the novel, where Greene writes: 'The priest came in from his inner room swinging a censor, but the censor which he swung in our faces was a trussed cock.'

Many thanks to Folio and to Sara Ogilvie for permission to reprint the image.

Illustration from The Folio Society edition of *The Comedians* © Sara Ogilvie 2015
www.foliosociety.com



Kings Arms refurbishment

In November *The Gazette* of Berkhamsted reported the refurbishment of the Kings Arms on Berkhamsted High Street. The building is owned and run by Tring-based firm Oakman Inns, which has spent £400,000 on the upgrade. The newspaper reported that a wood-fired pizza oven now takes centre stage in the dining area. The pub's principal function room, the Greene Room, now has a dedicated kitchen after an adjacent bedroom was converted. Other bedrooms have been updated, soundproofed and redecorated to bring them 'up to standard' and there have been repairs on the roof and second floor. Downstairs in the bar area, the open fireplace has been restored and the bar furniture replaced with leather seating. Festival-goers from out of town might like to take a look next time they are in Berkhamsted.

Greene on stage

Reference was made earlier in this edition to the fact that Graham Greene's plays are not much performed these days, but there are two adaptations of his novels which are still doing the rounds. Press notices appeared late last year of a run for Giles Havergal's adaptation of *Travels with My Aunt* in an off-Broadway venue, The Clurman Theater in New York, while at the Pitlochry Festival Theatre in Scotland, Clive Francis's version of *Our Man in Havana* was being performed. Both, of course, are staged with just four men playing all the parts.

CORRESPONDENCE

Greene and dentists

The discussion concerning Greene and dentists in the last issue of *ASON* provoked the following letter from Peter Hollindale, a speaker at previous GG Festivals:

'I enjoyed 'Greene and dentists' in the latest Newsletter, but the story is incomplete without the strange episode of the dentist in Chesterfield. In *A Sort of Life* Greene recounts his spell as a private tutor to an eight-year-old boy at Ashover, near Chesterfield, soon after he had come down from Oxford. Not surprisingly:

... the oppression of boredom soon began to descend. Once on my free day I walked over the hills to Chesterfield and found a dentist. I described to him the symptoms, which I knew well, of an abscess. He tapped a perfectly good tooth with his little mirror and I reacted the correct way. "Better have it out," he advised. "Yes," I said, "but with ether."

A few minutes' unconsciousness was like a holiday from the world. I had lost a good tooth, but the boredom was for the time being dispersed.

'Chesterfield is my home town, and since reading of Greene's adventure I have often wondered whether this could have been the dentist I attended as a schoolboy twenty-odd years later. He was certainly old enough, and his premises well-placed – on the High Street, but with a curious door requiring furtive entry. Greene's fear of dentists clearly wasn't equal to his fear of boredom. The walk over from Ashover is beautiful, but long enough to make most men reconsider such a desperate errand!'

What an extraordinary story, and how Greene-like.

Peter tells me that he has no memory of there being any stained glass above the door of the dentist in Chesterfield. Of the dentist in Kings Road in Berkhamsted, Colin Garrett tells me that there is 'stained glass in and around their door but it is nothing special – just coloured glass in patterns. It may not be the building that GG remembers.' So the stained glass of *The Laughing Cavalier* and the *Tudor Rose* which Greene refers to in his fiction has still not been tracked down. Can any of our readers shed any light on this?

Bernard Diederich and North Georgia

More news from North Georgia about developments there, from an email received from Professor Joyce Stavick:

'Festival Goers and Friends of the Graham Greene Birthplace Trust may be acquainted with Graham's good friend, Bernard Diederich, who has attended some of the Festivals. Bernard will be the 2016 Visiting Author of the University of North Georgia on April 4 and 5. The festivities will begin on Sunday, April 3 with a celebration in his honor, followed by his speaking engagements on two campuses. Visiting Professor Quentin Falk will interview Bernard on stage for the engagements (Quentin, by the way was the Visiting Author for 2013). Readers of *ASON* and other friends of the Festival are invited – encouraged – to attend. For more information, please email Joyce Stavick at joyce.stavick@ung.edu. Bernard and Ginette will be glad to see you.'

Greene quoted

From a recent email from our good friend John Osthaus in Virginia:

'For Christmas, I was given a copy of *The Last of the President's Men*, by Washington Post writer Bob Woodward. It is about Alexander Butterfield who was a special assistant to President Nixon in the White House. He was one of the few staff who knew about the taping system in the Oval Office and disclosed the taping system to the Senate Watergate Committee. The tapes revealed evidence of the President's participation in a cover up of the Watergate burglary and was "the smoking gun" that led to his impeachment and resignation in 1974.

'The book is based on Butterfield's papers and Woodward's interviews with Butterfield that took place over several years. In a passage toward the end of the book on page 159, Woodward quotes Graham Greene in describing how he pushed Butterfield to discuss his motive for disclosing the tapes:

But I pushed him on the question of motive. The mystery of human motivation looms as a big, central question, I said, particularly when so much consequence attaches to what he did. I noted that Graham Greene, the celebrated novelist, wrote of "those interior courts where our true decisions are made."

'Woodward then quotes Immanuel Kant on the question of motive: "We can never, even by strict examination, get completely behind the secret springs of action."

'Woodward observes, "Are these 'secret springs' like the 'interior courts'?"

'Woodward goes on to quote J.D. Salinger, John le Carré and Joseph Conrad about their respective views on the question of motive for one's actions. So Greene, as his fans know, is in exalted company.

'By the way, what is the novel that contains the Greene quote? (I know; I looked it up.)'

Your editor has to admit that like John, he had to look the quotation up.

MISCELLANY

Greene Exhibition

From 1 March to 30 April the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies department is to stage an exhibition in its foyer area in Hertford, entitled 'Graham Greene: A Celebration of his Life and Work.' For those unable to see the exhibition, I understand the display may also be available as a hard copy booklet. On 22 March, at 6pm, there is a talk on 'Literary Lives of Hertfordshire', also at County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford. For more details go to www.hertsdirect.org/services/leisculture/heritage1/hals/whatson or email hertsdirect@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Book News

ASON readers will know of the *Collector's Library* series of volumes of Graham Greene's works. Each book is pocket-sized, hard-backed and beautifully produced in high quality paper with gilt edges. The first volume, *The Third Man and Other Stories*, was published in 2011 and given a very favourable review by Hope Gilbert in ASON in November (Issue 48). *Brighton Rock* and *The Ministry of Fear* have followed since

then, and now a new volume has appeared, *Our Man in Havana*, as always with an elegant accompanying essay by Professor Richard Greene. Highly recommended.

Readers may also know of the Folio Society, a London-based publisher of high-quality classic fiction and non-fiction. Hardbacks come in specially designed bindings, have their own slipcases, and with new illustrations and introductions. Folio have produced Greene volumes in the past, and in 2015 came an edition of *The Comedians*, with an introduction by Francis Wheen and illustrations by Sara Ogilvie – one of which may be seen elsewhere in this issue.

The Greatest Books You'll Never Read edited by Professor Bernard Richards (Cassell Illustrated, 2015) covers lost, unpublished and unfinished books from a range of over 40 famous authors, from Virgil to Gabriel García Márquez. (Perhaps the most surprising entry concerns *Skorpion und Felix*, a comic novel by Karl Marx – yes, Karl, not Groucho.) Each lavishly-illustrated article has material on the author, the book in question, and a newly commissioned front cover illustration. The article concerning Graham Greene, by author and critic George Lewis, covers the unfinished Agatha Christie-style whodunit *The Empty Chair*, written around 1926. Professor François Gallix is given due credit for the publication of the work over five editions of *The Strand Magazine* beginning in 2009. A competition inviting readers to finish the novel was won by Michael Stanley (the *nom de plume* of Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip), but the work – either unfinished or completed – has never been published in book or electronic form. Will this ever happen?

The two weighty volumes of *The Penguin Book of the British Short Story*, edited by Philip Hensher and published late in 2015, inevitably generated heated debate among reviewers and readers, most often over which writers, and which stories, had been omitted. Graham Greene has made the cut in the second volume, which runs from P.G. Wodehouse to Zadie Smith. The Greene story is 'The Hint of an Explanation', first published in 1949 and then included in the 1954 collection *Twenty-One Stories*. The tale, Hensher writes, is 'thrillingly preposterous'.

Graham Greene Reading Circle Book List 2016

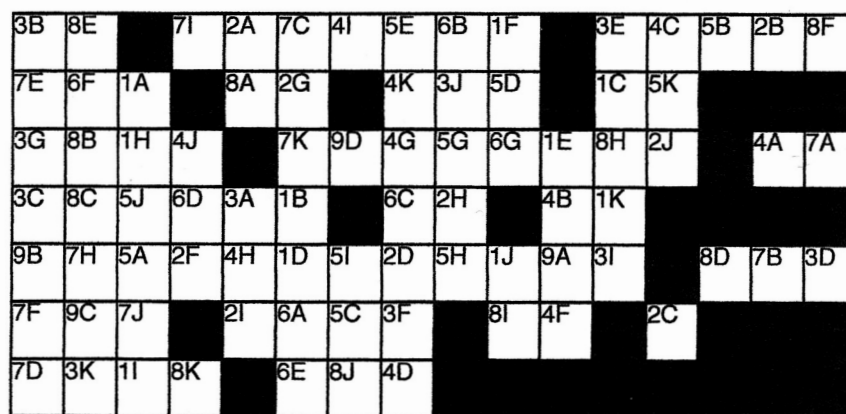
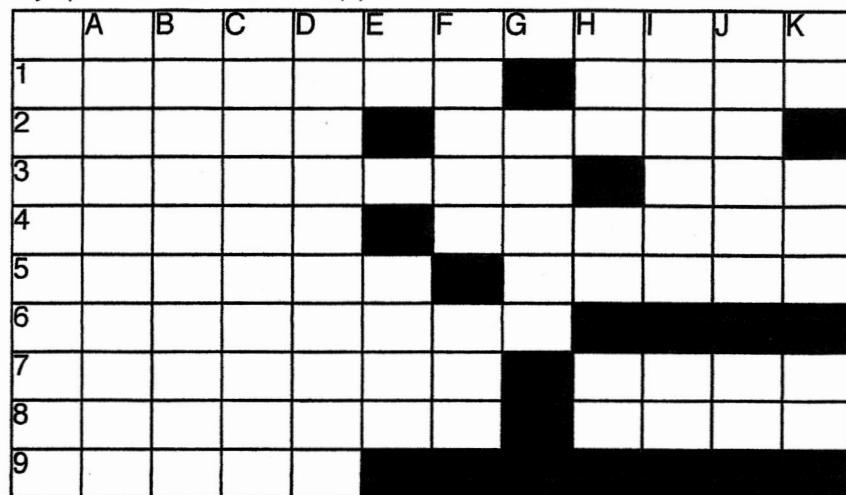
January	<i>England Made Me</i> – Graham Greene
February	<i>Barchester Towers</i> – Anthony Trollope
March	<i>Disgrace</i> – J.M Coetzee
April	<i>Queen Lucia</i> – E.F. Benson
June	<i>Canada</i> - Richard Ford
July	<i>Housekeeping</i> - Marilynne Robinson
September	<i>Waiting for Sunrise</i> - William Boyd
October	<i>Shadow of the Silk Road</i> - Colin Thubron
November	<i>A Widow for One Year</i> - John Irving
December	<i>The Turkish Gambit</i> - Boris Akunin

GREENE PIECE

Reading down Column A will reveal a "character" in Monsieur Quixote.

The bottom grid will reveal something said about that "character".

1. White ____, character in Alice in Wonderland [6] Labyrinth (4)
2. Cricket ground [4] Hangman's rope (5)
3. First name of Greene's father (7) Perish (3)
4. Alpine wild goat (4) Didn't succeed (6)
5. The ____ Lunch by W S Burroughs (5) Samuel Pepys kept one (5)
6. Town on the Riviera where Greene lived from 1965 (7)
7. Nothing (6) Japanese maple (4)
8. Chewy sweet (6) Entrance to a building (4)
9. Nymph who loved Narcissus (4)



Greene acrostic

No prizes for this one, but here's a new Greene acrostic provided by that accomplished puzzle-setter June Arnold. Once again, the idea is to solve the clues and put the answers in the top grid, then transfer the letters from the top grid to the bottom one. By that point, you have a character revealed in the top grid and a quotation about that character in the bottom – both from *Monsignor Quixote*.

A reminder that copies of June's book of Greene's acrostics are available from her direct – email june.arnold@ntlworld.com – at a cost of £5 each plus 50p postage.

ALS Literary Weekend 2016

The UK's Association of Literary Societies has been running since 1973 and currently has around 125 members, including the Graham Greene Birthplace Trust. It holds an annual literary weekend hosted by one of its member organisations, and the Trust was host in 2004, Graham Greene's centenary year. This year is the bicentenary of the birth of Charlotte Brontë, so in 2016 the literary weekend is to be organised in Haworth in West Yorkshire by the Brontë Society. The weekend will run from 20-22 May. At the time of writing full details have not been finalised, but these will eventually be available on the Brontë Society website – www.bronte.org.uk/bronte-society – and that of the ALS – www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk. Now, Denholme, where your editor and his better half live, is two or three miles from Haworth (and a similar distance from Thornton, where all the Brontë girls were born), and Jean and I are minded to go to the literary weekend. So if any of our readers are also coming, do get in touch in advance – it would be good to arrange a get-together.

Graham Greene Quiz 2016: Deaths in Greeneland

Greene's fiction can be a dangerous place – the body count can be considerable. Moreover, death can come in all sorts of ways, as this year's GG Quiz illustrates. The questions, it should be mentioned, all relate to Greene's novels and short stories, not to film adaptations, where details can be different.

For each question, name (or where no name is given, describe) the Greene character who dies in the following way:

1. Executed by shooting in *The Power and the Glory*.
2. Leaps to his death from a cliff having had his bottle of vitriol smashed in his face in *Brighton Rock*.
3. Poisoned in the mistaken belief that he is a spy in *The Human Factor*.
4. Stabbed and drowned in the mud of a river in *The Quiet American*.

5. Dies from pneumonia in *The End of the Affair*.
6. Commits suicide by taking an overdose of tablets to fake an angina attack in *The Heart of the Matter*.
7. Killed in a skiing accident in *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*.
8. Pushed or fell over banisters and down into the hall below during an argument with her husband in 'The Basement Room'/'The Fallen Idol.'
9. Knocked down by a car which swerved to avoid hitting his dog (and it also says he died of 'shock and a weak heart') in 'Across the Bridge.'
10. Shot in the back through an opening door in *A Gun for Sale*.
11. Dies from yellow fever in 'A Chance for Mr Lever.'
12. Apparently frightened to death during a game of hide and seek by his brother's touch in the dark in 'The End of the Party.'
13. Commits suicide in a swimming pool by cutting his wrists and throat in *The Comedians*.
14. Dies in a plane crash attempting to kill President Somoza in *The Captain and the Enemy*.
15. Killed by a pig that falls from a balcony in Naples in 'A Shocking Accident.'
16. Shot in the Wonder Bar in *Our Man in Havana*.
17. Knocked down by a car as he tries to shoot the Assistant Commissioner in *It's a Battlefield*.
18. Commits suicide by shooting himself in a railway station lavatory in *The Ministry of Fear*.
19. Murdered by being pushed from an upstairs window in a Bloomsbury hotel in *The Confidential Agent*.
20. Shot by a German firing squad in *The Tenth Man*.

Answers to me, please, by Sunday 20 March, by email to newslettereditor@grahamgreenebt.org or by post to The Fairways, Keighley Road, Denholme, Bradford, BD13 4JT. First prize will be a copy of the Folio Society edition of *The Comedians* plus a copy of the *Collector's Library* edition of *The Ministry of Fear*. Second prize will be a copy of *The Greatest Books You'll Never Read*. Details of these books can be found earlier in this issue. Many thanks to the respective publishers for donating these books as prizes.

Mike Hill

TALEPIECE

A bit of a different Talepiece this time – recommended novels not from our readers, but from Graham Greene himself. In February 1984, Greene spoke at a luncheon in the City of London to launch the Book Marketing Council's promotion 'The Best Novels'. Such an appearance was most unusual for Greene – according to *The Times*, it was his first public speech in Britain for 15 years. The Council had produced a list of Best Novels, selected by Elizabeth Jane Howard, Sir Peter Parker and Dr Richard Hoggart, which in turn had provoked a rival list of 99 titles from Anthony Burgess. Graham Greene then took the opportunity in his speech to poke a little fun at the promotion and at Anthony Burgess, as well as to generate his own list:

'PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION SPEECH

'1st draft speech to be given by the Publishers' Association to publicise the "10 Best Living Novelists in England".

'Ladies and Gentlemen and that Unholy Trinity of Judges.

'I believe all of you wanted controversy, and even before this jamboree – if you forgive the term – you certainly got it. What does surprise me is the real anger and bitterness you have aroused. Your choice of books has even been called "scandalous".

'Of course, the idea is a little absurd to list the ten best books. Is it even good English, for some of the best must be better than those on your list? Anyway your rival's lists 99 best books. Why 99? Why not 100? Why not a thousand? Mr Anthony Burgess, who is an avid if rather indiscriminate reader of fiction, can certainly remember a thousand, even though he seems to have forgotten our greatest comic writer, Wodehouse.

'I agree with Paul Bailey that the whole affair is a bit of a joke, but a joke that honours no age and may help a few.

'It's rather like the paper games we used as children to play at Christmas. One game was called Consequences. You wrote a name on a piece of paper, folded it over and passed it to the next player. At the end the contents was read and perhaps "Lloyd George met the Archbishop of Canterbury who said 'Will you marry me?' and the Consequence was ..." I don't know if the three judges used the folded paper but certainly the Consequence was ... a very angry author.

'I see no the reason why I shouldn't join in the fun.

'I have listed ten authors. None of them are on your list, and I won't suggest which

of your names I would use to push off to make room. One angry author is enough. All but two are not surprisingly among Mr Burgess's wide choice of 99, though the books are not the ones he has chosen.

'Would you all join in the game and raise a hand when you approve at least the name of the author? I ought at least to get one vote for each if the publisher is here.

'I will not call them best authors, for who am I to judge, but authors I can read and reread several times. I wonder if Mr Burgess has been able to read Mailer's last novel more than once.

1. Flann O'Brien – *The Third Policeman*

2. Henry Green – *Living*

3. Malcolm Lowry – *Under the Volcano*

Here I am in agreement with Mr Burgess. I am a bit surprised these authors were not on your list.

4. (this isn't in order of merit) Muriel Spark – *Memento Mori*

5. R.K. Narayan – *The Man Eater of Malgudi*

6. Brian Moore – *The Great Victorian Collection*

7. V.S. Naipaul – *A House for Mr Biswas*

8. J.G. Ballard – *The Disaster Area*

Now for two who don't find a place even among the 99.

9. Beryl Bainbridge – *The Bottle Factory Outing* – that strange mixture of humour and horror.

10. Patrick Hamilton – *The West Pier* – the best of all Brighton novels.'

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Thanks to the Graham Greene literary estate for permission to reprint the text of the speech, and to Jon Wise for providing the text, the original of which is at Georgetown University Library.

And finally ... don't forget to keep revisiting the Trust's website – www.grahamgreenebt.org – where new material is appearing all the time, including some early details of the programme for this year's Greene Festival in September. A full preview of the Festival should appear in the next issue of *ASON*.

The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust

is a member of the Berkhamsted Arts Trust which is financially supported by Dacorum Borough Council

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