A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Summer 2002

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

£1.50
Free to Friends

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26 Sept - 29 Sept 2002
2 Oct - 5 Oct 2003
30 Sept - 3 October 2004
(*Centenary Year*)

Do not forget to visit the web site of the Trust which is on

www.grahamgreenebt.org

Editorial

By now you should have had the Festival Brochure and you will know that once more we have a veritable Greene feast to look forward to. There is a brand new film as well as two old ones and many interesting speakers. David Pearce has set out the 'menu' with fuller details inside.

Those of you who have been to one or more previous Festivals will know that not only are there interesting and informative talks and entertaining films, there are also interesting and entertaining people to meet. The atmosphere is invariably friendly and I know that, once the organisation has been taken care of, one of the things the Trustees look forward to is meeting old friends.

Because it would not be much of a Festival if YOU did not come, would it? The Festival Director has organised it; the Secretary has made sure you know all about it by sending you the brochure; the speakers have prepared their material - all this just for you. Do come! And please heed the advice given just after the preview and book early.

Yan Christensen

No responsibility will be accepted for any errors or omissions, or comments made by writers or interviewees. Views expressed are not necessarily the views of The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust

PREVIEW

The Fifth Graham Greene Festival

The 2002 Festival plans are now complete. Yet again, as the organiser, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of Greene friends and specialists who make it all possible. Speakers are prepared to travel from around the world that they may share their memories of Greene and their understanding of him as a person and a novelist. Much of this would not have been possible without the generous support of Amanda Saunders, Graham's niece, who enables us to share in her wide circle of family friends. I am hugely indebted to her and pay tribute to the patience with which she responds to my requests.

The main thread of this Fifth Festival relates to Graham Greene's political thinking. Dr Maria Couto comes from Goa where she first met Graham on a newspaper assignment. Her book, *Graham Greene on the Frontier,* deals with politics and religion in the novels. Professor Anthony Arblaster, known to many as an old friend of the Trust, will be concentrating on the post-1945 period, and Nigel West, who has written a number of books on MI5 and MI6 will consider Greene's Secret Service activities.

The films to be shown have been chosen to relate to this theme. There will be a showing of *The Human Factor* shot partly in Berkhamsted, and of the original 1957 *The Quiet American*. A new version of this novel has now, this year, been made and the absolute up-to-the-minute news is that we shall be able to show this to our audience before general release. It stars Sir Michael Caine,

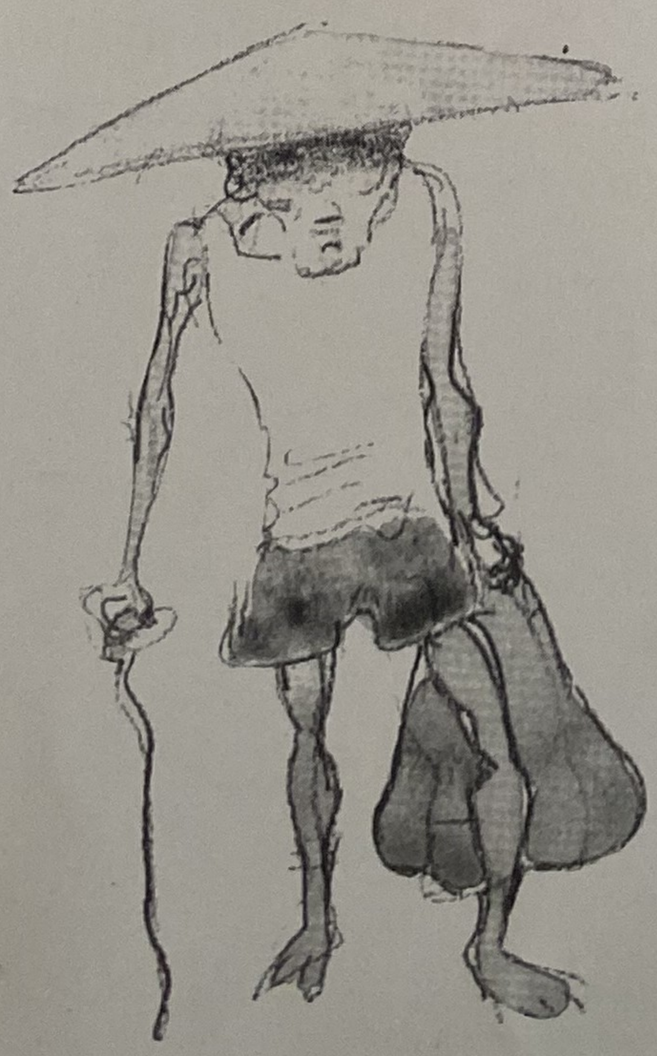


Illustration by Paul Hogarth

and the script is by the famous dramatist, Christopher Hampton CBE, who will be talking to us on the Friday, immediately before his attending Broadway, New York celebrations. So there are some suggestions for re-reading before the end of September.

I have been very conscious that many of those who attend the Festivals have themselves a great knowledge and understanding of the man whom we celebrate. I have tried to make use of this in two sessions called *Worldwide Perceptions of Graham Greene.* Participating will be speakers from Germany, Holland, America and Japan. We shall learn from these why Greene is steadily popular abroad, while, to our shame, rather less generally read in England. A Japanese delegation will be with us this year for the duration and we warmly welcome them, as we do all new visitors. Other speakers will include Professor Valentine Cunningham from Oxford and author of *British Writers of the Thirties*, Tim Waterstone, whom some will have heard speak on the radio on Greene, Neil Sinyard, without whom no Festival would be complete, Anthony Arblaster, known to Trust Friends, and Gloria Emerson who is another of those whom we welcome most especially because they share with us the memories of Greene whom they knew. Gloria, the author of the novel *Loving Graham Greene*, will propose the Birthday Toast.

On Sunday, Christopher Hawtree, who compiled the anthology of Greene letters to the Press *Yours etc* - will be speaking about T*he Freewheeling Greene - The Unpolitical Man.*

I have tried not to give away all the details at this stage. As I write this, I am conscious of the fact that I am quietly smiling, and that, at last, after many perplexities, the programme has come together. I am hoping that no international incident will ruffle the waters as happened last year. Our Festival in September will, I am confident, be an occasion to remember. We shall meet those who are distinguished, those who are enthusiastic, those who bring us special insights and we shall meet again each other. Tell your friends, and let us make those four days in Berkhamsted buzz with fun for all those who have generously committed themselves to be with us.

David Pearce
Festival Director

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

From the Secretary's Desk

This year we have a very special feature, as we shall be able to show the latest version of *The Quiet American* before it is on general release. We expect that to be popular and you should note that Friends will have priority when booking for this Friday evening event but only up to **8 September**. In theory season tickets are available until 23 September, but if one event is sold out, they cannot be issued. Please note therefore the advisability of booking early.

REMEMBER: Friends' discount only available to postal applicants.



Rudolf van Dalm entertaining at last years' Festival

REVIEW

Perceptions of Religious Faith in the Work of Graham Greene

Edited by Wm Thomas Hill
Pub: Peter Lang: Bern,2002; 691 pp

In one of the Penguin guides to classical music on CD, there is a fascinating review of a performance of Bruckner's 9th Symphony by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Leonard Bernstein, where the critic is clearly perplexed by contending allegiances. He has to assess and balance the like-ly response of those (like myself) who admire Bernstein in practically everything and (also like myself) those lovers of Bruckner who might be appalled by the interpretative liberties. In the end, he concludes: 'Nothing Bernstein did is without its insights, and this is undoubtedly a performance to hear, but it can be recommended only to the very faithful'.

That is roughly what I felt about this book: it is full of insights and a work that Greene enthusiasts would wish to read, but it is only for the very faithful. This is perfectly proper, of course: it is, after all, a discussion and survey of the way in which the complexities of religious faith are rendered and dramatised in Greenes work. The overtly religious novels - *Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair* - are exhaustively covered, but there is interesting commentary on other texts too, particularly *The Ministry of Fear*, which seems to be gathering steam as Greene's most underrated novel. Although the intended readership for the volume is obviously an academic one, the text is relatively free of excessive jargon, and the displays of literary theory are restrained and accessible. For example, an essay by Kenneth R. Morefield might begin forbiddingly with a description of Gerard Gennette's categories of Epitexts and Peritexts, but they are deployed very clearly in a compelling argument about Greene's deep personal involvement in the themes and situations of *The Power and the Glory*. As a contrasting way of reading the same novel, Thomas Woodman's chapter lucidly uncovers its shrewd and indeed prophetic insights into the thinking of the Catholic Church and its relationship to the modern world. Greene as a 'Catholic novelist' is subjected to a magisterial analysis by Bernard Bergonzi, with particular reference to what he calls the 'inspired pain' of *Brighton Rock*.

In some ways, it is a little invidious to single out individual essays, because an eclectic and pleasingly international group of contributors all have something to offer. Nevertheless, after a while, there comes a real feeling of overkill. 'Not a Catholic writer but a writer who happens to be a Catholic': if that declaration of Greene's had been quoted and pored over one more time, I think I would have thrown this book against a wall - at probable damage to the wall, as this is an extremely long book. The editor has been sympathetic but too indulgent. There are over twenty essays on roughly the same theme, and the effect becomes relentless and repetitive. After a while, you crave a bit of variety and eccentricity, as in, for example, an ultimately unconvincing but at least dotty and imaginative



Neil Sinyard (centre) at supper

comparison by Walter O'Grady between *Travels With My Aunt* and *Death in Venice* (though there is no mention of the odd coincidence that Greene's villain and the director of the famous film version of Thomas Mann's novella share the same name).

I found the presentation also a bit odd. The book suffers from what I would call footnote-and-mouth disease. There are over 1600 footnotes in the book (one chapter alone has 164): scholarly accuracy is taken to the point of agonising pedantry. Conversely, there is no index. Maybe, like me, editor and publishers were so exhausted by the time they got to the end (it took me two months to read from cover to cover) that they did not have the energy to provide one. But it is a serious omission for a book that one dips into rather than consumes and where much of the pleasure comes from the incidental observations: for example a telling reference to Ingmar Bergman's film *Shame*: choice quotations from the likes of Orwell, Judith Adamson, Shirley Hazzard, Flannery O'Connor; discussion of the complicated Wordsworthian provenance of the title for *Ministry of Fear*; a reminder of Greene's irritation with E. M. Forster for his underestimation of the importance of story to the novel in *Aspects of the Novel*; a rather beautiful analogy between Sarah Miles's journal in *The End of the Affair* and the 'What God Tells Me' movement that so gloriously concludes Mahler's 3rd Symphony. These and other incidentals are illuminating and enrich the text, but, without an index, you will have your work cut out finding them again.

For such a long text, there seem to be relatively few lapses of accuracy or critical concentration. There are one or two grammatical infelicities in the introduction; one reference refers to a 1936 film called *The Greene Pastures*, a slip which Greene himself would probably have enjoyed; and one amazing comment on Pinkie: 'There is something very, very wrong with this boy' seems to belong less to the discourse of literary criticism than to a probation officer who is notoriously slow on the uptake. On the whole, there is an enormous amount of rewarding material in here and it is certainly a tribute to Greene's powers of renewal that he can be analysed at such length without your feeling that there is now nothing left to say. On the contrary, by the end of the book, as well as feeling massively fatigued (as if I'd done a reader's equivalent of the London Marathon), I felt as if I were emerging from a kind of tunnel vision and longing for a wider perspective. What about those who love Greene without sharing his



At the cinema (Kodak Hemel Hempstead)

religious background? What about those agnostic readers who could not care a jot about the theological intricacies of Greene's position but are still moved by the enormous compasssion he conveys for all species of humanity at the end of their tether? It made me think of a review of Sidney Lumet's film comedy *Bye Bye Braverman*: 'It is not essential to be a Jewish New Yorker to love this film but it helps.' There seems something of the same feeling behind this book: 'It is not essential to be a Catholic to enjoy and understand Graham Greene but it helps.' I'm not sure it does; and I'm not sure Greene thought so either. After all, he was not a Catholic writer but a writer who just happened to be a Catholic (sound of book hitting wall).

Neil Sinyard

CORRESPONDENCE

Please use these columns to express views, discuss themes, comment on the news and views of others, or simply write to tell us you are there

I just received the late spring Newsletter and have a comment regarding the "In the Press" column. It is stated that the public doesn't have access to the GG collection at Georgetown. However, I came across an article that would imply that anyone (with a photo ID) can access the archive.

See
http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues02/jun02/presence.html

James Nicholls

As you may imagine, that letter confused us here because of the articles quoted in the last issue. We therefore asked James Nicholls to tell us more, and he very kindly provided the following:

I used to travel frequently during 1998-99 to Austin, Texas as part of my work. Among Austin's many pleasures, besides the food and music, is the Harry Ransom Center for Humanities at the University of Texas, Austin. The HRC houses one of the largest collection of Graham Greene manuscripts and correspondence in the world (the other of course at Georgetown). The total collection comprises some "96 boxes (40 linear feet), 7 galley folders, and 3 oversize folders".

When I first heard of this improbable literary treasure some five years ago, I was excited to visit the HRC and see if I could access the collection. After perusing the formidable exhibits on the ground floor (e.g., Gutenberg bibles), I asked the guard and was shown to a small elevator tucked in the corner of the building by the security desk. I went up to the top floor, and when the elevator doors opened I was surprised to see a modern, glassed-in reading room. Outside, the reception desk. Now I needed to convince someone to buzz me into the reading room. When I explained that I was a researcher creating a GG website, I was given several forms to fill out: scholastic affiliations, personal ID etc.). Once they were completed, I was given a Reader's Card - which was good for expediting future visits! - and buzzed into the sanctum sanctorum.

While my initial impulse was to bolt for the solemn-looking young staff at the help desk and ask for a stack of anything GG, a glance at the half-dozen scholars quietly examining documents at tables throughout the room made me think twice and refrain from drawing attention to myself. I noticed a series of those old-fashioned wooden index-card filing cabinets and headed over to drawer "G". My eyes almost popped out of my head when I saw about 12 inches worth of cards under GG. I furtively scanned through the cards, feeling like a child in a candy shop. I pulled the drawer out and sat down at a reading desk. I hastily selected about 25 random titles - including a *Power and the Glory* manuscript and a letter from Vivien Greene to GG. I then went over to the help desk and, *sotto voce*, enquired as to how one might access these documents. I was given a tiny pencil and a form to fill out, one for each item requested. Although it was rather tedious, I filled out 25 of the forms and headed back to the desk. The chap kindly explained (I think he was bemused) that one can receive only one item at a time. Fair enough - I picked one at random and handed it over. Within a few minutes the manuscript was delivered in a folder and I was on my way.

It is really incredible, especially after reading Sherry's biography, to hold in your hands so many of these cited documents and manuscripts. Some examples:

GG's Hermes diary books - neatly stocked in a cardboard box, by year. Flipping through the pages is a revelation. In particular, Greene would write down at the end of each month the list of books he'd read. Plenty of cryptic mnemonics, places visited, people visited.

Love letters to Vivien. These old letters are at times rather soppy, but one must say he was certainly smitten at one point with her. In fact I would say that, from what I've read at HRC, their mutual affection was stronger than Sherry had described in his biography. If GG had to cajole Vivien to marry him, he certainly appears to have done the trick of winning her over! Seeing these letters, often written on hotel or other monogrammed stationery, adds a alluring patina to the correspondence that's missing when the words are stripped bare for publication.

There is one early love letter from Vivien to GG replete with several doodles and sketches by Vivien in blue ink. She writes about the excitement of visiting an aerodrome and seeing aeroplanes, and anxiously awaits GG for the holidays. One humorous sequence of sketches shows her before and after GG's anticipated arrival.

There are several manuscripts, both written and typed, as well as corrected manuscripts. One wonders at how these tortuous manuscripts could be rendered into a published book, given GG's tiny scratchy handwriting, with corrections throughout, sometimes quite lengthy, and typesetting marks. It gives an appreciation for the word processor - but also for the handwritten manuscript, which is a remarkable artifact to explore. I'd like to think that his writing, having been put down on paper with pen and ink where there's no turning back, was that much more spontaneous.

Of course, the collection lacks Walston correspondence, and has precious few letters from Vivien to GG. Still, in maybe five trips to the center, I have always found more than enough to pique my curiosity.

There are also several other important collections, including Evelyn Waugh ("16 boxes [6.67 linear feet], 2 oversize bound volumes, 1 oversize folder, and 1 galley folder"). The HRC is also America's largest repository of works by the French composers Claude Debussy, Gabriel Fauré, Maurice Ravel, Paul Dukas, and Albert Roussel.

The HRC reading room does not allow pens, nor photocopying of any sort. Laptops may be used, and there are power outlets at each reader's table.

Next time you're in Austin, I'd recommend putting the HRC high on your list of places to visit, not only for its GG collection, but also its ground-floor displays of precious books and memorabilia. Now that I think about it, as an additional bonus, the

HRC has the world's first known photograph, which is quite spectacular to view. Following are some links to explore:

http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/
Ransom center home page

http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/greene.hp.html
GG collection home page

http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/permanent/wfp/wfpc4a.html
First photograph

James Nichols

IN THE PRESS

The Daily Telegraph of 22 July 2002 notes that two volumes of *Brighton Rock* signed by Graham Greene were sold at a Sotheby's auction for £4182. The expected price had been £900.

Is the revival imminent?

The Evening Standard of 16 July 2002 reports that William Cash, speaker at the 1999 Festival and author of *The Third Woman*, is to marry Ilaria Bulgari in London on 13 October.

Our friend the Mexican writer Rubén Moheno continues to publish articles on Greene. One on his several trips to Cuba appeared in *La Jornada Semanal* on 30 June 2002. We are delighted to see the description of the writer as 'our Greenista'. It is hoped to say more about these articles in a future issue.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The following are the forthcoming Festival dates:

2002 Thursday 26 Sunday - 29 September

2003 Thursday 2 Sunday - 5 October

2004 Thursday 30 September - 3 October

In April 2004 Centenary Year the Trust is hosting the AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies. This event is hosted in turn by member Societies and takes place over a weekend. Further information from the Secretary and more here at a later date.

PRESS RELEASE

A press release was recently issued on the subject of the 2004 centenary of Graham Greene's birth. In it the Secretary draws attention to the Trust's Festival plans and to the opportunities there are for other organisations to take part in the celebrations from biographical, literary, theatrical and cinematic points of view.

There will be a Centenary section of the GG Website which will include all Greene-related events of which the Trust becomes aware.

PUBLICATIONS

You will know that the Trust holds tapes of most of the talks given at past Festivals. In order to preserve these sound archives for future generations, the National Sound Archive has advised the Trust to transfer its audio recordings onto compact discs. It will take some time to complete this exercise, but it does mean that the CDs will be available for purchase, provided the speakers agree, at a price of £5 plus postage. At present only one is available, namely Nigel Lewis' interview with the artist Paul Hogarth at the 1998 Festival.

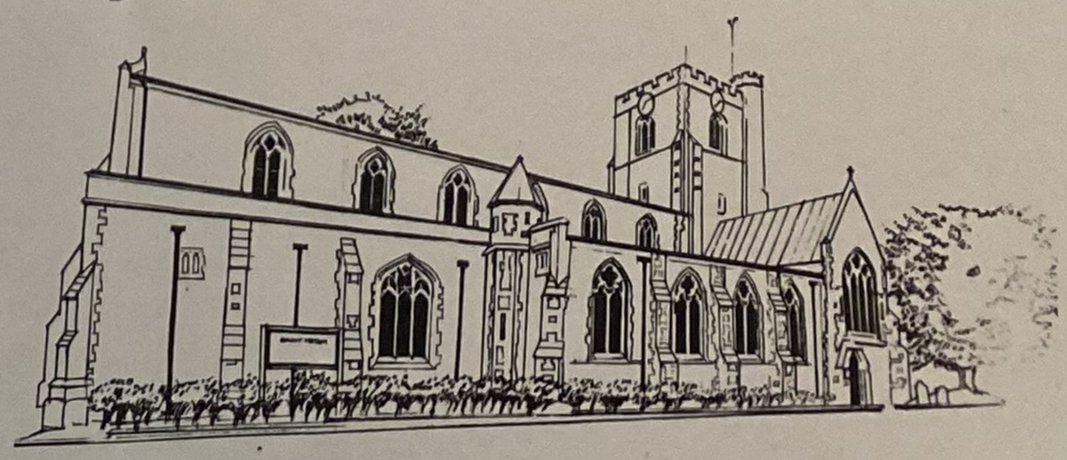
Please note that when you order publications from outside the UK from the Secretary you must add £1 for postage, as the postage can be a relatively large amount for e.g. a leaflet.

A list of available publications can be obtained from the Secretary.

WEB SITE

Do not forget to visit the web site of the Trust which is on

www.grahamgreenebt.org



Graham Greene Festival

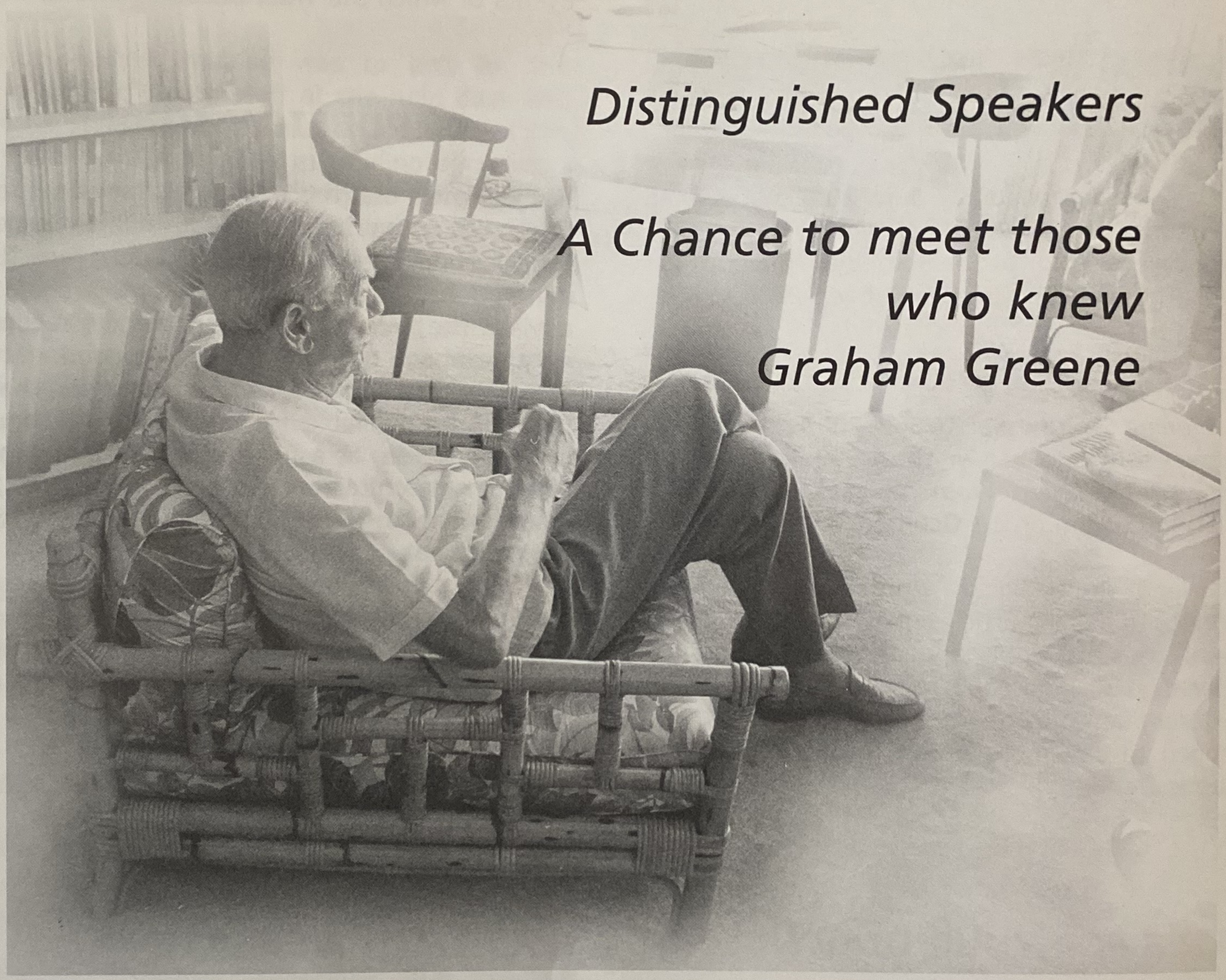
26th - 29th September, 2002

Vintage Films and a New Release

Berkhamsted Connections

Distinguished Speakers

A Chance to meet those who knew Graham Greene



Information & Tickets: Berkhamsted Library or Festival Office 01442 865158

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