# A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2003

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

£1.50
Free to Friends

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Thursday 22-Sunday 25 April 2004

**7th Festival Centenary**
Wednesday 29 September
Sunday 3 October 2004

**WEB SITE**

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

www.grahamgreenebt.org

# Editorial

It is traditional and inevitable, because true, to start the autumn issue with 'Another marvellous Festival'. I hate repeating myself, but what else can I say, it was indeed another marvellous Festival. And once more we have David Pearce to thank for the organisation of speakers and films, and Ken Sherwood for the organisation of venues and efficient sorting of queries.

Others have their part to play in the event: a good many volunteers act as stewards at each talk or film, taking tickets and manning bookstalls; some are roped in as reporters for this Newsletter and you will be able to enjoy their efforts inside.

Next year will be a big one for the Trust as 2004 is the centenary of Graham Greene's birth.

We start the formal arrangements with the Spring Festival the last weekend in April. It is centred around the AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies which means that several of the delegates will not necessarily be Greene fans, and we shall accept that challenge with every confidence in our ability to convert them. But we certainly also hope that as many Friends of the Trust as possible will be able to be there.

Yan Christensen

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Your comments and letters are always welcome.

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

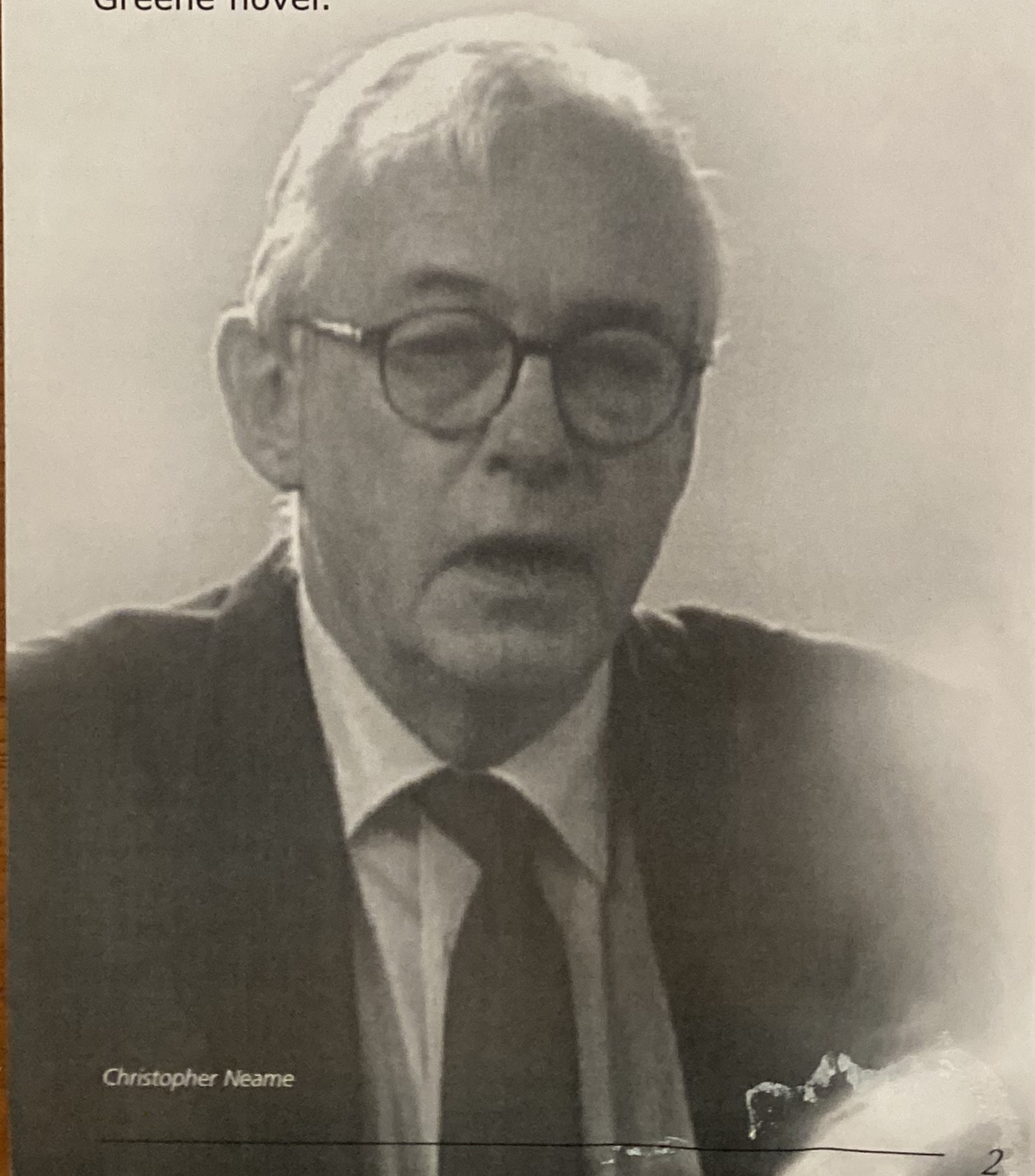
# REVIEW

## FESTIVAL 2003

If you missed the Festival you have now the chance of catching something of the flavour of each event; and if you were there you may well want a reminder of the talks which are here reported by: Christine Bryon, Yan Christensen, Tom Dobbyn, John Partridge, Alan Porteous, Jenny Sherwood and Anne Vickers.

### Film
### *Monsignor Quixote*

This Thames TV film describes a spiritual journey of a simple Catholic priest - unexpectedly and reluctantly created Monsignor - and a communist ex-mayor, through sumptuous Spanish countryside as they grow in respect for, and understanding of, each other. The outstanding cast recreated the Greene novel with sensitivity. Alec Guinness and Leo McKern as the priest and the mayor respectively seemed faultless. Rosalie Crutchley, Graham Crowden and Maurice Denham also gave outstanding supporting performances. The screenplay was well paced reflecting the developing relationship between the priest and the mayor and followed remarkably closely the Greene novel.



*Christopher Neame*

### Talk
### Making *Monsignor Quixote*

Christopher Neame was asked by Euston Films to do a mini-series on gangsters and was surprised, after he had turned this down, to be asked to produce a film on two men chatting - *Monsignor Quixote*. The screenplay he was given was seriously flawed. He met Graham Greene for the first time at the Ritz and was fascinated by his eyes. The meeting was a success and he set off on a five-day visit to Spain to demonstrate that the film could be made within the restricted budget available. He delivered the screenplay to Graham Greene in Antibes and when he called back, Greene suggested that he remove the word 'Draft ' from before the word 'Screenplay'. He also gave him an undated letter to Alec Guinness inviting him to take the leading role. His relationship with Graham Greene was constructive. They could accept or reject each other's suggestions without rancour. The team (Christopher Neame, the Director Rodney Bennett, the actors and crew) worked harmoniously knowing that they were making an outstanding film.

In the discussion which followed, it was explained how generally the scenes were shot at the locations in the novel and in the right sequence. But they had to wait until they found the right lavatory and hotel room into which the crew could squeeze to shoot the confession and brothel scenes.

### Discussion
### Philip French with Rodney Bennett

Philip French, the film critic of *The Observer,* interviewed Rodney Bennett, the Director of *Monsignor Quixote.*

English actors speaking English were used in the film in an entirely Spanish setting. Attempts had been made in other films, e.g. *Madame Bovary,* to use regional accents to indicate class but it had proved very difficult.

Despite the low budget the film was shot in 35mm. While 16mm was cheaper, many shots would have had to be retaken because camera noise could not be completely suppressed. There was little need for post dubbing with 35mm.

The literary references were left intact as in the novel. Bad luck if some of the audience did not understand.

The pace of the film was leisurely, reflecting the pace of two old men. When the film was first screened before people other than the team who made it, the audience walked out without saying a word. They did not know what to make of it.

There was a discussion on whether the novel was picaresque simply to break up the narrative or whether this style was chosen to allow the narrative to reflect the developing relationship between the Monsignor and the Mayor.

Rodney Bennett did not think that the debate in the novel reflected an internal debate in Greene's mind. He had been called the first Catholic fellow traveller, but he was his own man rather than a 'party man'.

The film had been made at a time of change and uncertainty. The scene at Franco's tomb had to be authorised by Parliament who agreed, provided the army was happy. In the end, it was shot before all bureaucratic formalities were completed. The film was about friendship, and the friendship of Alec Guinness and Leo McKern continued after the film despite their very different characters.

Other points arose in discussion. Alec Guinness took religion very seriously but his portrayal of Monsignor Quixote came from his acting technique and not his faith. The Don Camillo saga and the mad scene in King Lear were not thought to be sources.

## Film
## *The Destructors*

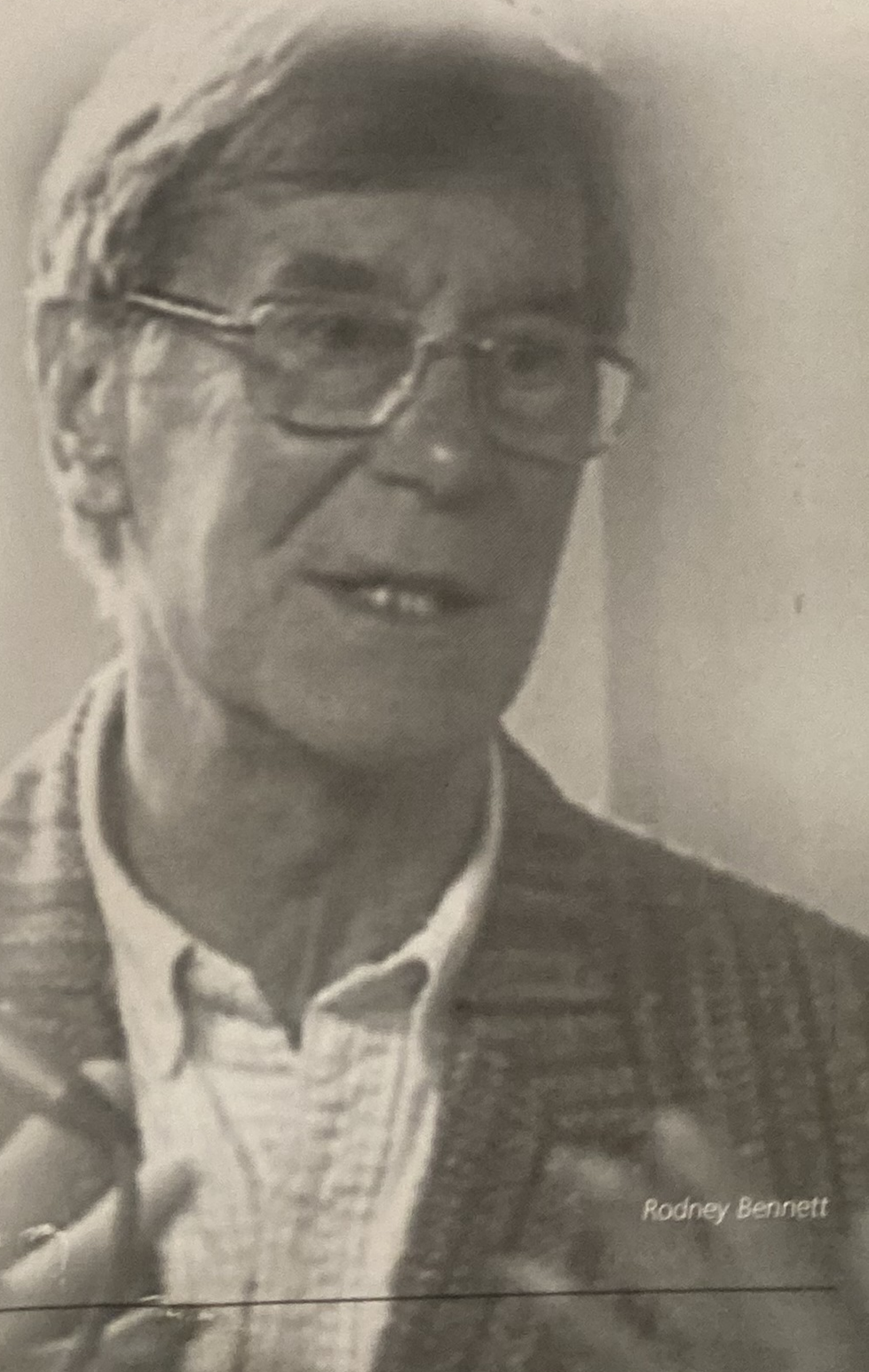
David Pearce briefly introduced this film of the Graham Greene short story. A gang of youths - following a new leader - destroy without apparent motive the house of a kindly old man (Old Misery) while he is away on a Bank Holiday. The single-mindedness and ingenuity of the gang are devoted to a contemptible objective. A somewhat frightening film evoking Golding's *Lord of the Flies.*

## Talk
## 'Perfect in being much too short'

Neil Sinyard is very knowledgeable on the subject of Graham Greene and on films, and this was certainly reflected in his talk. The story of *The Destructors* follows the traditional pattern of setting a goal, overcoming obstacles and achieving success. But the goal is destructive. There are a few films of this type e.g. *Bridge over River Kwai.* The subtext is that the destructiveness of war - illustrated by the house on the bomb site - produces rebellion. Creativity is channelled into destruction. Graham Greene thought this one of his best stories. He saw short stories as a way of escape from writing novels. But he was bored by the lack of surprise that comes in writing a short story. The surprise in a short story can come in the use of language.

A short story is easier for the film-maker to adapt. He can expand and develop it rather than contract. Two films illustrated this - *Went the Day Well* and *The Fallen Idol. Went the Day Well* is the story of a poacher who single-handedly defeated a German unit who had invaded an English village. It is developed in the film to show complex relationships, dehumanising violence and the dangers of deference to rank and class.

In *The Fallen Idol* (from *The Basement Room*), the boy Philip lies to save Baines but only succeeds in confusing the police into believing that he had



*Rodney Bennett*

murdered Mrs Baines. The story becomes a comedy of non-communication with an eye for detail. The slatternly policewoman Rose of *The Basement Room* becomes a tart trying to cheer up Philip with the language she uses with her clients.

*The Basement Room* is a story of the green baize door which separates childhood and the adult world. Philip betrays his friend Baines to the police when the adult world clashes with the childhood idyll.

## Film

### *The Heart of The Matter*

This year a local commercial cinema was hired to show *The Heart of the Matter*, which was therefore seen by a record audience. Neil Sinyard in his introduction advised us to look at how religion was treated, and at the ending.

In the novel, Scobie commits suicide when he, by now professionally compromised, is unable to give up his mistress or, as a consequence, to hurt his wife. His dilemma is heightened by his Catholic faith which required him to give up his mistress in order to continue taking the sacraments, and in which suicide is forbidden. He commits suicide by pretending to be ill and then taking a massive overdose of the medication. In this way he hoped to avoid distressing his wife and the revelation of his mistress. The irony is that his wife already knew about the mistress.

In the film, Scobie is shown contemplating suicide by shooting himself but dies when he intervenes to stop a murderous assault. He dies a hero rather than as a tragic soul.



*Neil Sinyard*

## Talk

### Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh

Professor Robert Davis gave us an interesting excursion through the relationship or acquaintanceship between Greene and Waugh

Greene and Waugh were born in 1904 and 1903 respectively; they were both at Oxford; they were both writers and Roman Catholics; they had both unsuccessfully attempted suicide.

But their first recorded meeting was not until 1936 and they certainly never met at Oxford where they agreed that Waugh had been in a different camp (Waugh had many homosexual friends at Oxford). They appear to have got on well. Waugh once said to Greene 'I wish we met more often, I am deeply fond of you', but it is apparently unknown whether this was simply a fleeting emotion. Greene's feelings towards Waugh are not documented.

They respected each other's work although Waugh had reservations about Greene's style (too much metaphor and simile) and suspected his religious orthodoxy (very near hatred of free will). Greene's opinions on Waugh's work are scarce, although in the early thirties he wrote generously about the author of *Vile Bodies*.

For all that, it is unclear why they were not closer. There were temperamental differences but these seem minor when described by Professor Davis. Generally, Greene was more serious and less tolerant although of course Waugh had his tantrums and obsessions. Greene was also far more interested in films.

Is it surprising that they did not see more of each other? Who is to say?

## Slides
## Monsignor Quixote's route in pictures

Dr Ramon Porta, a dedicated Greene fan and friend of Fr Leonardo Duran, set out to follow the route described in Greene's book *Monsignor Quixote*. The slide presentation that Dr Porta prepared for the Festival gave a powerful visual representation of the places visited by Greene's Priest/Monsignor and the communist mayor in the novel and film.

Unfortunately, Dr Porta was at the last moment unable to be present in person at the Festival and David Pearce presented the slides in his place.

The route followed is over 600 km through four regions: Castile La Mancha, Madrid, Castile Leon and Galicia.

El Toboso is a modest village but it embraces a 16th century Gothic church, a monument to Don Quixote and his beloved Dulcinea, and Cervante's Museum. It was Fr Quixote's parish and the Mayor, Sancho Panza's, bailiwick.

A key location was Salamanca by the tomb of Unamuno (Spanish writer and rector of the University of Salamanca) who was admired by Greene. The dismissive porter at the shrine, when asked by Greene, retorted that Unamuno's tomb was no. 340. This, we are told, was the moment when Greene conceived the idea for the book.

The Valley of the Fallen (or the Dead in Greene's terms) has a giant cross, visible for 30 miles. The Valley was created after the Spanish Civil War as a memorial and it is said that some 40,000 soldiers from both sides are buried there. In the vast Basilica in front of the altar there is the tomb of Francisco Franco.

Segovia is famous for its Roman aqueduct, built of granite without the use of mortar. It is 15 km long and 28 m high at its highest point. No doubt Greene and Fr Duran visited the Candido Restaurant in Segovia, famous for its sucking pig, so tender that Sr Candido could cut it with the edge of a plate.

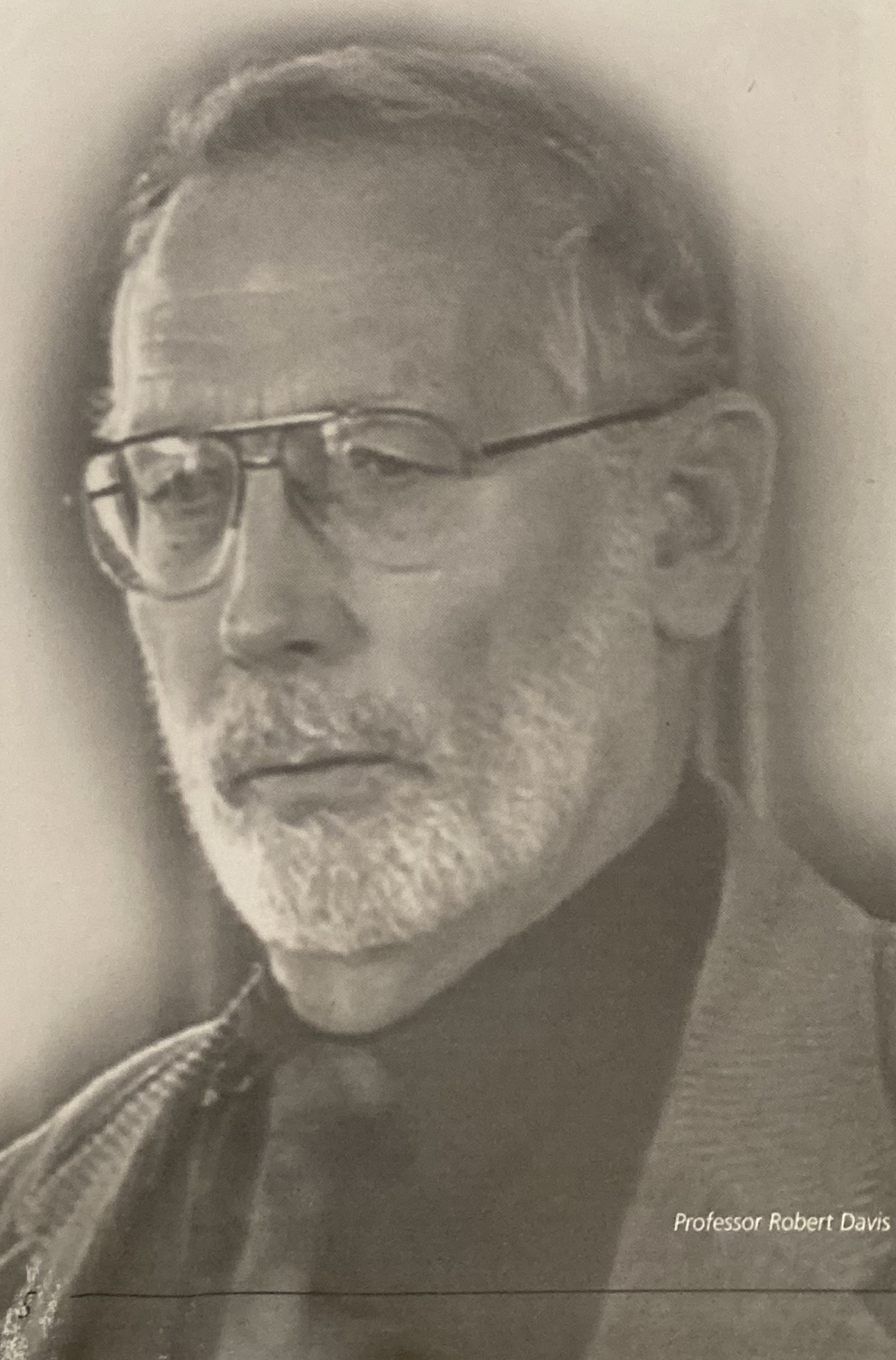
Returning to Salamanca we saw many views of the town and particularly reminders of Unamuno: his house, statue etc. In the town is the Valencia Restaurant, located by Greene in Valladolid, something he regarded as literary licence.

The Cathedral at Leon is judged the finest Gothic edifice of its kind in Spain and will be remembered particularly for the visit made by the Mayor and Monsignor Quixote, who prayed there.

Earlier, in the book, Ourense gets a passing mention because the Monsignor and the Mayor headed for the peaceful Osera Monastery. Monsignor Quixote's story ends at the Monastery (a favourite with Greene and Fr Duran).

In the book Monsignor Quixote died but in reality the Mayor died first. For Fr Duran, on whom Quixote was modeled, still lives in a pleasant apartment in Vigo, with over 8,000 books.

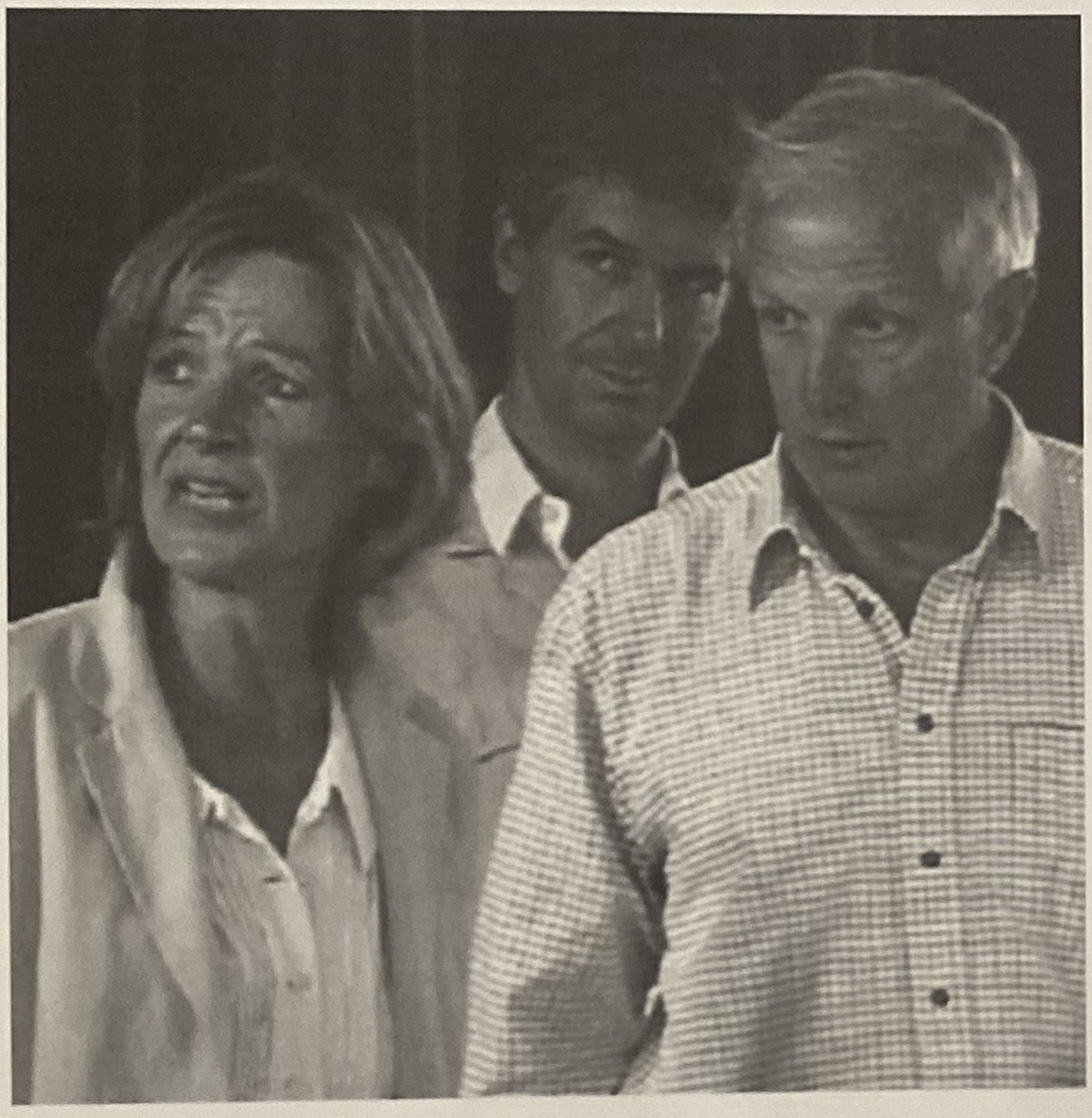
This was a wonderful film record of Ramon Porta's travels over the country featured in Greene's novel; it was a pity he was not there in person to receive our thanks for the very considerable trouble he had taken.



*Professor Robert Davis*

## Dramatisation
## *A Burnt-Out Case*

On Saturday afternoon we were treated to a most entertaining event. David Pearce had once again assembled a company of local enthusiasts who perfomed a dramatised reading of *A Burnt-Out Case* with David Pearce in the central rôle of Querry. Although inevitably much abbreviated, the performance eloquently conveyed the action and atmosphere of the novel, and it was greatly enjoyed by all. The other participants who took one or more parts were: Francis Beuttler, Martin Canter, Cherrie Gallagher, Christopher Green, Martin Pett and Peter Swaffield.



*Some of the players: Cherrie Gallagher, Martin Pett & David Pearce*

## Talk
## Greene's Portrayal of Christians and Christian Issues

This talk was given by Professor Tom Hill who lives in Japan and lectures there on Modern American and British Literature. He dealt with his subject by taking us through Greene's novels from his early withdrawn novels to some of his later works. He explained that Christians, particularly Roman Catholics, and Christian issues emerged gradually in the novels. It starts in *It's a Battlefield*. Here, however, spiritual issues are portrayed as a dark cloud of melancholy and depression made darker by a salvationist and in this period one gets a picture of what for Greene is the seedy side of religion. There is also the Chaplain's unease and dilemma when the death sentence is commuted to 18 years' imprisonment when he is unable to accept the arbitrariness of man's justice but appears to be willing to accept God's seeming arbitrariness.

Greene examines prayer and whether God answers prayer in *England Made Me* and later in *The End of the Affair*. Although in *Gun for Sale* Raven might not necessarily see the fact that he eventually discovers Anne after a series of events, starting with finding 6d, as an answer to prayer, the fact that he had prayed with "half a hope" is important to Greene. He uses the notion that God hears and answers anyone's cry or supplication if such person prays with hope. Again in *The End of the Affair* when a prayer is uttered, a "wild hope" seems to be generated and Bendrix gradually admits that he believes in God. Sarah intercedes and her prayers are answered leading to a transformation in Bendrix's prayer life.

The theme of grace is dealt with in *Brighton Rock* and Greene explores the force one needs to exercise to turn oneself away from God's grace as well as the difficulty in actually accepting it. Catholicism is introduced and dealt with increasingly as a recurring theme in *The Comedians* as well as in such novels as *The Power and The Glory, The Heart of the Matter, A Burnt-Out Case* and many others. Greene tackles absolution and repentance but he considers that a lifetime's sin could not be wiped out in a moment, as in a deathbed repentance. For him repentance must be much more of a process. As an aside, Professor Hill remarked that he would have liked to have asked Greene about his own end of life experiences and death.

The way in which people select and rationalise parts of religion are dealt with in *The Heart of the Matter*, for example, where the themes of love, mercy and justice are pondered upon. The character Scobie is all the time 'in his own head' trying to work out the issues and attempting to define love for himself. This insistence on relying on his own reasoning follows him to his death. Reliance on oneself and one's own interpretation of spiritual matters and selectiveness about which religious or spiritual matters one wishes to hear, Professor Hill calls 'spiritual deafness'. Querry in *A Burnt-Out Case* displays this and finds that he is eventually more comfortable with physical things. In *The Human*

*Factor*, Castle goes into the church of his youth to give thanks to his childhood God but in his own head he has no sense that he is present and participating with others there until he is jolted into considering adulthood.

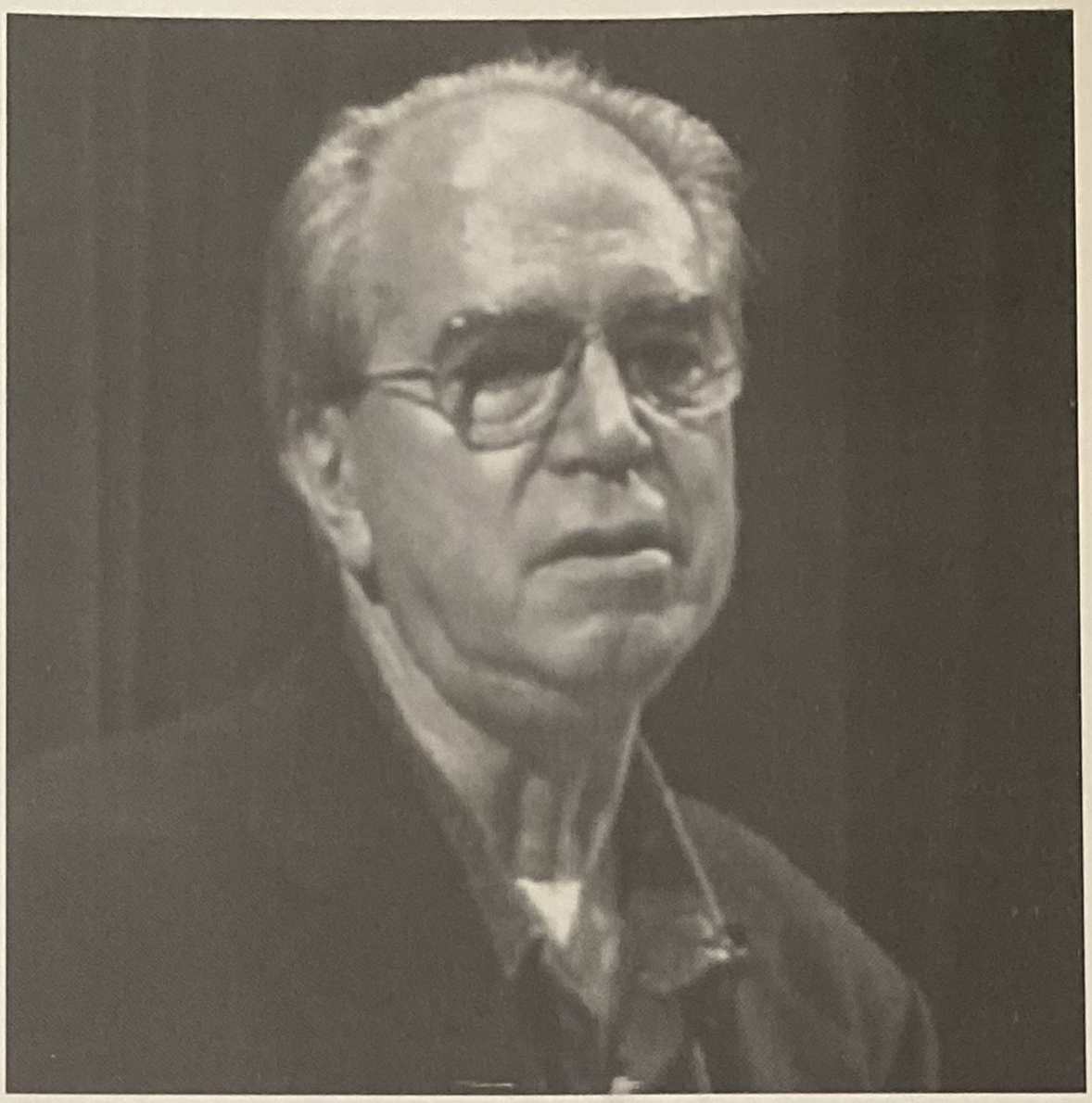
Professor Hill also touched briefly on the way Greene dealt with love, spirituality and Christianity in some of the other novels but time did not permit him to continue the list.

## Talk
## *The Power and the Glory* and *A Burnt-Out Case*

In his introduction Roger Watkins told us that Tom Aitken was a man of wide interests who had been Film Critic for *The Tablet*, was especially interested in music, drama and history and was currently writing a history of The Salvation Army in Russia during the revolution. Such breadth of interest became engagingly apparent as his talk progressed.

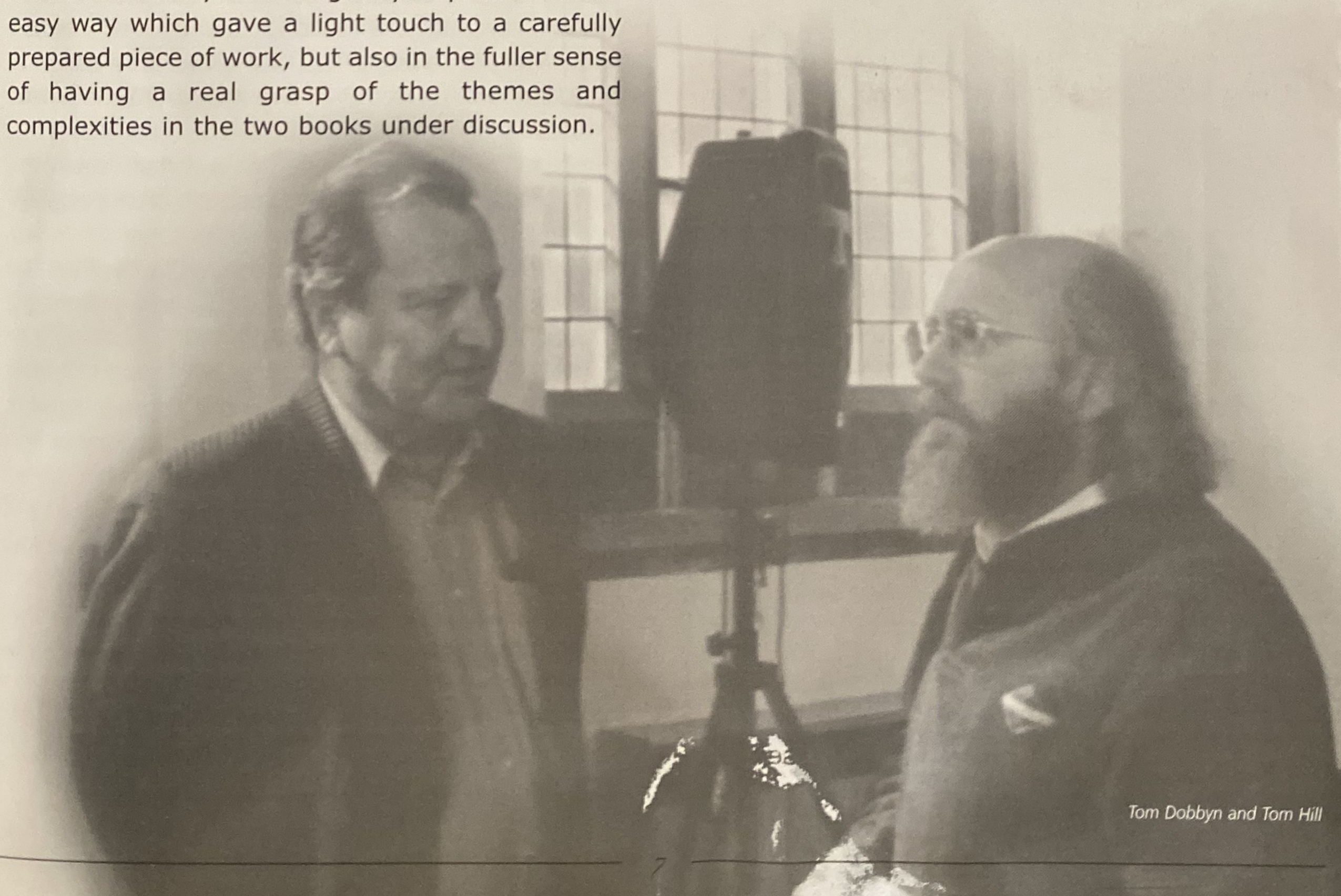
After this superb talk an enthusiastic listener was heard to exclaim "Wasn't that marvellous!" and the reply was "Yes, it was most gracious!"

Indeed it was 'gracious' in the obvious sense that it was so clearly and elegantly expressed in an easy way which gave a light touch to a carefully prepared piece of work, but also in the fuller sense of having a real grasp of the themes and complexities in the two books under discussion.



*Tom Aitken*

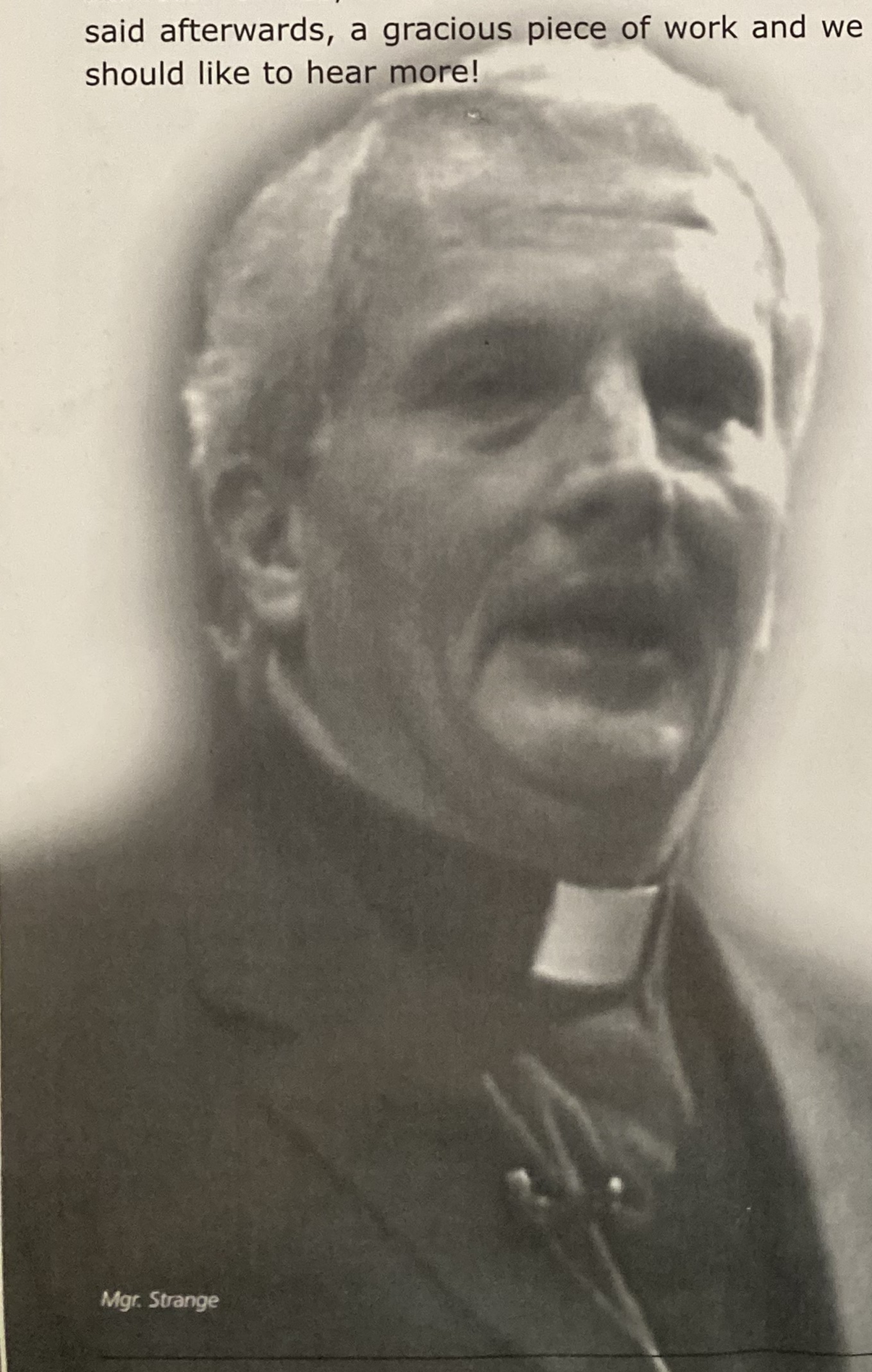
He began by a brief history of the religious situation in Mexico at the time of Greene's visit and referred to his non-fiction work *The Lawless Roads* which had provided so much background to *The Power and the Glory* though it had been a commissioned piece and not undertaken with a work of fiction in mind. In that respect he contrasted it with *Congo Journal*, which had been specifically written as preparation for *A Burnt-Out Case*.



*Tom Dobbyn and Tom Hill*

Tom Aitken gave his talk the title of 'Ways of Affirmation and Ways of Escape' and linked these to different aspects of Greene's character and stages of his development, both as a man and as an author. He thinks that *A Burnt-Out Case* is the better book and reflects a period when Greene himself felt 'burnt out'. Despite some of its humour, Greene himself said the book showed the depressive side of a manic-depressive, whereas his next book *Travels With My Aunt* showed the manic side - in fact almost out of control! The speaker thought these contrasting books have themes in common. One of these is that fear is a universal phenomenon; another is the reality of God in the Mass and, as in much of his writing, there is a recurring motif of what goodness might be. Greene, as his readers know well, was fascinated by the nature of 'goodness' but wary of 'innocence' which he saw as a dangerous quality. At least, as he said, the guilty know what they're doing.

This was a richly constructed talk, deep without being heavy and enlivened with touches of humour. It was, as that member of the audience said afterwards, a gracious piece of work and we should like to hear more!



*Mgr. Strange*

## Talk
## A Religious Awareness

Monsignor Strange teaches at the English-speaking college in Rome and helps older men through an accelerated course to the priesthood. To judge from our brief acquaintance with him at the Festival, there is no doubt he is a marvellous teacher.

He first of all told us that in the early sixties he had read all the novels and short stories of Graham Greene and it became clear that he is still familiar with the work.

Mgr. Strange had at one time been asked to give a talk about religious awareness in turn-of-the-century authors, and it had brought home the considerable contrast with modern authors. At the end of the 19th century all fiction had at least some religious dimension and allusion and the characters were part of a church-going community.

Modern authors such as William Boyd show no such awareness nor a sense of sin. In many of Greene's novels, on the other hand, church and religion are part of the tapestry of life. His writing is a study in involvement and he uses the motif of a 'risk of commitment' in many novels. Examples given were the commitment to his office of the whisky priest; Scobie's commitment to his wife; Sarah's commitment to God. Castle loved his wife and 'love was a total risk, love the only careless thing he had done'. In such books commitment creates a dilemma which drives the narrative whereas in others there is a crisis and the narrative unfolds the consequences of the crisis.

In *The Human Factor* Daintry says to Percival 'An action has nothing to do with the consequences? Is that what you are telling me?'

But the reader of Greene and the listener to Mgr. Strange can have no doubt as to the nature of risk and the consequences of our actions. It was an exceptionally lucid talk with much depth but without being heavy. We are sometimes truly blessed in the quality of our speakers.

## Film
## *Cheap in August*

This was a film from the Thames TV series *Shades of Greene*. The brilliant adaptation by Philip Mackie of the short story, *Cheap in August*, the two principal parts superbly and sensitively acted by Virginia McKenna and Leo Mackern, recaptures the excitement, the humour and the tragi-comedy of the short story, and incorporates much of the crisp, succinct and witty dialogue of Greene. Mary Watson, who feels the "restlessness of middle age", and is desirous of achieving something before it is too late, takes a short holiday in Jamaica, where it is "cheap in August", and which she is assured she will love, "because it is so English!" She has a good husband, who "writes every day" and he has implicit faith in her fidelity. The film contains many delightful digs at the American stereotype and the humour is typically English. "The three English from St. Louis", in their Bermuda shorts, "an awfully jolly bunch", are reminiscent of Angela Brazil, and the little health touches, "I've had my half-hour", and "there's a lot of vitamins in fresh pineapple" personify the American image seen through English eyes. Henry Hickslaughter does not, however, fulfil Mary's image of "interrogation is a principal part of American life". There is an air of mystery about him. He has a "mysterious past", is a "gangster" and a "blackmailer". The potential danger adds to the excitement of Mary's "adventure". Fortified by bourbon, she has the courage to return to his room only to find, not a dangerous gangster, but a rather pathetic old man, who yearns for company; a man, who is afraid of the dark and, above all, "afraid of dying, with nobody around, in the dark". Through him Mary discovers an "America I never knew before, failure and fear in an American accent". Making love together somehow seems perfectly natural, as if they really did "have a lot in common", other than that for both of them Jamaica was "cheap in August".

## *In the Shadow of Cain* (BBC, 1964) featuring Julian Maclaren-Ross.

This short film clip gave us a taste and glimpse of the subject of Paul Willett's subsequent talk - an interesting 'starter'!

## Talk
## Julian Maclaren-Ross

The Festival came to an end with a stimulating talk by Paul Willetts, the author of *Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia*, outlining the life and works of an important twentieth century writer, Julian Maclaren-Ross, who sadly never fulfilled his early promise and whose way of life almost certainly prevented him from becoming a novelist of the calibre of Waugh or Greene. Four decades after his death Maclaren-Ross is remembered as much for the bohemian excesses of his life as for the enduring wit and panache of his writing.

Julian Maclaren-Ross, whose life, in Paul Willetts' opinion, "was every bit as interesting and distinctive as his writing", started life in the suburb of South Norwood. His father had links with Oscar Wilde and his mother was the daughter of a big game hunter. A family business, which had fallen on hard times already by the time Julian was born, brought his father an income. The family lived in a succession of seaside towns before moving to the South of France to avoid the taxman. After being expelled from school in his late teens, he went to Nice where he acquired a taste for wild café society. He conceived the ambition to become a writer or painter and returned to England, supported by a trust fund from his grandfather.



*Paul Willetts*

He sampled the arty life of Soho, married a failed actress and went to Bognor Regis. The marriage did not last. By 1938 Maclaren-Ross' private income had dried up and he took a job as a door-to-door salesman, selling vacuum cleaners. He sought permission from Greene to dramatise *A Gun for Sale*. Greene suggested they meet, and this would appear to be the first contact between the two. The meeting is described in Maclaren-Ross' *Memoirs of the Forties*, published posthumously in 1965, and also serialised in the *London Magazine*. This gives an interesting glimpse of the life-style of Graham and Vivien Greene and the family during their time at Clapham Common. Greene was intrigued by Ross' job and there is no doubt that the latter served as a model for Wormold in *Our Man in Havana*. Although there is little documentary evidence of a continuing friendship between the two, throughout Maclaren Ross' life the latter appeared to set great store by this "professional relationship". It is possible also that in writing of Greene in his *Memoirs* he concertinaed several meetings with Greene into one.

Maclaren-Ross achieved a big break in 1939 when Cyril Connolly, the editor of *Horizon*, accepted his story *A Bit of a Smash in Madras*, an account of a hit and run incident in Colonial India. As a result, Jonathan Cape offered him the opportunity to produce a collection of works, but conscription to the army intervened. Whilst this gave him little opportunity to serve the war effort his time in the army certainly helped his literary career. He wrote stories of his experiences, reproducing the barrack-room language of the period, publishing these in *Penguin New Writing, Lilliput* and *Horizon*. Discharged from the army as unsuitable, Maclaren-Ross found a job in the documentary film industry working alongside Dylan Thomas. By the end of the War Julian Maclaren-Ross was established as one of the rising stars of the English literary scene. He seemed destined for the super stardom that Waugh and Greene had gained. Unfortunately he had established a way of life, that would undermine his ascendant career.

Graham Greene, who regarded Maclaren-Ross as "having had a touch of genius", introduced him to Andre Deutsch. Ross managed to secure a multiple book publishing deal. In 1946 the novella *Bitten by the Tarantula* was published, the first commercial hit for Deutsch. By the summer of 1947 Ross was again in financial straits. Once more he turned to Graham Greene, who was by now managing director of Eyre and Spottiswoode. Greene agreed an advance of £300, thus "reiterating Greene's faith in MacLaren-Ross talent". *The Dark Diceman* was started, but never finished.

By the mid 1950s Julian was an alcoholic and drug-dependent. At the beginning of the 60s he pulled himself together a little. *The Memoirs of the Forties* was commissioned by Alan Ross, editor of the *London Magazine*. The *Bowl of St. Giles* was broadcast. In 1962 Ross approached Greene for help in finding a publisher for *My Name is Love*. He drew up a fresh chapter plan for the *Memoirs*, and by the end of October had written thirteen more chapters. A few days later, however, on 3rd November, he fell victim to his dissolute life style, and died of a heart attack.

This outline of the life of Julian Maclaren-Ross gave an illuminating insight into the mid-twentieth century literary scene, and showed something of Graham Greene's concern for, and support of, promising young writers. It provided a fitting end to the Festival.

## CORRESPONDENCE

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

We have been asked by Professor Tom Hill to draw your attention to the conference he is organising in Madrid at the end of May 2004. Further information can be obtained from

http://home:inter.net/wthill/grn2004/grnconf.htm

## IN THE PRESS

The editor cannot keep up with the entire International Press, so please help by sending any press cuttings you would like to see reported. An English précis in the case of the more exotic languages would be appreciated. Please always indicate publication and date. Should you want further details of anything mentioned here, please contact the editor.

From Spain we have received an article published in *Catalunya Cristiana* about Graham Greene. It is part of a series featuring 'thinkers of the 20th century' and includes biographical details as well as comments on his work. The article acknowledges that Greene writes about murder, corruption and other evils but nevertheless concludes that Greene has a message of hope for Christians because God inhabits the world.

An article in the Barcelona daily, *La Vanguardia*, headed 'Hollywood penetrates Vietnam' states that *The Quiet American* is the first Hollywood film to have been well received in Vietnam!

The Italian journal *La Republica* published a long article earlier this year about *The Quiet American* hailing Greene as a prophet, although he is quoted as having said, modestly, that if one knew the situation in Vietnam as he did then, it was not difficult to imagine what would happen there.

*The Quiet American* continued to spark off articles and one in *The Washington Post* earlier this year draws interesting parallels with the situation in Iraq.

Another in *The Times* lists the efforts of Robbie Millen to find the Saigon of Greene's day. He does see things that the author might have recognised, but most of the signs of French influence, of the brothels and the opium dens have gone.

A recent weekend supplement carried a long article by the writer and broadcaster Julian Evans about Yvonne Cloetta, the woman who was Greene's companion for more than 30 years. They met in French Cameroon in March 1959 and were close until Greene's death in 1991. Although Yvonne Cloetta was not divorced, she returned to France leaving her husband working in Africa, and met Greene again shortly after returning. They settled into a routine of having lunch and spending the afternoons together. Cloetta also accompanied Greene on holidays in Capri. The relationship surely suffered from his celebrity status, but she was consistently discreet and has rarely spoken of it; she did not collaborate with Norman Sherry's authorised autobiography. In the conversation that is the basis for the article, she makes it clear that what she saw in Greene was a tenderness and gentleness that most others failed to find.

The Diary of *The Evening Standard*, noting the death of Vivien Greene, comments that another key character has missed the final volume of Norman Sherry's biography. Ellah Allfrey is the editor at publishers Jonathan Cape who will work on the more than 1000-page-long final volume which is expected to appear in 2004.

*The Wall Street Journal* of 13 August 2003 published a cartoon illustrating the agonies of the blocked writer musing before his computer "Now, which of these fonts would Graham Greene have chosen?"

*The Oldie* of October 2003 carried an article by Stanley Price who went to Havana to cover the making of the film *Our Man in Havana* and met Greene there. They spent some time together, Greene's knowledge of Spanish enabling him to instruct taxi-drivers to search the city for brothels. Later Price had invited his hairdresser out for a drink, only to see her fall under the spell of Graham Greene. Price considers he had his revenge some years later when he won a *New Statesman* competition to write the opening of a Greene novel; Greene came third on that occasion.

How long have you been a Greene fan? If for a long time or if your parents were, do check your book shelves. *The Daily Telegraph* of 2 September 2003 published a list of the Top Ten UK adult fiction first editions 1900 to the present. *Brighton Rock*(1938) came in at no. 5 being worth £20,000 with dust jacket; £700 without.

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## APOLOGIES

In the last issue we featured a photograph of Graham Greene. Regrettably we omitted to indicate that this was taken by Bernard Diederich and that he owns the copyright. He had kindly given permission for it to be used in an earlier Festival brochure. Watch this space for news of Bernard Diederich's book in which that and other photographs will appear.

## OBITUARY

In the last issue we briefly reported the death of Graham Greene's widow, Vivien Greene, at the age of 99. They had met when she worked at Blackwell's the publishers in Oxford where Greene read English at Balliol. She had a great interest in literature having written poetry as a child. During their long courtship Vivien influenced Greene considerably and his conversion to catholicism was in no small measure due to her. There were two children and after the beautiful house in Clapham was bombed they moved to Oxford; Graham Greene did not stay there long, but Vivien Greene remained there until her death.

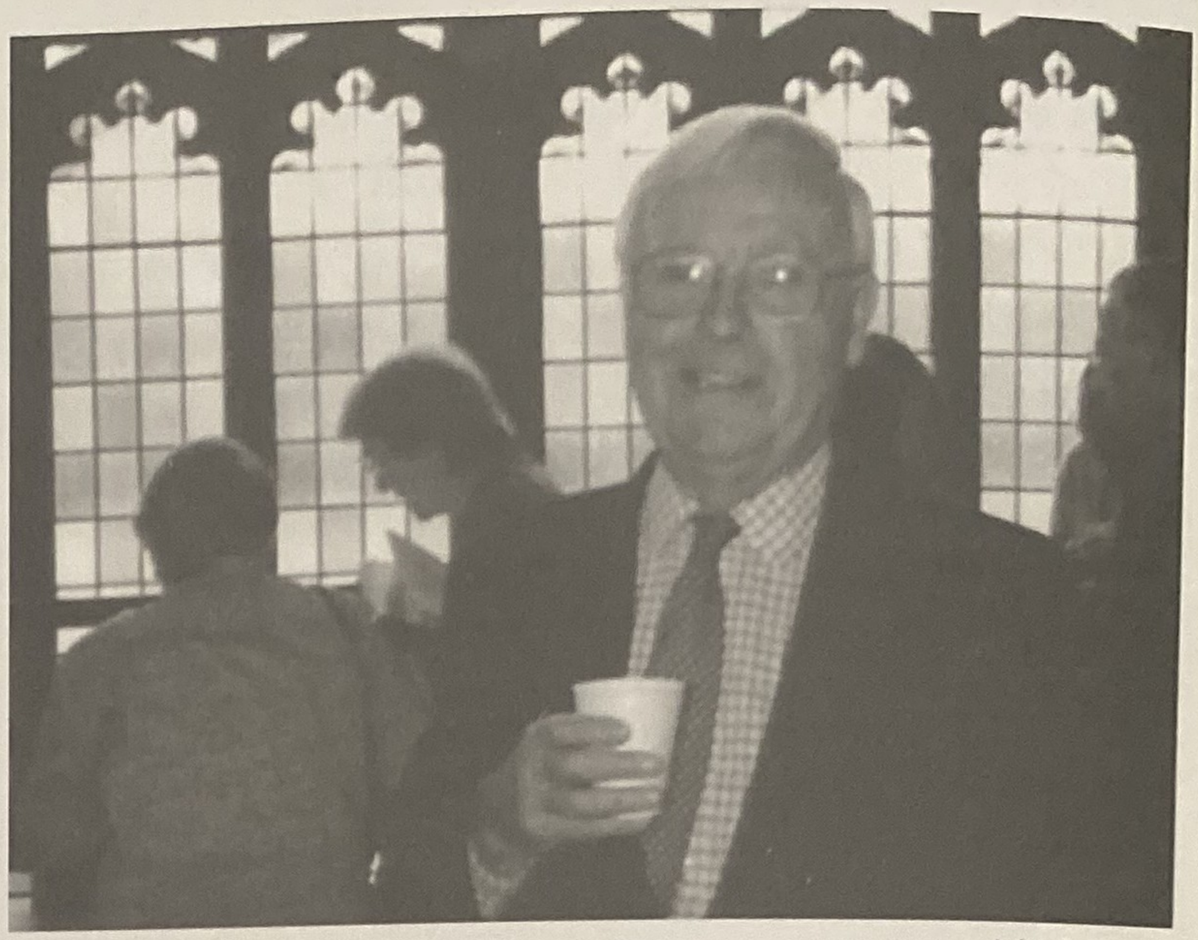
She was a woman of many interests; one appears to have come about by chance when she found a dilapidated doll's house which she set out to restore. This became an enduring passion and she was an acknowledged expert, having published two books: *English Dolls' Houses of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (1955) and *Family Dolls' Houses* (1977).

Vivien and Graham Greene never divorced and as his wife she was often interviewed by his biographers; with her dies a link with one of the greatest writers of the 20th century.

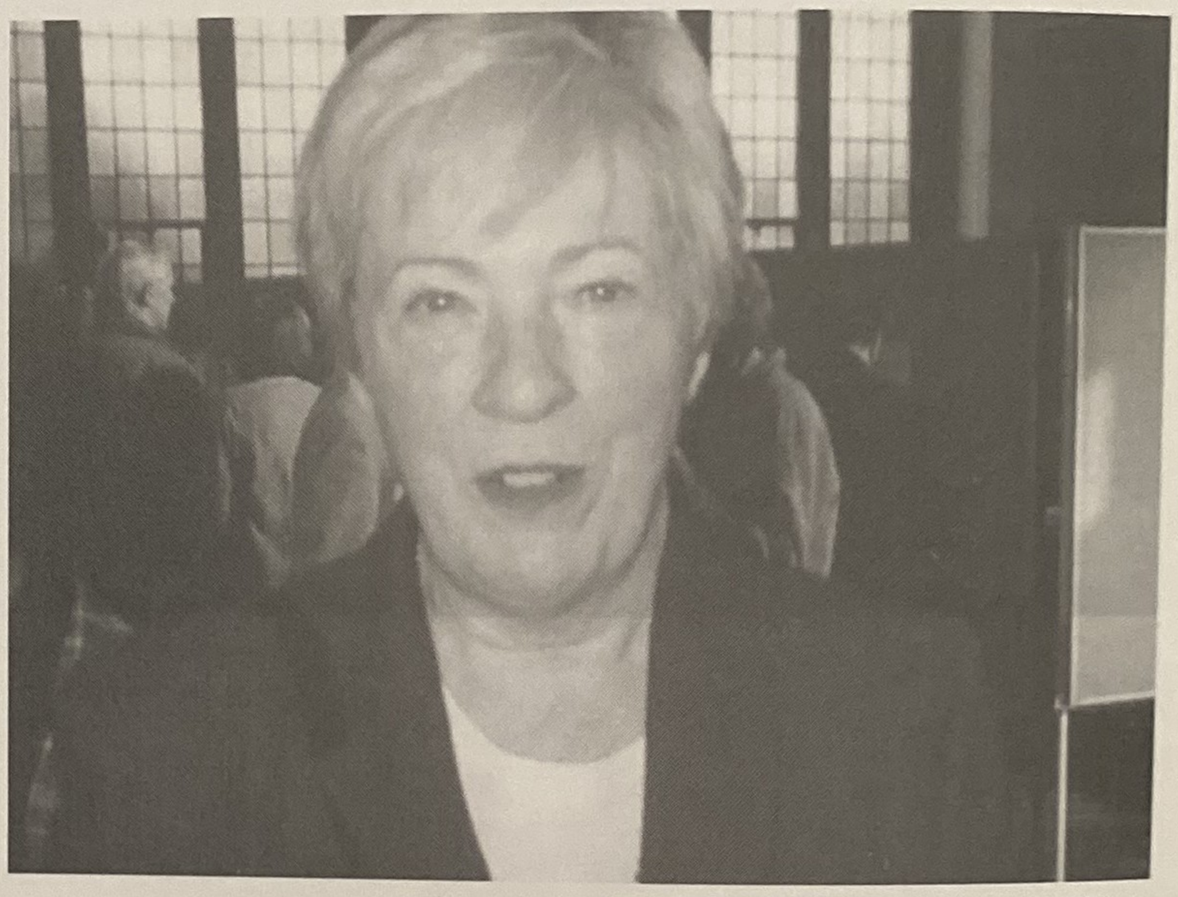
## MISCELLANY

The Trustees have been considering how best to respond to a Friend who enquired about a distance learning course on Greene's works. So far as is known no such course exists and it would be prohibitively expensive for such a course to be commisssioned. It is unlikely that any educational body would be prepared to make the necessary investment unless Greene's works formed part of a recognised course of study. The Trustees decided that probably the best substitute currently in print was Professor Cedric Watts' *A Preface to Greene* published by Pearson Education Ltd under the Longman imprint ISBN 0 582 43769 5 PPR. '

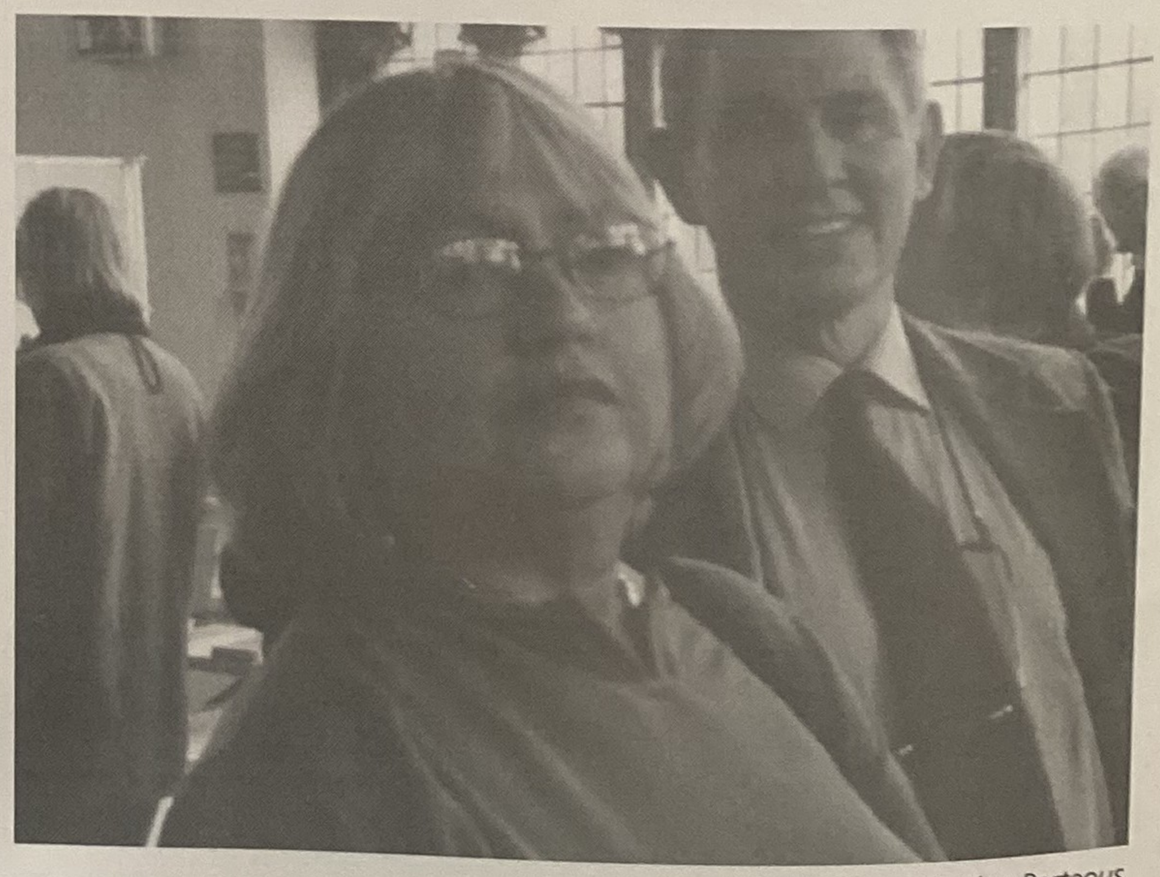
## *Some Festival Reporters*



*John Partridge*



*Anne Vickers*



*Christine Bryon & Alan Porteous*

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