A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Winter 2003 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST £1.50 Free to Friends

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial

Festival Preview
Festival 2003

Awards
Article by Award winner
Lindsey Craig

Review
Carol Reed and Graham Greene

Miscellany

Correspondence

In the Press
Reports and cuttings

The Trust

Crossword

Dates for your diary

6th Festival
Thursday 2 October Sunday 5 October 2003

7th Festival - Centenary
Thursday 30 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

This issue is one with a mixture of features. The crossword I promised, many press cuttings and an award-winning article. Something for everyone, I hope, and I very much hope that you think so too. If you do not, or even if you do, why not write and say so? Is there something you would like to see more or less of? Tell me!

It is very encouraging to see that you are kind enough to send me cuttings from the Press. The ones quoted inside are from several different readers; now you need to work on the Crossword and send me your best attempts at the answers. To coin a cliché, it's not the winning that matters, it's the taking part. Do have a go.

Although October seems a long way off, David Pearce, the Festival Director, has been thinking of it for some time and he already has arranged most of the events for the 6th Festival.

You may know that Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh were very near contemporaries and the Evelyn Waugh Centenary is celebrated immediately before this year's Festival. Please see details below.

Yan Christensen

EVELYN WAUGH CENTENARY
24 27 September 2003, Hertford College, Oxford

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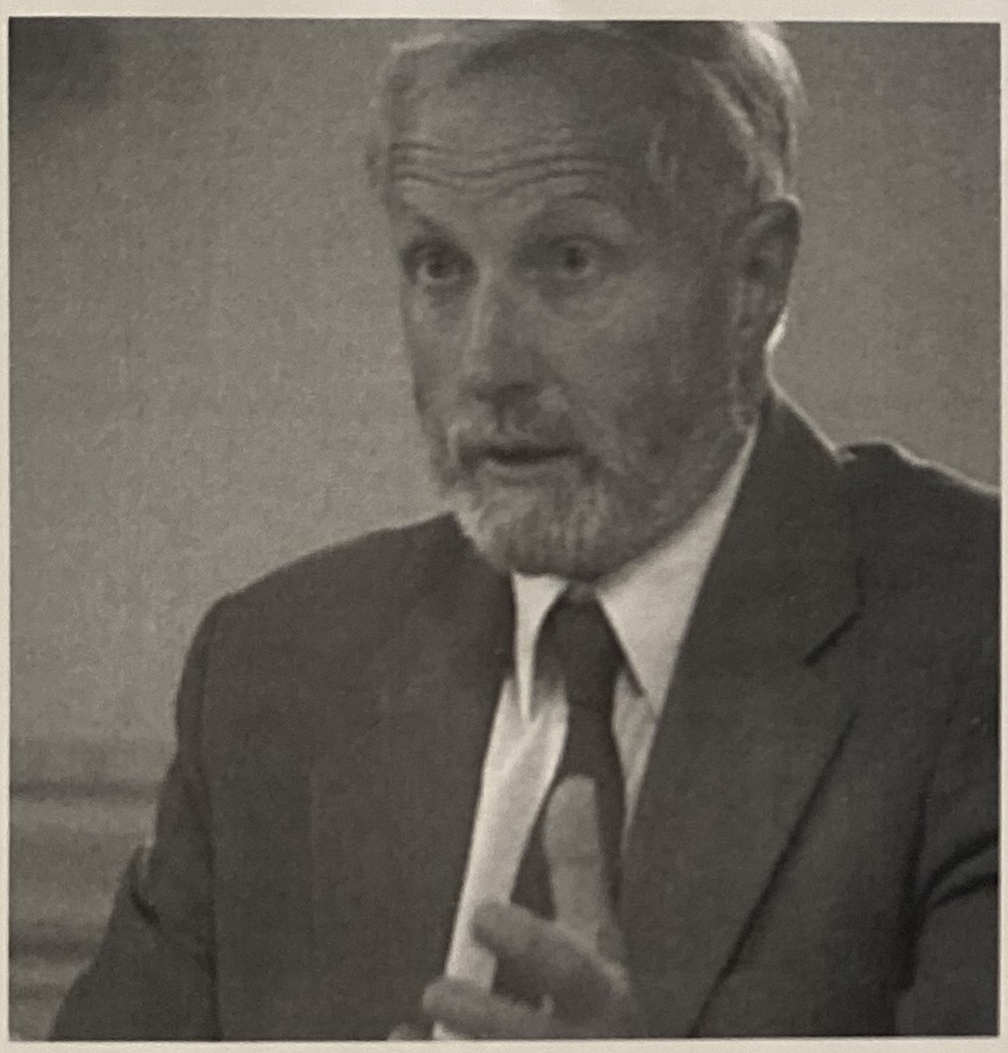
No responsibility will be accepted for any errors or omissions, or comments made by writers or interviewees. Views expressed are not necessarily the views of The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust

FESTIVAL 2003 PREVIEW

David Pearce, the Festival Director, has virtually finalised the programme for the Sixth Graham Greene Festival to be held on 2-5 October 2003.

There will be the usual exciting mixture of films and talks; we shall see *Monsignor Quixote*, the film, as well as films of some of the short stories. Christopher Neame, the producer of *Monsignor Quixote* will be one of the speakers. We shall meet Tom Hill; he is the editor of *Religious Perceptions*, reviewed in an earlier issue.
There will be other learned and interesting speakers; of special interest Father Roderick Strange who spoke at Graham Greene's memorial service in 1991. Not least, there will of course be the opportunity to meet old friends. More details in future issues.



David Pearce

REVIEW

The Trust has acquired a biography of Carol Reed by Nicholas Wapshott. It contains numerous references to Graham Greene and John Partridge has kindly read it and extracted some of the information that includes Reed's collaboration with Graham Greene

'None have been more co-operative and encouraging than Graham Greene' writes Nicholas Wapshott in the acknowledgements of his biography of Carol Reed - *The Man Between* (published in 1990 by Chatto & Windus, 376 pp) Graham Greene might have said that of Carol Reed.

Three films marked the peak of Reed's career as a Director - *Odd Man Out* (1946), *The Fallen Idol* (1947) and *The Third Man* (1948) the last two being by Graham Greene. Perhaps understandably he never achieved this peak again. In 1958 he directed *Our Man in Havana* but to mixed reviews.

Greene and Reed first encountered each other in the mid-thirties as film critic and director. Greene spotted the talent of Reed in his first film *Midshipman Easy* (1936) and later in *The Stars Look Down* (1940). In 1947, Alexander Korda introduced Reed to Greene with the proposal that they should make a film of *The Basement Room* (to become *The Fallen Idol*). A good working relationship developed. The result for Greene was that the films made with Reed were closest to his intentions.

As *The Fallen Idol* was nearing completion, Korda suggested to Greene a film set in post-war Vienna. He travelled to Vienna looking for a story and was not inspired until he was shown the sewers. He wrote the story in Ravello and Capri and returned to London to show Reed. As before, they worked effectively and harmoniously on the screenplay of *The Third Man*. The result was one of the great screen classics. However one of the best lines in the film was *ad libbed* by Orson Welles "In Switzerland they had brotherly love, five hundred years of democracy and peace, and what did they produce? The cuckoo clock" Greene's novel was not published until 1950.

Despite an outstanding cast, the team of Reed and Greene did not achieve with the 'entertainment' *Our Man in Havana* their previous acclaim. Reed was deeply disappointed with the reviews. "At least they can't read" he said to Guinness as a crocodile of children walked past.

Both men were obsessive about their craft. Both paid the price in their personal lives.

John Partridge

AWARD REPORT

The Graham Greene Memorial Award is made from time to time to applicants who satisfy the Awards Committee that their proposed project would have met with Greene's approval. Lindsey Craig was one of the three successful applicants who received an award in 2001 to help finance a 'gap-year' visit to India.



Lindsey Craig

'It's India!'
India is like no other country I have ever experienced; as often said, it is a land of contrasts: the immensely wealthy to the heartbreakingly poor, from staggering mountains and exquisite beaches to the deprivation of the slums.

From the outset I was trying to understand how this country of one billion people worked. I had the privilege of working for four and a half months at Deep Griha, a slum organisation in Pune, (four hours south-east of Bombay), and through this getting to know individuals on a more intimate level. Whilst travelling for a month and a half, I experienced a very different India. I saw the natural beauty of the country and also witnessed how rural families lived, yet it was a far harsher India. At every train station there would be rickshaw drivers badgering you for a deal, or beggars with maimed children. Everywhere you turned someone was trying to sell you something and in an economy where you have to barter for every item, naïve foreigners often walk away feeling ripped off.

So it was during my time in Pune that I really valued getting 'under the skin' of the country. My head was buzzing with questions. What does the average person do? What are their views on the marriage system? What is their biggest worry? What are their hopes for their children? Although it became very clear that India, with her one million languages, cannot be put into a box. I do feel that I have started along the path of understanding at least how slum life in Pune works.

Surprisingly I was not shocked by the difficult living conditions. In fact it was not until about three months into the project that I found what I was experiencing was particularly hard to deal with. On the outside the slum is a happy, vibrant place full of chattering people and kids playing. One is aware of how tough a life it is, but the harshest thing, I believe, is that they are largely trapped in the slum area and they never get to see the beauty of their own country. They will never experience the deserts of Rajastan or the long golden beaches of Goa, the wild tigers in their extensive national parks or the magnificent Himalayas in the north.

However, this goes far deeper than simply geography. It is in their outlook. It is almost impossible for a child to grow up to be a doctor or an engineer from this community. Reasons for this range from unsatisfactory education, lack of funding for resources, parents seeing education as pointless, thus placing a lot of pressure on their children to drop out of school to find work. Girls have arranged marriages when they are young and are then under the command of their mother-in-law who often treats them like a slave. It is very dangerous to upset your mother-in-law. While I was there it was not uncommon to hear of

'suicides' - the reality being that the mother-in-law had wrapped the girl in a blanket, drenched her in paraffin and the husband had lit the match.

What really struck me was the lack of freedom to be or become who you want to be and the ability to live the life you want to live. I started asking the question 'why are these people trapped into this lifestyle?' The answers are multiple but one key is the trappings of social structure. People have lived in the slums for generations and it becomes the norm. It is very difficult for a person from the slums to get a job above labourer or rickshaw driver, the opportunities are just not there. So their sights are lowered and the cycle continues on to the next generation.

But there is hope. One boy found by the Deep Griha Society on the streets at the age of ten had never been to school. They started educating him in their drop-out classes, then he moved into mainstream school and he is now studying at university. His success will also filter down, opening the eyes of younger people as to what their potential is. Slowly, I did see signs of this. In the oldest class I was teaching, all the boys had big dreams of being lawyers, doctors and engineers. My prayer is that there are the right opportunities allowing their potential to be fulfilled. One morning whilst I was preparing for a hobbies class I was teaching in the afternoon, there were lots of kids ranging from about six to sixteen years running around and generally being mischievous. I gave them paper and pencils and they eagerly started drawing. Many drew with a lot less maturity than their UK counterparts through lack of art classes, but one boy of about fourteen years still stands out. He had drawn a portrait of a famous body builder to a standard similar to the best artists on the streets of Paris. Although overwhelmingly impressed by this immense natural talent (he will have had very little artistic training) I was also deeply saddened that this boy would never be able to see or realise his full potential. In the UK he would have been pushed through art school and given every opportunity; maybe he would not be good enough to go professional, but maybe he would, the world will never know.

So what have I learnt? What was it all for? I believe a key thing is to look deeply into situations truly to discover the reality. It is also to appreciate every opportunity one is given and to make the most of it. Whenever we can, we should support and encourage others to fulfil their potential, whether it is in this country or in the developing world. Everyone can make a difference; how much depends on us.

I am very grateful for the generosity of the Graham Greene Birthplace Trust who helped support my trip to India.

Lindsey Craig

MISCELLANY

The Secretary gets a number of odd queries all of which he seeks to answer. Recently he was asked by a teacher in Germany, 'Who wrote the verse quoted towards the end of *The Quiet American'*. After some research he was able to respond that it was A H Clough (1819-1861). It is a comic poem of 12 verses each with the refrain

'So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho
So pleasant it is to have money'

Ken Sherwood delved a bit further and could tell the teacher that Clough had been at Baliol College, Oxford where Greene later read English, and that Clough's father had been a bankrupt, something that may account for the writer's interest in money.

★ ★ ★

At a recent auction at Bonhams in London's Bond Street there was offered for sale a *secretaire* the provenance of which was described as follows:

'Benjamin Buck Greene (1808-1902) co-owner of Buck and Greene's Brewery and Director and Governor of the Bank of England. Henry Greene MP (1843-1915), Benjamin's son. Charles Henry Greene, Henry's first cousin, Headmaster of Berkhamsted School. While in his possession his son, the novelist Graham Greene, wrote part of his first published novel, *The Man Within,* sitting at the *secretaire*. Alice Marion Walker (nee Greene, Henry's daughter). Janet Landau (Alice's daughter). Thence to the present owner.

★ ★ ★

The Reading Circle

As usual the year's reading list has been decided in advance. This year we are reading the following:-

It's a Battlefield, The Tenth Man, Ways of Escape by Graham Greene

Staying on - Paul Scott

Rabbit Run - John Updike

Age of Innocence - Edith Wharton

The Mandelbaum Gate - Muriel Spark

Brideshead Revisited - Evelyn Waugh

The Cancer Ward - A Solzhenitsin

We end the year with a play reading - which Greene play has not been decided yet.

★ ★ ★

Obituary

Max Reinhardt, described as publisher and friend of Graham Greene, died in November 2002. He had been the owner of the well known publishing house, Bodley Head, which flourished under his leadership, and where Graham Greene was a director for several years. Its stable included many famous authors such as Greene, Charles Chaplin, Eric Ambler, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Muriel Spark and Alistair Cooke. From 1987 he established Reinhardt Books which he ran until 1998. Greene followed Reinhardt, and his last novel *The Captain and the Enemy* was the first to be published under the new imprint. Reinhardt with his charm and courtesy was a well-known figure in the publishing world where he continued to be active until five years ago when he was already in his 80s.

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

When reading the last issue of *A Sort of Newsletter* I was struck by the comments interspersed in the film review. I was at the showing of the recent version of *The Quiet American* and as the audience left I heard several less than positive, or downright negative comments, yet they were not represented in the selected quotes. I therefore wonder whether that was a deliberate omission, and if so why.

Sushila Kandan

Editor's comment: No, not deliberate. We received a great many written comments after the film and it was not possible to use them all. A large majority were positive, but it is true some were not. One simply said "Brendan Fraser too fat; Michael Caine too old"!

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 case of the more exotic languages would be appreciated.

THE QUIET AMERICAN

This film was the occasion for a huge amount of press attention and not only by film critics. We bring brief mentions of some of the matters that we have come across, in some instances with your help - many thanks.

In November the *Front Row* programme on Radio 4 had a discussion of the film; Philip Noyce, the director and Christopher Hampton the scriptwriter took part. Among the comments were: 'dripping with atmosphere' and 'too full of guilt, so hard to adapt'.

A local paper, *The Leighton Buzzard Observer*, included the film in its listings and described it thus: 'A British opium addict, resentful of American colonialism in southeast Asia in the 1950s, vies against a young American for the affections of a Vietnamese beauty'!

Fortunately the national press took the film more seriously.

The Sunday Times concentrated on Michael Caine's voiciferous attempt to have the film shown early to give him a chance of an Oscar nomination.

The Guardian in a long article on Graham Greene had looked at declassified FBI files that show officials went to great lengths to compile Greene reports.

The Evening Standard's film critic discussed the film's political impact at this time. He was very complimentary about Caine's performance. The expression 'on the shelf for 12 months' elicited a reader's letter from Philip Noyce to the effect that the final, edited version was not ready until six months after its first showing to Miramax.

The Times did its former sub-editor proud with at least three articles. One by the film critic who clearly liked the film. Another on the politics of releasing a film that could be seen as anti-American, as well as Michael Caine's part in the publicity. Finally a long article with several photographs about the filming of Greene novels generally. In the listings for the London Film

Festival the film was described as a 'gripping premonition of the horrors to come'

What's On, Liverpool had a brief and not very positive review.

The Daily Telegraph carried a long article by Michael Shelden, a Greene biographer, who referred to the film as 'a timely tale - for Vietnam read Iraq'. Greene was deported from Puerto Rico and found the episode exciting and completely absurd, and his supposed anti-Americanism is still making news. One of Greene's supporters was ex-president Jimmy Carter who wrote a critical letter to Michael Shelden after his less than adoring biography of Greene.

The Regus London Film Festival listings suggest that Caine based the Fowler character partly on Graham Greene, whom he had met several times.

The Independent Review said that Caine 'seems limited in his emotional range'.

The film has now also achieved limited release in USA where *The Washington Post* described Caine as 'compellingly watchable'.

The New York Review of Books carried a long article well worth reading. It discusses the film at length and compares it with the 1957 version. In addition it brings in some of Greene's novels as well as earlier films based on them.

The Washington Post considers Michael Caine's one of the best performances of the year.

In fact we are told that the film has had lots of publicity and in Washington there was scrambling for seats as it only opened in two cinemas. On one occasion a film goer (instantly dubbed 'the noisy American') revolted and thwarted the management's attempt to save four prime seats for VIPs at the Cineplex Odeon Outer Circle.

The Washington Post further published on 28 February 2003 an article by a veteran reporter, H D S Greenway, who was a Saigon correspondent for *The Post* during the Vietnam War. He discusses the novel, which he has read five or six times over the years, and says that at the height of the American war in Vietnam it seemed as if they were living through the consequences of a Pyle-like mentality. Greenway tells us that 'Pyles' were everywhere in Vietnam portraying 'rosy pictures' that the news reporters could never see on the ground.
Fifty years later the inevitable parallel is drawn with the present situation in the Middle East, and Greenway concludes with the words '... if only there were a few more Fowlers to remind us that there are lots of people around the world who don't want us always telling them what they want'.

Of particular interest is an article in *The Hindustan Times* of 17 October 2002 by a Friend of the Trust Debanjan Chakrabarti, who is a Felix Scholar at Reading University, studying his PhD on Graham Greene's work as a journalist and film script writer.

The article starts 'It seems America will never suceed in exorcising the ghost of *The Quiet American*.' The novel has, the author says, achieved iconic status as an anti-imperial text, and he refers to the recent film as a brutally honest adaptation. He goes on to discuss the timing of the film and its delayed release caused by the heightened sensitivites in the wake of the 11 September 2001 bombing.

Chakrabarti considers the film a tribute to the novel and feels it will gag much academic criticism that tends to compare film adaptations with their literary originals. The bombings, seen as the climax of the film, invite comparisons with other war films, and the image of Pyle's bloodsplattered shoes will stay in the memory.



The Old Cinema in Berkhamsted. Now the site of Tesco supermarket

The author comments that subsequent research, notably by Norman Sherry, suggests that Greene's judgement was coloured by his anti-Americanism and American support of General Thé may not have been very strong. But it is suggested in the article that Philip Noyce's film could be read as a

classic Hollywood conspiracy theory tale turned on its head.

The parallel with the current Iraq crisis is hinted at, but fortunately Chakrabarti's tentative prophesy that American reactions to the film will mean it will be 'entombed in the cans' is not being fulfilled.
An interesting article well worthy of a Greene scholar.

OTHER PRESS CUTTINGS

On 9 February 2003 *The South Bank Show* presented by Melvin Bragg featured the well-known writer Hanif Kureishi who in an interview said that he was heavily influenced by Graham Greene, and if he had not read Greene he might not have become a writer. A speaker for a future Festival?

Catholic Life is a fairly recent publication established a couple of years ago. In the February 2003 issue it carried an article about Graham Greene. Naturally the article concentrates on his conversion and the 'Catholic' novels, but does also set out various details of his life, in fact it is in the nature of a potted biography. It mentions Greene's friendship with Waugh of whom he said 'I was very close to Evelyn Waugh, whose Catholicism was so orthodox that it clashed with mine'. The article concludes with the words 'the accepted wisdom regarding this rather controversial and somewhat unconventional Catholic, is that he would have never written the books he did had he not embraced the Faith'.

THE TRUST

The National Sound Archive has advised the Trust to transfer its audio recordings onto compact discs in order to preserve the archive of festival presentations. As a by-product of this exercise, copies of the CDs will in due course be availabe for purchase, provided the participants agree, at a price of £5 plus postage. At present only one is available Nigel Lewis' interview with the artist Paul Hogarth at the 1998 Festival.

Ken Sherwood

Publications

The following publications are available from the Trust secretary:

Occasional Papers @ £2.50

- Inaugural Lecture - Bill West
- Graham Greene and the Berkhamsted Connection
  John Davison
- The Comic Sense of Graham Greene
  Neil Sinyard
- Darkest Greeneland: Brighton Rock
  Cedric Watts
- The Craft of Graham Greene
  Neil Sinyard
- Graham Greene and Pathos
  Martin Corner
- The Long Wait for Aunt Augusta
  Judith Adamson
- A Burnt-out Case
  an Autobiographical Suicide - Rudolf van Dalm

Videos: 1998 Festival - £8
1999 Festival - £10

CDs:

- The Voice of Graham Greene £10.
- Paul Hogarth at the 1998 Festival £5

Please add postage to all orders (UK 27p; Overseas £1).

Subscriptions: From June 2003 subscription fees will be very slightly increased as follows:

UK £8 for per annum, £20 for three years

Rest of Europe: £11 per annum or £27 for three years

Elsewhere: £15 per annum or £40 for three years.

CROSS WORD

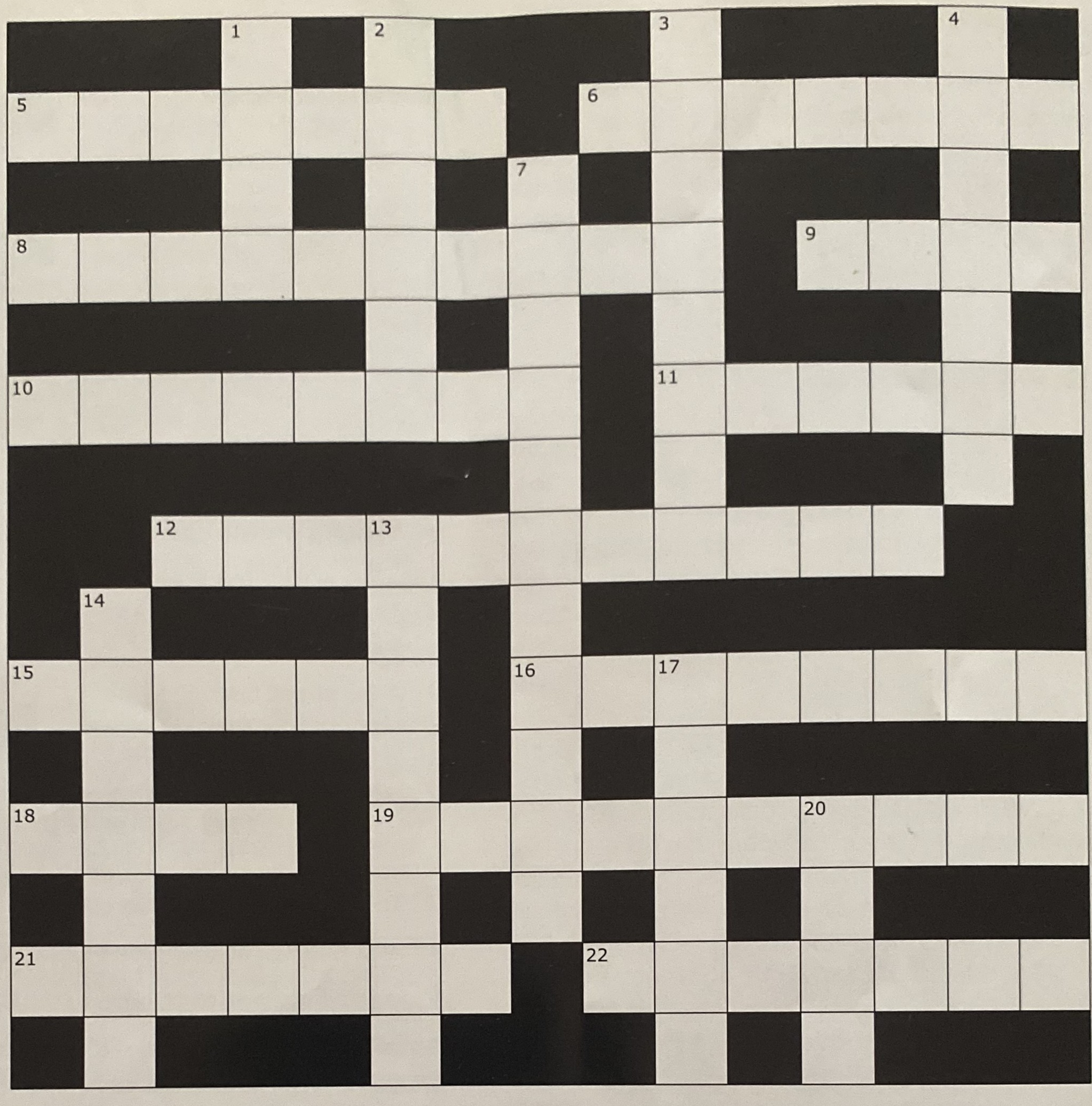
For the first time we bring you a Crossword puzzle. It is the work of Friend of the Trust, Roger Smith, who devised it especially to go with all the news of the new film. Do bear that in mind as you read the clues!

Although we hope for lots of correct solutions there is only one prize, namely a framed print by Catherine Rendón, a speaker at an earlier Festival. Correct solutions will be put in the Editor's hat and the winner drawn from it.

Answers by 25 April 2003, please, to

The Editor, 9 Briar Way, Berkhamsted HP4 2JJ, UK.

The Quiet American



ACROSS

5. Underworld amusement - fireworks on Chinese New Year for example (7)
6. Don't hit on man, one sister of Phuong (4,3)
8. Regret Tom and I not at street where bomb exploded (3,7)
9. Sixteen to the power of ten - lot, we hear (4)
10. See 16
11. Leading lady, we hear you in top Hong Kong milkbar (6)
12. European hotel? (11)
15. Thomas was striker in Liverpool (6)
16. and 10. General P Yankee (3,5,8)
18. Idealistic American author's first name is Duke as well (4)
19. Firm love stage time cut short for practitioner of eastern religion (10)
21. Troubled man I vet in a state (7)
22. Getting to know Thé ? (7)

DOWN

1. Oriental short film? No, very long! (4)
2. Cramp acid in diolactic plastic (6)
3. Do it to trapdoor to enter watchtower - elevator free (4,4)
4. Lien - the fresh policy of the third force? (3,4)
7. Saigon and Hanoi were, then weren't, now are again but one's different (2,3,6)
13. Go to set of arms - what Fowler was ultimately to Pyle (8)
14. Call to action I forgot in a crisis (2,3,2)
17. In French colony, the first person be the Spanish hard case (6)
20. Pyle's Duke and other domestic creatures are up to the pace (4)

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We are very gratefully to Jenny Thomas for permission to use her original drawings.
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