A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Spring 2004 | THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST | £1.50 Free to Friends

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WEB SITE

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

www.grahamgreenebt.org

Editorial

Excitement is mounting here in Berkhamsted. We have already had a very successful Spring Event and we are now concentrating on making the Centenary Festival the best ever.

Those of you who have been involved in organising such events will realise the amount of sheer hard work that goes into it - and this one will be very special, so David Pearce, the Festival Director, and Ken Sherwood, the Secretary, are putting heart and soul into making sure all goes according to plan.

The Centenary Exhibition is being organised by new Trustee John Partridge; he is giving a great deal of his time to this project which involves coordinating and collaborating with a number of people and organisations. I have no doubt that the result will be worthwhile.

In addition, former Trustee Lindy Foster Weinreb, who works professionally in PR, offered to undertake the publicity for the Festival. There is no truth in the rumour that I twisted her arm! The first press releases have gone out and there have already been positive initial responses.

So many people give of their time to the Trust and it is impossible to mention them all here and now. As a first this issue brings an interview with a very good friend of the Trust. As he is such a nice person as well, I chose Neil Sinyard as my first victim. I hope to bring more interviews with people close to the Trust. If you have anyone in mind that you would like to know more about, do send me your suggestions.

Yan Christensen

Newslettereditor@grahamgreenebt.org

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

PREVIEW

In the last issue you were told of some of the exciting events that will be part of the Centenary Festival. There are two new items on the programme: *The Tablet* is sponsoring a debate on Greene's catholicism; the panel will be chaired by Mark Lawson and further details of panellists should be in the full programme which will be sent during the summer. Some of you will recall an earlier Festival where Greene's religion was discussed and you will know what a rich subject it is for a discussion that will no doubt include audience participation.

The other event, which we are very pleased to announce, is a talk by Greene's official biographer, Norman Sherry. He will speak on Wednesday afternoon before the early supper that traditionally starts the Festival. By October it is hoped that the third volume of Sherry's biography will be available and we are able to reveal that the first two volumes will now be in paperback; if you are there you may be able to get the author's signature in your copy.

One event is entirely new this year, namely a production of *Travels With My Aunt* by the local Ad Hoc Theatre Company. There will be opportunity during the Festival for you to see it and you should certainly make sure you go to the Pendley Theatre for this delightful performance, which runs from 29 Sept - 1 Oct.

There will also be a concert of music on a Greene theme in Berkhamsted on the Sunday before the actual Festival. Ideal start for local Friends or for those wanting to enjoy a week's holiday in the Chilterns.

All in all this will be a Festival not to be missed. Look out for your copy of the brochure setting out the entire programme, and be sure to book early.

OTHER EVENTS

The City of Bradford has The Third Man exhibition 7 Aug - 19 Sept and a Greene film season during July - September with Quentin Falk lecturing on 19 September.

The National Film Theatre, London, has a Greene season during July with a talk by Norman Sherry on 10 July.

REVIEWS

Spring Event 2004

Each year the Alliance of Literary Societies holds its AGM in April or May and selects a member society to host the event. This year The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust was host, and we were particularly pleased to welcome the new ALS President, Aeronwy Thomas. We took the opportunity to show the delegates something of what the Trust is about. Our secretary, Ken Sherwood, had organised a full programme that started on Saturday morning with a talk by Roger Watkins who delighted the audience with his interesting *Introduction to Graham Greene*. After lunch we heard David Pearce on the Greenes of Berkhamsted, a talk that neatly combined subject and venue. After a film Neil Sinyard spoke about his new book, reviewed below.

Everyone went to a post-prandial performance of *May I Suggest.* a dramatisation of Greene's letters to the press. This was directed and in part performed by David Pearce whose very active participation did much to make the weekend such a success.

On Sunday morning there was a tour of the School and a walk around the Graham Greene Trail; this was followed by one more film and the farewell lunch. It was a very enjoyable weekend. You will find a letter of appreciation in the Correspondence Column.

Graham Greene: *A Literary Life*

By Neil Sinyard

(Basingstoke and New York:
Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 170. £14.99

This is a fresh and useful book, written with all the clarity and depth of knowledge that those who have heard Neil Sinyard speak at the Graham Greene Festivals would expect. It successfully tackles a difficult problem: how, in a series entitled 'Literary Lives,' to present Greene succinctly and without getting embedded in the tangled biographical arguments that so fill the Greene landscape. Wisely, Sinyard chooses to adopt an oblique approach: to allow the life to emerge through a series of perspectives - authorial motivation, literary context, working methods, relations with the cinema, comedy, personal relationships - so that it gradually forms

before us. Along the way, these dimensions of Greene's creative life are brought into focus and patterns begin to emerge.

The fresh perspective for a literary life is Greene's long-sustained relationship with film, and here Sinyard's encyclopaedic knowledge of the medium provides a rich support for the discussion of Greene's filmic activity in its many forms. Beside the bibliography there is a richly annotated filmography that gives a full and informative account of films made from or around Greene's writing. Those who might be inclined to feel that this approach inverts the balance of Greene's achievement should recall that Greene's career coincided with what was, perhaps, the richest period of Western cinema, the half-century from the introduction of sound in the late 1920s; and that he is a writer who, rather than having a side-interest in film, wrote out of an age in which that medium, popularly, was dominant. His is fiction of the film age as surely as Defoe's is fiction of an age of pamphleteering and Eliot's of the age of the circulating library.

Though this is the bias of the book - perhaps pushed a little far in the slightly digressive chapter on Greene and Hitchcock - the writing is not neglected, and the major themes in the writing, though not systematically engaged, nevertheless emerge and are given their place. This is probably the best approach for a younger generation who cannot be presumed to share the religious or political concerns of Greene's earlier readers, but who may find him more accessible in his relation to a culture increasingly visual. It is also valuable for older readers to be reminded that Greene is great enough to be read in different ways, from a variety of entry points, by different generations.

Sinyard notes that Greene has slipped from university syllabuses (to the extent that he was ever on them); this is in part because the provinciality of contemporaneity operates on the assumption that he writes about dead issues only - Catholic guilt, sexual fidelity and betrayal. This book makes it clear that the Greenean issues are not dead, but it does so by setting them in a contemporary frame and in intimate relation to what is shown to be an extending, not a limiting, other medium. Sinyard includes a comment from Leonard Bernstein which is perhaps the key to what he is attempting himself: "the best way to 'know' a thing is in the context of another discipline" (p. 107).
Certainly this book will provide many readers with a new way of getting to know Greene.

Martin Corner
Kingston University

MISCELLANY

INTERVIEW with Neil Sinyard

Neil Sinyard is a great friend of the Trust; he is very knowledgeable on matters literary and cinematic with a "history" that includes being film critic on *The Daily Telegraph* and Head of English at Hull University, where he is currently Reader in Film Studies. He has recently published his 21st book. The first 20 reflected his great interest in and love of the cinema; so does the latest, but the title is *Graham Greene - a Literary Life*, and the book is a specialised biography of a writer with a considerable cinematic connection. It is reviewed above.

Meanwhile Neil has been in Berkhamsted to talk about his book to those who attended the Spring Event, and we took the opportunity to interview him.

Ed. What first interested you in Graham Greene?

NS. I remember reading *Our Man in Havana* whilst still at school and found it quite exciting.

Ed. Did you come to GG through books or films?

NS. Hard to say - I think both together. Certainly I saw *Our Man in Havana* as a film about the same time I read the book, and I know I saw the film of *England Made Me* long before I read it.

Ed. What made you want to add another to the numerous books and articles about GG?

NS. I was asked! The background is that I was a Ph.D. co-examiner with Richard Dutton who was the editor of the Macmillan series of *Literary Lives*; he was aware of some of my books on the cinema and asked whether I would write a 'life' of Graham Greene.

The initial proposal was back in 1996 but I did not really start the book until a couple of years later. It took a long time as I wanted to re-read and evaluate Greene's works and I was also working on other books in between.

Ed. Can we assume you have read everything by Graham Greene?

NS. Yes, I think so. I remember some things better than others of course!

Ed. Are there other authors so strongly associated with the cinema?

NS. Other major writers have had a strong connection with the cinema, but Greene is unique in the extent of this association. For example he was this country's first important film critic, and he was a scriptwriter as well as a novelist most of whose work was made into film.

Ed. For you - what next?

NS. Books on two favourite film directors of mine, Richard Lester and William Wyler.

When asked to name his favourite Greene novel, Neil was unable to confine himself to one as you will see

NS. In chronological order: *England Made Me, The Quiet American, Our Man in Havana, A Burnt Out Case, The Honorary Consul, The Human Factor.*

Ed. Have you favourite novels of other authors?

NS. Oh yes, among the classics they would include *Great Expectations, Jude the Obscure, Crime and Punishment, Portrait of a Lady, Daniel Deronda.*

Ed. Do you get time to read for pleasure?

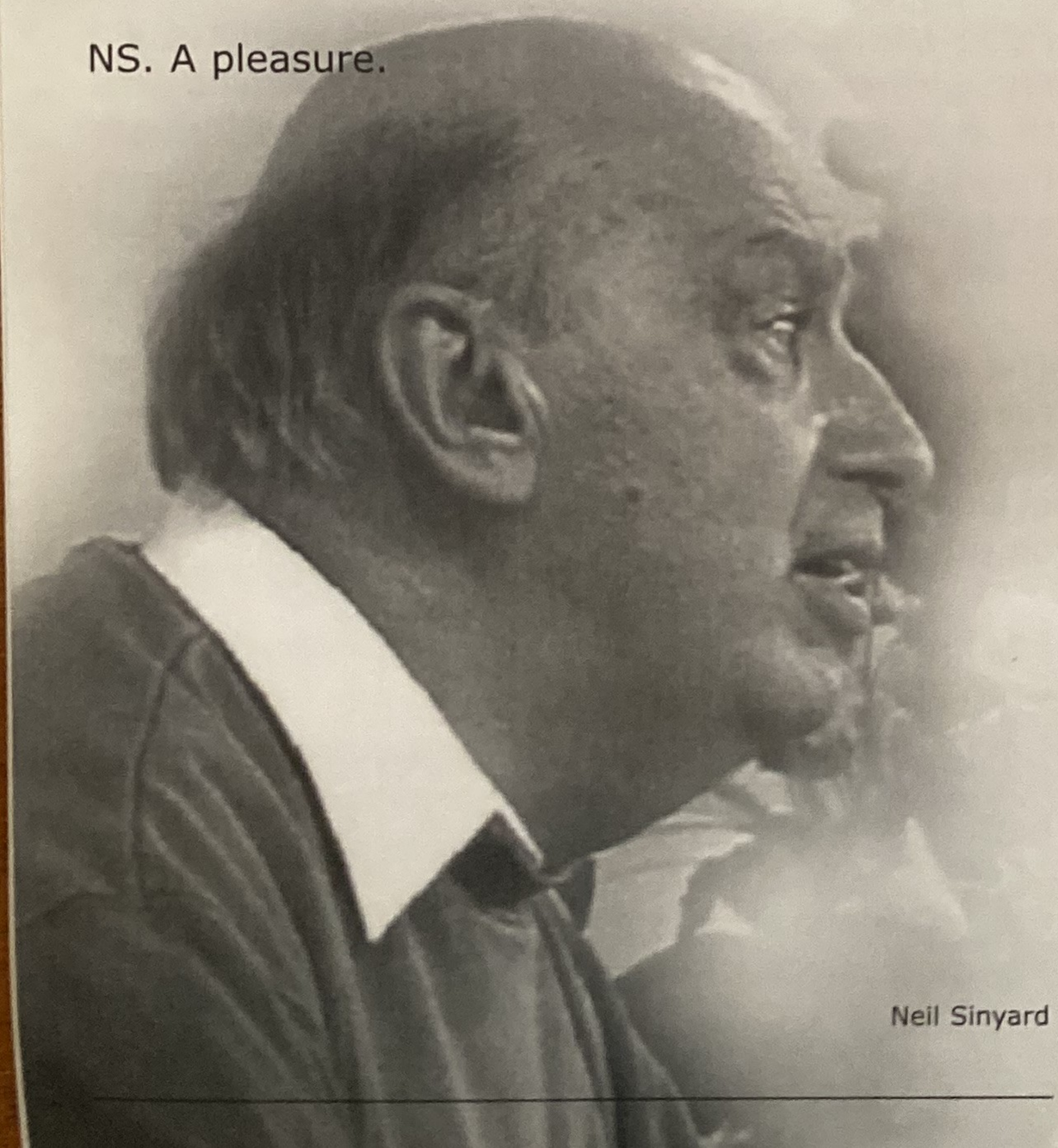
NS. Yes, I enjoy books by Jonathan Coe, le Carré and Ruth Rendell. I also read a lot of biographies on film and music.

Ed. If there is another book on the horizon, I hope you will not desert the Graham Greene Birthplace Trust

NS. No, I promise not to!

Ed. Many thanks for your time and patience.

NS. A pleasure.



Neil Sinyard

The World of Graham Greene According to O'Prey

Philip Stratford, in his *Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac,* claims that Graham Greene 'can accurately be described as a novelist who is continually rewriting the same novel'. Michael Shelden, for his part, rather condescendingly remarks in *Graham Greene: The Man Within* that 'All he [Greene] could do was repackage old themes in duller hues'. On reading Paul O'Prey's *A Reader's Guide to Graham Greene* the other day, I found myself wondering whether the author had inadvertently unearthed the material needed either to take the edge off those arguments or to knock the bottom out of them once and for all. It so happens that what O'Prey does is give brief extracts of Greene's novels and additionally indicate the various themes, motives, characteristics etc. he can make out. He also demonstrates - and that is of greater importance to the matter in hand - when and where Greene had already applied them in more than one earlier works. As O'Prey's book was published in 1988 it had not been possible for him to include an analysis of *The Captain and the Enemy* which appeared in the same year.

O'Prey's findings reveal that there are at least 95 different aspects/characteristics/motifs/themes (for the sake of convenience jointly referred to as elements) Greene uses in his novels, to which one had to add four more that are to be found in *The Captain and the Enemy*. Close investigation has shown that these 99 elements are used by Greene in his books in varying combinations, and he takes care that almost every novel contains one or more new elements. What does strike one is that, starting with *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), quite often just one new element is added to a varying number of familiar ones. There are at least seven novels in which such is the case. However two more novels are virtually devoid of any new element, viz. *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* and *Monsignor Quixote*. It is probably this fact that has enticed Stratford and Shelden to their rash statements. It seems that they have jumped to conclusions. But on the other hand, they were right to the extent that there are indeed at least three elements in the works of Graham Greene that are recurrent in his oeuvre of novels. First, there is the underlying message, running like a thread through all of the novels under discussion, that 'in the end we will be judged on love'. Despite the often seemingly depressing representation of the various characters that inhabit Greene's works it does seem that he can actually be regarded as a writer with a positive attitude. Secondly, in all of his novels 'there is always an intrusion of

adventure on normality', this with the exception of *Doctor Fischer of Geneva*. For that reason Greene may consequently, and safely, be regarded as a writer of novels of limited adventure. Thirdly, it appears from his novels that 'the individual always declares itself', no matter what the consequences are. Greene obviously placed great value on the moral strength of the individual when facing the odds, which in itself again speaks in favour of the author.

Additionally, my investigation has offered ample opportunity for making some interesting observations concerning the popularity some of Greene's novels enjoy. It appears that the more (new) elements Greene used in a novel the greater its appeal was. A very good example is *The Power and the Glory* with 49 used elements, 13 of them being newly applied. This compared favourably with, for instance, *The Honorary Consul*, which also has 49 used elements but with only one new element among them. Another facet also becomes noticeable. When the proportion of new elements in a novel is great in comparison to the ones already used, the novel is experienced as being different, more interesting. Examples of this are *Stamboul Train* with 11 new elements out of 16 and *Brighton Rock* with 17 newly used elements out of 36. Another observation may be revealing. *The Heart of the Matter* shows a total of 40 applied elements, of which only one can be called new. Perhaps this is the reason why Greene regarded it as a 'great vulgar success'.

One other observation is worthwhile paying attention to. It is almost symbolic that in his very last novel, *The Captain and the Enemy,* Graham Greene falls back on quite a lot of elements from his very first book. There are at least 10 out of 14 elements from *The Man Within* to be found in it. One cannot help getting the impression that, by doing so, the writer had come full circle: there is a returning to the womb (Berkhamsted), just as if the author knew that *The Captain and the Enemy* was to be his last novel.

Rudolf E. van Dalm

Notes:

Philip Stratford - *Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac.* Notre Dame, Indiana, USA. U of Notre Dame P, 1963, p.11.

Michael Shelden - *Graham Greene: The Man Within.* Heinemann, London. 1994. p.483.

Paul O'Prey - *A Reader's Guide to Graham Greene.* Thames and Hudson, London. 1988.

Greene and Capri

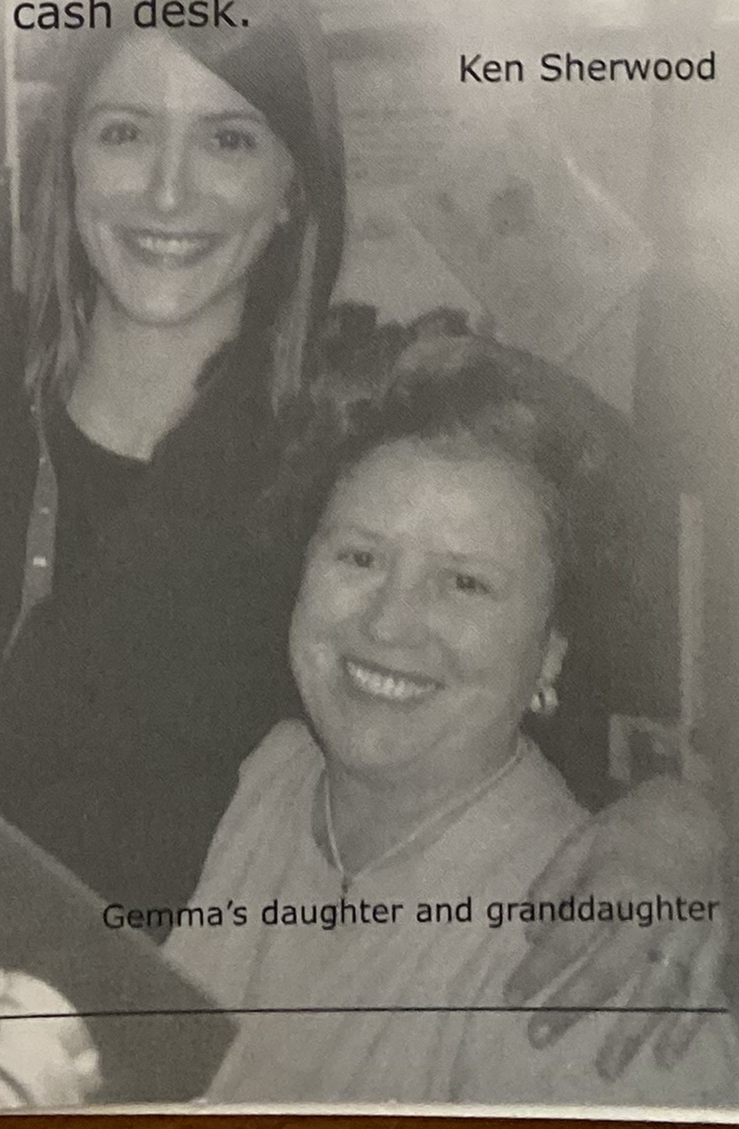
Last October my wife, Jenny, and I went on an art tour of the Bay of Naples. The tour included a day on Capri with lunch at Gemma's, Graham Greene's favourite restaurant. He usually visited the island twice each year over a period of more than forty years. According to Shirley Hazzard in her book *Greene on Capri*, the staff at Gemma's knew him as 'Signor Grin'.

On arrival on the island our party was taken by minibus to Anacapri in the upper part of the island where Greene had his villa, *Il Rosaio*. Unfortunately, we were unable to find the villa. We did however locate the baroque church of San Michele where he chose to receive the award of honorary citizen of Anacapri in 1978. The church is now visited mainly because of its unusual floor, an 18th Century representation of the Garden of Eden. Gemma's is situated in Capri Town, which is on the hill immediately above the harbour. The restaurant is approached along an enclosed alleyway and has marvellous views over the Bay of Naples. Gemma had started the restaurant in the 1930s. Graham Greene first visited Capri in 1948. When Gemma died in 1984 Greene, himself nearly 80, walked in her funeral procession.

He was still remembered by many of the waiters and also by Gemma's daughter and granddaughter, who now run the restaurant. They pointed out to me his favourite corner table. They were all delighted to receive a Graham Greene Birthplace Trust bookmark.

Like many restaurants in Capri, Gemma's is organised so as to provide lunches to the island's day tourists. It would seem that Greene, like many other temporary residents, chose to hibernate during this daily invasion, only venturing out for dinner in the evening when peace had returned. Graham Greene's photograph, along with those of other well-known temporary residents, is pasted on the wall by the cash desk.

Ken Sherwood



Gemma's daughter and granddaughter

QUIZ ANSWERS

Once again you have impressed me and delighted Mike Hill, who set the Quiz. There were several entries with every answer correct and others that came close - in fact no-one had less than 28 correct. That is extremely good, but should not discourage others from trying next time.

The name drawn out of the hat is Jon Wise of Gravesend, who collected the IOU for his Festival Season Ticket at the Spring Event in April.

THE GRAHAM GREENE QUIZ 2004 : ANSWERS

1. 2 October 1904
2. His father, Charles Henry Greene
3. H. Rider Haggard
4. The Communist Party
5. 1926
6. 'There's another man within me that's angry with me'
7. *Stamboul Train*
8. *The Bear Fell Free*
9. *Spectator*
10. *Brighton Rock*
11. *The Power and the Glory*
12. Fritz Lang
13. *The Little Train*
14. *The End of the Affair*
15. *The Blue Film*
16. *Loser Takes All*
17. *The Potting Shed*
18. *A Burnt-Out Case*
19. *The Comedians*
20. *The Soupsweet Lane*
21. *Travels With My Aunt*
22. *England Made Me*
23. *The Honorary Consul*
24. In a public house behind St. James's Street
25. *The Bomb Party*
26. Louis Chavel
27. *The Last Word*
28. Judith Adamson
29. Ralph Fiennes
30. Gloria Emerson

Start reading now to prepare yourself for next year's Quiz!

An Exhibition

We have been asked to include the following information about an interesting exhibition starting just after the Centenary Festival. If you have the time, it sounds worth going to Texas for this - as well as all the other attractions of the State.

The Ransom Center Galleries at The University of Texas at Austin will host the exhibition "Writing among the Ruins: Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh" from October 5, 2004, through March 20, 2005. The Center owns extensive archives relating to both novelists.

Born within a year of each other, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh were both Catholic converts who were deeply engaged in the life of their time. The sometimes complex relationship between the novelists will be traced in examples of their mutual correspondence and inscriptions in books. Manuscripts of their principal works (the Ransom Center owns holographs of all of Waugh's novels except one), correspondence, and personal effects will be featured. The Greene archive includes the revised holograph manuscript of *The Power and the Glory* and more than 750 letters from Greene to Vivien. In addition, the exhibition incorporates the desk, books, and some of the paintings from Waugh's library, the contents of which are now at the Ransom Center. The Center's galleries are open from Tuesday through Sunday, except for major holidays. Consult the Ransom Center web page at www.hrc.utexas.edu or call +(512) 471-8944 for updated information on the exhibition.

A Conference

As you, the readers, must be presumed to have literary interests we are pleased to tell you about *Arnold Bennett - New Perspectives* a conference at Staffordshire University on 12 June 2004. Application to Lennie Ashewell
e-mail: l.ashwell@staffs.ac.uk

STOP PRESS

The Madrid conference, Following in the Steps of *Monsignor Quixote*, took place at the end of May and we hope to bring a report of it in the next issue.

A Book

There is an active and enterprising interest in Japan in the writings of Graham Greene, and a book will be published in Tokyo (in Japanese) to honour the Centenary. It is entitled: *The Literary Dictionary of Graham Greene,* and it is edited by Dr Kazumi Yamagata, who is Emeritus Professor at Tsurumi University, and has two previous books on Greene to his name. He was prevented by illness from speaking at our Festival in 2002. Masaya Iwasaki, who is a Friend of the Trust, is another contributor, and he has, this year, published his own book on Greene; it relates to a metaphorical understanding of 'the green baize door'. Five other scholars have helped with The Literary Dictionary.

The book has articles on all the novels, on key concepts in Greene's writing, on the significance of Berkhamsted, and on various members of the Greene family.

It is good to realise that our celebration of Graham Greene here in Berkhamsted is being matched around the world.

David R.A. Pearce

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.

Ken Sherwood was the organiser of the Spring Event and he received the following letter of appreciation. Ken works especially hard for the Trust and it is only right that everyone should know about it.

Dear Ken

I just wanted to write and thank you for the wonderful weekend we all had last Saturday/Sunday. I know how terribly hard these things are to organise, and the point of their being well organised is that nobody notices. But I do!

When I tell people that I attended three lectures, two films, one play and two walks in two days - plus lunches/dinners/coffees/teas - they think I must be exhausted. Well, I am a bit, but happily so, it was all so interesting. But I reckon you and David Pearce and everyone else deserve a fortnight on a beach in the Bahamas to get your strengths back!

Anyway, all I can say is thank you - it was really great!

With very best wishes
Sincerely

Frances Allwright
Member of The Dubliners Literary Circle

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.

Last year the Trust participated in an internet auction for a copy of the September 1971 edition of *Esquire* magazine which contained an article by Graham Greene, entitled *The Greenes of Berkhamsted*. The Trust was outbid. The article is more than likely extracts from *A Sort of Life* which was published in 1971, but has anybody read the article? If so, please tell us about it.

Still on the internet: A listing of *99 Novels: The Best in English Since 1939*, selected by Anthony Burgess features Graham Greene twice. In 1940 with *The Power and the Glory* - together with *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway, and *Strangers and Brothers* by C. P Snow.
Greene is mentioned again for 1948 with *The Heart of the Matter* together with *Ape and Essence* by Aldous Huxley, *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer and *No Highway* by Nevil Shute.

It is an eclectic list - have a look at http://mason-west.com/MasterWorks/burgess.php

Reviews of Yvonne Cloetta's book have appeared in a number of papers; in fact *The Sunday Times* had a major article in the 21 March 2004 issue and

an extract from the book on 28 March. The article reprints a large section of the book, the chapter dealing with Greene's friendship with Kim Philby. The later extract concerns the lovers' meeting and the time Greene took Yvonne Cloetta to a brothel in Paris.

Some reviews have not been particularly flattering to the book, which consists of conversations between Yvonne Cloetta and Greene's French literary agent Marie-Françoise Allain. Our own review will be in a forthcoming issue.

NEWS OF FRIENDS

We are always happy to bring news of Speakers and other Friends and we especially want to mention any books or articles they have written. In the case of books about Graham Greene we want to review as many as we can.

In the Review section you will find details of Neil Sinyard's book *Graham Greene - A Literary Life.*

We hope shortly to bring reviews of Yvonne Cloetta's book, *In Search of a Beginning - My Life with Graham Greene,* as well as *Cinema's Strangest Moments* by Quentin Falk

In addition we have heard of the following:-

Judith Adamson - *Love Letters: Leonard Woolf and Trekkie Ritchie Parsons 1941-1968.*
Judith Adamson is currently working on a book about Max Reinhardt, Greene's publisher.

Monsignor Roderick Strange - *The Risk of Discipleship*

We can also reveal that the first two volumes of Norman Sherry's biography will be published in paperback at the same time as the long-awaited Volume 3.

Our active and loyal Friend Rudolf van Dalm has prepared a Dictionary of Quotations from Graham Greene; at present there are no definite plans for publication but as it is likely to be an excellent tool for scholars it is hoped that it will eventually appear.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2004
Centenary Exhibition:
Monday 27 September - Saturday 2 October

Centenary Festival:
Wednesday 29 September - Sunday 3 October

Festival 2005
Thursday 29 September to Sunday 2 October

Festival 2006
Thursday 28 September to Sunday 1 October

Festival 2007
Thursday 27 September to Sunday 30 September

THE TRUST

Tom Dobbyn has now retired as Trustee but has offered to help from time to time. We are happy to record our thanks for all his past efforts and express our hope that we shall still see him from time to time.

In his place we were fortunate that John Partridge accepted election to become a Trustee. He lives in Berkhamsted and is a founding member of the Reading Circle; he has now been thrown in at the deep end by taking on the organisation of the Centenary Exhibition.

We are also pleased to announce that at a recent Trust meeting it was unanimously decided to elect Mike Hill (he of the Quiz) future Festival Director.

David Pearce had previously decided that this year's Centenary Festival would be his last. Thanks for all his work were recorded - inadequate as all such expressions are, this time they did voice our heartfelt appreciation.

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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