A Sort of NEWSLETTER

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

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Saturday 2 Oct 2004

7th Festival – Centenary
Sunday 26 September –
Sunday 3 October 2004

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28 Sept – 1 Oct 2006
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WEB SITE

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

www.grahamgreenebt.org

Editorial

It's nearly here – the Centenary Festival. You have booked, haven't you? Many have and for some events it is well to be in good time – just in case…

Tickets for the Saturday Supper are actually sold out.

It is the biggest Festival yet, and we think the programme does justice to the occasion. There are films, talks, social events, a concert, a theatrical production and a unique Exhibition. We are proud to be able to welcome members of Graham Greene's family, including his niece Louise Dennys who will be speaking on Saturday evening; scholars such as professors Sherry, Adamson, Watts and Lodge; writers, critics and journalists including Sir John Mortimer, Neil Sinyard, Quentin Falk, Brigitte Timmermann and Alexander Kulpok.

The Tablet, the Catholic paper, is sponsoring a panel discussion whose members will include Mark Lawson and A.N. Wilson.

In fact I have not mentioned everyone – you will want to consult the Festival Brochure for further details and make your choices – you may even want it all and season tickets are available up to 15 September from the Secretary, Ken Sherwood, at the Trust office – address on back page.

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

REVIEWS

In Search of a Beginning: My Life with Graham Greene by Yvonne Cloetta.
Bloomsbury. 209pp. £16.99
The Third Man by Rob White.
BFI Classics. 87pp. £8.99
Cinema's Strangest Moments by Quentin Falk.
Robson. 325pp. £8.99

There are some biographies that proudly claim to be a 'warts and all' portrait of their subject, but Yvonne Cloetta's memoir of Greene is a love song without warts. Sympathetically interrogated by Marie-Françoise Allain (who published a fine book-length interview with Greene, *The Other Man*, some twenty years ago), she explains what it was she loved about Greene over their thirty years of companionship, thus giving a different perspective on familiar material, such as the traumas of his school experience and his political sympathies. She draws an intriguing sketch of a man whom she saw raging on behalf of friends, melancholy about those people to whom he had caused suffering, almost involuntarily affecting a mask of either boredom or amusement, and whose somewhat intimidating demeanour was possibly a defence against shyness. There is some fascinating gossip about literary rivalries. She notes how wounded Greene was by the disparaging description of him as a '30s writer' by John Le Carré. (One might set against that a recent comment by John Carey about the new Man Booker prize designed to reward writers whose take on the world is original and not like anyone else's – like Dickens in the nineteenth century, he suggested, and Graham Greene in the twentieth. Greene would have loved that). Whilst rhapsodising over his nobility and integrity, she notes a self-torment which she could never fully penetrate and which may indeed have been necessary to Greene as a stimulus for working. 'I was never able to reconcile him to himself,' she admits. 'But that would have been an impossible mission.'

Some readers might find the portrait idealised but part of the reason for that seems to be an intention to act as a corrective to biographies that are biased the other way, notably Michael Shelden's, which she describes as a 'grotesque and obscene mockery'. Citing Martin Stannard, she avers that, whilst it is permissible for a biography to be a narrative, it is not permissible for it to be a fantasy. Her memoir strives for honesty but makes no pretence at objectivity. In the introduction, Marie-Françoise Allain describes it as an 'expression of ultimate love, unadorned and authentic' and that seems fair. Deeply felt and moving, this book is another precious piece to add to, and have an important place in, the personality puzzle that was Graham Greene.

Rob White's book about The Third Man is a volume from the British Film Institute's series on classics of the cinema and is targeted towards film fans more than Greene scholars. A lot of the background on the making of the film has already been covered in Charles Drazin's book *In Search of The Third Man* (see below). Nevertheless there are some valuable insights on Greene's contribution to the film, particularly on the literary and Biblical allusions in the screenplay and on the character of Holly Martins, a morally hollow man who is shrewdly seen as an anticipation of Pyle in *The Quiet American*.

One thing not mentioned in White's book is that a fire in the editing room almost led to the film's being lost. This little nugget of information is contained in Quentin Falk's latest book *Cinema's Strangest Moments* which relates, to quote the book's subtitle, 'extraordinary but true tales from the history of film.' As would be expected from a critic who has written one of the best books on Greene *(Travels in Greeneland)* and is known to Festival goers for his illuminating film introductions and fearless interviews, he has some choice anecdotes about the making of Greene adaptations such as *Brighton Rock* and *Our Man in Havana*. He also explains the tantalising reference Greene made in his famously hostile review of *Twenty One Days* (which he himself had scripted) to a 'story involving a theme song, a bottle of whisky and camels in Wales', which Greene thought far more interesting than the actual film. My favourite tale, though, concerned the outrageously drunken behaviour of the cast during the making of Stanley Kramer's medical drama, *Not as a Stranger*. This reached a peak when

Broderick Crawford, needled once too often about his weight by Frank Sinatra, tore off the crooner's hairpiece, proceeded to eat it and then started to choke: he was only saved by being induced to vomit it out by the film's quick-thinking medical adviser. Not even Greene's saga of scotch, songs and camels can quite match the drama of a movie temporarily grinding to a halt because of the near-fatal consumption of Frank Sinatra's wig by an enraged co-star.

Neil Sinyard

The Catholic Revival in English Literature, 1845-1961 by Ian Ker.
Gracewing. 231pp. £14.99

In his introduction Ian Ker quotes an essay of John Henry Newman in which Newman argues that English literature (he meant post-medieval literature) is essentially Protestant and that there is nothing that Catholics can do about the situation. As a challenge to Newman's view Ian Ker looks at six writers all of whom were Catholics – Newman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. This review will focus on the Graham Greene section but certainly all the others are equally worth reading.

Ian Ker distinguishes between writers who happen to be Catholic and Catholic writers. He has selected the six authors listed above whose religion, in his opinion, was central to their work. Graham Greene would have disputed this; he is often quoted as referring to himself as a writer who happened to be a Catholic, not a Catholic writer: 'my professional life and my religion were contained in quite separate compartments and I had no ambition to bring them together'. However Ian Ker argues that Greene's religion became politicized and energised through his experiences in Mexico and that by far his most powerful writing is then seen in the Catholic 'quartet' of novels: *Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter and The End of the Affair* – all novels in which the themes of good and evil, belief and unbelief, loyalty and treachery are vital elements. To use Ian Ker's own words 'he [Greene] was never to write with such power as during the years when his Catholicism was a vibrant force in his life'.

Graham Greene's complex, ambivalent character is captured superbly by Ian Ker. As Greene acknowledged in *A Sort of Life* he was influenced by Robert Browning and if he 'were to choose an epigraph for all the novels I have written it would be from Browning's *Bishop Blougram's Apology:*

> Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things.
> The honest thief, the tender murderer,
> The superstitious atheist...'

Ian Ker acknowledges, too, the great influence of the cinema on Greene and feels that in his most creative period there was an exciting, powerful fusion between his interest in evil, Catholicism, the cinema and the thriller – the 'dangerous edge' between loyalty & disloyalty, fidelity and infidelity.

This is an excellent book and manages the difficult task of bringing together theology and literary criticism and does so in a most accessible way. The section on Graham Greene is thought provoking and shrewdly perceptive, but the other five are equally so.

There is a particularly amusing quotation at the end of the section. In conversation with Evelyn Waugh in 1953, Graham Greene said he was thinking of writing a political novel, 'It will be fun to write about politics for a change and not always about God', but Waugh cautioned against change, 'I wouldn't give up writing about God at this stage if I were you. It would be like P.G. Wodehouse dropping Jeeves halfway through the Wooster series'!

I highly commend this very scholarly but most engaging book.

Anne Vickers

In Search of The Third Man by Charles Drazin.
Methuen 208pp. £9.99

A little late for a full review as this was published four years ago, but with so much focus on The

Third Man at this year's Festival the book is a must. It is a well written and very detailed account of the planning, making and showing of the film with some history of what Drazin calls the 'band-wagon cash-ins' that followed its success. Parallels are drawn with several other works of Greene and there is speculation regarding his knowledge of Philby's activities and use of them as source material. It is known that Greene liked puns on his name and Drazin points out that given his full name of Henry Graham Greene the name Harry Lime may well be one such pun.

It is amusing to learn that the film was initially strongly attacked by Viennese reviewers. Vienna has now taken it to its heart as will be made clear at the exhibition that is part of the Festival. It is hoped that copies of the book will be available at the Festival and the author may be there to sign them, although that is not yet definite.

Der Dritte Mann by Brigitte Timmermann (text) and Frederic Baker (picture editor).
Czernin Verlag. 287pp €49

The book should shortly be available in English, but meanwhile there is much to enjoy even for the non-linguist. It is a very handsome volume, richly illustrated with stills annotated with lines from the film. There is also a wealth of other pictorial material such as photos from the shooting of the film, letters, posters and cartoons; of these the ones from the zither craze are especially amusing.

The text is full of fascinating detail. Before the filming began Greene stayed for a couple of weeks at the famous Sacher Hotel which had already inspired so many writers, but which at the time was forbidden to Austrians. It is clear that at the time Vienna was quintessential 'Greeneland' and the book provides details of the socialising of several of the people working on the film; they certainly enjoyed that aspect of the city they were visiting.

They were strange times; during the subsequent filming in England Wanda Rotha, a Viennese actress, came especially to Shepperton Studios to slap Siegfried Breuer in the face, calling him a Nazi! Politics were never far from the surface, and the author states that several celebrities, including Sir Alexander Korda, had been recruited by the Secret Service during World War II, and the inspiration Greene may have had from that and his knowledge of Kim Philby are discussed.

The book naturally contains much additional information about the Austrian actors that took part; several were not credited but much research has gone into recording their contribution now. One of the letters quoted is from Graham Greene who was asked in 1974 to write a sequel to *The Third Man*. He declined on the grounds that 'too much time has passed'.

Whether your interest is in films, in Graham Greene or in Vienna this is a wonderful book – but its real star is Vienna.

Yan Christensen

MISCELLANY

1904

No reader of this publication can be in any doubt as to the significance of the above year. But there are a number of other centenaries, some being celebrated, some not. The most obvious one is perhaps the birth of Isaac Bashevis Singer who died in 1991 and was therefore an exact contemporary of Graham Greene.

Other notables born in 1904 include the actor John Gielgud, the poet Pablo Neruda, the band leader Glen Miller, and the writers Christopher Isherwood Margery Allingham. It is also the year of of Anton Chekhov's death. In January 1904 British troops under the command of the "Mad Mullah" killed 1000 rebels in Somalia.

On 3 February a tidal wave devastated the Channel coast.

On Merseyside the first electric main line train in the British Isles ran in March from Liverpool to Southport.

In April another record was broken when a train took less than 4½ hours to run non-stop from Plymouth to London. Later that month the Bill allowing peaceful picketing was passed, and the tobacco industry protested against the third increase of tobacco tax.

5 July was the day that saw the composer Edward Elgar knighted. On 12 July a treaty was concluded between Germany and Great Britain to resolve disputes through arbitration. Later that month the foundation stone was laid for the new Anglican cathedral in Liverpool.

To add fuel to that favourite topic of conversation, 28 December 1904 was the date of publication of the first weather forecasts by radio telegraphy! Other odds and ends were that Messrs Rolls and Royce first got together; we had the first conviction based on finger prints; and the Abbey Theatre opened in Dublin on 27 December. Waitrose was established in 1904.

Finally a new play was first performed on 27 December; it had been inspired by the sons of the author's Berkhamsted friends and the title is the answer to one of the questions below.

THE 1904 QUIZ

Once again we have Mike Hill to thank for an interesting quiz. Just have a go; do not be discouraged if you do not know all the answers; even if there is no complete solution, the best will win. And it might be you! The prize is a season ticket to next year's Festival. Please send your answers to Mike Hill whose address appears below.

1. In 1904 a writer was born in Ireland who later became Britain's poet laureate, wrote detective fiction under the pseudonym Nicholas Blake, and was buried in Stinsford churchyard near Thomas Hardy's grave. Who was he?

2. In a novel published in 1904, George Arthur Rose is elected pope; the author was the subject of three essays by Graham Greene. What was the novel, and who was the author?

3. At Christmas 1904, the story of the boy who wouldn't grow up was first performed on stage. What was the title of the story, and who was the author?

4. A Henry James novel – described by Greene as 'exquisite' in an essay in 1934 – was published in 1904. What was its title?

5. Which prize, never won by Greene, was won in 1904 by José Echegaray and Frederic Mistral?

6. In 1904 *Nostromo* was published, written by an author whose influence so distorted Graham Greene's early fiction that Greene vowed never to read any of his novels again. Who was the author of *Nostromo*?

7. In 1904 a famous novelist, who had given up novels for poetry, published the first part of *The Dynasts*, a verse and prose drama about the Napoleonic Wars. Who was the author?

8. *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* was published by which author in 1904?

9. A novel set in 1984, described in a Greene essay in 1944 as a 'prose fantasy' and featuring Auberon Quin as its central character, was published in 1904. What was the novel, and who was the author?

10. In 1904 a prolific writer, editor of *The Dictionary of National Biography* and father of Virginia Woolf, died. Who was he?

Answers by 15 October to:
Mike Hill, The Fairways,
Keighley Road, Denholme,
Bradford BD13 4JT

No Man's Land

We have heard that there were plans to issue a short novel by Graham Greene with the above title. Copyright problems surfaced, but Hesperus Press hopes to publish it in the foreseeable future.

Festival 2004

We regret to have to announce that Ian Ker will not be able to be at the Panel discussion; we shall welcome instead Ian Thomson.

When you come to the Festival be sure to look in the Oxfam shop and the Bookstack for special offers of books by or about Greene.

Greene Centennial in Spain

This conference, held in May in Spain, was the brainchild of Professor Tom Hill who was supported by Dr Ramon Rami Porta and Professor Carlos Villar Flor.

Greene scholars came from far and wide to present papers – many were old friends from our Berkhamsted Festivals. I was pleased to be invited – not as a scholar, but as the Festival Director of the Birthplace Trust - to speak at Madrid University; I spoke about the history and the efforts of the Trust and the individuals who have contributed so much.

Father Leopoldo Duran was there, still charged with his unquenchable spirit, still full of fun, and still giving thanks to God for the gifts of wine and friendship.

David 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.

In connection with the Graham Greene Festival people may be interested to know that apart from *The Third Man* Tour I am also conducting a **special Graham Greene Centenary Tour of Vienna** (2½ hours, August and October: every Thursday 16.00hrs., September by private appointment only). It focuses on the places Graham Greene visited in Vienna, where he made important contacts and which served him as inspirations for *The Third Man*. We finish the tour with a visit to the beautifully refurbished 19th century Josefstadt Theatre, Anna Schmidt's theatre in *The Third Man*, which saw the German language premiere of Greene's drama *The Potting Shed* in 1957 in the presence of the author.

I am very much looking forward to attending the Berkhamsted Festival!

Dr. Brigitte Timmermann - VIENNA WALKS & TALKS OEG
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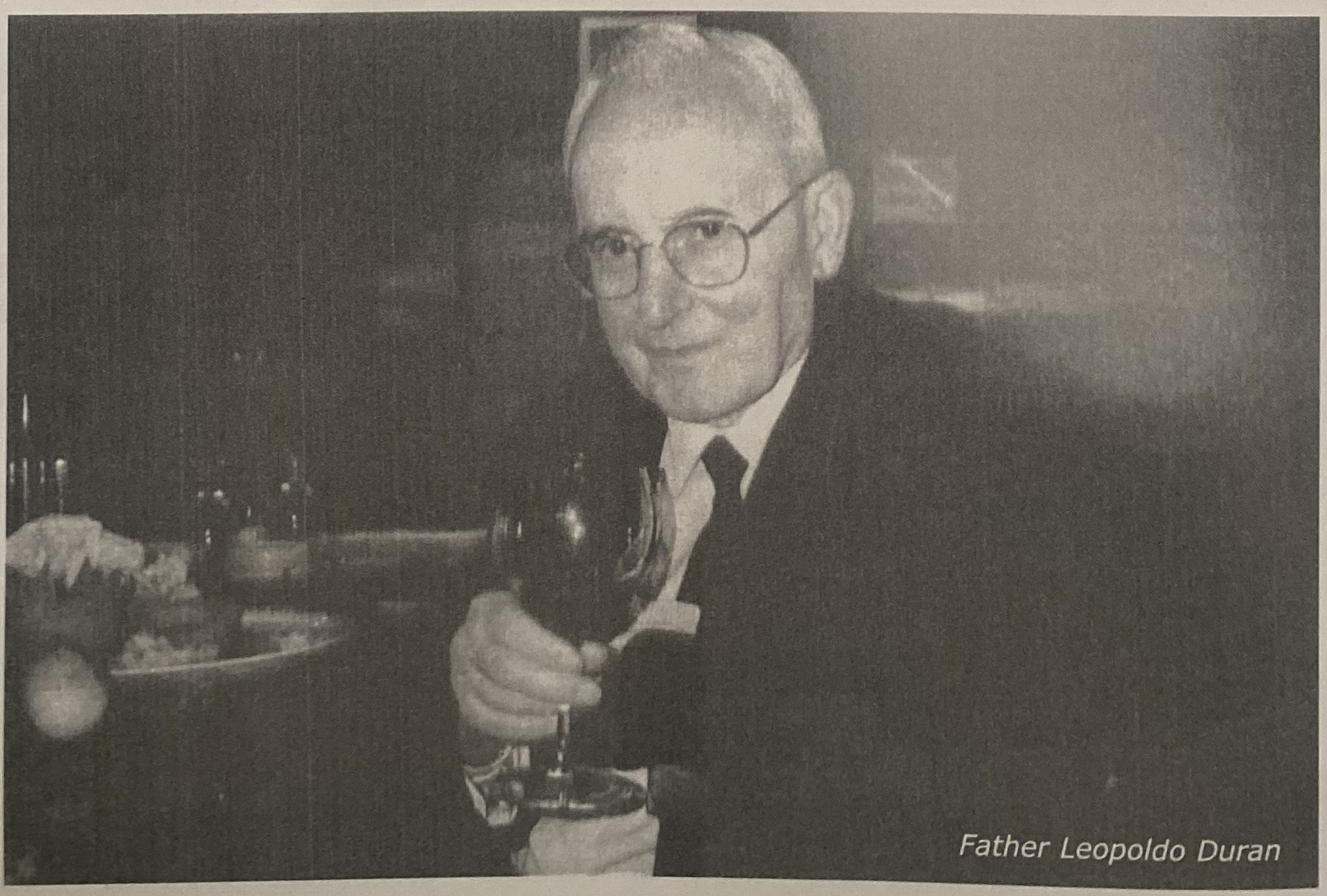

Father Leopoldo Duran

There was a reference in the Spring 2004 *A Sort of Newsletter* to the Madrid Conference - Following in the Steps of Monsignor Quixote. This reminded me of a book, which was published some three years ago, entitled *Don Quixote's Delusions* by Miranda France. It may be well known to many of your readers, but if not I can recommend it as a good, and thought-provoking, read. The author travelled in Castilian Spain in 1989 and again in 1998 with Cervantes providing a link for her experiences and observations. Not surprisingly she remembers Graham Greene's Monsignor Quixote when she comes across the present mayor of Argamasilla having a joke with his friend the priest. The mayor apparently said that he had heard of GG, but admitted that he had not read the book!

Alan Gardner

In response to brochure-mailing the Secretary, Ken Sherwood, received the following from a speaker at an earlier Festival:

Dear Ken

Thank you for the programme for the Centenary Celebration. I do wish I could be there to share in the joy and spirit of this memorable event, and certainly will be present in spirit. My warm congratulations on organizing such a splendid series of events that evoke Graham, the man, and his work in all its variety. Above all, his deep humanity that lives on in the memory of those of us who knew him, and which enriches all those who read his work.

With good wishes, as always.

Maria Couto

In the last issue the article by Rudolf van Dalm was interesting, but I should have liked more examples of the 'elements' referred to. It seems to me that there must be a limited number of such elements used in fiction, and few, if any, can be regarded as new. Life, death, love, grief, faith are all the stuff of novels and without further examples I fail to see how anyone could make a precise count of 'elements', but I admire the attempt.

M. Trellis

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 *Times Online* of 5 July 2004 we learn that Penguin has sold a large number of books from its archives to a dealer in Dallas. The archive contains early editions of i.a. Graham Greene, Agatha Christie and John Steinbeck. 'Half Price Books' has 80 stores across USA and it is thought that a number of publishing gems found their way to its shelves.

By visiting the internet on *http://justgoodcompany.com/2.1_/rami_porta.engtext.htm* you will find an interesting article by our very good Friend, Ramón Rami Porta, who has written a commentary on *Monsignor Quixote* which he calls *The Itinerant Theologian.* The article discusses Greene as well as the novel and no summary could do it justice. Do read it.

Also on the internet is a review of Mike Hill's monograph *Greene and Hitchcock*. It is available from the Trust as an occasional paper and the review is found by looking for webaddress *http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin/publications_c.html*

The Daily Telegraph of 7 June tells the story of early planning for *Brighton Rock* the musical to be shown at the Almeida Theatre. The music is by John Barry who met Greene to discuss the project. Greene wanted to try his hand at lyric writing and Barry had the unenviable job of telling him that was one talent he did not have! At the time the project foundered, but it will now be at the Almeida in London from 20 September – 13 November. The lyrics are by Don Black.

In the *Evening Standard* of 24 May Norman Lebrecht writes about those two exact contemporaries, Graham Greene and Isaac Bashevis Singer, both of whom he met. He draws

interesting comparisons and differences and concludes that both are gifted story tellers.

OTHER CENTENERY EVENTS

The British Library is mounting a Graham Greene exhibition 21 September – 31 October in the Entrance Hall, called *Beyond the Novel*.

The Barbican Cinema, London, has a Graham Greene season 3 – 26 October,

The Red Shift Theatre Company has a touring production of *The Third Man*, adapted by Jonathan Holloway. The Autumn Tour opens 7 October in Greenwich; for full details visit:
www.redshifttheatreco.co.uk

The Third Man Exhibition will be at the Museum of Oxford 9 October – 21 November.

The National Film Theatre, London had a Crime Season in July during which several Greene films were shown, including the best known, *Brighton Rock* and *The Third Man* as well as panel discussions and Frederic Baker's documentary about filming the latter, *Shadowing the Third Man.* It was interesting to see some of the very old films from the 30s and 40s, such as *Ministry of Fear, Orient Express, This Gun for Hire.* Greene is said to have called *Orient Express* the worst film he ever saw, and it is true to say that only the merest story line reminded one of *Stamboul Train.*

Brighton Rock , the musical, will be at the Almeida Theathre 20 September - 13 November.

For further Norman Sherry speaking dates see our website.

APOLOGY

In the last issue we mentioned the exhibition in Bradford (7 Aug – 19 Sept) but failed to mention that it is put on by the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. You are still in time to hear Quentin Falk on 19 September.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death in New York on 3 August 2004 of the writer Gloria Emerson, one of our speakers at an earlier Festival. She had been a Vietnam reporter for the New York Times and was also a published novelist with Loving Graham Greene, a fiction inspired by her correspondence with him. She was suffering from Parkinson's disease

THE TRUST

Self-adhesive book plates are now available for use in your library. They are printed in colour and cost £2 per sheet of 8.

Available from the Trust Office, see address below.



From the painting by Paul Hogarth

Ex Libris

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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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