A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Summer 2005

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

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Web site
Do not forget to visit the web site of the Trust which is on
www.grahamgreenebt.org

Editorial

You should by now have received the Festival Brochure with the details of all the exciting events Mike Hill has organised for us. The Preview on the next page tells you more and I hope you will find it as tempting as we do here. And don't forget the Quiz Evening. You already know how good Mike Hill is at making up questions, and he assures me that anyone who has ever read a book will be able to do a lot of this quiz, so do come to the Quiz evening as well as the rest of the Festival.

When you do, you'll find that the GG world did not come to an end with the Centenary - we shall continue to hold and to develop the annual Festival for many years. We have lots of ideas for future events, but we shall of course also always be pleased to hear of any ideas you have, or your wishes for any particular facets of the fascinating Greene character that you want brought forward or emphasised, whether it relates to books, films or journalism.

Meanwhile the non-summer continues in Berkhamsted and as I shiver through another week it is a great consolation to me that I shall soon be seeing so many of the good friends I have made among you over the years.

Yan Christensen

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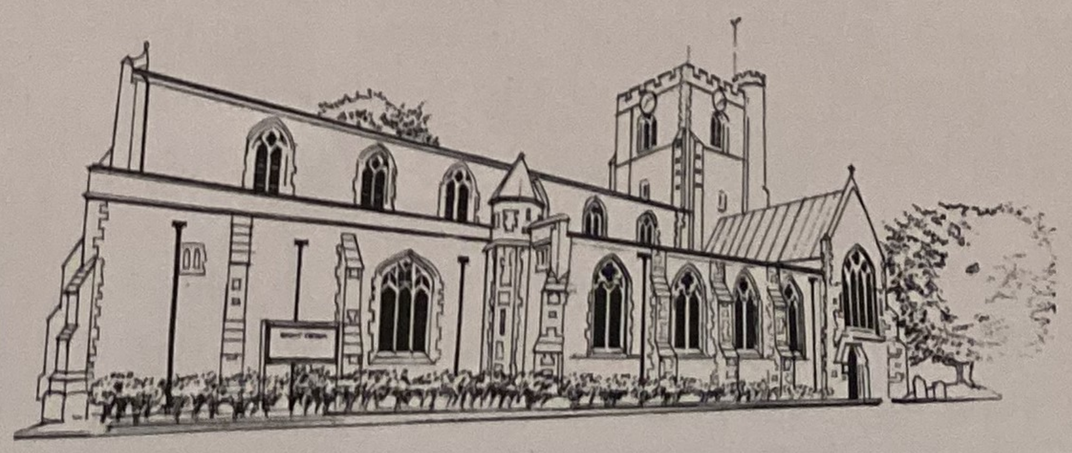
Your comments and letters are always welcome.



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Festival goers 2004 engrossed by Sir John Mortimer's talk

PREVIEW

How do you follow a superb Centenary Festival? With an eighth annual festival, which hopes to demonstrate that interest in Graham Greene is still alive and kicking, and to continue the splendid tradition established by my predecessors, Roger Watkins and David Pearce - a tradition of excellence and of welcoming conviviality.

While the festival will look at Graham Greene the man, the main emphasis will be on his work. I hope what's on offer will be of interest to Greene specialists, to more casual readers and to those who are new to him - this latter category including young readers, whom I hope to attract to a session on *The End of the Affair*. The aim is to have variety, both of format and of content. This year's festival does not have a single theme, but there are strands - including *The Fallen Idol* and the depiction of childhood, Greene and the cinema, the novel *The End of the Affair* - as well as individual items like Greene and journalism.

Our contributors are equally varied. Some will be well-known to festival-goers - Neil Sinyard, Tom Aitken, Quentin Falk, Martin Corner, David Pearce and Rudolf van Dalm. Others we welcome for the first time, both those who knew Graham Greene - Koo Stark, Marie-Françoise Allain, Euan Cameron - and those offering expertise on his work and life - Sir Peter Stothard, Guy Hamilton, John Sutherland, Kate Mosse, Adrian Wootton, Clive Francis and Mark Bryant.

There will be exhibitions at the festival, and a bookstall. Two new 'fringe' elements are also worth mentioning. One is a Pre-Festival Literary Quiz - not on Greene, but the whole range of books, plays and poems - to raise funds for the Berkhamsted Hospice of St Francis. The other is a Prize Draw, with Greene-related prizes, including two A3 colour prints of Graham Greene by Gerald Scarfe, signed by Scarfe.

This year's festival is being sponsored by Ottakar's, and we thank them for their generosity. Thanks, too, are due to *The Tablet* for generously agreeing to fund refreshments, and, as always, to the Principal of Berkhamsted Collegiate School, for allowing us to use the school's facilities.

Full details of all events can be found in the festival brochure. Come and support as many events as you can; see if you can involve some young people; and do give me your comments on this year's festival. I hope and trust we can follow last year's splendid 'Lord Mayor's Show' with something rather better than a horse and cart.

Mike Hill

Festival Director

REVIEWS

VINTAGE CLASSICS CENTENARY EDITION OF GRAHAM GREENE

Many readers will be aware that Graham Greene's books have for the past few years been published in paperback in the UK by Vintage, a division of Random House publishing. As part of the Greene Centenary celebrations, Vintage Classics have published a new edition of many of the novels, with introductions as follows:

Stamboul Train - Christopher Hitchens
Brighton Rock - J.M. Coetzee
The Power and the Glory - John Updike
The Heart of the Matter - James Wood
The End of the Affair - Monica Ali
The Third Man/The Fallen Idol - Ian Thomson
The Quiet American - Zadie Smith
A Burnt-out Case - Giles Foden
The Comedians - Paul Theroux
The Honorary Consul - Nicholas Shakespeare

I understand that the remaining volumes of Greene's fiction are to be 're-jacketed' in the new format in the coming months, but without introductions.

With the exception of John Updike's essay on *The Power and the Glory*, all the introductions are new, having been specially commissioned for this Centenary edition. The writers of the introductions are a very high-powered team, and it would be good to get some of them to speak at future festivals; only one - Ian Thomson, who was part of the Tablet discussion panel last year - has spoken at Berkhamsted before.

The introductions themselves approach the books in differing ways, but all have interesting things to say about Graham Greene and his writing. All of the writers clearly admire Greene, but they are not uncritical - Paul Theroux's account of *The Comedians*, for instance, has much to say that is not congratulatory. My own favourites among the introductions are, in no particular order, those by Zadie Smith, Nicholas Shakespeare and James Wood.

Two complete sets of these ten Vintage Classics Centenary editions will be among the prizes in the Prize Draw at this year's Graham Greene Festival.

Mike Hill

Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination.
Mark Bosco, S.J.

Oxford Univ. Press, 2005. American Academy of Religion, Academy Series. 205 pages. $45.00.

Central to Mark Bosco's excellent study is the notion that the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) altered in critical ways Greene's literary imagination. That is, rather than abandoning Catholicism after *The End of the Affair* as many believe he did, Greene shifted with the prevailing winds of Catholic thought and concern. In Bosco's own words, 'there is an organic growth in his religious imagination that is reflected in his literary artistry as he lived in tension with his Catholic faith in the last half of the twentieth century'.

Since the whole book pivots around this argument, Bosco begins with an examination of the important ways the Church viewed itself before and after the Second Vatican Council. He focuses on five areas which he sees as important. First, he mentions God's manifestation of grace through human relationships as 'possible pathways to the sacred'. Second, he argues that before Vatican II the Church had concentrated on the individual's relationship to God; salvation was perceived as almost exclusively a private affair between man and God. Third is the idea that after Vatican II God's grace is not extended through the sacraments alone but through all members of the Body of Christ. There are other forms of human interaction, therefore, that may be considered sacramental, that is, 'visible signs of God's invisible reality'. Fourth, Vatican II signalled the end of the predominance of the body/soul dualism of human nature. The body and soul are thus consubstantial. St. Paul's struggle with his flesh becomes more realistic in this light, more a part of the spiritual life of every man. And fifth is that through Vatican II the Church has come to re-evaluate its relationship to the outside world. Chapter Two examines Greene's early Catholic influences while he was at Oxford. It also examines Catholic literature before Vatican II and how it had fit into the predominant Catholic world

view. He focuses largely on France where it flourished. He then provides a detailed examination of Greene's pre-Vatican II 'Catholic' works - *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter,* and *The End of the Affair* - in order to show their similarity to the French pre-Vatican II pattern.

For those of us who are not Catholics, Chapter Three is very helpful as an explanation what Vatican II was about and how it influenced Greene through his reading Here Bosco examines what Greene was reading during the latter part of this period with special attention to Edward Schillebeeckx and Hans Küng though he also discusses the importance of Newman, Tielhard de Chardin, Lynch, and von Balthasar at some length. According to Bosco, the former authors, 'provided interpretive lenses that proved important for Greene's continued identity as a Catholic in the last decades of his life'. While the focus of this chapter is more on Vatican II in the light of Schillebeeckx and Küng, the author does include some discussion of Greene novels and plays written from the mid fifties through the sixties.

After all of the preliminary work examining the literature and theology of pre-Vatican II, we finally get to Bosco's focus. That is for Bosco, that Greene's post-Vatican II literature is not post-Christian or post-Catholic. It is simply post-Vatican II and reflects a post-Vatican II consciousness. It is then in Chapter Four where Bosco finally enters the world of Greene's post-Vatican II Catholic imagination. In this chapter he does an in depth examination of *The Honorary Consul* and *The Human Factor*. This Greeneland is a land of greater social commitment. From the whiskey priest to Sarah, Greene's characters must work out their own salvation in fear and trembling. Greene's post-Vatican II world is one in which Father Rivas must reach out to Dr. Plarr and then it is Dr. Plarr, not the priest, who says, 'Ego te absolvo'. Forgiveness and salvation are not separated from lived experience but are worked out through social interaction with the world. A broader social commitment draws the individual out of himself and forces him to see his attachment to other human beings and his responsibility to love them.

Bosco then moves on to an in depth discussion of *Dr. Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party* and *Monsignor Quixote*. In the first novel, a sort of dark morality play, Alfred Jones and Anna-Luise rise above the greed and jealousy of Dr. Fischer in their love for one another and in Jones's refusal to be bought. Doctor Fischer's character allows Greene to examine the nature of God. But for Bosco it is not Dr. Fischer who speaks for Greene but rather Jones who considers Dr. Fischer mad. Dr. Fischer's speculations and conclusions about God are ultimately proven inadequate.

Bosco subtitles the section of Chapter Five on *Monsignor Quixote*, 'The Quixotic Heart of Vatican II Catholicism'. He sees this novel as 'overwhelmingly more Catholic than communist'. This is an important point given those who have tried to turn it into a political statement. After outlining the importance of Unamuno to both the Monsignor and his Sancho, Bosco points out that it is on the common ground of mutual doubt that both men meet. Where the important element of love is shared Sancho moves closer toward his own salvation in the end.

It is in the horizontal realm of love that Greene's post-Vatican II literature is in step with Catholic thinking. Greene had already been moving in this direction in *The End of the Affair* where Sarah's love continues working on Bendrix even after her death. Referring to that marvellous scene at the end of the novel where Monsignor Quixote holds communion for Sancho, Bosco writes:

'Not since *The Power and the Glory* has Greene embodied such a profound sacramental aesthetic, now imbued with a post-Vatican II sensibility. The significance of their love and companionship is fully realised in this moment of touch. Quixote touches God in a supreme act of faith and then becomes the material action of God's touching of Sancho'.

I have some problem with Bosco's reading of *The Human Factor.* I do not see 'the religious undertones of the novel' that he sees. I'm not arguing that there aren't any at all, I just don't see them to the extent that he does. And while I agree that Castle seeks priests to console him, it strikes me as a little bit too much to go the other direction as well and say that 'Catholic images and allusions still inform the reader's understanding of Castle as a priest "without a Church", who in the end offers his peace and comfort on behalf of those threatened in a deadly game of power'. But these are minor quibbles.

The text overall is excellent and well researched.



Graham Greene in Switzerland with his Grandsons Andrew and Johnathan



Graham Greene's grave.

that Greene, thanks to his exceptional intelligence, faced up to death with clarity and serenity. 'He himself appears to feel no particular emotion'. He was clearly at peace with his conscience and longed neither for special friends nor even a priest.

We are told that his last words, before he fell into a coma, were 'I want to go'. He died on 3 April 1991. At the funeral his friend Father Duran quotes from Shakespeare: 'Goodnight, sweet prince, And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest'.

The Quiz ANSWERS

1.	Anne	2.	Bertrand
3.	Castle	4.	D
5.	Elizabeth	6.	Fischer
7.	Granger	8.	Hilfe
9.	Ida	10.	Jim
11.	Kate	12.	Lime
13.	Michel Mangeot	14.	Ninitch
15.	O,Toole	16.	Parkinson
17.	Querry	18.	Rivas
19.	Smith	20.	Tench
21.	Unamuno	22.	Victor
23.	Wormold	24.	X
25.	Yusef	26.	Zancas

This time, what was lacking in quantity was made up by quality. Between all answers there was only one incorrect, so the winner had to be pulled out of a hat. Colin Garrett of Berkhamsted should contact Ken Sherwood for his prize, which is, as announced, a season ticket for this year's Festival.

Congratulations to Colin.

MISCELLANY

You may be interested to learn that Oxford University Department for Continuing Education is featuring a course entitled: *Novelists of the 30s: Waugh, Greene, Isherwood, Bowen.* The course starts on 28 Sept. 2005 & continues over 10 weeks. For further information contact 01865 270360

Those with an interest in more than one art form will want to go to the Bonhams sale on 3 October 2005 which, in the words of the catalogue, offers 'a rare opportunity to acquire literary and artistic portraits' from the Roy Davids Collection. There are nearly 300 portraits - including of course Graham Greene, a photographic portrait by Yousuf Karsh.

To view the catalogue on-line, go to
www.Bonhams.com

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.

I'm sure someone will have noticed this before, but if not, you may be interested in David Lodge's 'tribute' to the influence of Graham Greene in his 'Afterword' on pages 214-215 of *Ginger You're Barmy*.

Incidentally, having endured National Service myself in 1948-49, initially at Catterick, I can fully endorse David Lodge's experience and opinion of it.

Tony Price

In this connection, note also the GG pastiche in David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down*. ed.

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.

It was interesting to note that Ann Gate, Director of Waterfield's Bookshop, wrote an article in *The Tablet* of 18 June 2005 mirroring and expanding John Partridge's feature in the last Newsletter. Gate writes about the inscriptions in the books left by Vivien Greene, and goes on to say more about her and her books; an interesting article full of human interest.

We have received a cutting from Sheila Davies: *The Daily Express* of October 1972 interviewed Maggie Smith briefly about her reading habits at about the time she was filming *Travels with my Aunt.*

The Times of 30 July 2005 carries the obituary of Jocelyn Rickards, the costume designer who was Greene's lover in 1953. She is quoted as saying: 'Greene saw me as a kind of happy savage whom he did not want changed'.

The internet is still verdant. A lot of mentions come from USA, some from India - the Narayan connection - and Australia where Shirley Hazzard has lectured; and *The Vanguard*, Lagos, Nigeria lists GG along with John Galsworthy among the greats that did not get the Nobel Prize for Literature.

A Book Club in Virginia is reading *The Power and the Glory; The Potting Shed* is being performed on Long Island; Philip Caputo's *Acts of Faith* is repeatedly said to be to the era of the Iraq war what GG's *The Quiet American* was to Vietnam.

Shadowing the Third Man has clearly been featured in America and is mentioned in *National Post*, Ontario, *Chicago Tribune* and *Winston Salem Journal*.

Huntsville Times, Huntsville, AL, coins an expression, which I at least had not heard before, Graham Greene-esque.

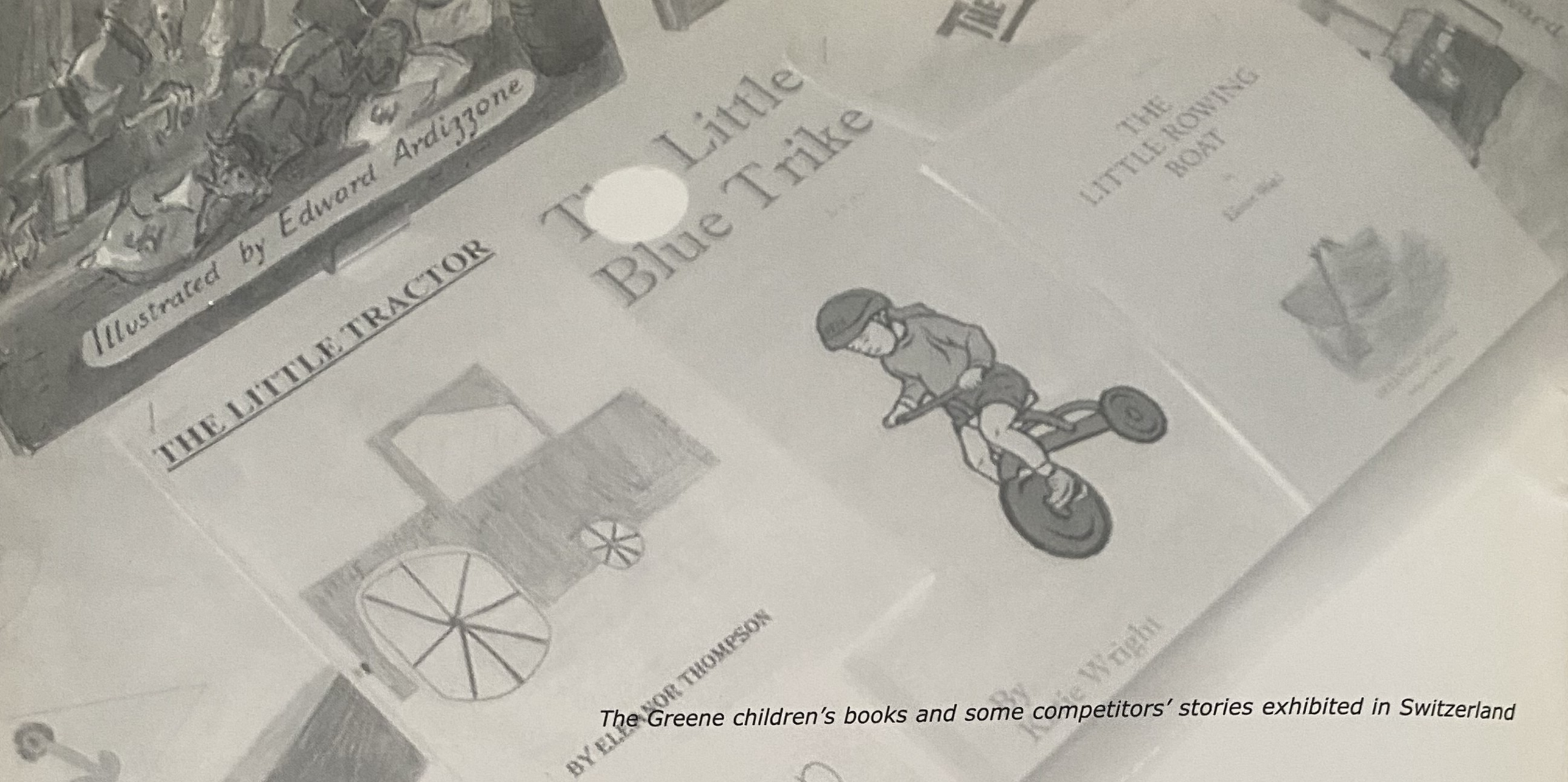
An item about '*Lolita* at 50' brings in the fact that Graham Greene reviewed it and chose it as one of three best novels of the year.

Balliol students in Oxford have formed a Harry Lime Society which carries on a feud with Trinity students; the former recently, in the middle of the night, painted a boathouse green.

The Hampstead and Highgate Express (Ham & High), London reports that the film director Sebastian Godwin is looking to cast identical boy twins for his film version of *The End of the Party*, a GG short story.

In a review in *Politiken Weekly, Copenhagen* of *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini the reviewer is strongly reminded of several Greene novels and their recurring theme of betrayal.

Last but not least, there is the 'house magazine' *Trinity* of Trinity University, Texas, where Norman Sherry has been O.R. Mitchell Distinguished Professor of Literature since 1984. The autumn 2004 issue has Norman Sherry on the cover and a two-page, very complimentary article inside. Obviously the article is linked to the third volume of the Greene Biography last year, but it goes much further about Sherry's literary detection work, his dedication to writing and teaching and the success of the first two volumes - it being then too early to comment much about the latest one, except to say it had some good reviews and the author understood lecture tours in UK and USA. Comments from a recent student speak well indeed of Norman Sherry's teaching skills. He has clearly made his mark on Trinity University as well as on the 'Greene industry'.



The Greene children's books and some competitors' stories exhibited in Switzerland

A STORY

As promised in the last issue we bring here one of the delightful stories written in response to the Graham Greene competition at Greenway School. They are all based on the four children's books that Greene wrote, so all have a similar theme; some are handwritten, some typed, but all are wonderfully illustrated. This is just one example.

WE ALL CAN HELP

BY Alexander Ryan

One day Timmy, a medium sized plane, took half a shop's goods to help the children in the Tsunami.

The big planes all laughed at Timmy saying 'You cannot carry much stuff'. Timmy was a little bit sad but he thought every bit helps.

The planes were all ready. Jumbo was full to the top and Big Henry and Jumbo laughed out loud. 'We will help a whole town' they said.

'You can only help one street' said Jumbo.

'Every bit of help is worth it' said Timmy.

They all started their enjines and taxied to the runway.

STOP! Shouted the controller. 'You cannot go'. Big Henry and Jumbo said 'Why?' The controller said his runway could not take big airplanes, only middle sized ones. They would have to go to another one. Timmy smiled to himself and thought YES. I will be able to take my stuff today to help the children.

He flew over to Phuket, an island in Thailand. Little children came running out to meet him.

Look what I have for you. I have clothes, toys, food and sweets. Help me unload so that I can go back and help Big Henry and Jumbo with their stuff.

When Timmy got back Big Henry and Jumbo were sad. 'I'll help you' said Timmy and they shared out the stuff so that they could all take off together.

Jumbo and Big Henry said sorry for teasing you and all of the big planes said sorry too.

I do not mind, said Timmy, so long as we can help the children.

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