A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2006

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial

Review
The Festival
Book Reviews

Miscellany
Short Stories Wanted

Correspondence
French Conference

In The Press

The Trust
Obituary of Rudolf van Dalm
1926 - 2006

Dates for your Diary
Future Festivals
27 Sept - 30 Sept 2007
2 Oct - 5 Oct 2008

Web site
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Editorial

Another very successful Festival thanks to Mike Hill and all those who help in so many ways. John Partridge organised distribution of the Festival brochures; Colin Garrett dealt with ticket sales; Hazel Ward and Sally Bartlett were at the forefront of the publications sales team. Many others contributed by stewarding, chairing, organising refreshments and in various behind-the-scenes ways. Not to forget the dedicated reporters whose critical efforts are a large part of this issue. The Trust could not exist without all these willing volunteers and we thank them all.

It is still a matter for concern that we have too few subscribers, i.e. those who contribute regularly and receive this Newsletter; but there can be no doubt that the Festival continues to attract people and it is with some pride that we shall celebrate the 10th Festival next year. Put the dates in your diary now!

And there is one important message that I must be sure to get across. To any Radio 4 listeners who have yet to attend one of our Festivals: they bear no resemblance whatsoever to Ed Reardon's description of the Berkhamsted Literary Festival. Yes, we feature Graham Greene but, as for the rest, I think not.

If you don't believe me all you have to do is come to the next one.

Yan Christensen

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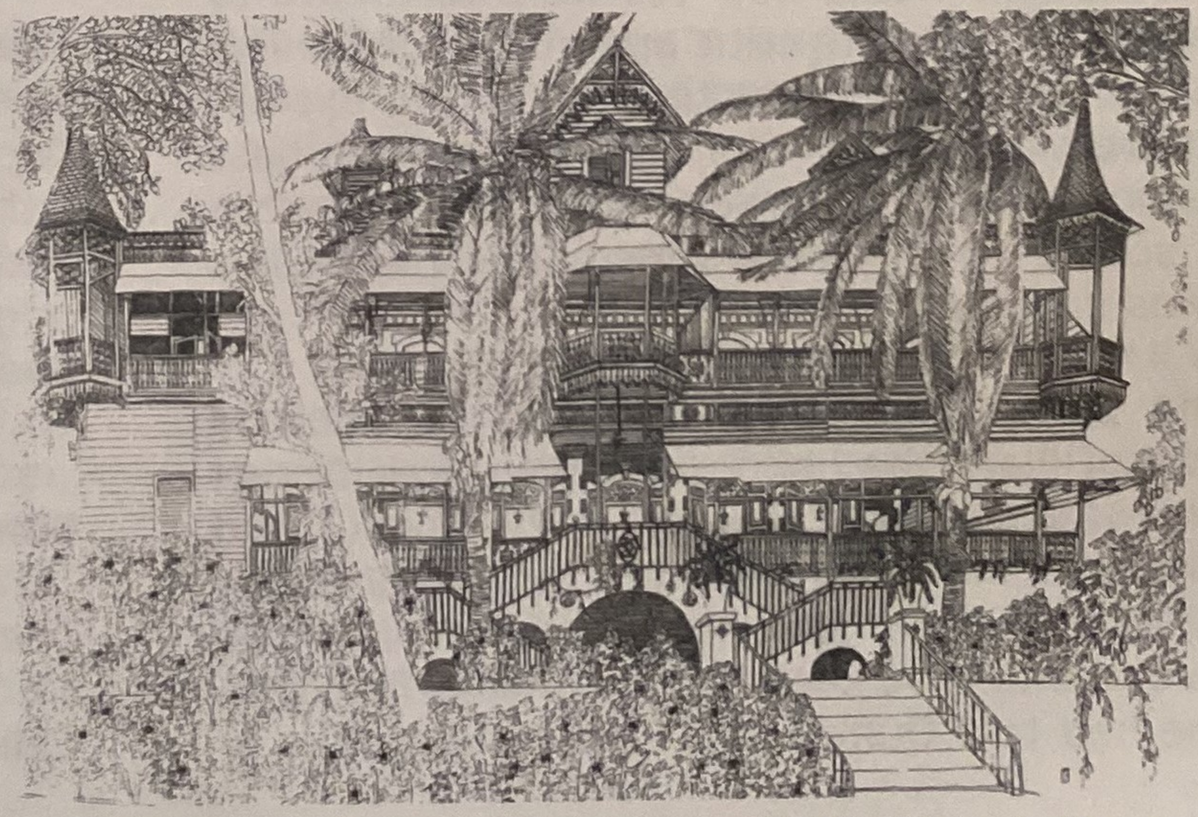
Your comments and letters are always welcome.



Hotel Trianon in Havana



REVIEW

FESTIVAL 2006

Read about the individual events below. The reporters in reverse alphabetical order were:
Hazel Ward, Anne Vickers, Jenny Sherwood, Alan Porteous, Ramon Porta, Ros Partridge, John Partridge, Donna Osthaus, Hope Gilbert, Yan Christensen.

Film: *The Honorary Consul*

It was entirely fitting that the 1983 film version of *The Honorary Consul* should have been shown in Berkhamsted, since it was in this town that Graham Greene watched his first film and thus was born his lifelong love affair with the cinema. The resplendent surroundings of The Rex cinema would most certainly have met with his approval even if the film would not! We were fortunate to have Quentin Falk, film critic and author of *Travels in Greeneland* to introduce the film and to explain why it took so long for this, one of Greene's best novels, to reach the screen. Peter Duffell wrote three scripts but it was Christopher Hampton's that was finally accepted.

Casting posed numerous problems, particularly the role of Plarr, the half Paraguayan, half British doctor, who cuckolds the Honorary Consul and impregnates his wife. Greene himself favoured Jack Nicholson for the role; Richard Burton seemed at one time keen to play Charlie Fortnum. Greene had told Duffell that Plarr would make or break the film because the complex evolution of character that the role demands is crucial to the story. In the event the choice of Richard Gere proved highly controversial. His accent was ridiculed as was that of Bob Hoskins who was cast as Colonel Perez. If the critics did not agree that Gere's Plarr was faithful to Greene's character, at least Michael Caine's characterization of the almost permanently inebriated Fortnum met with general approval, including Greene's. Those who expect a film to include all the characters from a novel might be disappointed to find that Hampton excluded Saavedra from the script as well as Plarr's mother. There was, however, a nice little cameo role for Geoffrey Palmer as the British Ambassador. Hampton contrived to ignore the subtle religious discussions that took place between Plarr and the terrorists who had kidnapped Fortnum instead of the Ambassador. Whether Duffell's script would have been any more faithful to the original novel we cannot know.

The film was shot in Mexico and not Argentina due to the outbreak of the Falklands War in 1982. The background of poverty, corruption and intimidation in a police state were well handled and in spite of the critical reviews the film originally received it was much appreciated by the audience at the Festival.

Film: *The Potting Shed*

The film of Graham Greene's play was brought to life by its outstanding cast led by Paul Scofield and Celia Johnson. The plot is based on the central

paradox of the priest who loses his faith by offering what he most valued (his faith) and the rationalist who regains it when faced with a miracle. Tension is gradually built up from the moment that the audience learns that James Callifer is to be excluded from seeing his dying rationalist father, to the finale when we learn that the miraculous recovery of James had completely undermined his father's rationalist beliefs. All then live happily ever after. James returns to his wife and the priest recovers his faith.

The themes in the play/film are familiar to Greene readers. The idea of a pact with God in the face of a death and miracles are also in *The End of the Affair*. The priest who loses his faith is a whisky priest. Here Catholicism has an easy victory over rationalism. The play is not concerned with any specific theological or rationalist argument, but with the domestic drama caused by ideological conflict. Today even the Pope is a rationalist.

Greene and the Critic
Professor Bernard Bergonzi

In an interesting talk, Professor Bergonzi gave us a varied series of insights into the critics' view of Greene, Greene's approach to them and Professor Bergonzi's own view of Greene's authorial development and the sources that influenced him.

Critics had difficulty with Greene. Partly this was because he wrote for such a long period; at one stage, the later novels tended to be overpraised and the earlier ones discounted (the speaker suggested that critics are prone to ignore books written before they were born). But a different line of criticism has it that Greene's creative power declined as he aged and that the later novels rely more on professionalism than inspiration.

Professor Bergonzi thought Greene a 'good' critic, particularly of his own books. He said 'My early novels horrify me', and 'I'm never satisfied with a novel but am especially dissatisfied with *The Human Factor*'. (A critic described that book as 'the finest Greene has ever written'.)

Regarding Greene's development, there is a clear 'fissure' between the 'Catholic' novels leading up to *The End of the Affair* and the later 'political' ones starting with *The Quiet American*. Greene had decided to write a political novel 'for a change'. (His friend, Evelyn Waugh, commented that Greene dropping God was like P.G. Wodehouse dropping Jeeves). These later, political novels were also marked by a more straightforward style and greater psychological depth.
The professor's view is that Jacobean drama, especially *The Duchess of Malfi*, was a primary influence. Maybe also the boys' adventure stories such as *Kidnapped* that he was so fond of were a background to the 'entertainments' such as *The Ministry of Fear.*

In a short review it is hard to do justice to the plethora of observations and thought in Professor Bergonzi's talk but those interested may wish to refer to his recently published book *A Study in Greene* reviewed in this issue.

J.B.Priestley: English Journeyman
Lord Hattersley

As Vice President of the J.B.Priestley Society, Lord Hattersley was an excellent choice of speaker at this year's festival. He chose as his subject 'The English Journeyman' to describe the career and writings of his fellow Yorkshireman, J.B.Priestley. Whilst acknowledging that Priestley was not a great writer like Graham Greene, Lord Hattersley is of the opinion that his work should not be underestimated, for he displayed a versatility so lacking in many present day writers. His prodigious output included novels, film scripts, reviews, essays, literary criticism and much more. To many he was best known for his wartime broadcasts after the 9 o'clock news, broadcasts that Churchill tried, unsuccessfully, to ban.

Lord Hattersley referred to a certain ambivalence in Priestley's make up, for whilst he embodied the spirit of the tough, gritty northerner, and never lost his Yorkshire accent, he lived for most of his life in the south. Many of his works, most notably *English Journey* show a great affinity and sympathy with the northern working class, but he himself lived a very comfortable upper middle class life and was strongly attracted by the glamour of actors and actresses with whom he associated.

Writing brought Priestley great financial rewards; in fact one of his most popular novels *The Good Companions* was written at the suggestion of his agent who was sure that it would make money; which it did! Priestley embarked upon this work with great enthusiasm and showed his skill at capturing the spirit of both time and place, but it was his *English Journey* that Lord Hattersley feels is one of the greatest works in English to have come out of the inter-war period.

As a playwright Priestley was able to reach a wider audience but the critics were not always appreciative, as with his comedy of manners *When We Are Married*. In Lord Hattersley's opinion he was better when he did not attempt to intellectualise but he considers his real genius was as an essayist.



Lord Hattersley

We were very fortunate to have such an accomplished public and literary figure to give us this talk. When asked at question time why he had wasted his life in politics when he could have spent it in the literary world, Lord Hattersley replied that it is because he believes in bringing about a more equal society. This opinion would certainly have resonated with Priestley, in fact the two men have much in common, both as Yorkshiremen and as literary figures who also bear an uncanny physical resemblance to each other - a fact that was not lost on the large and appreciative audience who came to hear this fascinating talk.

Clash of Ideals: Greene and G.B. Shaw
Ivan Wise

Ivan Shaw, Secretary of *The Shavian*, the Journal of the Shavian Society, scored a Festival first by using Powerpoint to illustrate his talk! One full of quotations and photographs of personalities to illustrate the comparisons he made between the two writers.

Despite their clash of ideals, Ivan drew out what the two men had in common. Shaw and Greene shared a certain cynicism about human nature. They were both stubborn and keen to get their own way; they both had slow starts to their literary careers; they both agreed about art as needing to be interesting, exciting and full of action; they both liked dialogue to have a fast pace; they were both reviewers: Shaw reviewed plays and music and Greene plays and films. Shaw was the successful playwright though Greene's play *The Living Room* was deemed the 'best first play of the last half century' by Kenneth Tynan. Greene adapted the play *St Joan* written by Shaw, to a screen version which was not successful.

Where they clashed was certainly in matters of faith; Greene, the Catholic, said 'I had to find religion in order to measure my evil'; Shaw, the agnostic and believer in the 'life force', said 'my art is my own sense of what is moral'. He objected to Catholicism.

In politics they were both socialists. Greene, an Independent Labour Party member, would choose the Soviet Union over the USA – 'Russians destroy the body; the USA the soul'. Shaw, on the other hand, was Stalinist and in favour of dictators. He signed a letter asking for peace with Hitler. Greene had some sympathy too with dictators, Gran Bassa and Ho Chi Minh, but criticised Pinochet. Both liked to stir up trouble politically, to be 'a piece of grit in the state's machinery' (Greene).

In conclusion Ivan Wise reflected on their similar view of retirement: Greene's 'death for a writer' and Shaw's 'as long as I live I must write' and their 'genius'. Greene claimed to be 'a craftsman'; Shaw won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925 'for his work marked by both idealism and humanity'.

Perhaps the last word should go to Greene about Shaw: 'You have to hate the man a little'!

Film: *Our Man in Havana*

This film has already been shown at a Festival with a report of it then, but the last time the copy was frankly poor. That inspired the Trust to consider supporting the restoration of the film and we therefore had the pleasure of seeing the Trust's contribution acknowledged on screen. That will be there whenever the film is shown anywhere. As is traditional at Festival films we had a knowledgeable introduction by an expert, this time Professor Peter Evans. With a minor technical hitch, we then enjoyed this lighthearted film and the excellent performances, by Alec Guiness in particular; some minor parts played by Noel Coward and Ralph Richardson were absolute gems. This was another instance of the combination of Greene's writing with the directorial skills of Carol Reed.

Comedians – but who's laughing?
The Rev the Lord Griffiths

Lord Griffiths, widely travelled author, broadcaster and public speaker, spent ten years in Haiti - from

1970. As a Methodist minister he fulfilled many roles, mainly teaching. During his years there he came to know Papa Doc, the Tontons Macoutes and the political class, as well as becoming well acquainted with the peasant class, which represented 85% of the population. He explained that the oldest Christian tradition there was Methodism dating as it did from 1803.

In 1970, little had been written about Haiti, (although *The Comedians* had come out four years previously.) This was a country known for voodoo, drums in the hills, zombies, charms and curses. When slaves had been brought from Africa, tribes were deliberately separated, so that existing tribal animisms were combined to form the new religion, voodoo, and tribal languages combined with French to become Creole. Lord Griffiths found them to be a very attractive people and experienced charm and kindness at their hands. He learned to converse in Creole and would discuss with the voodoo priests their outlook on life.

From this knowledge of Haiti the speaker went on to consider *The Comedians*. The picture of the country was observed with Greene's accustomed brilliance and economy and confirmed his own experience; the lights that might or might not come on; the highway to the South 'a hundred miles of potholes and dust'; the dry, uninhabited mountains.

But this is a novel about Europeans. The Haitians, apart from some political figures, do not get the same sensitive attention as is given to the Mexicans in The Power and the Glory. There is Smith, the American who, with missionary zeal, preaches vegetarianism, helped by his intrepid wife. They are not comic but heroic. Then there is Brown; shallow, pursuing his love-affair insensitive to the tragedy that is happening around him, yet occasionally showing a hint of nobility. Finally Jones, the poseur in pursuit of money, always able to make people laugh, whose eventful past is a fabrication. Though he supplies arms to the government he is in the end not able to lead a rebellion on account of his flat feet. In contrast, there are the committed; such as the wise Dr Magiot and the young priest who condemns violence, but condemns indifference more strongly.

Who's laughing? From time to time we all laughed as we were reminded of the comic scenes and characters in the book, but we were left in no doubt that here was another Greene triumph, a masterly portrait of a country combined with sympathetic appreciation of human strengths and weaknesses. Haiti is still all too recognisable in these pages. However the real life Trianon Hotel has gone up in the world and now sports its own Graham Greene Suite.



Lord Griffiths

We were indeed privileged to hear a compelling speaker discussing a place he knew and loved well, and a book which he greatly admired.

Articles of Faith: Graham Greene and *The Tablet*
Ian Thomson

'I think... it's a *mystery*', he said slowly and with some feeling. 'It's a mystery which can't be destroyed...even by the Church...a certain *mystery*'. Then he sipped his cocktail with immense relish. The sentence above concludes John Cornwell's interview with Graham Greene which was titled *Why I am still a Catholic* and which was published in *The Tablet* on 23 September 1989. We were very fortunate to have Ian Thomson speak to us about the book he has recently edited of Greene's writings for *The Tablet*.

Ian Thomson is a writer and journalist who won the 2002 W.H. Heinemann prize for his biography of Primo Levi.

Graham Greene first wrote for *The Tablet* in 1936 having converted to Catholicism in 1926. This began a long association with *The Tablet* through very different types of editor. In the 1930s the editor was Douglas Woodruff who was a rather conservative figure, though through him the

journal became less 'churchy'. He was sympathetic to Franco's Catholic cause in Spain but Greene did not share his views. At first Greene reviewed for *The Tablet's* 'Fiction Chronicle' and in the process reviewed some new authors such as Stevie Smith whose first book impressed him. Tom Burns became editor of *The Tablet* in 1967 and although he and Greene were very different they had more in common than Greene had had with Woodruff and in 1976 (rather reluctantly) Greene became a trustee for *The Tablet*. He offered Burns a selection of his manuscripts for auction at Sotheby's 1979 to raise funds for the journal which is a testimony to his involvement, loyalty and generosity.

John Wilkins succeeded Burns as editor. He, like Greene, was a left-of-centre convert and Greene expressed his approval of him to Burns: 'I am so glad that Wilkins is keeping *The Tablet* on the liberal lines you instituted'.

This book edited by Ian Thomson is a treat and we were very pleased it was launched at the Festival. We in Berkhamsted have reason to be grateful to *The Tablet* not only for the excellent book, but because they most kindly host drinks and refreshments on the Saturday of the Graham Greene Festival! Thank you.

See formal review later in this issue.

The Power and the Glory: Paradoxes and Pleasures. Professor Cedric Watts

It was as always a pleasure to hear Professor Watts' talk delivered with the clarity and erudition we have come to expect. Many people have found *The Power and the Glory* a pleasure to read but some of the paradoxes may previously have escaped our attention and this talk was therefore enlightening and thought provoking. It is impossible to do justice to such a dense talk in a short review, but among many others consider these points. The whisky priest does not in fact drink whisky. He is a religious failure but at the same time a saint in the making. 'Pride' made the priest stay and suffer many humiliations. The book has what Professor Watts calls covert plotting, and only a second reading reveals the plot. We may not immediately realize the many influences of the priest and his transformative powers – the number of people whose lives are touched by him. Many points are inferred and the speaker quoted Conrad: 'One writes half a book, the reader writes the other' – advice indeed for the reader.

The Power and the Glory – quite an ironic title – reconciles tragedy and comedy. Admittedly sometimes very dark comedy, but it is there for example in the passage where the priest is trying to buy communion wine; the chief's toothache is a running joke in the book. The conclusion Cedric Watts reached was that Graham Greene liked and actually lived paradoxes.

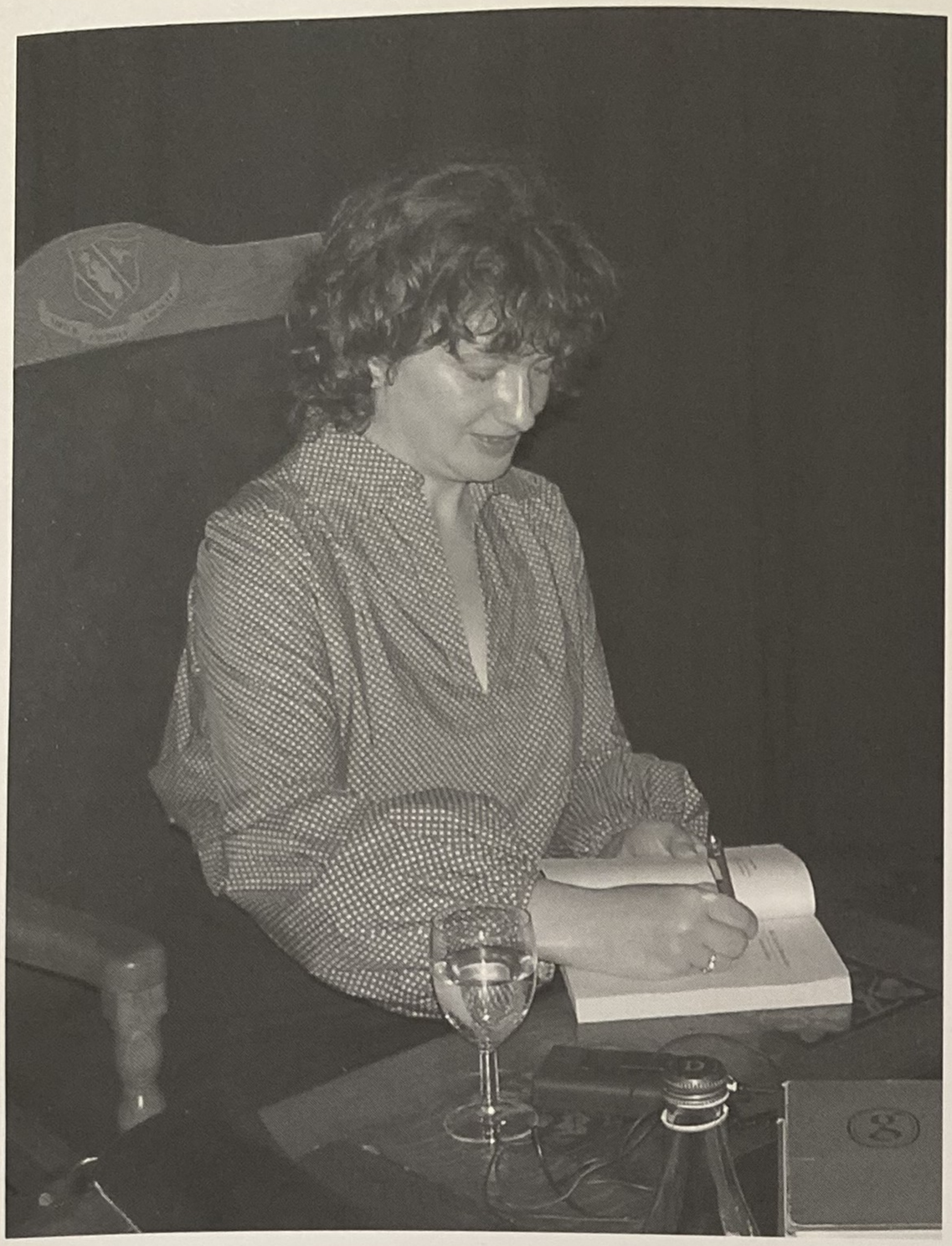
From *The Lawless Roads* to *Getting to Know the General*: A Political Journey Patrick Marnham

Patrick Marnham analysed the political journey from *Lawless Roads* to *Getting to Know the General*. In *Lawless Roads* Greene looked at the persecution of the church and priests by the state. This was a cause which Greene took up in 1939 when no one else showed interest in what was happening in Mexico. He saw a parallel between the persecution of Edmund Campion (Waugh had published his biography) and that of the Mexican priests. Indeed Waugh saw Greene's involvement in Mexico as left wing cover for his work for MI6. But Greene was pro-Catholic and anti-Nazi - a lonely position in 1939 after the Spanish Civil War.

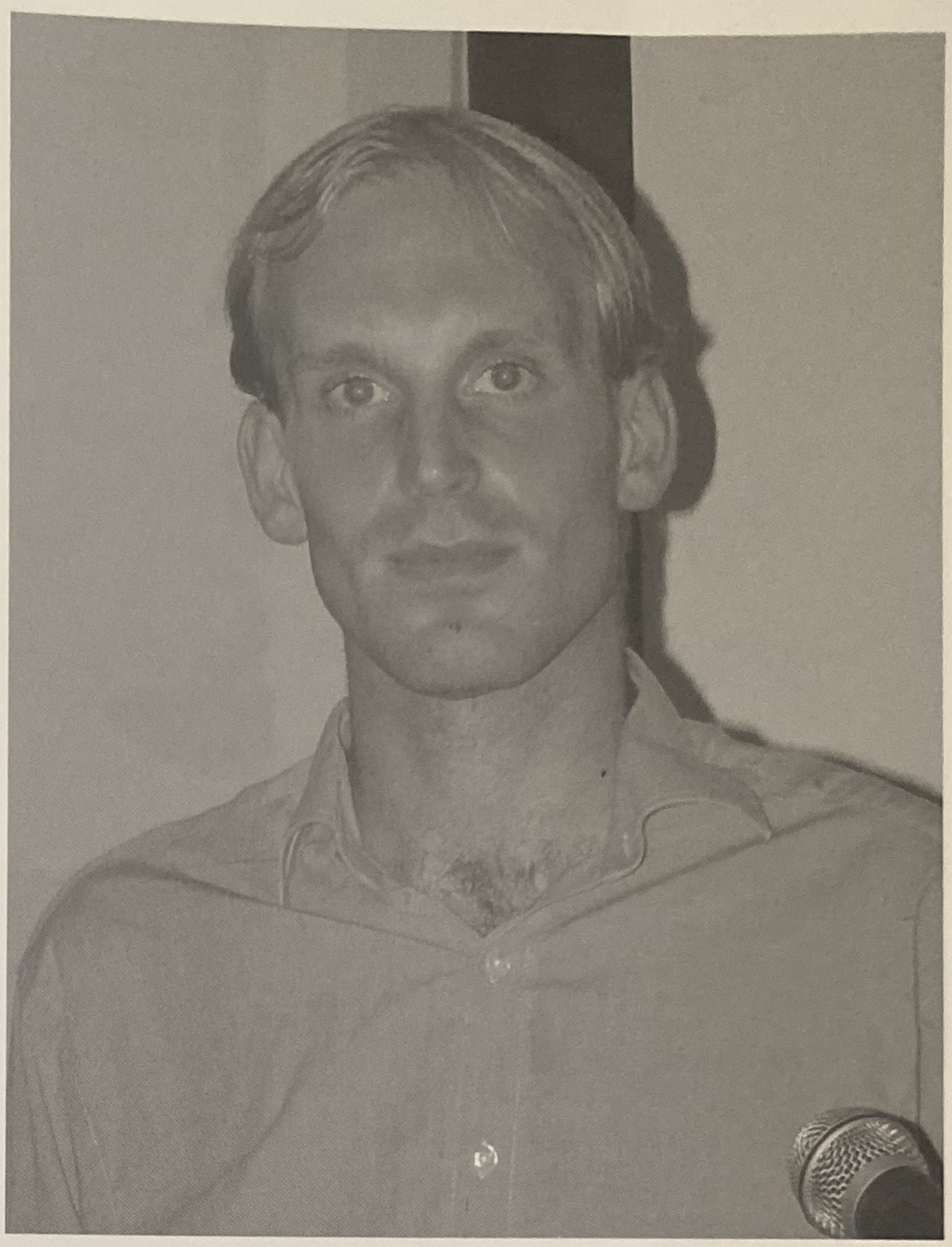
In Getting to Know the General Greene seems to have travelled to the opposite extreme. He is befriended by General Torrijos of Panama to assist in the recovery of the Canal Zone from the USA. The General needed intellectual muscle rather than guns. Greene became a member of the Panama delegation negotiating with President Carter. However at Torrijos' request he became involved with Tomas Borge of Nicaragua. Borge wanted to take away power from the Catholic Church. Greene was uncomfortable with this position. Perhaps he had been trapped into compromise by loyalty to his friend Torrijos. He failed to find a novel from those particular experiences fairly late in his life. Real people do not always come to life for a novel.

Greene, Argentina and *The Honorary Consul* Miranda France

Miranda France is a travel writer and author of *Bad Times in Buenos Aires*. Her address compared her experience of Argentina with the events in Greene's *The Honorary Consul*. Ms France confirmed that the political situation and living conditions in Argentina conformed to Greene's preference for living 'on the dangerous edge of things'. She pointed out that Argentina's large population of European refugees emigrated at the turn of the 20th century to take advantage of New World opportunities. However greed, corruption, and excessive foreign speculation sowed the seeds of failure. Despondency became a national malaise. For instance, when giving English lessons in Buenos Aires, Ms France was asked to provide a 'feeling bad' vocabulary. In the middle



Miranda France



Ivan Wise

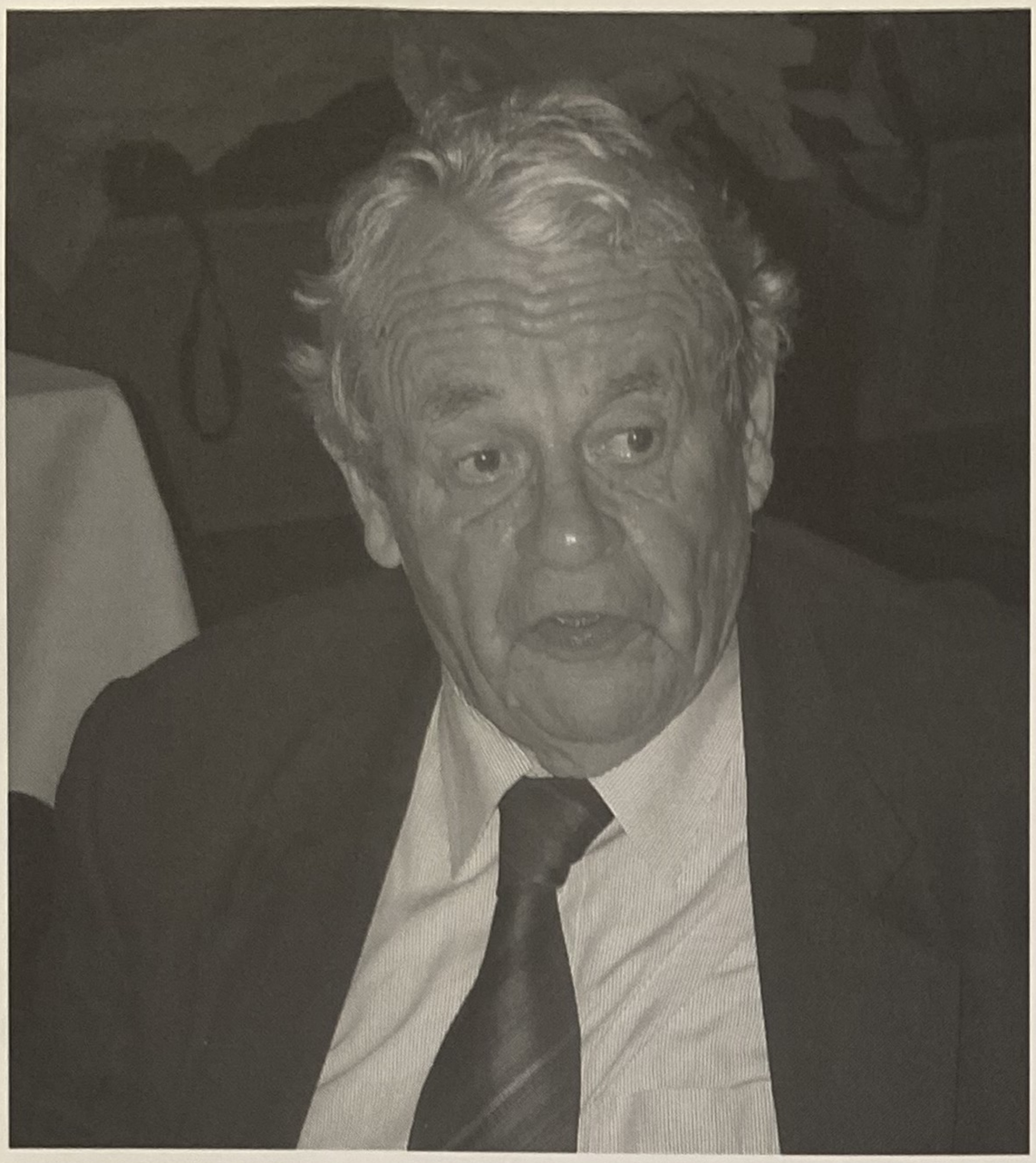
and latter part of the 20th century a major nostalgia developed for the former time of well-being. Greene acknowledges this in *The Honorary Consul*. Dr. Plarr longs for the time when his father was with the family. Dr. Humphries keeps a picture of the Queen and inquires after the London smog. Greene was very intrigued with the town of Corrientes situated on the river which forms the border between Paraguay and Argentina, and which he made the setting for the book. (The kidnapping in the book had to be done by Paraguayans, as Argentineans had by that time become quite adept at kidnapping and wouldn't have bungled the job.) In this isolated border town Dr. Humphries is lonely and forgotten. The consulate is empty. The brothel is plain (the rooms are called 'cells'). The kidnappers are jaded – they can't regain control of the situation after their mistake. Yvonne Cloetta said that after spending three years writing this book, Greene was disturbed and unsettled. He did not uncover any absolute truths. However, the men in the novel evolve: Charlie Fortnum succeeds in loving and Dr. Plarr allows love to exist through his sacrifice.

Graham Greene in the Congo
Dr. Michel Lechat

Ever since the very early days of our Festivals we have had the privilege of hearing speakers telling us their memories of Graham Greene, perhaps initially a chance encounter that developed into a lasting friendship. This was the case with Dr. Michel Lechat, who was medical director of the Yonda leprosy settlement in the former Belgian Congo when Greene arrived to research for his book *A Burnt-Out Case*, and to whom he later dedicated that book. 'Digging into the background of a famous novel, browsing through old correspondence, reviving past memories and sharing them' with his audience Dr. Lechat described as a difficult exercise, but also 'a moving experience', and it was that for us too.

Greene had asked through a mutual friend in Brussels to 'spend some weeks in a hospital of the Schweitzer kind in Africa, but run by a religious order', for the purposes of a book. In 1959 Schweitzer was not highly regarded by medical professionals and Yonda was very different from the leprosaria Greene appeared to have in mind. Yonda was aiming to become the prototype of a modern institution for the care of leprosy. Lechat did not feel it was an inspiring context for a novelist. He prepared a list of other leprosaria he felt to be more suitable.

Greene reassured Lechat that the 'leper mission was to be purely background' and 'the more normal routine-like... the more effective it would be.' The Superior of the Mission gave his consent and Greene arrived and life continued undisturbed, in spite of extensive building works. He soon established a routine for his days. He was



Dr Lechat

like everybody else, doing a job, in his case 'struggling to deliver a novel.'

Nevertheless Greene himself needed protection particularly from aspiring novelists. A strategy for escape was developed. At the sight of the arrival of a possible 'nuisance' Graham rushed back to the house, jumped through a bedroom window and out into the forest. Lechat sees this as the basis for the flight of Querry's boy into the forest at night.

Lechat stressed Greene's tremendous skills as an observer, but felt it would be a waste of time to try to identify central characters of the novel. His characters are 'formed from the flotsam of thirty years as a novelist.' Greene kept his observations to himself, allowing them to mature. A sort of tacit pact of mutual reserve, a 'duty of reticence' grew up between them. Lechat always refrained from reporting anecdotes, which could have provided the framework for a novel. This explains why the friendship between the two was kept alive until Greene's death.

The publication of *A Burnt-Out Case* caused controversy. A few leprologists criticised the author for choosing leprosy as background to a novel. Lechat wrote in defence of Greene: 'Leprosy is part of life, like war, corruption, lost expectations and love.'

Lechat felt that Greene must have been faced with a dilemma when he saw Yonda, an institution that did not perhaps meet his expectations. Here disease took precedence over sin. He was having to make the best of an inauspicious situation. For Greene *A Burnt-Out Case* was a struggle: 'never a novel proved more recalcitrant'. In the end he succeeded and as Lechat said 'The result was a superb book.'

I am my Books: Greene, children and child-women
Dr Rudolf van Dalm

Dr. Rudolf van Dalm's posthumous contribution to the Graham Greene Festival was read by Yan Christensen and opened the last session of this year's festival. This work stems from Dr. van Dalm's last lecture, *The Splinter of Ice*, in which Greene's mood and many of his actions were explained by the effects of his congenital bipolar disorder.

In 1932 Greene admitted to having been sexually aroused by a small, dark and well-dressed American girl, with a lovely rump and small hands. This seems to be the first evidence of the attraction Greene felt for young girls. It may be explained by the increased sexual drive inherent in his bipolar disorder. In any case, the impact on Greene was so deeply rooted that many female characters of his novels and all the women who played an important role in his life followed the same pattern. Early examples in Greene's fiction are Rose, in *Brighton Rock*, and Else, in *The Confidential Agent*. Rose is pale and thin, with mousy skull and bony face and body; and Else is small, bony and immature. A live example of the sexual appeal that very young girls can have is Shirley Temple acting in *Captain January* and *Wee Willy Winky*, films which Greene reviewed for *Night and Day*. Greene had no problem describing her disguised infancy, her mature suggestiveness, her coquetry, and her effect on middle-aged men and clergymen. His review was followed by a suit for libel against *Night and Day*, which the magazine lost.

All this happened when Greene was in Mexico on assignment to research on the governmental repression and persecution of the Church. *The Power and the Glory*, the novel derived from his experiences there, has plenty of children, both virtuous, Coral, and prematurely spoilt, Brigitta, the whisky-priest's illegitimate daughter, whose model may have been Shirley Temple. Liz, a seven-year old bandy-legged girl who appears in *A Discovery in the Woods*, a short story included in *A Sense of Reality*, is another example of explicit sexuality in small children that seems to pass unnoticed by other characters in the story, but conveys Greene's interest in it.
Greene's lover, Dorothy Glover, was small and thin, and may have inspired Helen, in *The Heart of the Matter*. Marie Rycker, in *A Burnt-out Case*, a

child-woman, too, and a clear example of dangerous innocence, may have been inspired by a combination of Anita Björk and Yvonne Cloetta, who also were small, child-like, and sexy. The last of such characters is Clara, in *The Honorary Consul*, whose physical description matches well with that of Yvonne Cloetta.

Greene admitted to Yvonne Cloetta that he was his books. Many examples in his fiction support this. To Greene, children were sacred. Seducing them was out of the question, would have been considered indecent and illegal behaviour. His fiction and his attraction for child-like adult women could have been surrogates of his interest in and response to the sex appeal of young girls. Again Greene translated into literary masterpieces aspects of his life, as only the greatest artists can do.

Film: *When Greek Meets Greek*

The theme of this amusing, somewhat far-fetched film, in the series *Shades of Greene*, based on the short story of the same name, is one of misunderstanding, deception, double-dealing and fraud. Set during World War II, it features Mr. Lord Driver, a Londoner who is making money on the side producing counterfeit clothing coupons and whose son is coming to the end of a period in Borstal, and Nicholas Fennick who has established a fictitious college, St. Ambrose's, in Oxford, from which he runs a correspondence course. He sends for his niece, Miss Cross to help him. Lord Driver applies to the college on behalf of his son. Believing he has snared a representative of the peerage, Fennick responds accordingly. The decision of Lord Driver to visit the college leads to still more deception and intrigue on both sides, as each seeks to get the most out of the situation. The son, released from Borstal in time for his bogus degree awarding ceremony, falls in love with Miss Cross and the film ends with their plans for fraud on a much larger scale.

Sad Dogs and Englishmen: canine motifs in the work of Graham Greene

Neil Sinyard

Although he could say that this year 'he had gone to the dogs' Neil showed once again in his inimitable style that he had in no way lost his power to amuse and captivate his audience.

When looking for Greene's experiences of dogs and his feelings towards 'man's best friend' the most obvious allusion is that in *A Sort of Life*, when he is in his perambulator together with the dead dog.
What were Greene's own feelings towards our canine friends? In *A Quiet American* Fowler admits he does not like dogs. In *The Power and the Glory* the dog, 'a mongrel bitch…an ugly creature with bent ears, trailing a wounded or broken leg, whimpering' loses the battle over the bone, but retains until the end 'a kind of hope.' Mrs. Callifer in *The Potting Shed* also does not like dogs. This may or may not indicate something of Greene's ambivalence.

In examining the role of the dog in many of Greene's works it is notable what an important, even if unspoken, part the dog plays. Sadly more often than not its dogged faithfulness is repaid by death – the 'dog it was that died'. On other occasions it is the dog's very presence, which betrays his master or could do so, and thus must be sacrificed. Neil examined in some detail the dog's role in each story. In *Our Man in Havana* it is the poisoning of the black dog that trustingly drinks the doctored whisky, which identifies for Wormold his potential killer, Carter. *In The Human Factor* Castle fears that his adoptive son's boxer dog, Buller, might betray the fact that the house is empty. So it is decided the dog must be killed. The animal, trusting his master to the last, licks the muzzle of the gun, Castle pulls the trigger and the poor beast dies a terrible death.

In *The Quiet American* the dog, Duke, is a black chow with a black tongue. Pyle has been murdered and his dog has disappeared. If it can be found perhaps the examination of its paws would provide clues as to the place of death and identify his killer. When it was eventually found its throat had been cut. Here again it signifies doom. The role of the dog in *The Potting Shed* is an interesting one. He is a 'secret' dog, a dog that belongs to James, someone unwanted and about whom hangs a cloud of mystery. It is banished to the potting shed, where once long ago something sinister took place. The howling of the dog somehow increases the fear of the unknown. The fact that Mrs Callifer does not like dogs makes James' presence even more unwelcome.

In *Across the Bridge* the dog plays a slightly different role, since it is Calloway, and not the dog, that dies. There is evidence of a faithful relationship with his master on the part of the dog, which is not reciprocated. This flea-ridden 'miserable imitation of a setter' is captured by the police seeking to arrest Calloway, in the hope that it will lead them to their prey. This is exactly what happens, but the dog runs across in front of the car, the detective swerves to avoid the dog and strikes Calloway. The dog reaches his master, licking his wounds. Calloway's hand falls across the dog's neck as if in a caress. The whimper rises to a bark of triumph, but Calloway is dead. Was it a caress or a final blow, 'one more indication of a human being's capacity for self-deception'?

(Graham Greene) The adaptation of this story for the screen, the final tense moments of which Neil showed us, indicated once again how admirably Greene's work, especially his short stories, transfers to the screen.

This extract rounded off a most entertaining and thought-provoking talk.

BOOKS

ARTICLES OF FAITH: The Collected *Tablet* Journalism of Graham Greene.
Edited and with an introduction by Ian Thomson
(Signal Books, 2006, 183 pp)
Price £12.99

A STUDY IN GREENE by Bernard Bergonzi
(Oxford University Press, 2006, 197 pp)
Price £16.99

In their different ways, these are two valuable additions to the Greene bibliography. Ian Thomson's anthology collects together a fascinating variety of Greene's writing-reportage, fiction, reviews, interview, even a poem, whilst Bernard Bergonzi casts a penetrating spotlight on the strengths and weaknesses of Greene's novels. Interestingly, although their agendas and intentions are dissimilar, there are two particular ways in which their approaches intersect. Both authors express a suspicion of reading Greene too much in terms of his biography. Also, when Ian Thomson notes in his introduction that 'in Catholicism, Greene had found a sense of melodrama – an atmosphere of good and evil – that was useful to him as a novelist', he anticipates a perception shared by Bernard Bergonzi, who argues strongly that the melodramatic elements of Greene's early fiction give the work a flavour and intensity rather lacking in the later novels.

As its subtitle indicates, *Articles of Faith* is a collection of the journalism Greene wrote for the Catholic paper, *The Tablet*, from the 1930s until his death. Some of the material first published here would be incorporated almost wholesale into later works such as *The Lawless Roads* and *Monsignor Quixote*, but there is other material which has not been published elsewhere. Vaughan Williams once remarked that a musician should be able to apply the same skill to writing thirty seconds' worth of interesting music as to composing a symphony, and one suspects that Greene felt the same about writing: he brought the same kind of perception and professionalism to his journalism as to his other writing. One can see it in his film reviews, which I have always regarded as of equal importance to his short stories; and one can see it here in his book reviews, which alone would make this collection worth having. His two pages on Thomas Mann, for example, are models of concise astuteness, offering a quite different take on the author from that of D.H.Lawrence, superbly evoking Mann's sense of the isolation of the artist, and seeing Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* as in part a self-portrait, a perception which has become something of a commonplace now but was not at all widely seen at the time. One brilliant article hits on the imaginative device of encapsulating his attitude to four new novels by analyzing their opening paragraphs. He shrewdly notes that the plain style of Somerset Maugham's novel, *Theatre* 'cunningly disguises uncomfortable depths of irony': the more trusting George Orwell tended to take Maugham at face value. His evocation of the way Storm Jameson's novel, *Delicate Monster* conveys 'the mental atmosphere of jealousy' suggests that the novel might well have been in his mind when, year later, he was to dramatise that same state of mind in *The End of the Affair*. The collection also includes an encounter with John Cornwell, who teases out of Greene more about his Catholicism than in any other interview I have read; a fine memoir by his friend and former *Tablet* editor, Tom Burns; and some previously unpublished correspondence with Peter Lesley, whose career in a roundabout way might have partly inspired *Our Man in Havana*. The book is very nicely illustrated with some rare photographs and a delightful cartoon of Greene published in *Punch* at the time of *The Comedians*. It is also intelligently edited by Ian Thomson, whose introductions wittily and pithily put the material into context and whose commentary illuminates as well as simply informs.

In his introduction, Bernard Bergonzi comments that 'readers should be warned that this is a work of old-fashioned criticism'. Far from being a literary Health Warning, this may serve as a positive recommendation to many, who will relish the swagger and incisiveness with which, uncluttered by voluminous footnotes and impenetrable theory, Bergonzi describes and analyses Greene's fictional landscape. It is an account that self-professedly goes against the biographical and authorial grain, arriving at judgments that not only other critics but Greene himself would probably have challenged. He embraces the poetic and the melodramatic in Greene, precisely the qualities which Greene thought he must grow away from; and thinks his best qualities are found in the earlier novels. He repeats a passage from Greene's text on Jacobean drama in *British Dramatists*: 'we are in the company of men who would really seem to have been lost in the dark night of the soul if they had enough religious sense to feel despair: the world is all there is, and the world is violent, mad,

miserable and without point'. He feels Greene is best when he is most like Webster and that his masterpiece is *Brighton Rock*.

It is an unabashedly personal reading, with something contentious on nearly every page. You might disagree (I don't) with his views on the inadequate female characters; you might disagree (I do) with his claims about the overestimation of Greene's cinematic influence, and be puzzled by his offhand remarks on *The Third Man*, which, considering Greene wrote the screenplay for what is widely regarded as the best British film ever made, deserves a little more credit on his writing c.v. Nevertheless, like all good criticism, it will send you scurrying back to the novels. One minor error (he gets the name of the main character of *Our Man in Havana* wrong) can be set against several major epiphanies.

What is intriguing, though, is to set the book against another recent critical study, Murray Roston's Graham Greene's *Narrative Strategies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) which, from a similar critical position – biographical detritus eschewed in favour of concentration on the text – comes to radically different judgments. Far from being his masterwork, *Brighton Rock*, thinks Roston, is shrill, exaggerated entertainment. Whereas Bernard Bergonzi regards *A Burnt-out Case* as one of Greene's weakest novels, Roston believes it is one of his richest. It seems that not even good old-fashioned close reading can produce a critical consensus on where Greene's greatness lies, which is one reason why his work continues to be re-read, re-experienced, and re-evaluated. Greene once defined the writer's task as to be a piece of grit in the State machinery: to be, in addition, a piece of grit in the machinery of lit. crit. would, I suspect, have surpassed his expectations. I fancy I can hear him chuckling.

Neil Sinyard

MISCELLANY

The Commuter's Library is looking for new short story writers; if any of you literary types should be interested you can get in touch with Dream Depot, PO Box 3218, Littlehampton, BN16

Copies of Dr Lechat's address to the Festival and of the birthday toast are available by email from Ken Sherwood: secretary@grahamgreenebt.org. If no email send a stamped addressed envelope to the Trust office.

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.

Perhaps you know that Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* is on the syllabus for the whole of France for the Agrégation – a competitive exam for future professeurs (teachers) of English. I will be lecturing on the novel at the Sorbonne, wrote a book about it, with an introduction by Bernard Bergonzi, and I am also organizing a conference at the Sorbonne (with Bernard Bergonzi as a guest speaker) on 15th December.

François Gallix.

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.

One of this year's speakers, Lord Hattersley, is also a columnist and he did us proud with a column in the *Daily Mail* the week after the Festival. He wrote of the town, and of the activities around the Festival, including the children's competition arranged by the local Waterstones. The school was mentioned and the Grand Union Canal that runs through Berkhamsted. In fact a whole column devoted to the town and its inhabitants, ending with the comment '...they have a lot to be proud about'. Berkhamsted is also regularly mentioned on Radio 4 in a comedy series called *Ed Reardon's Week*. The eponymous hero 'lives here'.

The Evening Standard of 9 Aug 2006 had an article about the school curriculum which includes English classics such as Dickens and Austen. It then lists '20 books we all should have read', predictably starting with *Pride and Prejudice* and including *Brighton Rock* among seven other 20th century novels.

Around the world there have again been many mentions of Graham Greene and his work, including the film *Went the Day Well*? described by *Digital Spy*, UK as a 'superb piece of British wartime propaganda'.

The *Toronto Star*, Ont. Canada reminds us that the author Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer

Narayanaswami took his friend Graham Greene's advice and published as R. K. Narayan. The *South Asian Women's Forum*, New Delhi, India writes of a novel by the Cuban author Pedro Juan Gutierrez. It is a thriller called *Our GG in Havana*; and is described as 'a ribald take-off of the 1958 comic masterpiece *Our Man in Havana*'. Review in next issue.

Among the publications that mentioned 'our' GG were:
Noriegaville, Panama; *Ohmy News International*, South Korea; *Manila Bulletin*, Philippines; *Caribbean Net News*, Cayman Islands; *Financial Express*, India; *Daily Times*; Pakistan; *Haiti Info*; Haiti; *Nhan Dan*, Hanoi, Vietnam; *Daily News Journal*; Murfreesboro, USA and many other USA, Canadian and UK publications.

THE TRUST

Obituary
Many of you will know that Rudolf van Dalm, that faithful supporter of the Trust, died in August 2006 after a long illness. At his specific request his ashes were interred at St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted after a short committal service. Ramon Rami Porta spoke at the service and his words are a fitting obituary.

Ramon said:
In the 1999 Greene Festival, Rudolf and I sat in front of each other at Palace Pier, Brighton, and over a plate of fish and chips our friendship was born.

We all know Rudolf. We know what he wrote and what he talked about in the Festivals. Therefore, I will not elaborate on these issues. But, at this moment, so important for him, when we bring his ashes to rest on holy and literary grounds, I would like to emphasize two aspects of Rudolf's personality that I came to know through his generous conversation in the past seven years.

First of all, a human virtue: his will, his tremendous will. Rudolf had been sick for many years. However, he never gave up. He completed his doctoral thesis during a very difficult period of his life. He felt an inner strength that kept him going and helped him complete his work. He was very proud of his achievement. He felt that his academic degree entitled him to discuss Greene with other scholars, as we all know he often did here in Berkhamsted. He was also proud of his encyclopaedic compilation of Graham Greene's quotations. In one year instead of five, as he had initially thought, Rudolf read or reread all that Greene had published and was available to the public, distilling the most essential spirit of Greene's thinking.

Second, his hope. Hope is a theological virtue, that is, granted by God to us. Rudolf had hope in a better life beyond our human life. His idea of heaven was not exactly that of the Catholic heaven, but, after all, nobody really knows how heaven is. Hope also is a very Greenean virtue. Charles Moeller, the French Catholic writer, called Greene 'the martyr of hope', martyr in the sense of witness, for Greene never spared hope even in the most dramatic circumstances when most persons would think there were no hope at all. Rudolf hoped that his mind would persist in peace for ever. Isn't this the country many Greene characters were yearning for: a country called peace of mind?

In many ways, Rudolf was a Greene character. Despite his difficult life, his heart had not hardened: he loved his wife, Astrid, his children and his grand-children; he loved Greene and his works, and, I can assure you, he loved this Festival and all of us. The Festival was the highlight of his last years. His wife shared with him his love for England and all things English, to the point of having England as their only holiday destination. They would not go anywhere else, but England and only England. It is not surprising that Rudolf wanted to rest on English ground for ever.

His will and his hope, his faith and his love were the four wheels on which he drove from Doetinchem, in Holland, to Berkhamsted just eleven months before his passing away. Terminally ill and on many medications, he still wrote a paper for the 2005 Festival and another one for this year's. Rudolf assumed with exemplary serenity the end of his life on earth, in a way that resembled that of his favourite writer, who was also ready to go with hope and intellectual curiosity for a new life.

Rest in peace, dear Rudolf. We will miss your attentive presence in the front row; we will miss your encouraging enthusiasm. We will miss you and we will never forget you.

Ramón Rami Porta

Read at St. Peter's Church, Berkhamsted, October 1st, 2006, on the occasion of Dr. Rudolf van Dalm's committal.

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