# A Sort of NEWSLETTER

Summer 2006 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST £1.50 Free to Friends

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

# Editorial

This is the issue where we really start telling you about the Festival. Not only because we are proud to present the range of events listed in the brochure, but also because we really look forward to seeing you again in September. Inside you can read what the Festival Director, Mike Hill, has to say about what is in store.

Those of you that come regularly will know that enlightenment and entertainment are there in almost equal measure. You also know that historic Berkhamsted has something to offer apart from the Greene associations. The church is very ancient; the castle ruins bring to mind past glories including William the Conqueror (or at least his brother) and Geoffrey Chaucer who lived there briefly. Unfortunately we have as yet no town museum, but rest assured that Jenny and Ken Sherwood are working on that, so one day…

Present day Berkhamsted is a very pleasant place to live and several restaurants will be worth a visit – a range of styles and nationalities are on offer. We have not yet entirely fallen prey to the chains, and there are individual shops to look at. For those of a literary bent there is Waterstones, a well-stocked bookshop with a coffee bar at the back; Bookthrift, a cut-price bookshop that will give you a discount on books that have to be ordered; and no doubt Oxfam will again fill their window with second-hand copies of Greene novels – usually including some first editions!

So make sure you come – we'll be here to welcome you.

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

## GRAHAM GREENE FESTIVAL 2006: PREVIEW

**The Festival Director Writes**

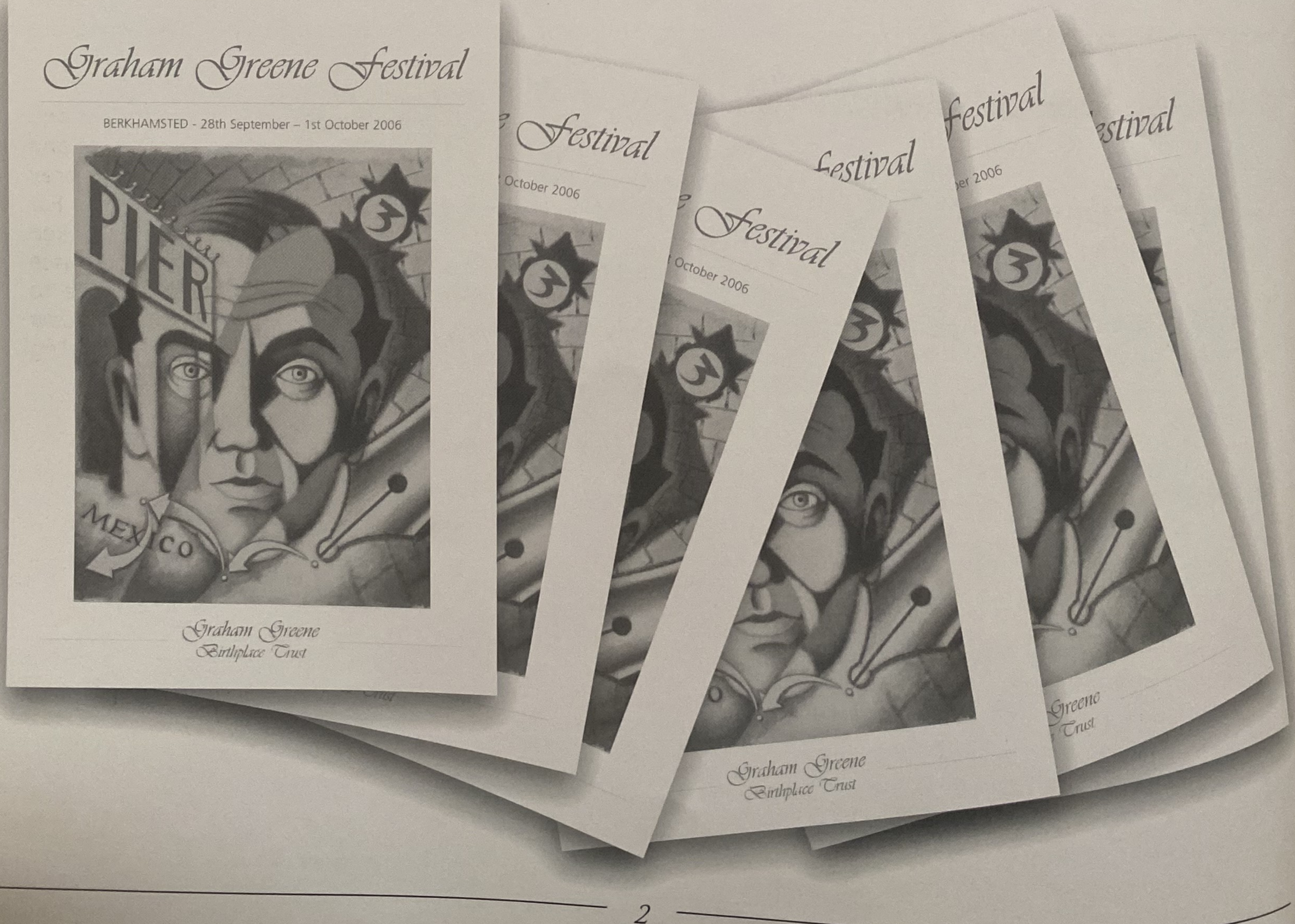
Rather startlingly, it is now fifteen years since Graham Greene died, yet interest in his work and life shows no sign of slackening. New editions of his novels are published, with new introductions; new collections of some of his other writings are in the pipeline; academic studies of his work continue to appear, and one doesn't have to scan the media for long to find mention of Greene the man and the writer. This year's festival, the ninth, hopes to capture and stimulate some of this interest.

Two of this year's talks reflect Greene books published this year – Professor Bernard Bergonzi's critical reappraisal of the writer, and Ian Thomson's collection of Greene's writings for *The Tablet*, a book we are delighted to have launched at this year's festival.

Greene on the screen is as always well-represented. The Birthplace Trust is delighted to have helped finance a new print of *Our Man in Havana* – first showing at the National Film Theatre in September as part of the celebrations of the centenary of Carol Reed's birth – and we will be showing the new print at the festival. We will also see the 1983 film of *The Honorary Consul*, whose screenplay writer Christopher Hampton spoke about at the 2002 festival. There will also be the chance to see the wonderful Paul Scofield in two very different television adaptations of Greene's work – one a play, the other a short story.

We continue our tradition of looking at some of Graham Greene's literary contemporaries. George Bernard Shaw and J. B. Priestley go under the microscope this year, in the latter case in a slightly different way. Though the lives of Priestley and Greene did intersect, Roy Hattersley's talk will not aim to pursue these connections, but simply to give an overview of Priestley's life and work, as a member of a literary scene of which Greene was another part. I hope the approach will give an added element of variety to the festival.

Though there is again no single theme to the festival, there is very strong emphasis on Greene's novels set in the Caribbean, Central and South America. In addition to the two films already mentioned, we have talks on Haiti and *The*



*Comedians*, Argentina and *The Honorary Consul*, and two different considerations of Mexico and *The Power and the Glory*. For the close of Saturday, though, we move to Africa: I am delighted that Michel Lechat is able to join us from Belgium, to share his memories of Greene in the Congo preparing what became *A Burnt-Out Case*, and to propose the Birthday Toast.

Add to all of this: thematic talks by Rudolf van Dalm and – who else? – Neil Sinyard, a bookstall, a Prize Draw and a Pre-Festival Quiz in aid of the Hospice of St Francis, and you have, I hope, a packed, diverse and interesting programme. Please let me know what you make of it all.

Once again I must thank *The Tablet* and Berkhamsted Collegiate School for their continuing support for the festival.

I hope the festival encourages you to read or re-read Greene's books, particularly those featured this year. Come and enjoy what's on offer, and bring a friend who's not been before. The tradition of stimulating events and convivial company will, I trust, endure.

Mike Hill

## MISCELLANY

*A Variety of Lives*
A Biography of Sir Hugh Greene
By Michael Tracey; The Bodley Head (1983)

Although this biography was published a long time ago, I only recently read it, primarily out of a GG interest. It is described as a biography and there is certainly some information about Hugh Greene's early life, his childhood in Berkhamsted and his years at Oxford. Once he starts working, however, there is not so much about his life and a lot about his work. He was foreign correspondent in Germany and was instrumental in starting up broadcasting in post-war Germany. It is clear he led a very interesting life with much of his work experience leading directly to the BBC. The latter part of the book in fact seems to be a history of the BBC of which Hugh Greene was eventually Director General. Such information is important from the point of view of a BBC historian, but of Hugh Greene's personal life … well his wives and children are actually mentioned but there really is not enough to engage a reader who is interested in the person of Graham Greene's brother.

Yan Christensen

## Berkhamsted

It is not for nothing the Trust has Birthplace in its title. We are proud of our small town and enjoy showing it to visitors, especially of course at Festival time.

Some of you may have noticed that Berkhamsted featured several times in the national press over the last year, namely in connection with our new cinema, *The Rex*. In the childhood of Graham Greene – which coincided with the childhood of the cinema – there was a cinema here, but it was pulled down to make way for Tesco. Later another was built incorporating a small parade of shops, but that was closed in 1988, presumably for lack of business.



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




*The Rex Cinema, Berkhamsted. Photograph by Colin Garrett.*

That was seen as a development opportunity for lots of flats, and in fact several were established and are now among other des. res. in the town. But for several years there was a *Save The Rex* campaign led by James Hannaway who now runs what the BBC and the national press have called 'possibly the most beautiful cinema in the country'. According to the locals there is no 'possibly' about it: *The Rex* has been restored to full 'thirties glory: there are wide comfortable seats with legroom on the balcony, and tables and a bar downstairs. A range of films is shown, old and new, and a monthly programme issued. Each film is introduced by James Hannaway personally – a unique feature which in turn delights and enrages patrons.

This cinema is without question a wonderful addition to Berkhamsted's attractions and this year one of the Festival films will be shown there. Don't miss it!

## 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.

The quotation from Arthur Calder-Marshall in *The Long Weekend* by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge might make an intriguing puzzle for the more erudite members and Friends of the Trust, those with an encyclopaedic knowledge of Graham Greene's works. Given that *Journey Without Maps* was published in 1936, and that the review probably appeared (where?) fairly soon thereafter, the puzzle is:

1 Do all the characters quoted appear in Greene's works, and
2 Where do those that are his appear?

The quotation in question reads:

'Greene, an Oxonian, a Catholic and one of the most admired novelists of the 'thirties, wrote in his *Journey Without Maps*, on returning to London from the West Coast of Africa: 'One was back or, if you will, one had advanced again, to the seedy level.' Arthur Calder-Marshall, a critic from the Left, took the phrase up and characterized Greene's writing thus: 'The seedy level! That is the location of Greeneland. The sadist and the incestuous brother and sister, the coward, the braggart, the man with the tic, the hare-lip, the spy-maniac, the torturer of spiders and the collector of small foreign coins, the diseased dentist in a foreign port, the one-legged military man managing a road-house, the rich Jew despised by aristocrats, the bullied chambermaid in an all-night hotel, the Major ordering whores by telephone ('a pig in a poke'). The lawyer who married beneath him lusting after typists who pass his window, the adulterous butcher: they are all different... but all seedy, the ingloriously vicious.'

Tony Price

I was editor of *Green Leaves*, the Journal of the Barbara Pym Society, for six years, and included a regular feature, *Pym Gleanings*, similar to your *In The Press*, giving references to Pym found in other publications. In our May 2003 issue, Vol. 9 No. 1, we included this:

Not a direct reference to Pym's work, this quote, but a resemblance. *Pym Gleanings* often suggests other writers whose works are found Pymlike. Graham Greene has never featured in these lists. But his novel, *A Gun for Sale* (Heinemann, 1936) includes a distinctly Pymian passage in its third chapter. The woman who is to open a jumble sale is late, a long queue of impatient women is waiting to get at the bargains, and the vicar is worried about not opening the sale on time:

-- then I quoted 3 paragraphs, beginning, `A dry perky woman with a cameo brooch...', `'You can't really do anything about it ...' and `"Henry", the perky woman said ...'

With my note, 'Quoted by permission of David Higham Associates'.

Hazel K. Bell

# 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.

As always there is a lot to report, some of it not very recent but still worth mentioning. Earlier this year *The Times* featured an interesting analysis by Alyson Rudd of *Brighton Rock*, a book that even now provides material for discussion. An article in *The Spectator* about a Beatrix Potter exhibition quotes Greene who had referred to her as a genius.

*Brighton and Hove Leader* had an article about the connection of famous people with Brighton and predictably mentioned *Brighton Rock* and Greene with pictures of an early poster and a much later photograph of Greene.

*The Fallen Idol* was part of the Carol Reed season at the NFT and the film was mentioned all over the USA, including in: *Boston Herald*; *Sommerville Journal*, Sommerville, MA; *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News*, Denver, Co; *Creative Loafing Atlanta*, Atlanta, GA; *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, UT; *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, Fort Worth TX; *The State*, Columbia, SC.

*The Capital Times*, Madison, USA refers to the list of authors to have had their work appear serially in *Harper's* and it includes Charles Dickens, Graham Greene and Aldous Huxley among others.

*Jameston Press*, USA tells us that the Evening Book Discussion at the Jameston library recently featured *The End of the Affair*.

*Tyler Morning Telegraph*, Tyler, TX, USA similarly reports that *The Potting Shed* was performed at Tyler Library.

*Times Online* considers GG one of the 20th century's collectible authors.

*The Telegraph*, London writes that one of Ali Smith's favourite authors is Graham Greene.

A reader writes to *Malaysia Star* to say how delighted he is to have discovered the world of GG.

*Korea Times*, South Korea mentions *The Quiet American.*

In an article *Antara*, Antara, Indonesia refers to 'a plot that would not seem out of place in a Graham Greene novel'.

An item about Capri in *The Australian*, Sydney, Australia cannot resist mentioning that GG was a regular visitor.

And *Swissinfo*, Switzerland refers to *Stamboul Train* when writing about the present Simplon Orient Express.

*Al-Ahram Weekly*, Cairo, Egypt writes: 'until Graham Greene took *Lolita* seriously and published an interview with Nabokov, no one in Europe or US was willing to review the book'.

When *The Mail and Guardian Online*, Johannesburg, South Africa mentions the President of Panama, Martin Torrijos, it naturally also mentions that he is the son of Omar Torrijos, 'who is the subject of Graham Greene's *Getting to Know the General'.*

Even the financial pages manage to get in a reference to GG whenever they mention the Greene King Brewery in Bury St Edmunds.

Now two GG quotations in the press:
*Business Standard*, India – 'Graham Greene wrote that childhood is the bank balance of the novelist…'

*Guardian Unlimited* – ' Point me out the happy man and I will point you out either egotism, evil – or else an absolute ignorance.'

It was interesting to see two mentions that bring to mind two past talks at Festivals: *Edgware Times*, Edgware, UK when writing about Julian MacLaren-Ross refers to the fact that he was much admired by GG. It is a reminder of the interesting talk we had a couple of years ago about MacLaren-Ross, the writer whom Greene encouraged and who vividly remembered a visit to the Greenes in Clapham.

The other reference was an article in *Trinidad News* about Eric Williams, the Trinidadian writer and politician. Selwyn Ryan, the writer of the article, speculates about the mental state of Eric Williams and whether he was bipolar. He cites examples of depression in the famous (Winston Churchill's 'black dog', and Sylvia Plath) and recalls Graham Greene's observation that 'writing is a form of therapy', and says that Greene in fact wondered how 'all those who do not compose or paint manage to escape the madness, the melancholy, and the panic fear that is inherent in the human condition'. This is a clear link with Rudolf van Dalm's talk at last year's Festival.

Finally – *The Guardian*, UK gave us what was probably the first plug for this year's Festival. More power to their elbow!

## THE TRUST

**Profile**

Kenneth Alan Sherwood, Ken to all who have ever been to the Festival, has until recently been Secretary and Treasurer of the Trust; as mentioned in an earlier issue he has now asked to be relieved of some of the work for health reasons.

He was born in Pinner and has lived all his life slightly north of London – in Berkhamsted since 1969.

Ken lost his father when he was only 15; his mother then took in paying guests among whom was an accountant who inspired the young son of the house to take an interest in accountancy. He had been awarded a scholarship to Merchant Taylors' School and took articles in 1952, later qualifying as a chartered accountant, having won prizes for some of the qualifying examination papers. It is amusing to learn that while he was



Quentin Falk, Neil Sinyard and Ken Sherwood at supper

training he several times went to Ashridge, once the stately home of the Earl of Bridgewater, now a management college. At that time it was a girls' finishing school attended by foreign princesses among other well-bred young ladies.

By 1968 Ken became a partner in the accountancy firm of Chalmers Impey and was later the firm's National Director of Professional Services. He retired from the firm in 1994.

No-one will be surprised to learn that Ken served in a voluntary capacity on various professional bodies; he was President in 1988 of the Association of Accounting Technicians.

He clearly had a busy professional life, but he had time to meet Jenny, marry her in 1961 and establish a 'Sherwood Dynasty' with three children and eight grandchildren of whom two are "step". Ken has always been active in the community wherever he has lived. In his youth he was a Sunday School teacher and had other voluntary functions within the church.

In Berkhamsted he has held a number of offices in Berkhamsted Citizens Association, and it was during such a term of office that he met Graham Greene who came to give a talk in August 1975. He has been active in the Town Hall Trust and held various offices for many years. He was treasurer of the Berkhamsted Arts Trust and he supports Jenny who is very active in Berkhamsted Local History and Museum Society. Ken met Graham Greene twice – once at the Kings Hall, and then again in about 1984 when GG came with his sister Elisabeth to lend support to the Town Hall Trust; at the time GG donated a book to the cause.

When it comes to this Trust, the idea started in Jenny and Ken's kitchen. Talks were then initiated with people such as David Pearce as well as local bodies until in September 1997 a gift of £500 from the Town council made decisive action necessary. The Trust was then set up, initially primarily with Trustees nominated by local organisations. Among the founder Trustees were: Ken Sherwood; David Pearce nominated by the Collegiate School; Giles Clark nominated by Berkhamsted Citizens Association. In addition



*The Town Hall, Berkhamsted.*

Roger Watkins and Jeff Edwards were co-opted. The Trust was duly launched in October 1997 with a well-attended meeting.

Several successful Festivals later we have all witnessed the growth of the Trust and enjoyed making friends in the course of furthering its aims, and Ken is to be congratulated for his part in this.

## Support The Trust!

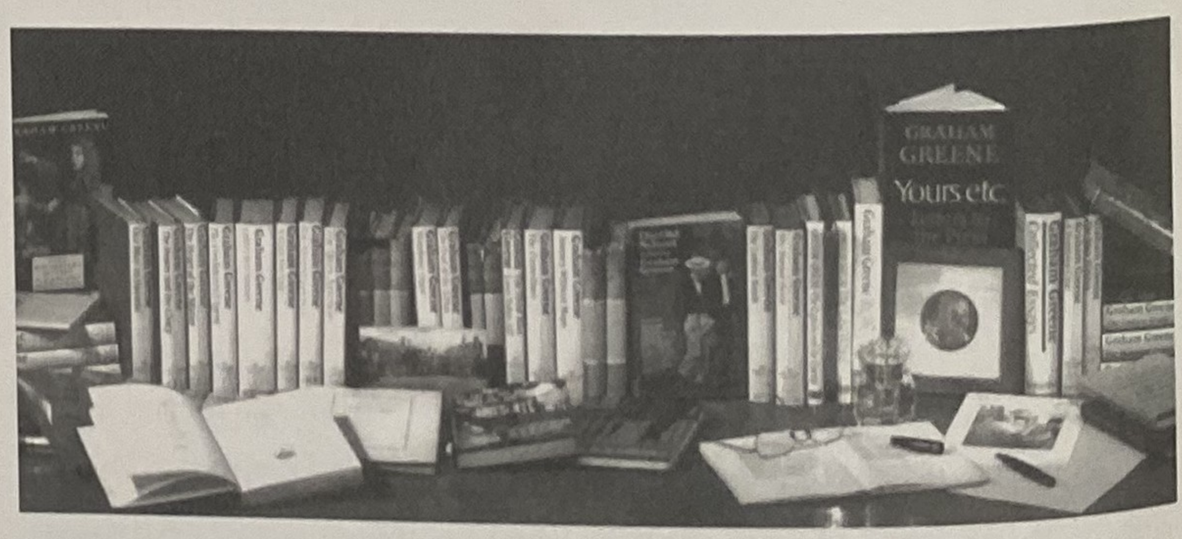
For those who did not renew their subscription earlier this summer, the present issue is the last they will get. To keep a newsletter going we do need subscribers, so if the faithful Friends want to keep receiving it they should consider whether they have friends who might like to join. More especially if you work at a school or a university – surely the library budget would run to the very modest subscription. We need you to go out there and sell the idea of supporting The Trust. The more subscribers we have the more likely it would be that we could augment the publishing budget with the occasional paid advertisement, and keep the subscriptions down.

Festival goers may want to be reminded of talks they have heard, and those who didn't make it might like to read some of the occasional papers available from the Trust. Do ask for a list of papers and CDs; there could well be something that you would enjoy. Contact trustee Hazel Ward on Hazelward@btopenworld.com or write to the editor at the address shown at bottom of the last page.

## The Reading Circle

This is by now a Berkhamsted institution with 10 members, including a local published author, Sophie King, who recently had a book launch in the High Street with her latest – *Mums @ Home*. This year we have read a selection of 20th century authors and we still have two novels by Graham Greene to (re)read, *Our Man in Havana* and *The Comedians* as well as *The Sea The Sea* by Iris Murdoch. We have a tradition of play-reading in December, but we have already 'performed' all Greene's plays so this year we shall amuse ourselves with a bit of Jeeves. Wodehouse seems a suitable choice for Christmas jollity.

Any editor is glad to receive readers' letters, and in this case it would be especially good to hear from you about any books you have particularly enjoyed recently – and whether you discerned any 'Greene' connection.




*Photograph courtesy of Peter John Gates fbipp arps*

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Literary Editor: Neil Sinyard
Correspondence to Yan Christensen, 9 Briar Way, Berkhamsted HP4 2JJ, England
Trust Office: Graham Greene Birthplace Trust, Rhenigidale, Ivy House Lane, Berkhamsted, HP4 2PP
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