A Sort of Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

Autumn 2007

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Website

Do not forget to visit the website of the Trust which is on www.grahamgreenebt.org

Editorial

Any Festival where good looking young men come up to me to say they enjoy this Newsletter is a success in my view. But fortunately there were many other enjoyable events and you can read all about them inside.

This was Mike Hill's third Festival as Director and he now hands on the baton to Dermot Gilvary; we wish Dermot all good fortune in the position and record our grateful thanks to Mike for three marvellous Festivals.

To while away the time until the next Festival you will no doubt be reading and I'd love you to contribute to a new feature which you will find at the end of this issue. Those of you that do not like puns are welcome to assume I cannot spell.

Most of you will have had details of the planned Spanish trip next May and this is to remind you that there is still time to book if you do it now. In fact the very possibility of the trip is in the balance - we do need more people in order to make it a reality, so tell all your friends about it.

Yan Christensen

Even a war of nerves has its heroic angle

Waterstones in Berkhamsted have a supply of the new edition of *The Spy's Bedside Book* editited by Graham and Hugh Greene. So now you know where to get the Christmas presents.

Newslettereditor@grahamgreenebt.org
Your comments and letters are always welcome.

The following reviews have been contributed by Yan Christensen, Hope Gilbert, Susan Johnson, John Partridge, Ros Partridge, Donna Osthaus, Jenny Sherwood and Anne Vickers.

FILM

ACROSS THE BRIDGE

Graham Greene's short story *Across the Bridge*, first published in 1938, provided the germ of a much more detailed and complex film script written by Guy Elmes and made into a film nearly twenty years later. The director, Ken Annakin, confessed that he had to work hard with Rod Steiger, an exponent of the Method school of acting, to reach agreement on the interpretation of Schaffner's character. The result was the production of a most absorbing film that launched this year's Graham Greene Festival at the Rex cinema in Berkhamsted. In changing Greene's central character, Calloway, into the corrupt, scheming Schaffner, Elmes fleshed out the original story to explain why the fugitive financier found himself in a dingy Mexican border town with only a dog as his companion. In his attempt to adopt a new personality Schaffner had mistakenly assumed the identity of a political assassin wanted by the Mexican police. Only in the last third of the film can one detect Greene's story, but apparently he approved the final draft of the film script, although he had no part in the actual filming. Both story and film reach their dénouement on the bridge linking Mexico with the USA when Calloway/Schaffner was accidentally killed by a police car whilst trying to release the dog, Dolores, used by the police to entrap him. Steiger's portrayal of Schaffner was impressive and, to his credit, he ignored the warnings of those who advised against appearing with a dog - but that was integral to the plot and provided an element of tragic-comedy which was an important feature of Greene's story. If the film was not a great success in the USA, because Steiger was not one of Hollywood's great stars, and the Mexicans objected to the way they were portrayed, the audience at the Rex was more appreciative. As a nation of dog lovers, perhaps we were won over by Schaffner's growing affection for Dolores, in the final scene his only mourner.

THEY SHOT GRAHAM GREENE AT THE NFT

Video

They Shot Graham Greene at the NFT was an apt title for this black and white film shot secretly at the NFT in 1984 - shortly before Greene's 80th birthday. It is well known that he refused to be filmed in the UK, so the existence of the video tape was kept secret until after his death. He needn't have worried; in response to Quentin Falk's and the audience's questions he came across as a charming, relaxed and humorous man with an impressive ability to recall the films made from his works. Greene's opinion that short stories make better films than novels is certainly borne out by the excellence of *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man*, both of which met with his approval. His collaboration with Carol Reed as director of both these films and *Our Man in Havana* has gone down in film history as the perfect partnership. He was also most complimentary about the 1970s Thames television adaptation of a number of his short stories. Another film he spoke highly of was *Brighton Rock* in spite of his disapproval of Hermione Baddeley as Ida. The fact that he agreed to change the ending to ensure that those who wanted a happy ending got one, only goes to show that a film is a film and a novel is a novel. On the whole Greene disliked many films based on his books, particularly those made in America. John Ford's adaptation of *The Power and the Glory*, entitled *The Fugitive*, fell into that category. Nor was he pleased with Fritz Lang's treatment of *The Ministry of Fear*, for which Lang apologised but explained that he was tied to his contract. Quite the worst film to have been made from his works was, in Greene's opinion, *Twenty One Days*, for which he wrote the script, based upon one of John Galsworthy's short stories. So bad did he consider it that he had written a scathing self-critical review in the *Spectator* which he read out to the amusement of the NFT audience. He agreed with a questioner that his film work had greatly influenced his writing and compared this to the influence of painting on the Victorian novelists and the theatre upon Henry James. J L Mankiewicz's production of *The Quiet American* he described as a complete treachery and Elizabeth Taylor's performance in *The Comedians* as a disaster. But he amused his listeners by describing Papa Doc Duvalier's accusations of him as a liar, a cretin, a sadist, a drug taker and a torturer!! No one is likely to disagree with his opinion of Otto Preminger's treatment of *The Human Factor* but, as he explained, Tom Stoppard, who wrote the script, was unable to stand up to Preminger and the result was predictably disappointing. At least he was spared a Preminger film of *A Burnt-Out Case* or, given GG's reservations about Hitchcock, a Hitchcock version of *Our Man in Havana*, however good that might have been.

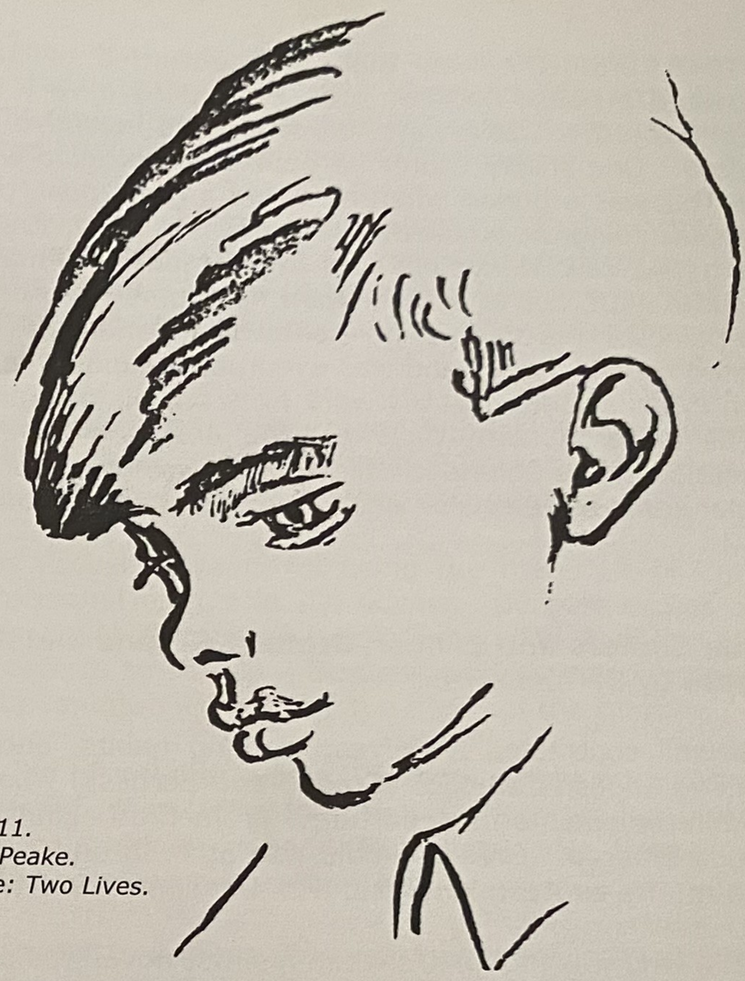
Greene's memory was impressive and his anecdotes highly amusing, particularly his story about Basil Dean holding up the filming of *Twenty One Days* for the sake of a bowl of coffee sugar!! Furthermore, he confirmed that Orson Welles' only contribution to the script of *The Third Man* was his speech about the Swiss and the cuckoo clock. One questioner remarked that the religious theme had diminished in his work over the years, but Greene remarked that *Monsignor Quixote* was essentially about religion. Of his Catholic films he stated a preference for *The End Of The Affair*, praising Deborah Kerr but finding Van Johnson's performance unsatisfactory, and not only because of his habit of chewing gum on the set! In spite of the graininess of the picture and the difficulty of hearing all the questions, the audience at the tenth Graham Greene festival was as appreciative of this unique opportunity to see film footage of Graham Greene as those who were at the NFT in 1984.

The Life and Work of Mervyn Peake.
by Sebastian Peake,

Sebastian Peake has spent his working life in the wine trade but is a poet and writer himself. He spoke at the Festival with affection and admiration about his father, Mervyn Peake, the artist and writer. He brought to life his father's work and early influences in a most compelling way as the Festival audience were able to enjoy a series of slides of drawings, paintings and photographs. These were the essence both of the talk, and of the man.

Mervyn Peake was Graham Greene's junior by about seven years and they knew and liked each other. Twice, apparently, Greene advised the young writer; on reading the unpublished draft of *Titus Groan*, though impressed, Greene suggested that he reduce its length drastically. Very sound advice which he followed. When asked on another occasion by Peake whether he should accept one farthing per copy published or a lump sum of £10, Greene advised the latter. This advice he also followed - to the huge detriment of the family fortunes.

Son of a missionary doctor and grandson of a missionary minister, Mervyn Peake was born in China in 1911, and lived there until he was 12 years old. We were shown slides which demonstrated the profound influence this background was to have on his later work. The elephants and horses and Manchu monuments became the fantastic creatures of his later stories and illustrations; pagodas became palaces.



Sebastian Peake at 11.
Drawing by Mervyn Peake.
(From Mervyn Peake: Two Lives.
©Sebastian Peake)

Through slides we were able to follow the variety of artistic styles of which Mervyn Peake was capable. As a young man he lived and worked in France and then, in the 30's on Sark, which he loved to the end of his life. Here he painted many fine portraits, including self-portraits, capturing the personalities of his sitters. Later some of these characters inspired his book illustrations. Was the Sark fisherman to become the future *Ancient Mariner*? Later work included cartoons such as his anti-war drawings; spoofs of drawings as by Hitler, and darker and more despairing, like a 20th Century Goya, in such works as his *Landscape with Figures*. Peake was a prolific artist as was evident from drawings of his family, fantastic scenes for his own books and wonderful illustrations for *Treasure Island* and other great classics. Even more striking was the variety of media at his command from delicate water colours, to powerful cross-hatched etchings and understated and touching drawings of friends and family.

In 1946, after the war, the family returned to Sark where they renovated a house and our speaker recalled a very happy childhood there. His father was always full of fun and inventive surprises for his children. One snowy winter he built them an igloo which lasted until May. This was a period when he wrote a great deal, poetry as well as prose, including the whole of *Gormenghast*. He illustrated as he wrote. During this talk we gained the impression of a many-talented and delightful man, but at a time when he should have been reaching the high-point of his career, he contracted Parkinson's disease, which blighted his later years and was eventually responsible for his untimely death in his mid-fifties. His work lives on, his portraits and paintings can be found in many galleries: the *Ancient Mariner* is now in the possession of the Coleridge collection at Dovedale. *Gormenghast* was a popular serial on television and his books are never out of print.

Saints, Sinners and Exiles: Graham Greene and Anthony Burgess by Dr. Andrew Biswell

Dr. Biswell contrasted the lives, working habits, and publications of these two English Catholics (Greene and Burgess) who had come from very different points of departure. From the beginning their working methods differed. Greene would rise at 7:30 and work from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. He wrote in longhand with the aim of 500 words for the day.

Burgess, who was in his 40's when his first novel was published, got up between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. and listened to the recording of a rousing march tune. At 10:00 a.m. he sat down at a south facing window (where guinea pigs were 'mowing' his grass) with a pint mug of English Breakfast tea (5 Twining tea bags in the tea pot). Burgess spent eight hours at his desk seven days a week. He smoked as many as 80 cigarettes while writing 1000 words a day, knowing that it would take 80,000 to complete a novel. He would take three Dexedrine tablets, if necessary, and a pint of iced gin and tonic later in the day. Burgess reviewed 350 novels in two years for a Yorkshire paper. He said he knew just how much of a novel he had to read in order to review it. Between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. he had a Welsh dinner (fried in lard) with a couple of bottles of wine. He then settled down to watch TV. Once a week he took his review copies to a bookshop for cash.

Burgess was born John Burgess Wilson in Manchester in 1917. He had a half-Irish Catholic father and an Aberdeen mother. They came from a recusant family, i.e. 'the ones who done the suffering' in the 16th century. As a cradle Catholic, Burgess despised converts. To him Greene belonged to the effete upper class of English converts. Burgess had been educated by Xavierian Brothers in Manchester.

Greene's conversion at first was intellectual: Catholic theology is 'likely to be true' and 'the Catholic Church is nearest to the truth'. However, in 1938 Greene went to Mexico where he acquired an emotional attachment to the Church and sympathy for those being persecuted.

There had been persecuted martyrs in Burgess, family, including 'Blessed Tom Wilson' also known as Thomas Summer. Martyrdom and redemption were of interest to both Greene and Burgess.

However Burgess accused Greene of using the materials of Catholic theology for sensational effects in his novels. Burgess writes about martyrdom in his novel *Tremor of Intent*, where an English Catholic rocket scientist defects to Russia. Burgess was optimistic about the Church's ability to continue if borne by the blood of the martyrs.

For Burgess the life of a writer was martyrdom where one was either ignored or subjected to hostility for one's work. Burgess wondered whether a Catholic could be a good Englishman. He believed their loyalty was divided between two authorities.

In 1966 Greene moved to Antibes. Two years later Burgess left England, first living in Malta, then in Rome, finally settling in Monaco, just down the coast from Antibes.

Greene and Burgess met in 1957 in London. Burgess had brought Greene some silk shirts from Malaga. Nigel Lewis reports the story that Greene immediately slit the cuffs to remove the opium pellets that were hidden there.

Burgess reviewed Greene's work from the 1960's. He was always enthusiastic. Greene, on the other hand, consistently corrected Burgess on facts and theology in *The Tablet*. Greene said that Burgess was good and popular, but he did not deserve to be remembered as a great novelist.

With Burgess' second marriage, he became a different person. He was a European Catholic renegade writer. The Speaker said that Burgess

wrote a different book every time in a different style. Greene, on the other hand, after *Stamboul Train*, established a clarity of style which remained throughout his work.

Greene thought that appearing on TV was beneath the dignity of a literary writer. One would play the part of either a writer or a Catholic. Burgess was freely involved in television. As Gore Vidal remembers, Greene dismissed Burgess by saying 'He goes on television'. Greene also said that Burgess amused him, but that as a born Catholic, Burgess didn't know theology.

Burgess wrote Greene's 1991 obituary anonymously in *The Telegraph*. He said that one couldn't trust Greene's Augustinian belief in a hopelessly flawed, fallen man. In his two volumes of memoirs Burgess continued to snipe at Greene. These two volumes of autobiography the writer William Boyd has described as two of Burgess' best novels.

Since their deaths in 1991 and 1993, both writers have acquired new readers. Greene wrote about the Cold War and Biswell says his novels seem less urgent. *Brighton Rock, The End of the Affair*, and the short stories do continue to be popular. He also considered that Greene was a comedian of culture, an ethical novelist, and the conscience of a generation. Burgess plays with language and his novels, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Earthly Powers*, continue to be read.

Finally it was mentioned that both writers have been victims of hostile, unintelligent biographies.

Barbara Greene, Countess Strachwitz
by Rupert Graf Strachwitz

Before Rupert Graf Strachwitz's talk the audience had the opportunity of seeing the first part of an interview with Barbara Greene on the occasion of her eightieth birthday. She came across as a dynamic, beautiful woman, whose clear blue eyes and lively presence captivated her audience. Barbara's childhood revolved around her family and her cousins, around the large, rambling house and beautiful grounds of The Hall; around her mother, who, very young herself, was so good with small children; and her father, who must have been absent a lot, overseas or away in London during the day; nevertheless his presence was always felt and respected. It was a secure childhood.

When at the age of eight Barbara was sent to the Girls' School in Berkhamsted she hated it, yet she later adored the life at the Quaker boarding school in Somerset, where she could ride alone across the Mendip Hills. The food was terrible, which meant she was well prepared for the vicissitudes of wartime in Germany. She described events as though only yesterday. We saw the young girl at her coming-out ball reluctantly wearing a dress like a Victorian lampshade, which her mother thought was lovely! Her parents agreed to her training to be a nurse, which Barbara thought would give her the chance to enjoy the delights of London. It was awful and she wanted to give up after the first year, but at her parents' insistence she saw it through to the end. To the surprise of both Barbara and her cousin, Graham, her father gave his blessing to the trip to Liberia, with the words 'I am delighted that one of my children is at last showing some initiative.'

Rupert then spoke of his mother, of his personal memories of her, of the gaps in his knowledge that he could only learn by talking to other family members. He spoke of her adventurous spirit: 'I liked it when it was difficult.' She was an enigma. She had decided to train to be a nurse, but knew absolutely nothing about nursing.

For Barbara Liberia had been 'an adventure, a turning point in her life.' One could almost speak of 'before and after Liberia., Her experiences there changed her outlook on life. Whilst in Liberia she had kept a diary, on which her later book, *Land Benighted* was based. Barbara was successful as a writer. This book was better than the one Graham had written on the same topic. Life for her had become more meaningful. She began to travel on her own. She went to Estonia in an Austin 7, with very little money. 'It was all very beautiful'.

In 1938 she went to Berlin to see her cousin, Hugh Carlton Greene. There she met Rudolph Graf Strachwitz, a diplomat, and they fell in love. War loomed on the horizon and Barbara was advised to go back to England, but for her 'staying seemed more adventurous.' They eventually married in March 1943. During the war years Barbara suffered many hardships. *Der Spiegel* accused her of collaboration with Lord Haw Haw. She was followed by the Secret Police on numerous occasions. She was reduced to working as a cleaner, suffered two miscarriages and had two difficult operations. Nevertheless she received many kindnesses. During the entire war years she received no messages back from her family in England although they heard from her. She became friendly with those involved in the 20th July plot against Hitler and was indeed in a potentially dangerous position. Her attitude

to Germany, like much else in her character was ambiguous. Half-German herself, and married to a German, she always considered Britain to be best. Yet she never regained her British citizenship, although to her England was always home. As a widow she could have lived in England. Her mother came from a liberal German family and had always retained her ties with Germany and its intellectual heritage. Barbara's German was not so good and because of the World War I years she had never developed a good relationship with her German cousins. However, she was almost closer to her English cousins than she was to her own brothers and sisters.

When the War ended she took refuge in Liechtenstein where Rudolph joined her after being released from prison. He returned to the diplomatic service and the family spent four years in South America and then nine years in the Vatican. Retirement she did not enjoy. Ordinary life bored her. She was a person of enthusiasms, of ambiguities, an enigma. Looking back on her early life she said, 'I wasted time and now time wastes me.' She was indeed a truly remarkable woman. 'I have had an interesting and varied life...warmed by affection...nothing is purposeless.'

FILM

The End of the Party is a student film based on the Graham Greene short story written in 1929. The film won Best Short Film in Rome and at Cambridge and was made by Sebastian Godwin. He had grown up in St Albans and had played as a boy in the grounds of Berkhamsted Castle. He had been attracted to the story because of the Greene connection and because of the challenge of making a film about the dark. How do you film the dark? He also wanted to bring the story up-to-date.

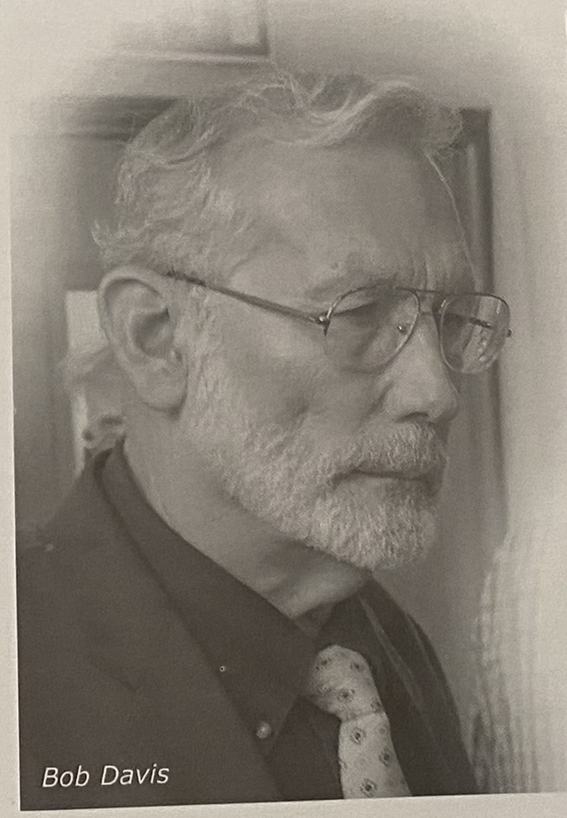
The film is about twins - Peter and Francis - one of whom, Francis, is afraid of the dark. Francis dies at the end of the party when Peter touches him to comfort him in a game in the dark. There is an ambiguity both in the short story and in the film about the identity of the twins. Are they truly separate? The film twins wear slightly different shirts but we are uncertain who we are looking at. We know whose the diabetic syringe is. But who is removing it?

Atmospheric shots gave a good impression of the terrors of the dark. The time of the action was successfully updated at least as far as the Fifties. An enjoyable film.

The second film - ***Went The Day Well?*** - is loosely based on the Graham Greene short story *The Lieutenant Died Last*. Neil Sinyard gave his usual introduction full of insights and ideas. The film was directed in 1942 by Cavalcanti as a war propaganda film with the message 'Be on your guard!' 'Be alert!' The film shows a German unit dressed in British uniforms occupying a British village. Their accents and manners are at first impeccable. When they are found out, monstrous violence ensues - not only by the Germans but also by the English villagers. The final scenes are of soldiers in British uniforms killing each other in an orgy of violence. The film also includes two murders by women. Is there such a thing as a necessary murder? In addition two other women are keeping score as if at a fairground shooting gallery. Is this a pacifist film? There is a social strand to this film too: the traitor is an upper class cad - detectable by the camel hair coat slung over his shoulders. He is shot by a decent woman who really can't believe what she has just done. Is England in turmoil with itself?

Figures in Greene's Carpet: *The Power and the Glory to Monsignor Quixote*

Talk by Prof Robert Davis


Bob Davis

It is always a pleasure to welcome back a speaker from a previous Festival, and that was the case with Bob Davis. His talk quoted Waugh who had said he envied painters that could return to the same subject again and again, whereas a writer had to find something new to write about; in the case of Waugh his novels did have a 'pattern in the carpet' and Greene acknowledged that there might be one in his but he wanted to remain unaware of it and not want his 'nose rubbed in it'.

Bob Davis considered he had detected something of a pattern, namely one relating to pursuit, geographical or psychological. *The Power and the Glory* (1940) and *Monsignor Quixote* (1982) both deal with variations on the pursuit/quest

theme and several other novels including for example *The Man Within* and *A Gun for Sale*. Our attention was then drawn to a number of parallels between the two books of the title - both with a priest as the central character. Both priests are on the whole more concerned with what practical good they can do rather than theology, with the spirit rather than the letter of their religion.

The talk explored a great many facets of both books as well as mentioning some of Greene's other novels. It was interesting to hear of the background to each: in the case of the older novel there is *The Lawless Roads*, the travel book resulting from Greene's trip to Mexico to investigate the state of religion under the hostile regime; and in the case of *Monsignor Quixote* Greene's holidays with Fr Durán when the two of them travelled in Spain and visited the places later described in the book. With more than four decades between the two books there were an amazing number of details and connections to be drawn and Professor Davis' audience will no doubt enjoy their re-reading of both novels more in the light of this talk.

Dr. Tamas Molnar interviewing László Róbert, introduced by Ramon Rami Porta

As Mike Hill said when thanking the three presenters, 'Where else but the Graham Greene Festival would you hear a Hungarian thoracic surgeon being introduced by a Spanish thoracic surgeon who later helps translate the French spoken by a Hungarian author and journalist who had known Graham Greene!'

This fascinating trio gave us a 'first' for the Festival as Graham Greene's connection with Hungary had scarcely been touched upon at previous Festivals. Ramon (the Spanish surgeon) is a regular visitor to Festivals and, on this occasion, introduced his friend Dr. Tamas Molnar (the Hungarian surgeon) who, with the help of slides, gave us a personal reflection on the huge influence Graham Greene's work had had on him as a youth in communist Hungary.

As Dr. Molnar said, 'To be a Catholic is never simple, being a teenager is often difficult and then to be middle-class', to be all three of these under a communist regime was very hard. Through his discovery of the work of Graham Greene he felt he had found an author who was like an uncle and a brother. He said this discovery led to a life-long liking for the English and English humour. At the time of his adolescence in Hungary the church was very much out of favour. It was under close scrutiny and often mocked. To him and his friends it seemed countries in the West had untold freedom. As he commented, the Communists liked 'liberation' as long as it was as far away as possible! He served some of his military service in Poland where he found priests were more open and more modern in their outlook and later influential in the process of change. In Hungary, he felt Graham Greene's books helped keep a glimmer of Catholicism alive.

Dr. Molnar then introduced his friend László Róbert who, like him, came from Pécs. Born there in 1926 László Róbert first studied French and became a correspondent in Rome and Paris. At the end of the Vietnam war he became a member of the International Ceasefire Commission and was in Saigon which (*The Quiet American*) was also well-known to Greene. He has written several books as well as producing TV documentaries one of which looked at priests of various religions. Two of his books relate specifically to Graham Greene - *The Hotel Majestic* (Saigon) and *The Greene Connection.*

They first met in Paris in 1973 and from this a friendship and correspondence developed which lasted nearly 20 years. In a very generous gesture László Róbert has since given all of this 'memorabilia' to Ramon Porta as he came to know of his keen involvement in all aspects of Greene's life and work. He also knows Fr. Durán and toasted him at the end of his presentation which took the form of an interview between him and Dr. Molnar.

The night they met Graham Greene asked László Róbert to his flat the following day. He was not to know there was a film crew with him but, although usually reluctant to be filmed, he agreed on this occasion. He later went to see the film being edited in



László Róbert

have been more successful if it had been more schematic? He felt it might have been, but it would have been a lesser novel. It is a great novel because it is richer and messier, just like life, and difficult to interpret. The black humour and the breakdown of communication at the book's heart make it painfully comic, exemplified by Querry's enigmatic last words, 'Absurd. This is absurd or else...' Absurdity, misplaced humour, runs through the book.

All of which brings us back to the speaker. A teacher of English who achieved political notoriety as an administrative hard-man, and now wants to atone as an academic. How very Greene.

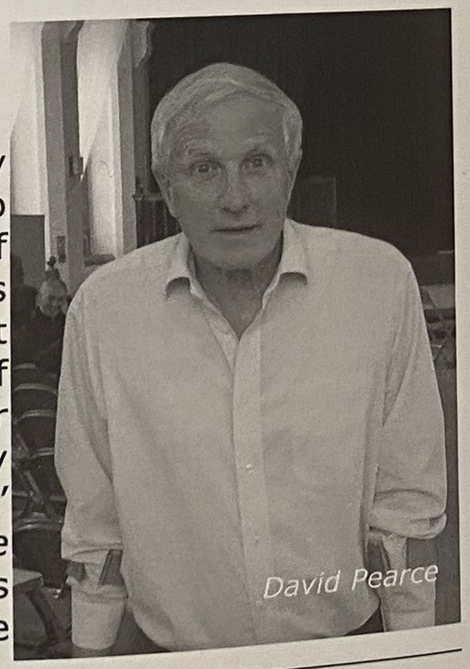
The Guardian of 9 October carried a review of Chris Woodhead's talk, mentioning that he 'chose a lecture at a Graham Greene festival in Berkhamsted to expand... on the inadequacies of Eng. Lit teaching'. ed

TRIBUTE TO AMANDA SAUNDERS

The Trust has lost a great friend and valuable support with the death of Amanda Saunders in February and David Pearce paid tribute to her memory. She was a talented woman who had set aside her own career to become her uncle's secretary in his last years. He clearly valued her a great deal and described her in a letter: '...my secretary is a complete safety box! And also incidentally my niece!' Amanda Saunders was very supportive of The Trust and helped successive Festival Directors with contacts and inspiration.

IN THE STYLE OF GRAHAM GREENE

By David Pearce


David Pearce

This event consisted of pieces, mostly selected by Mike Hill, that were intended to copy Greene's style, as well as snippets of Greene lore, including a quote from one of his letters to the effect that he had found out that *Brighton Rock* was being used as the name of a shade of knickers. He wondered whether that was fame! By 1945 Greene was already a term of reference and there were 'tributes' such as a chapter from David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down*; other items were entries to competitions including some submitted by Greene himself. As we now know, he came second in one such competition. Hugh Greene entered in 1965 under the name of Mr. Ely and Elizabeth Dennys, GG's sister entered as Catherine Onslow. One of Greene's own entries eventually became the beginning of the novel *The Captain and the Enemy.*This was a performance by David Pearce which to an extent missed the humour in favour of farce.

OVER THE BORDER - THE LETTERS OF GRAHAM GREENE

Edited by Prof. Richard Greene

When Richard Greene last visited the Graham Greene Festival in 2004 he was in the process of editing Greene's letters which have now been published to wide acclaim. Once more we were privileged to hear Richard Greene talk about this impressive collection at this year's festival. Not only does he show us a man of wit and passion who chronicled the human condition, but also a hard-working writer who researched his subject meticulously and produced between 500 and 1,000 words a day. In editing these letters Richard Greene set himself a mammoth task as the author wrote approximately 2,000 letters a year. One surprising cache was recently found in a hollow book and we were told that many of his letters have not yet surfaced. In his editor's opinion there is more to learn about Graham Greene from his letters than from the existing biographies. Travelling and privation were essential to him and he stored away his experiences to emerge in his works often decades later. For example, his interest in Paraguay can be dated back to letters he wrote in 1929 and that country provided a setting in two later novels - *Travels With My Aunt* (1969) and *The Honorary Consul* (1973). Letters to his mother and brother Raymond from Sierra Leone in 1941 convey the ambience and atmosphere later described in *The Heart of The Matter* (1948). The complexity of his private life and religious beliefs are shown in his letters to his wife Vivien and his mistress Catherine Walston and are reflected in both *The Heart of The Matter* (1948) and *The End of The Affair* (1951). The exchange of letters between Graham Greene and other writers shows the difficulties they all encountered in their dealings with publishers, agents, translators and reviewers. With them he revealed his opinions of other writers like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, E.M. Forster etc. There are numerous letters that show his generosity to aspiring writers like Muriel Spark and R.K. Narayan not to mention the help he gave to foreign writers who were suffering persecution at the hands of

totalitarian governments. His letter to Kim Philby's wife clearly shows that to Greene friendship overrode national loyalty. Humility also appears to have been one of his characteristics as shown in a letter in which he compares his own *The Power And The Glory* adversely with a novel about the Jesuit mission to Japan by the Japanese writer Shusaku Endo. This, in Graham Greene's opinion, had not received its due recognition. To many Graham Greene is still seen as a Catholic writer although he qualified this by describing himself as a writer who happened to be a Catholic. But religion remained important to him to the end of his life. The reforms of the second Vatican Council left him unhappy and Pope John Paul II was a disappointment to him. However, as Richard Greene emphasised, whilst his letters reveal his religious doubts, they do not equate with disbelief. Graham Greene is quoted as saying 'I am my books' but anyone reading his letters will gain an additional insight into the man and the writer. For those who have not yet read this collection Richard Greene's presentation will have whetted their appetites.

It is hoped to bring a review of Prof. Greene's book in the next issue. ed.



Professor Greene

CLIVE FRANCIS TALKS ABOUT *Our Man in Havana* AS A PLAY

Clive Francis is a professional actor who scripted and appeared in a recent production of *Our Man in Havana* and he came to the Festival fresh from a run at Windsor. He spoke about meeting Graham Greene many years ago and about his own work on writing the script to get the book on stage. He had used the technique that worked so well with *Travels With my Aunt*, namely having just a few actors performing all the parts. It was fascinating to get a glimpse behind the scenes and for those who had seen the play it was quite easy to understand the difficulties of keeping up with the very fast changes. Clive Francis himself appeared in a number of guises including a mother superior and a stripper! And he looked such a nice, respectable man too! An interesting and refreshing talk.

LIMELIGHT IN VIENNA: A JOURNEY ROUND GREENE'S MOST CHARISMATIC VILLAIN

by Professor Neil Sinyard

In taking us on a journey round Greene's most charismatic villain Neil discussed the characterisation of Harry Lime, visually, verbally and dramatically, and examined his relationship with his life-long friend, Holly Martins. Harry Lime is presumed dead, which immediately poses a dilemma. The link between the two friends is Anna, loyal and in mourning. As always, Neil was able to see the influence of other writers. Perhaps the genesis of Anna could be seen in the *Heart of Darkness* and the plot, the evil of Harry Lime, in Conrad - 'the fascination of the abomination.'

The name Lime portrays great symbolism. Lime, quick lime, 'how slippery his brilliant mind can be.' Lime is a shade of green. The absence of Harry dominates the film, yet he is always present. In different ways we see evidence of this. He must be found soon, but 'How?' and 'When?'

Harry's moment comes with the scene with the cat and Holly's childhood chant, 'Come out, come out whoever you are!' The skilful use of shadow and light, the suspense, the anticipation, the light shines on the highly polished shoes, and momentarily on Harry's face, as the window is opened above. Harry cannot resist the limelight! A shadowy figure moves along the wall. Holly dashes across the road, narrowly missing a passing car, and Harry is gone.

The film is a long drawn out game of hide and seek, which culminates in the final chase in the sewers. This can be compared with Greene's scenes of hide and seek in *The Fallen Idol* and *The End of the Party*. They start off as fun but go horribly wrong.

Orson Welles only appeared for eight minutes in the film, but as Harry Lime he had that 'look of cheerful rascality'. He is a 'hollow man', living on 'the dangerous edge of things.' 'We ought to have dug deeper than the grave' in the search for Harry. Greene's use of dialogue in the film is brilliant for its simplicity, for its topicality. It reflects the disordered period in which the film is set.

Nowhere is this more so than in the scene on the great wheel when we see in a few minutes of dialogue the relationship between the two friends. It is this earlier friendship that has kept Holly in Vienna. In Harry we see still the element of the naughty schoolboy, who always landed others in trouble, and has never really grown up. 'What can I do, old man, I'm dead, aren't I?' 'Nobody thinks in terms of human beings.' Holly, '**You** told them.' 'Safe for you, not safe for her.' 'Have you seen any of your victims?'

'Would you really feel any pity if any of those little dots stopped moving?' One sees here the absolute callousness of Harry, who in spite of his claiming to believe in God no longer has a conscience, only indigestion! Maybe he also represents the new post-war cynicism.

Then we come to the 'betrayal' of Harry Lime by his closest friend. 'As if I'd do anything to you, or you to me!' Harry's last line about the cuckoo clock, inserted by Orson Welles himself is 'clever, cheeky, barbaric, heartless'. It expresses the failure of democracy, a contempt for human values. Holly's action exhibits the virtue of disloyalty. Anna tears up the papers. 'There's a name for faces like that.'

Realistic, symbolic, mystical, *The Third Man* ends as it began, in the cemetery. The light has gone out for Harry Lime. The leaves are falling, but Anna walks on to an uncertain future.

Action has a moral simplicity which thought lacks

MISCELLANY

We very much regret to announce that Judith Watts, frequent Festival-goer and wife of Cedric Watts has recently died. Our thoughts and condolences go to Cedric and the family.

Our Man in Havana
Adapted for the stage by Clive Francis

Sometimes I think that it is impossible to go to the theatre successfully to see anything that I already know. Almost never does the production live up to expectation. Of course, I did not know this new dramatisation billed as a 'Comedy Thriller', but there was the nagging caution that the novel itself leaves its own scenario, and that the Alec Guinness film is, as they say, a classic. How utterly wrong I was about *Our Man in Havana* adapted by Clive Francis from the Graham Greene novel.

This production at the Theatre Royal, Windsor was a personal triumph for Clive, who had been modestly saying that he had 'something' on in Windsor just before the Festival. This 'something' was his idea, and he brought Graham's tongue-in-cheek portrayal of MI6 machinations in the Caribbean to life with verve, wit, colour and clarity. Only four actors, but they brought all the characters to life - instantly, absolutely, convincingly. Wormold, Hasselbacher, Segura, Carter (the name of the old school 'chum'), Beatrice, Hawthorne, Milly. Off into the wings and back again - a different character, a different voice, demeanour and dress. Such slickness, such assurance.

The audience was totally enthralled. It was a Thursday afternoon matinee for those with sticks and incontinence. There was the scent of boiled sweets. But the cast of Simon Shepherd, Hywel Morgan, Kelly Adams and Clive Francis had the house gripped and laughing from beginning to end. Here were actors enjoying themselves because of the script, because of their sheer delight in interacting. Never for a moment a slackening or dullness. The words woke all sorts of resonances, not just of Greene but of all imagined sinister police chiefs, Spanish waiters, fatuous Foreign Office mandarins, English gents abroad, commercial travellers, women who type, spend money, tease.

Because the characters have to be so clearly differentiated, the

subtleties and double-play of the plot are brought out even more clearly. Delicious moments of farce: Clive Francis in a kind of Aunt Augusta striptease act. Visual jokes - the cockpit of the plane, the car journeys, clambering out of the window, screened pictures of those terrifying weapons of mass destruction. Anything can be risked because Clive realises that the audience will have fallen under the spell of what was exuberant, noisy, racy, - just fun. Added to story is the piquancy of dubious present day politics - Basra, and the tackiness of the bestowal of Honours. Not now a mere OBE for our vacuum salesman, but a knighthood, while Hawthorne, after a lifetime of service, can but sigh and look on.

If the London theatre knows what is good, it will not miss this trick.

David R.A.Pearce

Ruth and David Pope saw the play in Guildford and wrote to us about it; from their letter there is no doubt they also enjoyed it a lot. ed

Greene Audio CD

We are very happy to draw your attention to a new audio CD of Graham Greene's Spoken Word recordings. It is launched by British Library Publishing and the recordings are drawn from rarely heard BBC broadcasts together with extracts from the longest private interview that he gave. Greene reads passages from several of his autobiographical works - notably *In Search of a Character* and *Ways of Escape* - and discusses in depth how his travels to far corners of the world and constant search for excitement informed his writing. Most of the recordings are being published here for the first time.

The CD is available online from www.bl.uk/shop or of course from the British Library Shop if you are in London. We hope to review the CD in a future issue.

Lonely Without God: Graham Greene's Quixotic Journey of Faith

A number of academics, including our own Cedric Watts, contributed to this book which is a study of Graham Greene's faith; several novels are discussed. Copies can be obtained at $39.95 from Academica Press LLC, e-mail: Academicapress@aol.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.

The following letter is somewhat out of date for which apologies to Cedric Watts, but it contains interesting speculation and is therefore brought now:

In a catalogue of Waterfield's, Antiquarian Booksellers, Oxford, there were some time ago many items from the library of Vivien Greene:

One item was Jacob Abbott's *Rollo in London*, 1864, featuring the adventures of a 12-year-old boy. Perhaps this work was the origin of the odd Christian name (Rollo) of the hero of Greene's tale, *The Third Man.* The name was changed to Holly in the film, and in *Ways of Excape* Greene says that this was because Joseph Cotton, the actor, thought that Rollo had homosexual connotations. (The jazz musician 'Jelly Roll' Morton, however, was alleged to have gained his nickname by virtue of his heterosexual prowess). Another item was L.T.C. Rolt's *Narrow Boat*, 1944; perhaps the author provided the surname of the heroine of *The Heart of the Matter* (Helen Rolt). Greene's novel is dated 1948.

The third item was an annotated edition of J.W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*, presented by Graham to Vivien Greene in 1931, confirming the importance of this work for both Greenes. The links between Dunne's theories and Greene's novels were discussed in my *Preface to Greene* and in a lecture at the Festival a few years ago.

Cedric Watts

With reference to the article 'The Friends go to Vienna, Mark II' in ASON Summer 2007 I should like to point out that Zsolnay, whilst publishing Greene's books in German is not his German publishing house, but his Austrian one. Currently his books in Germany are published by the Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag (dtv). I do not know if this has always been the case.

For the centenary of Greene's birth both Zsnolnay and dtv brought out special editions, Zsolnay: *Graham Greene, zum 100. Geburtstag am 2.*

Oktober 2004. Dtv published a biography, *Graham Greene und der Reichtum des Lebens* by Ulrich Greiwe and additionally new editions of three of his books.

I have copies of both the commemorative writings.

Jenny Sherwood

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.

The subscription to Google Alert continues to provide daily instances of GG being mentioned in the news, reviews, and blogs. This time just a few examples of what one finds: GG's cousin Felix Greene apparently wrote several books on communism and made a film about Tibet. *Brighton Rock* can at auction fetch £200-£300 without its wrapper, but £3000 with. One blog claims that *The Honorary Consul* was Greene's favourite. Michel Lechat's paper which was published after last year's Festival was received with interest. A blogger thought that in English literature only Shakespeare outranked GG. Even President Bush has been quoting Greene.

And his birthday was remembered on the internet - something that may well have filled the techno-phobic GG with wonder. His brother Raymond Greene was mentioned in *The Wall Street Journal* as the leader of a team of clinicians who published a textbook entitled *The Practice of Endocrinology.* J K Rowling is quoted as saying: 'Like Graham Greene, my faith is sometimes that my faith will return'.

Then of course the first film version of *The End of the Affair* was mentioned in connection with the death of its heroine Deborah Kerr.

Book and Magazine Collector reviewed Richard Greene's *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters*, and *The Independent* of 28 September reviewed the CD mentioned earlier in a lengthy article kindly sent in by a reader; the review was very positive, as was the favourable review in

The Times of 3 November. We hope to carry reviews of both the book and the CD in a future issue.



An interesting snippet appeared in *Timesonline*: at the Cheltenham Literary Festival a panel selects a Pre-Booker (pre-1969) winner, this time for 1932 which included such well know favourites as *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley; *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons; *Black Mischief* by Evelyn Waugh; and *Stamboul Train* by Graham Greene. The winner apparently surprised a lot of people, but won't surprise you! Yes, Our Man won.

The Spanish *El Païs* brought a whole page article about Greene in August this year. The writer, Manuel Vincent, goes into some detail of Greene's childhood in Berkhamsted, his start in journalism, his conversion, his affair with Walston and several of his novels.

The Gazette is the local paper and it did the Festival proud with a column reporting the success of the Festival immediately after the event; and then a week later a longer piece featuring the talk by Graf Strachwitz and information about his mother, Barbara Greene, and her adventurous life.

It really is good to see the local press doing us proud in this fashion - especially as the piece ended with information about how to become a Friend of the Trust.

Last in this section, and far from least, it was wonderful to see Richard Greene's review of the Festival in the Sunday Telegraph Magazine of 21 October. Prof. Greene commented on several of the speakers and on the Festival generally. Wonderful publicity for us - thank you, Richard!

THE TRUST

We are very happy to be able to announce that Lucy Saunders, the daughter of Ron and Amanda Saunders, and great-niece of Graham Greene, has agreed to be a patron of the Trust. We were particularly delighted to welcome her at the recent Festival.



Lucy Saunders

Lucy Saunders between Louise Dennys and Nick Dennys

TALEPIECE

What have you been reading? This is where readers can have a say about literature, whether connected to GG or not. Tell us what you have been reading and what you thought of it. Treat this as an informal Reading Circle where you can express your views about literature modern or classical, serious, thrilling or funny.

Those that were there will long remember that superb raconteur, Rick Gekosky, at a Festival some years ago. I recently read his book *Tolkien's Gown* about his life as a rare books dealer. Fun to read and surely instructive for prospective collectors.

Another recent acquisition was an example of Greene merchandising: *Victorian Villainies* edited by Graham and Hugh Greene and with a foreword by the latter. The book consists of four Victorian novels of which some are rather dated and one, *The Beetle*, would now be classed as science fantasy or horror rather than a thriller. *The Great Tontine* by Hawley Smart was fairly interesting, but I think the whole book would only interest those with a penchant for Victorian villainies. I am, however, told that a contributor at the recent Sorbonne conference on *The Power and the Glory* thought *The Beetle* might have been an influence on the imagery of that novel.



Scenes from a Festival











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