A Sort of Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

Summer 2007

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

Editorial

Very soon we shall all meet again. In the last issue you read Mike Hill's preview of the tenth Festival and I am sure there will have been items to tempt you. The annual brochure should now also be with you and you will have even more details. I am particularly looking forward to the films, which this year include a relatively new film based on a short story that I believe has not hitherto been the subject of a film: *The End of the Party*. The same evening we have a very old film, *Went the Day Well?* which I have seen before and can thoroughly recommend.

Ten years ago there were those who thought we could not go on having Greene Festivals, but here we are coming up for the tenth with no sign of slackening. The Festival Directors are opening up the event and other authors are being discussed but there is without doubt a lot of mileage left in GG and we shall be enlivening the Berkhamsted scene for many years to come.

We do need you to be part of it, so make sure you join us for at least some of the events.

Yan Christensen

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Your comments and letters are always welcome.

There is always one moment in childhood when
the door opens and lets the future in.

The Third Man DVD: The Criterion Collection 2007

For those of you who bought the fine Double Disc Special Edition of *The Third Man* released by Optimum Classics last year, I have bad news: the doyen of DVD production companies, Criterion, has just produced its own two-disc set and it is finer still. Indeed, I would go further: it is one of the best DVD productions of any film that I have ever seen, containing hour upon hour of fascinating information, drama and entertainment additional to the film itself.

As collectors amongst you will know, the production of DVDs has developed considerably over recent years. It is no longer a case of simply providing a quality copy of the film; the best of them now have additional features that contribute significantly to film knowledge, history and scholarship. Probably because of fewer resources, British companies have tended to be less adventurous than their American counterparts, a fact which has prompted the collector to shop around when more than one edition of a favourite film has come available. For example, the British DVD version of Billy Wilder's masterpiece, *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* – a film famously and savagely cut for its cinema release – just gave us the film. The American release, by contrast, went to great lengths to try and piece together the missing footage and soundtrack and provided the most complete cinematic compilation of that great movie that we are likely to have.



'Geoff, I think we've seen enough of the Harry Lime Adventure Tour.'

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The Optimum edition of *The Third Man* supplemented the film with useful material on Anton Karas, some original radio broadcasts, and the documentary *Shadowing 'The Third Man'*. Criterion's edition also contains the documentary, but the supplementary materials are more extensive. For film scholars, there are many fascinating items: for example, introduction and commentary from film-makers Peter Bogdanovich and Steven Soderbergh; an Austrian documentary that features interviews with cast and crew; Joseph Cotten's alternative voice-over narration for the US version of the film (the British version had voice-over by Carol Reed). Those particularly interested in the Greene angle will find a fine, hour-long 'Omnibus' documentary on him, first broadcast in 1968; and a reading of Greene's original treatment by the actor Richard Clarke. People intrigued by the after-life of *The Third Man* will relish the inclusion of two radio inspirations arising from the film, one of which is written and performed by Orson Welles. If this were not enough (and I have not space to mention everything), the package is beautifully produced, with an illustrated booklet featuring three stimulating essays and even details about where one can find further information on the film, including reference to Brigitte Timmermann's splendid book and Viennese tour.

Sometime in the future it might be interesting to round up other DVD editions of Greene adaptations and see how they have been treated, but I will mention here also Criterion's fine production last year of *The Fallen Idol*, less lavish than for *The Third Man* (understandably so, since it has not acquired the same legendary status) but still superbly done: it includes a documentary on Carol Reed and a gorgeously illustrated booklet with essays from David Lodge and Reed's biographer, Nicholas Wapshott. They are both American productions so would need to be played on equipment compatible with their system, but if you are interested in acquiring these discs – and I cannot recommend them too highly – then details of how to order can be found on their website at criterion.com.

Neil Sinyard

We understand that *The End of the Party*, which will be shown at this year's Festival, is now also available on DVD. ed

Alice Greene – Teacher and campaigner
South African Correspondence 1887-1902.
Troubadour Publishing Ltd Leicester £22.95

John Barham, one of Edward Greene's grandsons, has edited the correspondence between Alice Greene, one of Edward Greene's sisters who went to South Africa in 1887 to teach at the Collegiate School in Port Elizabeth, and her family in England and Canada. The letters contain much of interest including the family's move to Harston in Cambridgeshire which was organised by Alice's elder brother, Graham who was later knighted for his services at the Admiralty.



Another of Alice's brothers was Charles Greene (GG's father). Of special interest are the various references to Berkhamsted – especially the references to the School boarding house at St. John's where one learns that, before Charles married Marion on 31 December 1895, his younger sister Helen, who had trained as a PE teacher, acted as Charles' housekeeper. We also learn that the Greene family had some reservations about the potential difficulties that could arise from a marriage between cousins, although the family was to some extent reassured that the risks were less because Marion was Charles' cousin once removed. There is an interesting reference to Dr. Fry who was known in the Greene family as Charlie, his wife Julia being another Greene cousin. The correspondence includes references to visits to Harston by Marion and Charles and their young family but comes to an end well before the birth of Graham in 1904.

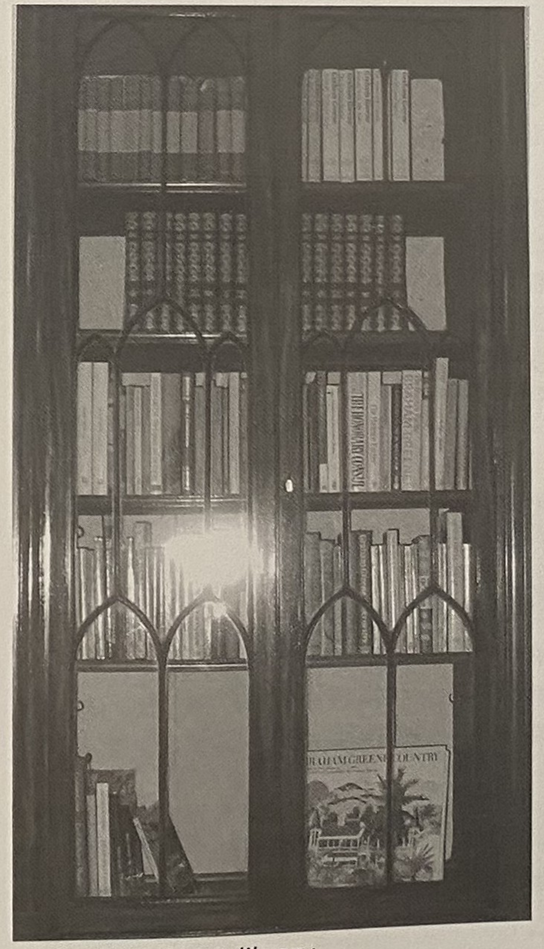
Ken Sherwood

There is a splinter of ice in the heart of a writer

MISCELLANY

BARBARA GREENE CENTENARY – 28 September 2007

Barbara Greene came to Berkhamsted from Brazil when she was still a toddler and later moved with her family into the Hall, the site of which is now occupied by Swing Gate Lane First School. Her mother, Eva Stutzer, was the daughter of a German missionary pastor. Her father, Edward Greene, became a member of Berkhamsted Urban District Council and was a church warden for many years of Sunnyside Church. As a young girl Barbara was regarded by her 5 brothers and sisters as somewhat of a tearaway and easily the wildest of the Hall Greenes. She did not like Berkhamsted School for Girls and at the age of 13 moved to a Quaker Boarding School in Somerset where she enjoyed the freedom of riding her own horse over the Mendip hills.



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In 1935 she was challenged by her cousin Graham to join him on a trek through Liberia. Graham later wrote *Journey Without Maps* in which Barbara was hardly mentioned; Barbara published her own version of their jungle trek under the title *Land Benighted*, republished many years later under a new title *Too Late to Turn Back*. Barbara's book was reviewed in the April 1939 issue of the *Berkhamsted Review*. In 1938 Berkhamsted School for Girls reported under news from old girls that 'Barbara Greene has taken to travelling in Africa'.

Later in the 1930's while on a visit to her cousin Hugh who was the *Telegraph's* reporter in Berlin, Barbara met and fell in love with Count Rudolf von Strachwitz, a German diplomat. Stranded in Berlin at the beginning of the Second World War she worked as an office

cleaner. Eventually she married Rudolf. They had two children – Rupert who is visiting this year's Graham Greene Festival in Berkhamsted to talk about his mother, and Ilona who was born in 1951 in Argentina when Barbara was 44.

Later Rudolf became German Ambassador to the Vatican.

In 1961 Barbara compiled an anthology of prayers entitled *God of a Hundred Names.*

Barbara died in Germany in December 1991 just a few months after her cousin Graham.

If you would like to see part of a videotape recorded by Barbara at her family's request and meet her son Rupert, why not come to the Graham Greene Festival? You will find full information about the Festival programme on www.grahamgreenefestival.com

Ken Sherwood

I have no talent. It's just a question of working,
being willing to put in the time

Those that attended last year's Festival will be pleased to hear that Michel Lechat's talk on GG will appear, in a slightly edited form, in the *London Review of Books* on 2 August. The article looks and reads very well, and Dr Lechat is absolutely delighted.

Greene and Crispin

I was recently reading a detective story by Edmund Crispin, the pen name of Bruce Montgomery, who was born in Chesham Bois in 1921. The story *Holy Disorders* had been published in 1945 and was one of Crispin's earliest stories about his fictional detective and Oxford Professor of English known as Gervase Fen. I was surprised to find Crispin describing one of his characters, a landlord of a village pub, as 'like something out of Graham Greene'. I cannot recall Greene ever describing a landlord of a village pub.

When Crispin wrote *Holy Disorders* he was only 24 so it would seem that he must have been one of those young writers who were influenced by GG's earlier works.

Crispin's friends include Kingsley Amis and Philip Larkin but I can find no record of him ever meeting or corresponding with Greene. It seems to be mere chance that Greene chose the name Montgomery when he played a joke on his colleagues at Eyre and Spottiswoode by pretending to have lost a manuscript by a Mrs Montgomery (*Life of Graham Greene* by Norman Sherry Vol. 2).

Crispin married late in life and died in 1978 while still in his fifties.

Ken Sherwood

We notice that David Lodge's talk '*Graham Greene and the Anxiety of Influence*', given at the Centenary Festival, has recently been published by him in a collection of his writings entitled '*The Year of Henry James: The Story of a Novel*'. (The title comes from the main essay in the volume, on the year Lodge spent writing his novel on James, 'Author, Author'.)

Nobody knows the beginning of anything

And did you know that Bernie Taupin, Elton John's lyricist, collects first editions especially Greene? He bought from Rick Gekowski, whom Festival-goers will remember, a copy of *Lolita* in 1992 inscribed with the customary butterfly drawing thus - 'For Graham Greene from Vladimir Nabokov, November 8, 1959'. He paid £9,000 and sold it a bit later for not a lot more. Slightly daft move as in 2002 it made $264,000 at Christies.

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.

Friends go to Vienna, Mark II

We also commenced our weekend at Restaurant Stopfen where everyone enjoyed their meal, accompanied for some by a welcome Austrian beer (well, it had been a very early start).



The Third Man arch in Vienna

When we joined our coach there was an obvious challenge since one of our party was a non-ambulatory wheelchair user, and to enter the coach required ascending several steep steps. However with Brigitte Timmermann's positive and persuasive ways and very willing volunteer helpers this problem was overcome, although the helpers must have had a much more energetic weekend than they had envisioned. Our visit to the Zsolnay Publishing House (Graham Greene's German publisher) was very interesting, and we were made welcome by several Zsolnay staff. We sat in the salon which was virtually unchanged and would have looked very similar when Graham Greene first visited. For entertainment we were treated to some fine zither playing by a young, very talented musician.

There were several transfers on and off the coach that afternoon so the 'bearers' were sorely put upon – however they all seemed very willing and showed great, good humour.

We then went on to tour the Burgtheater, a splendid 19th century theatre with grand staircases, decorated with frescoes by the young Klimt brothers.

In the evening we attended a drinks reception at the French Cultural Institute hosted charmingly and very amiably by M Georges Touzenis, Cultural Councillor at the French Embassy and Director of the Institut Français.

On our second day our coach was equipped with a lift – huge sighs of relief all round. Most of that day was similar to the earlier Friends' visit to Vienna.

We were joined at the Heurige by a relative of Anton Karas (nephew?) who talked to us about his family and happily answered lots of questions. Unfortunately the entrance entailed climbing three sets of steps and all those overburdened bearers were needed once more, well twice actually, for the entrance and exit.

On Sunday a good number of our party went to the Jesuit Church for mass – Joseph Haydn: Paukenmesse. This was a magnificent Baroque church, and it was wonderful music. Most of us went via the underground, including our wheelchair user.

Again we all enjoyed our lunch and tour of the sumptuous Hotel Sacher, and most were able to go on the final walk around Vienna. Altogether it was an interesting, varied, full and enjoyable visit. Brigitte was tireless in her eagerness to show us all those sights which may interest us, and many of our party expressed a wish to return to Vienna.

Jayne and Martin Beckett

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.

In early June *The Independent* printed an article speculating on GG's liking for practical jokes. Many people have assumed that in *The Third Man* Harry Lime was based on Kim Philby and a new theory has now

been aired to the effect that Holly Martins might have been based on Robert Buckner, a Hollywood producer and scriptwriter, who had incurred GG's wrath over a film version of *The Confidential Agent*, that the author described as 'trash'. Buckner wrote the screenplay for a number of westerns, including *The Oklahoma Kid*, which is the title of one of Holly Martins' novels also. It does sound like the sort of thing Greene might have done for revenge.

The Daily Telegraph of 14 July wrote about a sponsored event consisting of a discussion defending each of four writers in a balloon – who gets thrown out? Nicholas Shakespeare (clearly a man of taste) took the part of Graham Greene and won. It may still be possible to hear some of the debate on Telegraph.co.uk/wayswithwords

On line there is now a blog for booklovers and it is encouraging to read how many people are still discovering GG; one of his novels is always included in people's '100 books to read before you die'. Of course a search for our author also reveals quite a lot about the Canadian actor of the same name, but fortunately real confusion is unlikely.

DVDs of *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man* (see Reviews) are often mentioned and praised when you browse for GG and we hear that Patrick Hamilton's book *The West Pier* was generously described by Graham Greene as "the best novel ever written about Brighton". A Greene manuscript, namely a draft of *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* or *The Bomb Party* was recently sold for £42,000 – a record for this author's manuscripts.

And *The Observer* mentions one of Greene's books for children, namely *The Little Fire Engine*, because Philip French says that fans of that book and of GG in general would enjoy the new film *Firehouse Dog*.

As always we find that many reviews of books, and to some extent films, say things like 'he is no Graham Greene' or 'reminds me of Graham Greene' and the like. But rarely if ever does anyone say 'better than Graham Greene'!

Point me out the happy man and I will point you out either egotism, selfishness, evil - or else an absolute ignorance.

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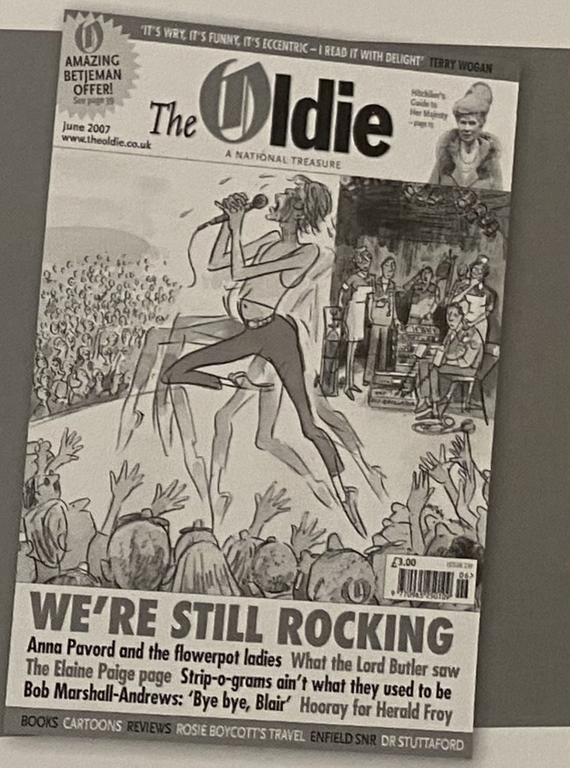

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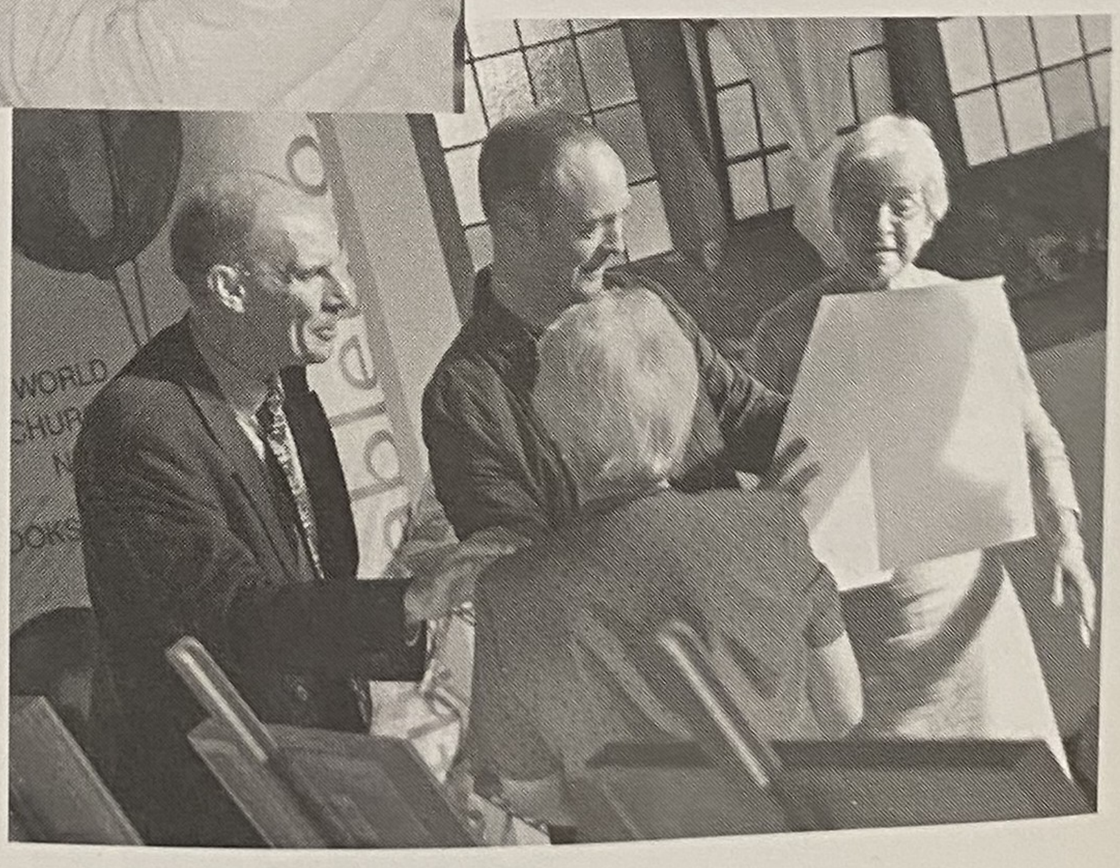
Scenes from Festivals











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