A Sort of Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAHAM GREENE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

Winter 2007

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

Editorial

As you will see we have changed the format of this Newsletter. The reason is that Royal Mail has divided post into "small" and "large", the latter being considerably more expensive to send, even if the weight is modest. By changing the format we are therefore saving a worthwhile amount of money four times a year. On the masthead our designer, Daryl Latham, has cleverly provided a facsimile of Greene's initials as GG wrote them.

In this issue I am proud to acknowledge the participation of several Friends of the Trust who have contributed reviews of books in languages some of us do not master, as well as artistic works reminding us of the last Festival. As always at this time of year there is also The Quiz - said to be 'easy', or maybe at least easier than before. So don't hold back - let's see how many you can answer.

As discerning readers will have realized, there was an error on the front page of last issue; Hotel Trianon is not of course in Havana, but in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It was entirely my fault, so please accept my apologies.

Yan Christensen

Newslettereditor@grahamgreenebt.org

Your comments and letters are always welcome.

STOP PRESS

We regret to announce the untimely death of Amanda Saunders on 15th February; she was a patron of the Trust and the niece of Graham Greene and acted as his secretary for some time. She has been of invaluable assistance to our Festival Directors over the years.

REVIEW

Nuestro GG en la Habana, by Pedro Juan Gutiérrez.
My translation: *Our GG in Havana.*
Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona, Spain; 2004.
ISBN: 84-339-6866-1

In 1954 Graham Greene visited Cuba for the first time. It was pre-revolutionary times, the atmosphere of which Greene described in *Our Man in Havana*. Fifty years later, Cuban novelist Pedro Juan Gutiérrez recreated in a very short piece of fiction Greene's visit and the forces that governed Cuban life at the end of Batista's era.

Nuestro GG en la Habana is a rare book in which Greene is one of the characters. There have been others before: Querell, in *The Untouchable*, by John Banville (Picador, London, 1997), is undoubtedly based on Greene; and Greene is constantly referred to in *Loving Graham Greene*, by Gloria Emerson (Random House, Inc., New York, 2000), resulting in a key element of the novel. In Gutiérrez's novel, however, Greene is the protagonist of the story.

In his text, Gutiérrez combined fact and fiction, and, regarding the Greene theme, he inserted clues that can hardly pass unnoticed: the Other, vacuum cleaners, sewers, MI5, MI6. Yet, the most relevant aspect of the novel is that Greene attracts the attention of the varied and opposing forces that controlled all aspects of life in Havana: the Military Intelligence Service, the FBI, the Nazi-hunters Habash, the Communist Party, and the local mafia. All try to persuade him to take action on their sides. Being Greene, a famous writer, his action would be best materialized in a book, which some want him to write and others want him not to. In successive episodes, the different forces try to invite, persuade, force, and even menace Greene in various ways, catching the attention of the reader throughout the 119 pages of the book..., that is, if you have been able to swallow the first 31 pages, which explicitly describe the most sordid places and performances in Havana, and have not thrown the book to the waste-paper basket. I would recommend not doing so. If you find these first pages indigestible and sickening, go directly to page 32: you will not lose any flavour (well, maybe some), but will enjoy all the action.

In the novel, it is Greene who throws a book by one of his contemporary writers to the waste-paper basket to make his luggage lighter. This is a most unlikely occurrence, especially because Greene had praised this author in one of his essays and kept 19 of his titles in his personal library, including his complete short stories and nearly half of his collected edition (Jean McNeil and Nicholas Dennys. *The Annotated Library of Graham Greene, A Catalogue*. The Gloucester Road Bookshop, London, 1993). It is unclear to me why Gutiérrez wrote this. It may be an in-joke addressed to connoisseurs that escapes the capacity of this humble reader or, maybe, Gutiérrez knows that Greene disliked this particular book of this recognized author. Earlier in the novel, Gutiérrez says that the authors did not like each other, but both read the other's books in secret. It is hard to think that this is enough reason to throw a book away. It seems too hard a punishment for someone like Greene, who loved books. Evidently, Greene did not throw it away, because it still was in his library at the time it was duly catalogued: a Doubleday edition of 1947, in good condition, but with evident traces of use in covers, hinges and pages.

This book, written in Spanish and sprinkled with Cuban idioms, flows smoothly and makes a good read. Although most of Gutiérrez's books have been translated into many languages, including English, such as *The Insatiable Spiderman, Tropical Animal* and *Dirty Havana Trilogy*, all I could find of this one searching the net is an Italian translation. Let's hope that the English readership won't have to wait too long to enjoy this homage to Greene.

Ramón Rami Porta.

An English translation was mentioned in the last issue. Publisher unknown. ed.

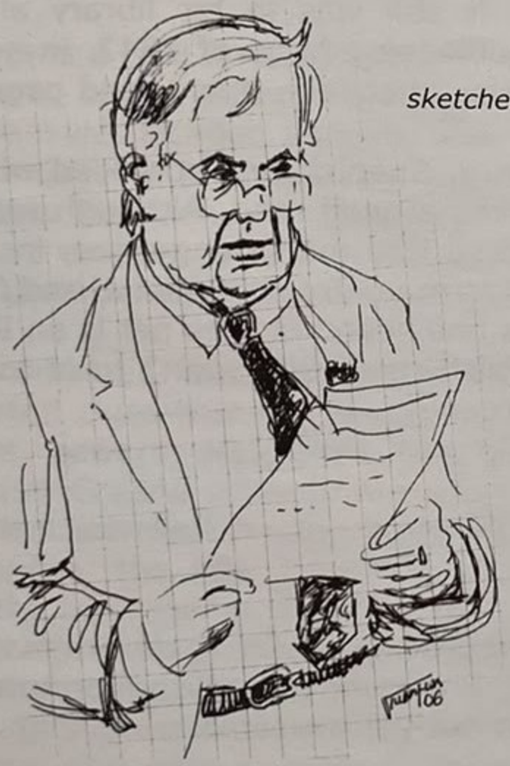
The Power and the Glory – Le Credo de Graham Greene. In French
By Francois Gallix, Professor of English literature at the Sorbonne
English translation not yet available.

This book is intended for students at French universities and for 'amateurs of English literature'. It should be useful to both readerships.

The book falls into two halves. In the first, Professor Gallix outlines Greene's background, life and the literary influences on him, and then goes on to characteristics and themes of his writing. In the second *The Power and the Glory* is examined in the light of these.

The first part of the book constitutes well over half of it. Many of the

topics have been explored in talks at the Graham Greene Festivals (in particular that in 2006 by Professor Bergonzi, who has written a preface to this book). They include Greene's underlying ennui/boredom/depression; his preoccupation with treason, individuals' sense of personal defeat, and corruption and squalor in life; the lack of clear boundaries between good and evil; the 'Catholic perspective' (Professor Gallix is very interesting on this); and how Greene's experience as a journalist and, very especially, his interest in films informed and influenced his writing. On the last point, it is stressed that there are many scenes in Greene's writing, including *The Power and the Glory*, that read as instructions for camera shots in a film.



Bernard Bergonzi, sketched at the 2006 Festival by Carlos Villar Flor

All of this is very readable and is studded with relevant quotations from Greene's works and various critics and friends. (The book's bibliography is impressive). This reviewer particularly liked the remark Evelyn Waugh (a friend of Greene's) made when in 1953 the Vatican demanded changes in *The Power and the Glory* (written in 1939). Waugh suggested that since the Vatican had taken 14 years to react, Greene should take the same time to reply.

The second part of the book deals with *The Power and the Glory* itself. Professor Gallix explores a number of underlying themes, mostly foreshadowed in the first half of the book. They include:

- The nexus between *The Lawless Roads* and *The Power and the Glory*, one being almost the template for the other.

- The great influence on *The Power and the Glory* of Eliot's *The Hollow Men* and, as always, Conrad.

- Greene's use of 'delayed decoding'. That is, introducing a feature such as the whisky-priest's briefcase and only gradually throughout the novel letting the reader know what it signifies – Agatha Christie was a mistress of this technique.

- the recurrence of consumption of alcohol throughout the book (inconceivable if Greene had been teetotal).

- The importance of frontiers – between the USA and Mexico, the provinces of Tabasco and Chiappas and life and death. (.....Over there everything is going to be different; life is never going to be quite the same again.....) This may reflect Greene's childhood where the green baize door separated his (relatively) happy home life from his miserable school one.

- Greene's sympathy even for his 'bad' characters like the police lieutenant. He wrote in a letter, 'the whisky priest and his executioner are me'.

This is an enjoyable and informative book for all of us whose knowledge of Greene's work is less than encyclopaedic. The French is not difficult (this reviewer has only 'O' level although I've tried to keep it up). The book is thoroughly recommended to any Greene aficionado with the energy to give it a try.

Alan Porteous

MISCELLANY

GRAHAM GREENE QUIZ 2007

Here is the latest quiz. Colin Garrett says it is easier this year, so please have a go at it. A lot of work goes into making this quiz and it is encouraging for the quizmaster to see as many replies as possible. There can of course be only one winner (Festival Season Ticket) but taking part will be fun for all the rest and only Colin will know how well or badly you did.

Please send answers by **1 May 2007** to:-
Colin Garrett, 17 North Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 3DX

1. Graham Greene wrote the script for Britain's most popular film *The Third Man*. He wrote another script for MGM. Was it called - *The Fifth Column, The Eleventh Man, The Tenth Man* or *The First Lady?*

2. In 1959 Greene wrote about a visit to a Catholic novelist.
Was his name – Moron, Morin, Marin or Miran?

3. One of Greene's early novels was *Stamboul Train*.
What was its title in the American edition?

4. *The Human Factor* is set in which country, England, Liberia, Paraguay or South Africa?

5. Who had 'half-baked ideas founded on the works of York Harding'?

6. When *The Comedians* was published which political leader attacked Greene with his own booklet *Graham Greene Finally Exposed* - Papa Doc Duvalier, Baby Doc Duvalier, General Omar Torrijos or Fidel Castro.

7. Which weekly journal did Greene co-edit in 1937?

8. Who said 'I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused'?

9. Who was the trouble maker?

10. In which novel do they both appear?

11. Greene said about one of his writings 'This tale has not been written for the purposes of encouraging adultery, the use of pyjama tops, or registry office marriages.' Which tale?

12. Which book provided Greene with the setting and theme for *The Power and the Glory?*

13. Which other writers joined Greene in correspondence published as *Why do I Write*?

14. Who held the Porridge Party, the Quail Party and the Lobster Party?

15. Which novel states that it is a record of hate rather than love *A Burned out Case, The Human Factor, The End of the Affair* or *The Heart of the Matter*?

16. For which novel is this the epigraph
'This is the patent age of new inventions for killing bodies, and for saving souls, all propagated with the best intentions'?

17. When asked if he/she believed in Catholicism, who replied 'Credo in unum satanum' - Padre Jose, Sarah Miles, Pinkie Brown or Henry Scobie?

18. Which Teddy represented the city that gave Greene its eponymous prize in 1981?

19. And which city was it?

20. In an Essay Greene writes that 'the characters of such distinguished writers as X and Y wandered like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper-thin'. Who were X and Y?

21. About whom did Greene write, 'Her admirers – middle-aged men and clergymen – respond to her dubious coquetry...'?

22. *The Monster of Capri* was originally written in what form?

23. What is the alternative title of *The Bomb Party*?

24. Who was found dead in a swimming pool - Dr Magiot, Dr Philipot, Dr Fischer or Dr Plarr?

25. What part did a dentist's assistant play in Greene's life?

Answers to Colin Garrett – see above.

Liberian Travels
Greene was accompanied by his cousin Barbara Greene on the travels that are the basis for his *Journey Without Maps*, and she too wrote a book about the journey. Because of the local connections her book was reviewed in the *Berkhamsted Parochial Review* and we reproduce the piece below:

Land Benighted
By Miss Barbara Greene.
'The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are.'
It is a far cry from 'Johnsonia' to Miss Greene's *Land Benighted*, yet this quotation sprang to my mind when reading her book.

She gives you things as they are; what the author sees you see, Liberian villages, beautiful by moonlight, haunted by a Devil; you feel with her the boredom of the bush, the bites of the insects, the painful feet, you like the dignified Amedico, the lovable Lanisah and the school boy Mark; you are sorry to part with them as Miss Greene was, at the end of their eventful journey.

You are still more sorry to leave Miss Greene. The short character sketches of the people she meets are drawn with a sharp pencil; she gives no picture of herself, only a slight caricature of a Gollywog in shorts, yet you feel the humour, charm, and courage of the author on every page, and marvel that a 'life of luxury' should have been a training ground for a walk of over 300 miles on foot through this African Republic of Liberia.

Taken from *Berkhamsted Parochial Review*, April 1939.

Hertfordshire Connections
The publication *Hertfordshire Countryside* recently carried a couple of interesting articles. One was about Champneys, the health farm not far from Berkhamsted, and the other of more literary interest with details of Evelyn Waugh's connection with Berkhamsted. Waugh later became a friend of Greene, but when he was quite young his elder brother was sent to Berkhamsted for military training. Dances were held for the young people of the town, some in the home of the short story writer W.W. Jacobs. Alec Waugh became engaged and later briefly married to Barbara Jacobs. Meanwhile the young Evelyn regularly visited the Jacobs family in Berkhamsted and struck up a friendship with Barbara's younger sister Luned. This schoolboy fling was recounted in Waugh's autobiographical work *A Little Learning* as his first, early flirtation. One does not get the impression that Graham Greene went to many dances in his youth, so the two probably did not meet then although the cinema was a common interest.

James Thurber Connection
As you will most likely know Greene's venture into magazine publishing did not last very long. But it did attract one very famous contributor, namely the American humorist James Thurber, whose drawings often illustrated his pieces. In a 1981 Penguin edition of *Selected Letters of James Thurber* the following was noted in a letter from London:
'Fortunately, I have been selling drawings over here and we live very nicely on that. *Night and Day*, the London imitation of *The New Yorker*, bought a flock of rejected drawings yesterday. ... *Night and Day* bought 'The Patient' series... When I told *Night and Day* that you and I liked them, they said fine.'

Greene Spain
It is only now that a publication has reached me which comes from The Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade. *Travel, Food and Wine Magazine*, Summer 2006 featured, as one would expect, a lot of delicious food and wine but also a long article, beautifully illustrated, about the country around the city of Ourense including the Monastery of Oseira known to us all from *Monsignor Quixote*. The book is also extensively referred to in the article. It is clearly a lovely and interesting part of Spain – it makes one wonder whether we shouldn't organise a *Monsignor Quixote* trail! It would be good to know whether you, the Friends of the Trust, would be interested. Please let us know.

Owning Graham Greene: The Norman Sherry Project
Many of you will remember the furore that followed the publication of Volume III of Sherry's biography of Graham Greene. Very many reviewers and Greene's family did not like it, to say the least.

We now have the comments of Professor Richard Greene (no relation); they appeared in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* of late 2006 and have been reprinted in booklet form. They are not favourable to Sherry! In fact blistering was the word that came to mind.

Professor Greene is the editor of the forthcoming volume of hitherto unpublished letters of GG and he has clearly been doing some research in connection with that. He points to failures of Sherry to identify

sources, omissions of whole periods and episodes of GG's life, attempts to control all matters of copyright of unpublished material, in addition to some errors of fact. Prof. Greene records how Yvonne Cloetta considered Sherry had betrayed Greene, herself and his (Sherry's) craft. The article casts a fascinating light on the biography.

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 Characters of Greeneland

In the Summer 2006 edition of *A Sort of Newsletter*, Tony Price quotes from *The Long Weekend* by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge. The extract in turn quotes from the critic Arthur Calder-Marshall in using the term 'Greeneland', the seedy territory to be found in many of Greene's novels.

Arthur Calder-Marshall's article, quoted here, appeared in *Horizon* in May 1940. Calder-Marshall was one of Greene's contemporaries at Oxford and a later acquaintance of his. He is generally credited with having coined the term 'Greeneland', a phrase included in the Oxford English Dictionary from the 1970s. Before Calder-Marshall's article, in *A Gun for Sale* in 1936, Greene had himself punningly referred to Greenland in a song a crooner sings early in the novel. An excellent discussion of the nature and origins of Greeneland can be found in Cedric Watts' *A Preface to Greene*.

The various characters referred to in Calder-Marshall's article are indeed all to be found in the novels Greene had published up to 1940. Far be it for a quizzer like me to spoil people's fun in working out who these characters all are, but here are one or two answers:
'the incestuous brother and sister' are the twins Anthony and Kate Farrant from *England Made Me*; 'the hare-lip' is James Raven from *A Gun for Sale*; 'the diseased dentist in a foreign port' is Mr Tench in Mexico in *The Power and the Glory*. (How, by the way, is he 'diseased'? Have I forgotten a detail?).

For the rest, happy hunting...

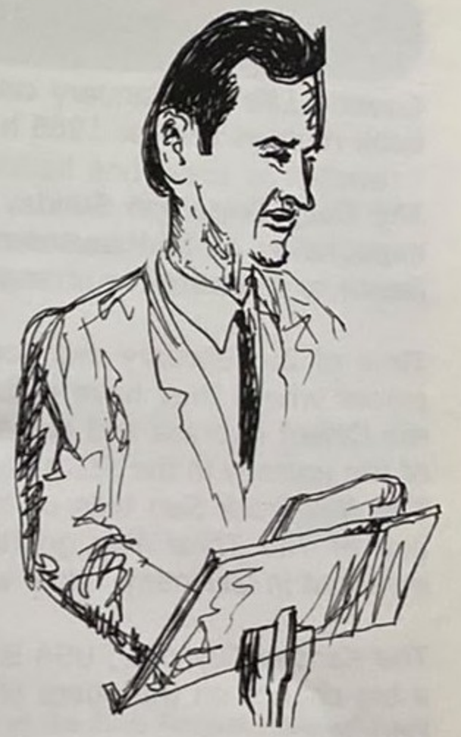
Mike Hill

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.

Not so much 'Press' but it is amazing how often one comes across the name of Graham Greene in novels as well as other media. There is a brief mention in Kingsley Amis' *Stanley and the Women*.

In Peter Robinson's thriller *Cold is the Grave* there are a couple of paragraphs where the well read detective speculates about Greene as he passes Berkhamsted by train.



Ian Thomson sketched at the 2006 Festival by Carlos Villar Flor

Also noted in a randomly selected reading schedule is that Greene was quoted as critic in a biography of Gary Cooper by Larry Swindell.

It is good to be able to report receipt of a number of cuttings from a wide selection of publications.

Among memorable Christmas meals *The Daily Telegraph Magazine* of 23 December mentions Michael Meyer's memory of Christmas 1959 with Graham Greene in Samoa. Festival goers will remember Meyer from his marvellous talk in Berkhamsted in 1999.

The Catholic Herald of 8 December has reviews of both *Articles of Faith* by Ian Thomson and *A Study in Greene* by Bernard Bergonzi – both Festival speakers of 2006. *The Tablet* itself carried reviews by David Lodge of the same two books a day later; Lodge, another Festival speaker, included a mention of the Berkhamsted festivals.

A number of sources, including *Sunday Times* of 14 January, preview Prof. Richard Greene's *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters* due out this autumn. Under the heading *New life for Greene letters* the

forthcoming publication is also featured by *The Bookseller* of 5 January.

Country Life of 6 January celebrates its 110th anniversary by reprising book reviews and for 1966 has GG's *The Comedians*.

The Daily Telegraph Sunday supplement (3.12.06) had Sandi Toksvig expounding on odd causes of death and she used GG's *An Accidental Death* to illustrate the strange things that happen.

Time of 26 February mentions among instances of authors describing places where they have not been, that GG was refused a free ride on the Orient Express and could only afford a ticket to Cologne. The rest of the journey in the *Stamboul Express* was based on what he had read. *The New York Sun* tells us that Orson Welles' clever caricature in the film of *The Third Man* got it wrong as the cuckoo clock was in fact invented in Germany. Now we know.

The Kansas City Star, USA is of the opinion that The Lyric Opera takes a big chance on the opera of *The End of the Affair* with music by Jake Heggie.

Taipei Times, Taiwan reviews the recent film *Little Miss Sunshine* and is reminded of Greene's review of Shirley Temple.

Bend Weekly, USA reminds us that GG lived in the Sacher Hotel, Vienna. No doubt coffee and cake there will be on the itinerary of those of us going to Vienna in May.

There are other mentions in far off places, including *The Age*, Melbourne, Australia. *Turkish Daily News*, Ankara. And in India: *Hindu-Chennai, Financial Express*, and *Hindustan Times*. *Daily Times*, Lahore, Pakistan.

Once again there is proof of how popular GG is in USA, and how well-read American journalists are. The following publications all referred to Greene in some way or another: *Albuquerque Tribune, Chicagoist, Philadelphia Daily News, Baltimore Sun, Billings Gazette, Santa Cruz Sentinel, Wall Street Journal, Toledo Blade, Chicago Tribune, Garden City News, The Brown Daily Herald, Boston Globe, Michigan Daily.*

THE TRUST

The Reading Circle

The list of books for 2007 has been established and reads as follows:
A House for Mr Biswas: V S Naipaul
*Across the Bridge (*in 21 *Stories)* and *Lawless Roads*: GG
From the *Holy Mountain*: William Dalrymple
The Kite Runner: Hosseini
The First Circle: A Solzhenitsyn
Far From the Madding Crowd:Thomas Hardy
The Secret Agent: Joseph Conrad
The Shadow of the Sun: Ryszard Kapuscinski
A Passage to India: E M Forster
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie: Muriel Spark

Festival Birthday Toast

We were indeed privileged to have Dr. Michel Lechat at the 2006 Festival. You will have read the report of his talk in the last issue of ASON and you will be aware that the whole talk can be obtained by e-mail from Ken Sherwood. But Dr. Lechat also gave the traditional Birthday Toast with an address which is reproduced below.

I feel quite impressed to be in this famous Berkhamsted School. It is here within these walls that Graham Greene spent his younger years. Here as a boy, he opened his eyes to the world around him, forging latent anxieties, waking up to dormant sensations, dreaming about his still untold future. What was it to be, this future? Exploring the jungle, playing secret games and spying, living in a lepers' colony? *Treasure Island? Dr.Jekyll and Mister Hyde? Father Damian*? After all, he was the great nephew of Robert Louis Stevenson.

But I see nothing of these prospective outcomes here, just a final result: friends who have gathered to commemorate the anniversary of his birth. They are standing for the millions whose lives, one way or another, were shaken up by his books. The irrefutable sanction of great accomplishments.

But books are books. In his unique way however, Greene knew how to raise the right questions, the basic ones which haunt all of us, even if he was unable to bring solutions, not even for himself. He was a

who introduced the films: 'I don't know who he was but he seemed to know what he was doing'. The two videos were from the *Shades of Greene* series: *The Invisible Japanese Gentlemen* and *Special Duties*. The scripts of both videos had been written by Sir John Mortimer who spoke later in the Festival. It seems probable that our volunteer operator took the videos home for safe keeping and forgot to return them to David Pearce.

4) The fourth loss is of three books from the Trust Library which had been stored for some years at our Chairman's house. When we came to move the Library at the end of January the following books could not be found: *The Viper of Milan* (Marjorie Bowen); *Mornings in the Dark*; and *Graham Greene – Man of Paradox* (AF Cassis).

If you have any clues which might help me in my search please email or telephone me.

Ken Sherwood
ksherw9100@aol.com
01442 865158



Roy Hattersley, sketched at the 2006 Festival by Carlos Villar Flor

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The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust

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