

Five Forewords and more ...

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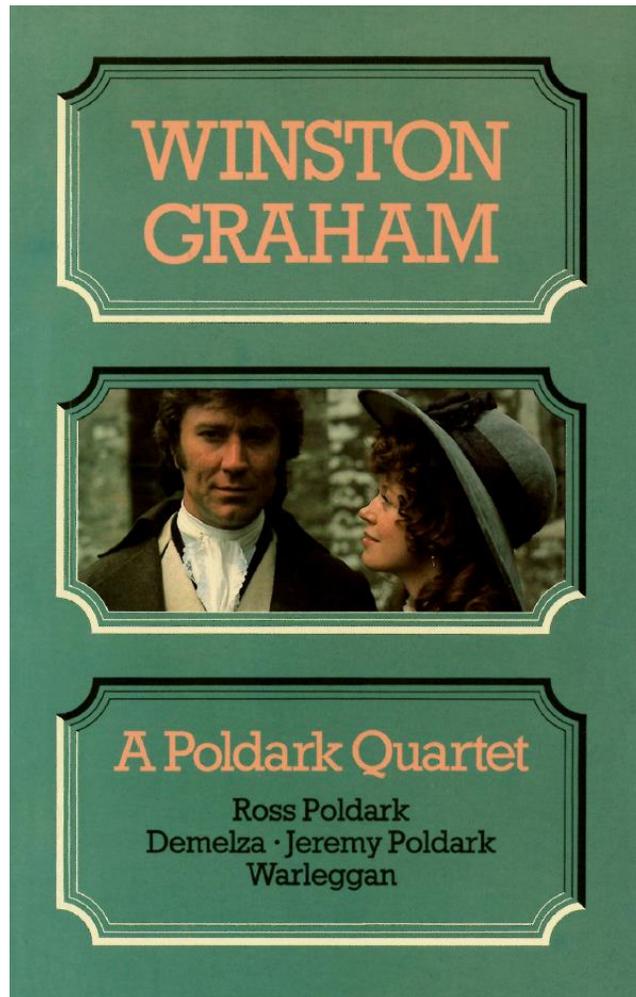
(14) From *Literary Guild Magazine*, January 1970: "WG tells about Angell, Pearl and Little God" (46)

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(1) From *A Poldark Quartet*, Collins Collectors' Choice, 1980



My parents moved to Cornwall from the north of England when I was seventeen. The change to me was an extreme one: this sudden transfer from the suburb of a big city to a small windswept Cornish village made a very deep impression, and as a result I came to take in more of the 'atmosphere' than if I had been naturally born into it. In a city green things grow reluctantly, flowers are tidy and trim, the weather is just a peripheral nuisance – or benefaction – the sky is of little importance somewhere above the tops of the houses and the trees. In Cornwall everything was lush: weeds and grasses fought together with campion and wild garlic; gorse rioted; bluebells and cow parsley overflowed the hedges. And the weather was omnipresent: wind and rain and monumental cloud; glinting sun and washed blue skies; with the tramp of the great surf never far away and the seagulls crying. The house

where we lived was a mile up the valley from the village, and at the appropriate seasons the lane was noisy with crickets and lit with glow-worms.

But although I began to write very early, and found a publisher who was brave enough – and rash enough – to publish me, I did not write about Cornwall for quite a time. This was because, although I instantly took to the scene, I did not quickly get to know the Cornish people. I remained an outsider, a visitor in temperament if not in fact. It took a number of years, and I can think of nothing in particular, no single event, no special friendship that produced the change. It just happened that as time passed I came to know the Cornish people and I suppose they came to know me. And at this stage I believe an affinity grew up.

It was soon after this that the Poldarks began to take shape.

It may be thought that I could – and should – have written about the county as I found it then; but my attention turned to the eighteenth century because it held so much that since has been lost to Cornwall: the mines that have now gone – almost, the fishery that has now gone, the excessive parliamentary representation that has now gone, the importance of Truro as a county town in which many of the gentry had their houses; and all the aspects of life then: the smuggling, the beach-watching for wrecks, the poverty, the rise of Wesleyanism, the beginning of banking as we now know it, and the new-rich families that grew up around the smelting and the foundries.

The Poldarks were never planned as a saga but grew and multiplied around a single central theme – one theme spanning the first four novels, the triangle of Ross, Demelza and Elizabeth; and one spanning the last three novels, the parentage of Valentine. What *was* planned was that it should cover an area of life and society in breadth rather than by the passage of time. Books which begin with the heroine at nineteen and end with her at ninety do not seem to me to show inventiveness but to betray the lack of it.

During the writing of part of these novels I was able to hire a small wooden bungalow entirely isolated on the cliffs, and each morning I would pack a haversack with a light lunch, and with this slung over my shoulder I would walk through the village and across the beach. At full tide the sea would be sweeping at my feet and it would be difficult to get across the planks that served for a bridge over the small, swollen river. Thence to the empty bunga-

low, and on the table gathering dust would be the reference books, the manuscripts, the notebooks and the books I'd been writing in yesterday. So I'd sit alone and write for six or seven hours, and when it came time to return in the gathering dusk the sea would be far out and the waves glinting like mirages over the wet sand.

As to the characters, I have tried to write about the Cornish with the affection and the affinity I feel for them but without sentimentality. I have written of them as I have known them, as I have read about them, as I have met them and laughed with them and talked with them: old miners, young rugby players, old fishermen, young lawyers, middle-aged butcher boys, clerics and farmers, doctors and dentists and dustmen. And their wives and sisters and daughters. And listened, of course, too. Above all, listened.

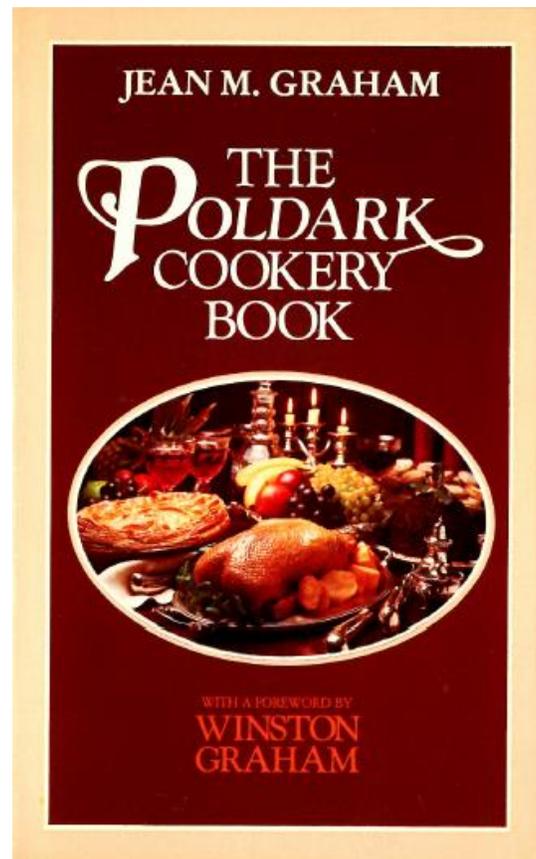
Some of the characters in the books derive in part from people I have known, though more in a composite way than in a precise transcription from life to print. Jud Paynter, for instance, the Poldarks' servant, derives about one quarter from a Lancastrian I knew as a boy and three quarters from a Cornishman I knew as a young man. I used to see this Cornishman cycling from his cottage to the local pub every night of his life, and I used to wonder why he bothered to take his bicycle as it was only a matter of some two hundred yards – until I saw him going home one night, and then I realized he used his bicycle to lean on.

So, too, historical fact intrudes on these books. The double shipwreck at the end of DEMELZA, and the miners looting the ships on the beach, comes from a contemporary account of two such wrecks on Perranporth beach in the seventeen-nineties. The tragedy of a man like Jim Carter is related in Wesley's Journals, but in a single line. The description of Launceston Prison is from Howard's STATE OF THE PRISONS (1777). The voting procedure in Bodmin is a description of an actual election. The incident in JEREMY POLDARK in which Dwight Enys is called to see Caroline Penvenen because it is believed she has the morbid sore throat, and what he really finds, is related by a Dr James Fordyce in a book on fevers which had a limited circulation in 1789.

Since 1975 television, aided by some admirable young actors, has of course added a new dimension to these books.

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(2) From *The Poldark Cookery Book* by Jean M. Graham, Triad / Granada, 1981



Every novelist should know and thoroughly understand what he is writing about. If in doubt, he must discover enough, either by personal experiment or by close attention to what others tell him or have written, to speak with sufficient authority to convince the reader. Thus he often discovers far more about the subject than he needs. It's a bit like the iceberg: the nine-tenths under water is necessary to support the one-tenth that shows.

But sometimes one's ignorance (or is it innocence?) is preserved by the existence of someone close to oneself (such as a wife) whose knowledge on a subject is such that there is no need to learn. This applies to my cooking. I have never cooked. There has always been someone at my side who could do it better and enjoyed doing it. Nor have I ever needed to inquire from others or to read about it from different sources. I am able to describe the making of bread in *The Black Moon* because my wife tells me how it is done.

Of course my wife's knowledge is relatively modern, but all through she has shown an innate flair for how cooking and serving would be approached two hundred years ago.

As to the composition of the meals in the novels – the menus if you like – this has been a sort of collaboration between her and myself and the writers of the time. Historians as such are rarely forthcoming about food: they tend to brush it aside in a couple of paragraphs, Diarists, having experienced – or suffered – it at first hand, pay it much more attention. From the original William Hickey's scathing remarks about the inns of Falmouth, to Staniforth's visit to Lord de Dunstanville at Tehidy – not to mention Boswell's; from Jenkyn's *News from Cornwall* to James Silk Buckingham's comments on his brief stay in the county, all have helped to contribute to our knowledge of the food and menus of the time. So of course does Polwhele – there are fewer pleasanter sentences than that in which he writes: 'Returned home to my wife and drank very agreeable tea with her sweetened with kisses.' Werner, Moritz, Simond, Dudley Rider, Christopher Wallis, the Torrington Diaries, are informative to a greater or lesser extent. And there are recipes and menus from the great houses of Cornwall – to be found in the County Records Office – which never achieved the permanence of print but are none the worse for that.

The over-all impression is of the quantity of food consumed. Almost everybody over-ate and over-ate outrageously. A table plan in those days did not merely indicate where the guests were to sit, it gave precise instructions as to where each dish was to be placed, like Wellington disposing of his divisions before a battle. The expression that the table 'groaned under the weight of food' could have been literally true.

Sir Frederick Eden in his *State of the Poor* (1797) shows the other side of the picture. His recipe for Hasty Pudding is '13 ozs of oatmeal in a quart of water, salted, with a little beer or milk poured over it. This will provide a sufficient meal for two labourers.'

Sir Frederick also deplored the spread of tea-drinking among the labouring

classes, observing that 'those who can't get malt liquor consume in excess the deleterious product of China.' He was not, however, an unsympathetic man and argued, 'How can the Rich justify their exclusive property in the common heritage of mankind unless they consent in return to provide for the sustenance of the Poor, who were excluded from those common rights by the laws of the Rich, to which they were never parties?'

One of the staple dishes of the very poor in Cornwall was known as 'Sky blue and Sinkers.' For this, water was put in a three-legged crock and heated over a fire of gorse and turf until it reached boiling point. Some flour, usually barley, was mixed in a basin with scalded milk, emptied in the crock and allowed to boil for a minute or so. This was then poured into basins for the family, and sops of barley bread dropped in. These sops sank to the bottom and were the 'sinkers'. The diluted milk liquid had a bluish tinge which was the 'sky'.

It's interesting to note that when conditions improved, either generally or for a particular family, it was the ingredients which were improved, not the basic recipe. Indeed, almost up to the present day, a popular dish in Cornwall, particularly at bed-time, has been 'Kettlebroth' or 'Kiddley', which consists of pieces of bread, preferably crusty, cut into large squares and put into a basin and covered with boiling water, to which is added half a cup of fresh cold milk, a big lump of butter and salt and pepper.

Perhaps of all printed commentators of the day, Parson Woodforde is the most detailed as to food – not, admittedly, as to how the cook operated, but as to what appeared on his and other people's tables. James Woodforde, of course, lived in Norfolk not in the West Country, but he notes painstakingly what he ate, whether it was good, and often whether it agreed with him. An example taken almost at random reads:

'I won at cards this evening 5/-. We had a very genteel Dinner and Desert after. The first Course was Fish, a piece of rost Beef, Pork Stakes, soup, hashed Calf's Head, a boiled Fowl and Pigg's Face – Second Course was stewed Sweetbreads, a fore Quarter of Lamb

rosted, Jellies, Custards, Lemon Cream, Syllabub and Blancmange. Desert – Oranges, Pistachio Nuts and blanched Almonds and Raisins, and preserved Cherries ... Afterwards my niece was not very well.'

Books on cookery were far from scarce even in those days. *The London Cook* by William Gelleroy was to be found in one or two of the great houses of Cornwall. Farley's *The London Art of Cookery* had reached its tenth edition by 1804. Verral's *The Cook's Paradise* and Mrs. Glasse's *The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy* were frequently reprinted. A book published in 1828 opens with an apology for being 'yet another cook book'.

Well, a century and a half later, this is 'yet another cook book'. I hope it may prove both useful and entertaining. But a last word. Cookery books are the sheet music of the world of food. A lot still depends on the skill and interpretation of the individual musician.

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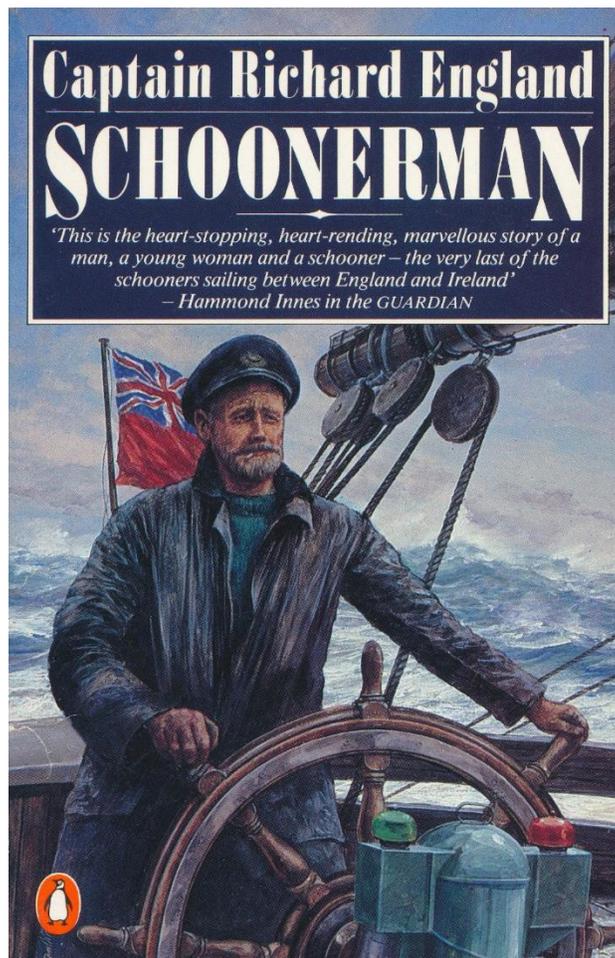
(3) From *Schoonerman* by Captain Richard England, The Bodley Head, 1981

I have never met Richard England, though had events moved more happily for us both – as will be related in this book – we might now be old friends. As it is, I can only recommend *Schoonerman* in the way it should most properly be recommended, without prejudice or personal involvement; and this I most heartily do.

In an age when the amateur sailor, the week-end sailor, the holiday sailor ever proliferates, so that bright new marinas flourish in every little port, and men and women take to the sea for pleasure or to escape from the problems of the land, and vie with each other to pit their varying skills against wind and wave, it is fascinating to read an account written by one of the last true professionals in the harsh world of the coastal schooner trade. For him the sea has indeed been The Cruel Sea. Yet all his vicissitudes in small and vulnerable sailing vessels, his struggles with obstinate, difficult and fractious human beings, his efforts to break through the stifling red tape of the official

world, the hardships that constantly beset him, are related with an absence of bitterness and rancour that compel admiration.

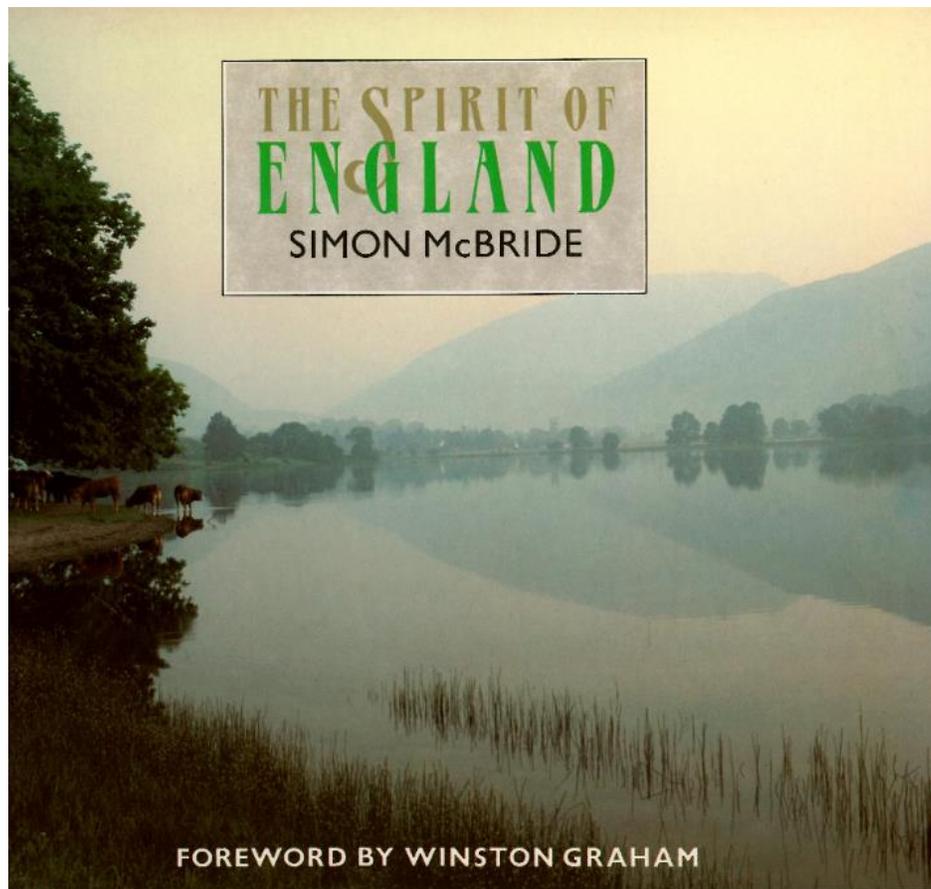
There is indeed in this book, although it is a recital of unrelenting struggle, a sense of dedication and happiness, as if Captain England and his wife and daughters achieved a contentment and unity in spite of it all and that, looking back on those days, he finds a real pleasure in the telling and only once the pain.



From any point of view this book must surely be looked on as a valuable record of a time now gone for ever, a vivid yet factual record that carries conviction. It was really like this, one thinks, and it will never come again. As the author remarks at a tragic point in his narrative: *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*.

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(4) From *The Spirit of England* by Simon McBride, Webb & Bower Limited in association with Michael Joseph Limited, 1989



*Earth's crammed with heaven
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

Thus said Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who knew a thing or two.

It is the responsibility and the pleasure – or should be – of every poet, artist, photographer, writer to see 'the burning bush', as it were, and to convey to his readers, gazers, critics, admirers, something of the world of nature or human nature, which he personally discerns and can offer specially to them. After he has spoken, or depicted it, as best he can, there are, one hopes, more people taking off their shoes and fewer just plucking the blackberries.

In observing the work of a fine photographer like Simon McBride one learns to see things through his eyes and not one's own. Often they are the familiar things which are so well known as to be taken for granted: fields, trees, mountains, fells, lakes, waterfalls. He observes them afresh; and in discovering a new sight one discovers a new beauty.

I first met him in 1981, when the book *Poldark's Cornwall* was projected, and it was suggested that as I provided the text he should provide the illustrations to the text. At this time I knew nothing of his background. Now I know that he comes of Lancashire, Irish and Cornish stock, that he left England with his parents when a year old and lived in Kenya until he was thirteen, when he came back to England to school. By then the African scene was firmly implanted and he has since returned many times. While training as a graphic designer in England he came to the conviction that photography was to be his main preoccupation in life, and when a friend sent him an air ticket to return to Africa – to Rhodesia, as it then was – it offered him the opportunity to develop his twin interests together; and he stayed there for three years as a press photographer. Back in England he took a degree in African Studies at London University, then he returned to Africa once more, covering the wars in Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique – and the riots in Soweto.

In 1980 he married, and by the time I met him he was settled in the West Country as an independent and freelance photographer.

After a preliminary meeting in London to discuss the book I saw him next in Cornwall in the summer of 1982. My wife and I were on holiday and the weather had been frightful; but one day, which had dawned burdened with the direst, most ominous forecasts of the weather men, had turned contrarily first into fitful and then blazing sunshine, with a rising sea, air like cool wine; bliss. Simon discovered us in our secret cove, the only couple visible, in bathing costumes, soaking up the sun. He wobbled down the precipitous path burdened with cameras, and at first was put out by a rash of caravans disfiguring the distant view. We all sat talking until the long day was near its end, and so climbed the path; then he and I strolled along the cliffs and down to the next unspoiled cove, where he took many more pictures of sea and sun and cliff and me and corrugated sand.

The following day, when the weather had returned to type, we toured round Cornwall, also the day after that, when his indefatigable energy and determination never to be satisfied with second best were much in evidence. During that summer and autumn he must have often returned to Cornwall, but then alone, seeking out the places I had mentioned in the book but seeking to create his own synthesis.

Recently a cynic said that a few generations ago England had been a country of beauty, now it was becoming a country of beauty spots. This book, *The Spirit of England*, I think disproves it. All the pictures are modern – taken, that is, within the last six years – and they show the extraordinary diversity of scene and mood and interest that such a small island can contain; and illustrate that so much is as yet unspoiled and some at least, thank God, unspoilable.

Simon is a loner, and there is a marked absence of human beings in the photographs in this book. He likes to work alone and to have long periods to himself, particularly when hunting the scene he is going to shoot. He talks to himself and the sky and the countryside, persuading them to arrange themselves to suit his mood. Design is in all of them, as in all good paintings, an arrangement that comes into being and settles into perpetuity when the camera at last clicks. In some of these pictures there is a sense of foreboding, as if a brooding scene had sparked off his own dark mood and fused with it.

But the drama of lowering skies, of mountainous waves, of lonely moors, of spouting fountains merging with stormy sun-shot clouds, can give way to the tranquillity of streams and shimmering lakes and the homeliness of thatched cottages and the fishing boat's return. For Simon is no misanthrope and can enjoy as well as anyone the company of his fellow men. And when he chooses humanity for his subject, whether it is a black baby rolling in the straw in Zimbabwe or a Cornish miner dirty and cheerful after a day's chore, he brings the same talent to bear on it, the artistic eye which goes so far beyond mere expertness.

Look at these pictures and study and enjoy them all, for it is a remarkable collection which should establish Simon McBride as one of the foremost

photographers of today.

It's really all in what Mrs Browning said, and she said it again in another poem, even more explicitly.

*The poet hath the child's sight in his breast
And sees all new: what oftenest he has viewed
He views with the first glory.*

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(5) From "Hang Your Halo in the Hall!" A History of the Savile Club by Garrett Anderson, The Savile Club, 1993

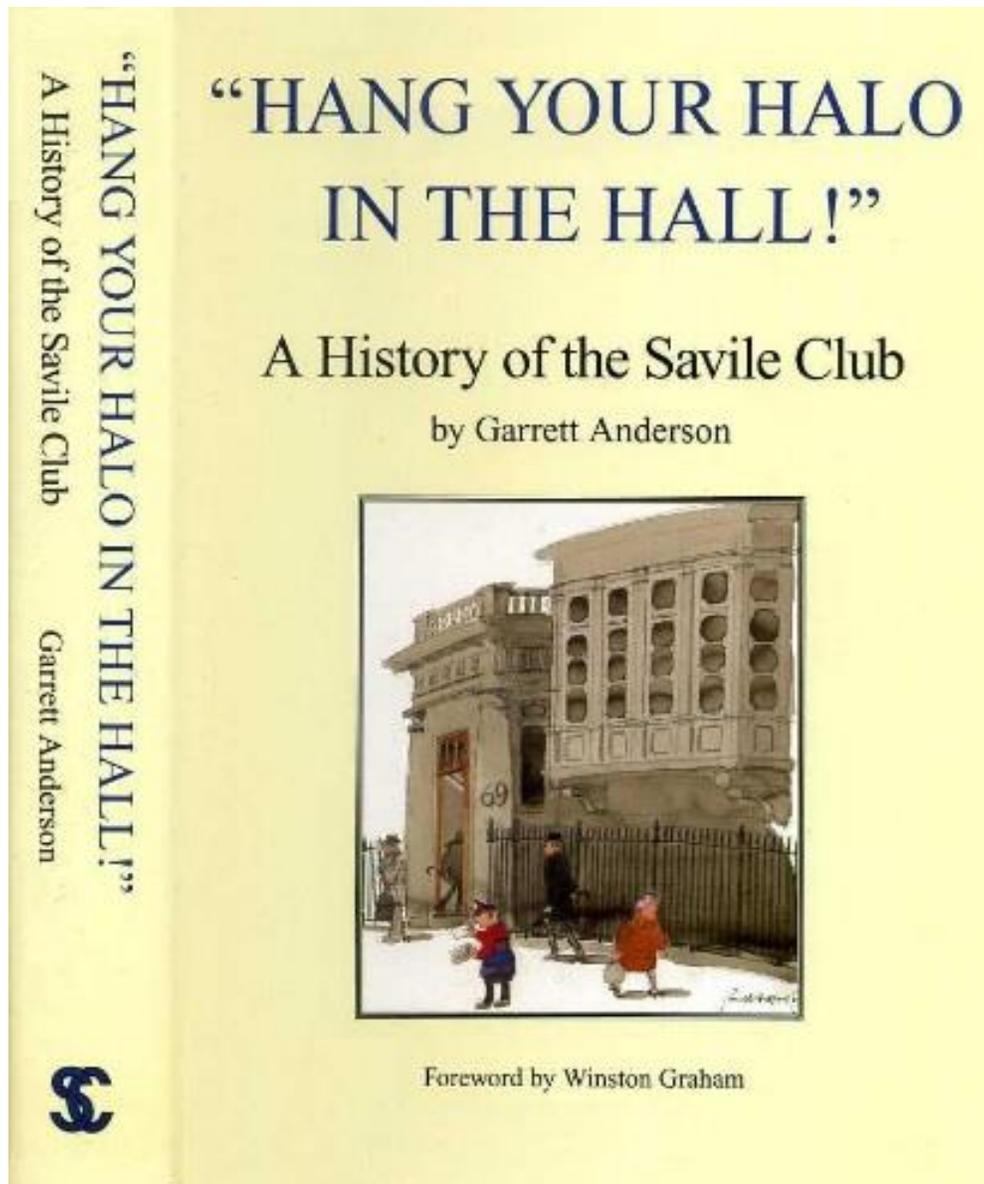
Ogden Nash once said that to be an Englishman was to belong to the most exclusive club in the world. A debatable point. Please discuss.

But that London is the centre of the club culture is hardly disputed, or that a few of its clubs form, in their own particular and exclusive yet agreeable way, the nucleus of a mainly male society unique in the world.

Among these – of which there must be fewer than ten – the Savile Club has its special place. It is, in my view, the most *interesting* club in London. When I was elected forty-two years ago it seemed to me to be full of wits, wags, sages, drunks, and holy eminences in every profession; some elderly and sombre, like H. G. Wells, some elderly and effervescent, like Compton Mackenzie, some youngish and sombre, like Peter Rennell Rodd, some youngish and jolly like Monja Danischewsky and Lionel Hale. Above all – and here it is perhaps unique – it was totally classless: Walter Greenwood, who drew on his humble origins to write *Love on the Dole*, was as much at home there as that quintessential aristocrat, Eddie Sackville-West, the heir to Knole. Equally, age was no barrier to communication as, with the generation gap, it is in most of the world. I have often seen a man of about twenty-eight suddenly go across and enter into earnest discussion with a limping seventy-eight, solely because they had some subject in common.

It is also a club which has never had any religious or moral prejudice. Practising Muslims, Jews and Christians have all been as welcome as the most

outspoken of atheists. Nearly forty years ago I heard two committee members discussing a potential candidate. One said: "I think he's been a Borstal boy." The other replied: "That should make him more interesting."



Sometimes in those days one thought of Cowper's: "Oh, to the club, the scene of savage joys, the school of coarse good-fellowship and noise." At the other extreme there could develop a tense and sober discussion on some subject close to the vital affairs of the world. This book recalls a number of such occasions when momentous decisions were taken in the Club which have affected us all.

Or one pictures Thomas Hardy writing many of his later matchless poems on the Club writing paper, late into the night.

With the enormous historical background of the eminent men who have been members, it is easy to look back – even four decades, as I can – and then look around one and wonder if the present membership is one half so good, or could ever become so good, as the muster of extraordinarily brilliant and likeable men who have been incumbents in the past. A useful antidote to this is an article about the Savile in *The Times*, written in 1923 by, it is thought, Edmund Gosse, rather regretting the quality of the present intake of younger members compared to the great achievers of his day. Not only does he appear to overlook the membership of such up-and-coming youngsters as Adrian Boult, Ernest Rutherford, J. B. S. Haldane, Arthur Bliss, Max Beerbohm and Edward Elgar, but – as a further corrective to those claiming to judge for posterity – many of the famous men cited by him among his older contemporaries have been rendered quite insignificant by the passage of the years. It is a salutary lesson.

To write a true and full and perceptive history of this unusual club it was necessary to find an unusual writer. Anthony Garrett Anderson is just that. Educated as a historian at Trinity College, Dublin, a member of the Club since 1966, he has published two acclaimed novels, and been involved in many other literary projects. This history of the Savile Club is a major book which will, I believe, distinguish him in a new way. It has taken three years to write – partly because of a disastrous fire in 1975 which destroyed many of the records and archives and so necessitated the gathering and checking of material from secondary sources – but also because of the author's consuming interest in and development of his theme. In the hands of many writers this history would have been a list of famous names, with a collection of facts and anecdotes hung on them to decorate and embellish. What Tony has done is to enlarge one's interest by following and exploring the lives of many of the Savilians far beyond the doors of the Savile, so that the history of a single club becomes a valuable record of the times in which the club has existed.

This foreword is necessarily short, for there is little one can say about the Savile which has not been fully and elegantly covered in the pages which follow. Most present-day Savilians will want this book because they are

members: they will be fascinated to discover how little they know of the Club's history. I commend non-members to read the book not for its subject but for its content. They will not be disappointed.

[Note: in addition to the foreword above, WG provided Anderson with a detailed reminiscence of his then forty-odd years as a Club member, from which the author quotes freely throughout his text. The book is well worth reading.]

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(6) From *The Savile Club 1868-1968*, edited by Monja Danischewsky and Stephen Watts (*The Savile Club*, 1968)

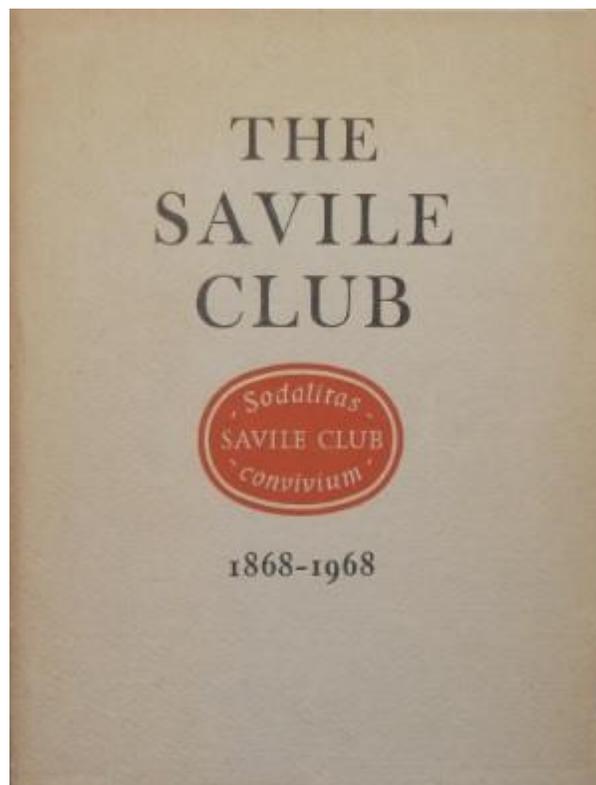
BRIEF ENCOUNTER by Winston Graham

He was a great mountain of a man, and I first saw him in the Savile bar surrounded by a group who listened with keen enjoyment to a funny story he was telling in three different perfectly simulated accents. I was a fairly new member in those days, and staying in the Club, and I tentatively drifted to the edge of the group and listened in as it were from the suburbs, without venturing into the inner circle. The story finished and another and another followed it, each one told with the brilliance of one of the best raconteurs in the world.

At the end of one story, when I was laughing with the rest, he suddenly fixed me with a furious eye and boomed out: "You! Who are *you*? *You* look an arrogant fellow!"

Among the many abusive adjectives that have been applied to me in my life "arrogant" was one that had not previously been used, and it shed a new light either on my character or on his. I answered who I was, and after glaring resentfully at me for another few seconds he dropped me from his attention and returned to his friends and intimates. But twice during the evening, after I had been drawn more into the community by common friends, he violently contradicted me on matters of opinion that were unimportant to me and, I would have thought, equally unimportant to him.

About midnight I wandered into the hall with a glass of whisky in my hand and found him sitting desolate on the hard hall chair, all his friends departed. The liquor had got into him and he was stertorous and unsteady. Kean had gone to find him a taxi and the hall was empty. "Tell me," said the big man contemptuously. "You say you're an *author*. What have you *written*?" I mentioned the name of a novel which had had some success in England and America and had been filmed. "Never seen it. Never *heard* of it," he replied conclusively. I then told him of another that had been filmed. "Never seen it. Never *heard* of it," he stated, like a judge sentencing a prisoner to life anonymity. I then told him the name of a third. "Never seen it. Never *heard* of it," he repeated, knocking the last nail in the coffin.



By now Kean had arrived back, and as our friend's great bulk was as unsteady as a building scheduled for demolition, I helped the porter to get him out to the taxi. Kean, clearly well briefed, gave the address to the driver, and I, having almost had to hoist the big man into the taxi, was about to withdraw when he put a powerful hand on my shoulder and said: "Come home with me. I want to – to talk to you." Slipped and carrying a glass of

whisky did not seem to be the best sort of equipment for a formal call, but I try when possible not to refuse interesting invitations, so I sat back in the taxi and went with him.

When we got to his flat we talked for maybe an hour before I could get away. He was serious, almost sober, entirely friendly, very candid about himself. It was as if he had suddenly dropped his public image, which was truly a part of him but a part he despised. Indeed, self-contempt was, by the time I knew him, one of the most powerful and most destructive elements in his nature. He despised what he had become and despised the public who had put him there; and he esteemed as nothing the great gifts that he clearly had. His belligerence was a sort of inverted modesty. What gullible fools people were who could be deceived into thinking him clever! Another and another cup to drown the memory of this impertinence.

I knew him for a good many years after that. From then on he was never less than absolutely polite and charming to me. I saw him twice in quarrels with members of the Savile, and they were both deliberately picked by the other men who began by insulting him in the most offensive and gratuitous way. I never saw him more than superficially belligerent without cause.

I still miss Gilbert Harding.

[Note: WG could not have named three of his books that were made into films before 1957, by which time he would not have been "a fairly new member" but one of seven years' standing. He reprised this story in *Memoirs*, 2.11 with that and other minor details changed, but otherwise as is.]

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(7) An introduction to The Medici Ear-Ring

After previous appearances in *The Windsor Magazine* (Ward, Lock, October 1935), *Argosy* (Fleetway Publications, July 1965), *The Japanese Girl and other stories* (Collins, 1971) and *The Ladies' Home Journal* (Downe Communications, November 1971, where it featured in abridged form as *The Earring*), WG's early short story *The Medici Ear-Ring* was published for a fifth time in William

Kimber's 1977 Denys Val Baker-edited anthology *My Favourite Story* with the following introductory lines penned by its sixty-nine-year-old author:



I can't say that 'The Medici Ear-Ring' is entirely my favourite story, but it is one for which I have a special affection, and I trust I shall not be looked on as unduly mercenary if some of that affection is financial.

This was almost the first short story I ever wrote, and certainly it was the first I ever sold, when I was a very young [twenty-seven-year-old] and very struggling author just [actually four years] before the outbreak of World War Two. I sold it to the Windsor Magazine, and the price I was paid seemed poor to me even for those days. I had the courage to protest, but the editor said it was all he could afford. (To be published in the

Strand or the Windsor in those days had a certain cachet which the editors were not above making use of when dealing with young and inexperienced authors.)

Twenty five [actually thirty] years later I was approached by another magazine [Argosy] which specialised in reprinting stories by well-known authors and asked if I had anything they could use. I looked up 'The Medici Ear-Ring,' brought it a little more up to date and sent it to them. They published it and paid me seven times what I had received for it in the first place.

A few years later, when I had at last written enough short stories for them to be published in volume form, I included 'The Medici Ear-Ring' and this story was picked up by an American magazine [Ladies' Home Journal] for their use, and they paid me more than seven times what the second magazine had paid.

All, no doubt, a familiar tale. But what it would have meant to me if the last payment had only come first. I could have lived for two years off it. Now times are altered; if I care to buy a thing I can. The pence are here and here's the fair. But where's the lost young man?¹

¹ The last three sentences comprise the second verse (of three) of Housman's "When first my way to fair I took" (see *Last Poems*, A. E. Housman, Grant Richards Ltd., 1922)

* * * * *

(8) A poem by WG published by M. Raymonde-Hawkins in *Just for Animals*, various authors, the Kensington Press, 1970

Contributors to Ms Raymonde-Hawkins' book were asked the question: "If you knew that you had come to the end of your life and could have

time for not more than 100 words, what would you hope to say?" Here, (in 174 words) is WG's untitled offering:

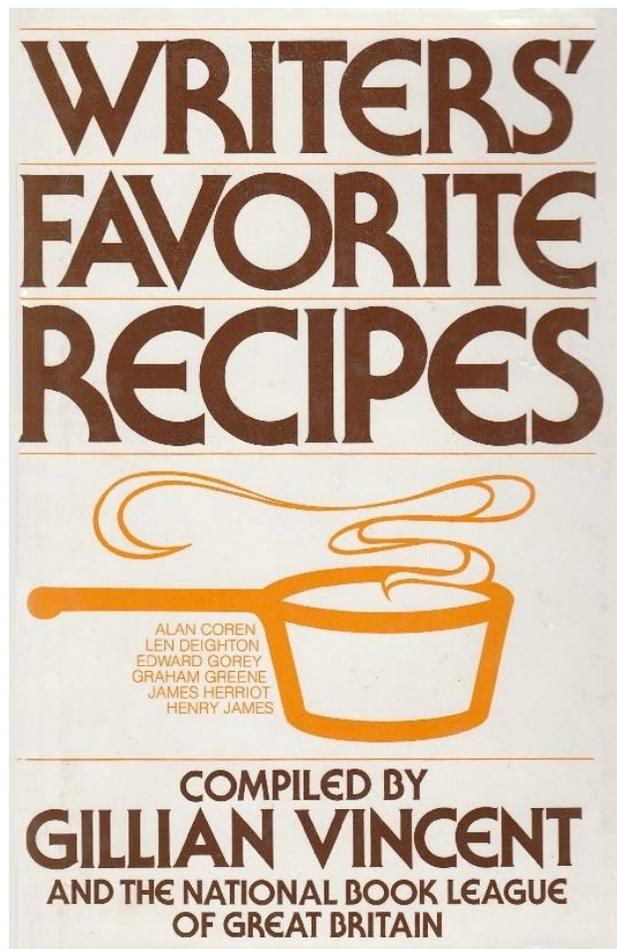
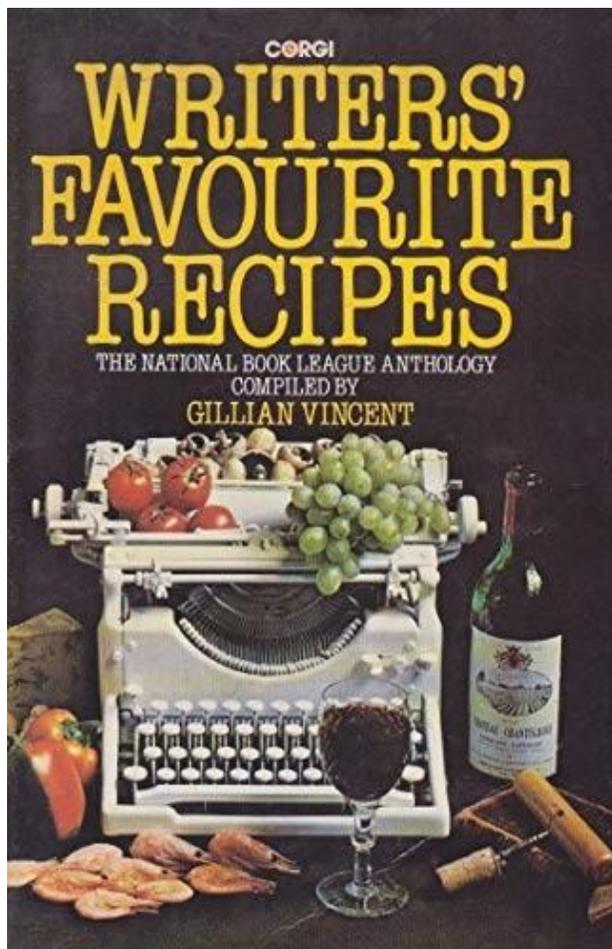
Don't plant me next to Mrs. Robinson,
I never got along with her too well.
Put me in a spot
Where the sun is nice and hot
And right out of earshot of that damned church bell.
Don't thank the doctor, Dr. Faversham.
He only paid me visits four or five.
The result was quite appalling
For the object of his calling,
Which he hardly seemed to realise, was keeping me alive.
See to my cat, Mr. Molotov.
Fill him up with liver and with lights.
A chair by the fire
Is something he'll require,
And don't allow him out on windy nights.
Send a *billet doux* to the Chancellor.
There's nothing for his old oak chest.
I gave my children two
All a decent man could do
And have taken special care to spend the rest.
Call on the parson, Mr. Pakenham.
I'm sorry there's a sinner on his roll.
You might give him a prod
To get a word with God
And have a bit of mercy on a poor old soul.

* * * * *

(9) From *Writers' Favourite Recipes*

In 1921, Hugh Walpole, John Galsworthy, Stanley Unwin, Harold Macmillan and others formed the Society of Bookmen, whose aim was to promote the cause of literature by forstening co-operation between all branches of the

book trade. In 1925, following liaison between the Societies of Bookmen and Authors, the Publishers' Association, the Publishers' Circle and the Associated Booksellers,¹ the National Book Council was launched to take the initiative forward. Renamed the National Book League (NBL) in 1944 and the Book Trust in 1986, the body was responsible for the introduction in 1932 of the Book Token scheme, early opposition to the Net Book Agreement (which prevailed until the 1990s) and more.² Another innovation was "the institution ... of an Annual Lecture delivered to a wide audience by distinguished writers". On 27 May 1964, the "distinguished writer" invited to address the NBL was WG, who spoke at their Ablemarle Street, London HQ on "Literary Fashions".³



(i) Corgi, 1978 (ii) St. Martin's Press (USA), 1979

In 1978, he also contributed as follows to Gillian Vincent's NBL-sponsored *Writers' Favourite Recipes*:

GOLF STEW

When I am working I like to play golf about three times a week. I play nine to twelve holes, nearly always on my own, and I scarcely ever speak to anyone. When I come home it is time for lunch, and one of my favourite meals in the cold weather is my wife's version of Irish stew, with a bottle of Worthington.

For the stew she buys six cutlets of middle neck of lamb and three pieces of best end of lamb. This she puts on the previous day to simmer gently in water for two hours. Next day she takes off all the fat that has come to the surface, and adds one large swede, one carrot, one parsnip, six to eight leeks all sliced, one bay leaf and two teaspoons of salt. She allows this to simmer for a further two hours, then adds six potatoes and three slices of smoked back bacon. When these are cooked the dish is ready for serving. This is enough for four to six people according to the size of appetite.

SOURCES

¹ thebooksociety.org.uk

² *The National Book League* by Clifford Simmons, in *Elementary English*, Volume 48, Number 2, February 1971

³ *The Times*, 27 May 1964

* * * * *

(10) From *Perranporth Official Guide, 1956*

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF PERRANPORTH by Winston Graham

One summer during the late sixties¹ of last century two men might have been seen frequently on the beach at Perranporth, walking across the sands or bathing or lying on the rocks talking and enjoying the summer sun. Both were poets, one, the lesser, a Cornishman, Henry Sewell Stokes, who lived in Truro.

The other, a striking, handsome man of middle age, very tall with a massive aquiline face, hazel eyes and a shock of thick, dark hair, was at that time the recipient of such popularity and fame as no other English poet ever had in his lifetime; and in his visits to Cornwall he found relief from the intense publicity which surrounded his movements elsewhere. It was while on one of these visits that he wrote the poem of which the first three verses run:

*Hast thou ever in a travel
Through the Cornish lands
Heard the great Atlantic roaring
On the firm, wide tawny flooring
Of the Perran sands?*

*Sea-rent gully where the billows
Come in great unrest;
Fugitives all white and reeking,
Flying from the vengeful Sea-king,
Striking from the west.*

*Level roadway, ever ermined
By the ocean verge;
Girt by sandhill, swelling, shoaling
Down to imitate the rolling
Of the lordly surge.*

This poem, of which there are six verses, was not published for some years, but eventually it appeared in the *London Echo*. It is a testimony, by one of the greatest of the Victorians, to a scene which had impressed him, as it has done many others less gifted, with its grandeur and its beauty.¹

* * *

Perranporth has a history dating back to the earliest times. In common with one or two other coastal areas of Cornwall, it was converted to Christianity by Irish monks about the year 490. When St. Augustine landed in a pagan Kent about a hundred years later, St. Piran's Oratory was already flourishing; and

the present building, itself about a thousand years old, maintains in size and plan the exact appearance of that very earliest structure. At the time of the Conquest this was all church property, but soon afterwards it was seized by Robert of Mortain, William's half-brother, and in the Domesday Book is divided into two manors: Lanpiran (now Perranzabuloe) and Tiwarthal (now Perranporth), the latter being the property of Sir Henry le Tyes, who was of Norman blood.

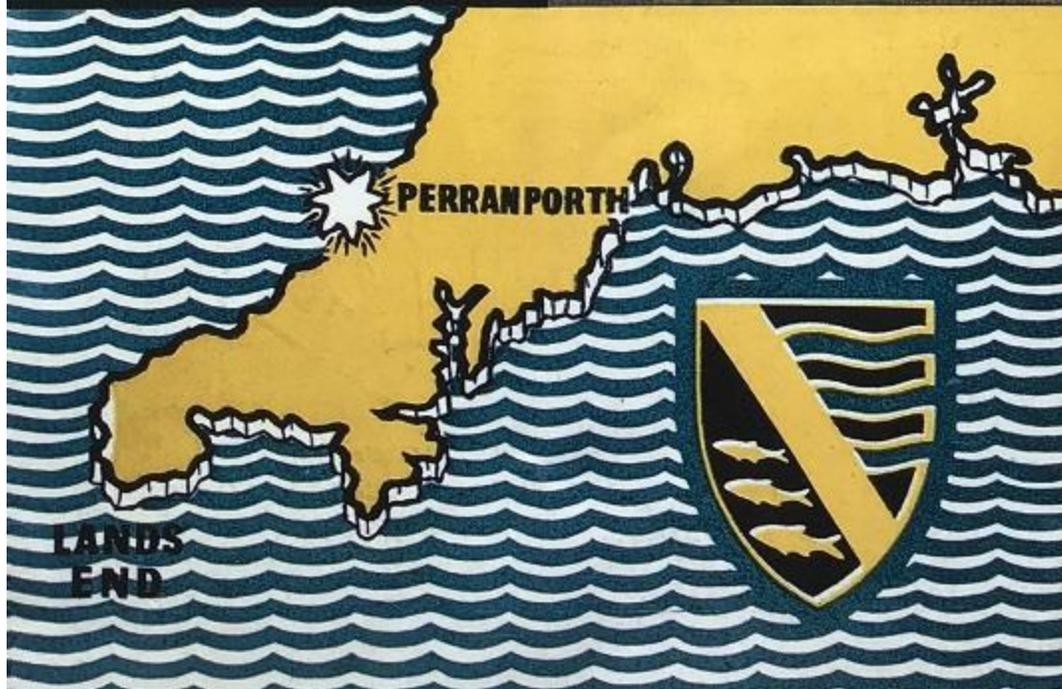
All through the middle centuries tin was mined in the district and during Elizabeth's reign there was extensive working of the copper lodes. The first serious attempt to smelt copper in Cornwall was begun, under German supervision, on the Perranporth sands about 1579. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, mining in the district was looked upon as played out, and a writer as late as 1817 casually lists all the mines as either suspended or abandoned. Twenty years after that began the great boom in minerals – iron, copper and tin, which was to reach its peak in 1874, when one mine in the district paid its shareholders a dividend of eight hundred per cent, and when two mines alone employed nearly two thousand operatives. A visitor to Perranporth in those days would have found the valley and surrounding hills dotted with the great engine houses whose balance bobs would be clanking up and down amid smoke and steam; horses and carts and mules and wagons would be busy with the movement of coals and minerals; washing floors and tin stamps were worked beside the leets and streams. It is interesting to note that the Bawden Rocks, prominent in the sea between Perranporth and St. Agnes, were for many years known as "Cap'n Dick" and "Cap'n Andrew," after Trevithick, the great engineer (1771-1833) and his partner, Andrew Vivian, the difference in size between the rocks no doubt in the first place suggesting to some wag the relative size of the two men.

But mineral prosperity fled as quickly as it came, and by the time Alfred Tennyson wrote his poem, most of the mines had closed or were closing. All the same it is as well that he looked for beauty only to the sea and cliffs. Now all that has changed; the scars have healed; houses stand where the mines once worked, roses grow in their gardens, and the combes are full of trees and wild flowers again.

Perranporth

On the Atlantic Coast of North Cornwall

A Spot
in the
Sun



*Perranporth Official Guide, 1956, published by Perranporth
Chamber of Commerce*

Pilchard fishing was carried out extensively from this bay, there being four companies in operation at one time, but almost the only sign left of their activities is the Western National 'bus garage, which was built as a pilchard curing cellar. The gully leading to the beach under the Droskyn Castle Hotel was originally made for drawing up the boats in the winter months. In the eighteenth century smuggling was rife here as in most parts of the county, though it was never an easy occupation apart from the risk of the law, for every journey to France meant the hazardous double-rounding of Land's End, often in small cutters or in "seine" boats carrying five or six men, and the goods could not be landed except in calm or moderate weather.

"Wrecking" – that is the luring of ships upon the rocks by lights and signals – is an invention of melodrama and never occurred in fact anywhere in Cornwall. Far more Cornishmen have lost their lives trying to save shipwrecked sailors than sailors by the exhibition of false lights. But it was the common practice to look on any ship or spar or cask blown ashore by wind or storm as fair pickings for the finders. That there was plenty of such flotsam before the days of steam can be seen by the fact that on this stretch of coast from Cape Cornwall to Trevoze Head, in the twenty-three years ending 1846, no fewer than 131 ships were wrecked, not counting fishing boats. Sometimes too, in times of poverty and distress, the finders could get out of hand as when, in 1764, a French vessel was wrecked on Perranporth beach. Not only was the ship cleared in a single tide, but the crew were stripped of their shirts as they came ashore. The captain, unable to get a hearing in Cornwall, eventually petitioned through the French ambassador in London and received compensation.

A writer² in 1602, after speaking of the abundance of fish to be found off the coast, goes on: "Touching the temperature of the county, the air thereby is cleansed as with Bellowes, by the billows that ever worke from off her environing seas, wherethrough it becometh pure and subtill, and is made very healthful. The Spring is not so early as in the Eastern parts; yet the Summer with a temperate heat recompenseth his slow softening of the fruits with their most kindly ripening. The Autumn bringeth a somewhat late harvest, and the Winter by reason of the sea's warm breath maketh the cold milder than elsewhere."

As a description this can hardly be improved on to-day, except to add that, though the salt winds of Spring still retard the trees, the warmth of the soil and the rarity of frosts make it ideal for early vegetables and spring flowers.

Sea bathing has been known in Perranporth for more than a hundred and fifty years, but surf bathing³ is comparatively new. To understand why this beach provides some of the loveliest sea-pictures to be found in England, it is only necessary to read the three remaining verses of Tennyson's poem:

*Nine large files of troubled water
Turbulently come;
From the bosom of his mother,
Each one leaping on his brother,
Scatters lusty foam.*

*In the sky a wondrous silence,
Cloud-surf mute and weird;
In the distance, still uplifting,
Ghostly fountains vanish, drifting,
Like a Druid's beard.*

*Spreading out a cloth of silver,
Moan the broken waves;
Sheet of phosphorescent foaming,
Sweeping out to break the gloaming
Stillness of the caves.*

Nothing of that has changed since he wrote it.⁴

NOTES

¹ Both "late sixties" and "1850s" (*Memoirs*, 1.3) would appear to be incorrect – see note four below.

² Cartographer and historian John Speed (1552-1629), whose landmark publication *The Theatre and Empire of Great Britaine* (1612) was the first atlas of the British Isles.

³ WG describes in both *Poldark's Cornwall* and *Memoirs*, 2.9 his particular fondness of "body surfing" (i.e. surfing without a board).

⁴ But *did* Tennyson write it? Not everyone thinks so. The poem was first published, without attribution, in *All the Year Round* on 15 October 1864:

THE PERRAN SANDS

*Hast thou ever, in a travel
Through the Cornish lands,
Heard the great Atlantic roaring,
On the firm wide tawny flooring
Of the Perran Sands?*

*'Cross a heath of sterile grandeur,
Underlaid with ore,
Hard by clank of mighty delving,
Pass ye down a roadway shelving
Slowly to the shore.*

*Down and down, a joyful terror
Burdening the mind,
As the booming and the clangour
Of the breakers' lofty anger
Cometh on the wind.*

*Down with quickening pulses,
Till ye reach a strand,
Where each day and night defiant
Waves advance to hold a giant
Tourney with the land.*

*Sea-rent gully, where the billows
Come in great unrest;
Fugitives all white and reeking,
Flying from the vengeful Sea-king,
Striking from the West.*

*Level roadway, ever ermined
By the ocean verge;
Girt by sandhills, swelling, shoaling
Down to imitate the rolling
Of the lordly surge.*

*Either side, dark solemn headlands
Sentinel the way,
Calmly looking on the curling
Summits of the breakers, hurling
Javelins of spray.*

*Nine large files of troubled water
Turbulently come;
From the bosom of his mother,
Each one leaping on his brother,
Scatters lusty foam.*

*In the sky a wondrous silence,
Cloud-surf mute and weird;
In the distance, still uplifting,
Ghostly fountains vanish, drifting,
Like a Druid's beard.*

*Spreading out a cloth of silver,
Moan the broken waves;
Sheet of phosphorescent foaming,
Sweeping out to break the gloaming
Stillness of the caves.*

*Deep-mouthed wounds that, brine-tormented,
Gape from Titan sides;
Gashes in the rock supernal,
Opened by the great diurnal
Tunnelling of tides.*

*In the sea road, two retainers,
Standing out alone,
Mock the tempest-vexed Atlantic
Coming to be driven frantic
By eternal stone.*

*One a giant, and the other
Reared in lesser form,
Two broad mammoth-chested sages,
That have stood from primal ages,
To defy the storm.*

*Fronting it with gaunt and gnarlèd
Ribs of ruddy brown;
Sphinxes builded in the ocean,
On its everlasting motion
Looking sternly down.*

It then resurfaced in the same abridged form (six verses of fourteen) in Samuel Pascoe's *On the Cornish Coast* (Lake & Lake, 1878), the *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser* of 19 August 1897 and the *London Echo* (as "verses ... we believe have not been published before") of 21 August 1897, each time attributed to Tennyson.

The Laureate's letters confirm that he did visit Perranporth in September 1860 – however, after the poem's publication in the *West Briton*, his son Hallam sent word that his late father (d. 1892) was *not* the author (*WB*, 30 September 1897) and in *The Suppressed Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1830-1862* (Harper and Brothers, 1904), J. C. Thomson writes:

[Perran Sands] *is supposed to have been written by Tennyson during a visit to Cornwall in 1860. But with a fairly complete knowledge of Tennyson at his worst – and at his worst Tennyson could be bad indeed! – [I] hesitate to assign to him the guilt of such doggerel as this.*

Of the poem's fourteen verses WG reproduces here numbers 1, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10. Pascoe quoted the same six stanzas in 1878, (whilst noting they comprise only "a few verses from a long poem") after which the same abstract was printed, as outlined above, in the *West Briton* and *London Echo* in 1897. On the face of it, then, Samuel Pascoe appears to have been the one who first abridged the original work and cited Tennyson as its author – though on what "evidence" is not known. *The Perran Sands* does not feature in any edition of Tennyson's Collected Works. In the *West Briton* of 2 September 1897, the writer is identified as academic, author and editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, T. H. S. Escott.

Whatever the answer, it seems WG liked what he read, for he reproduced the whole of the Pascoe précis a second time in *Memoirs*, Book One, Chapter Three and verses 4 and 5 (i.e. 8 and 9 of the full poem) in *Poldark's Cornwall* also.

(11)

The New Shell Guides

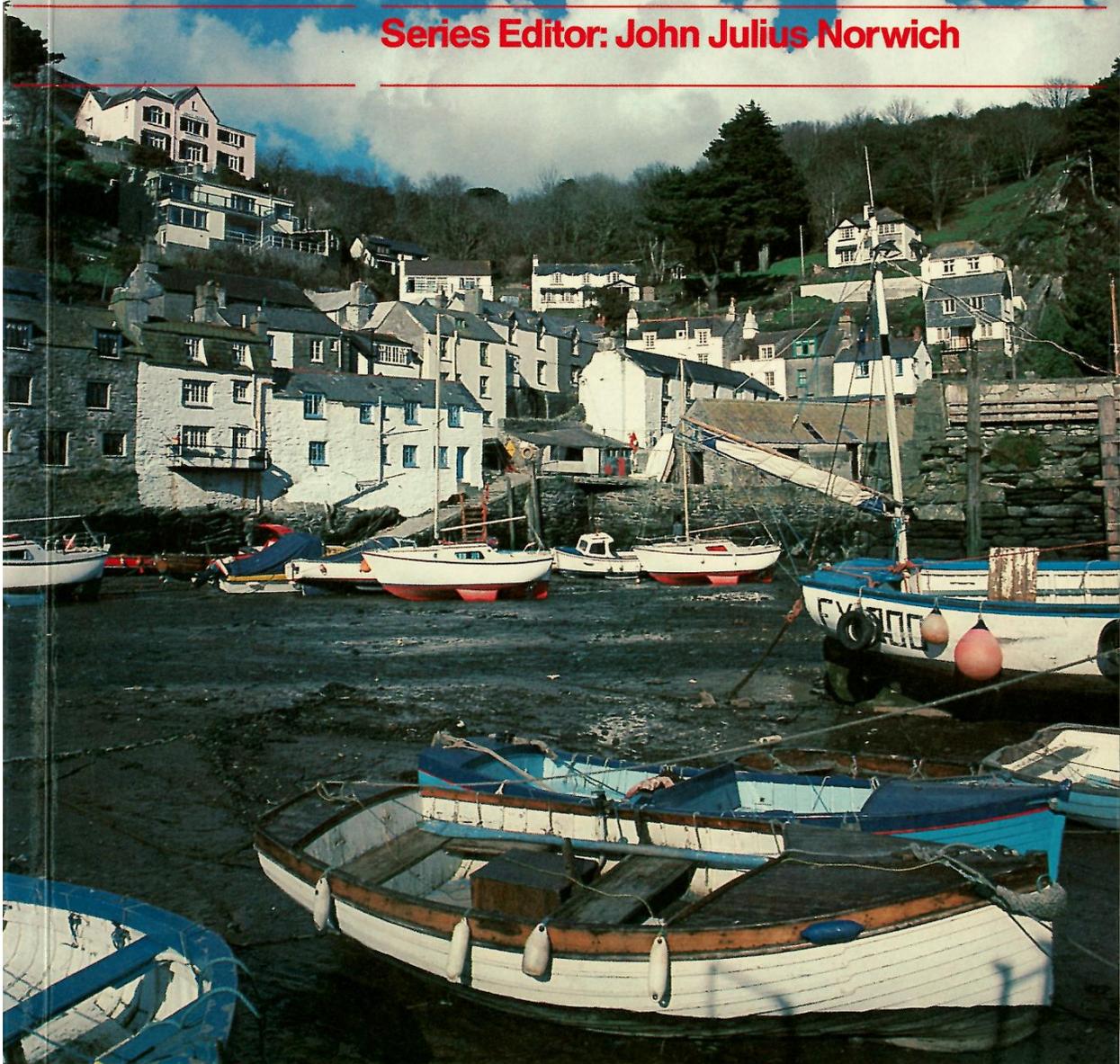
Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Paul Pettit

Introduction by Winston Graham



Series Editor: John Julius Norwich



Introduction

WINSTON GRAHAM

To attempt an introduction to a Guide to Devon and Cornwall is rather like trying to describe an apple and an orange in the same breath. From an appropriate distance the two objects have a strong resemblance; the nearer you approach them the more different from each other they prove to be. No two adjoining counties in England are, I fancy, so dissimilar. It is even difficult for the casual tourist to move from one to the other without this fact being brought to his attention.

This is not due to any perverseness on the part of the inhabitants; it is because for ages they have been in effect a different people.

Inevitably there are a few areas where this is not so. From Launceston to Hartland, around Stratton and Holsworthy and Bude, it is not always easy to know whether to ask for Cornish or Devonshire cream. But as a generality the differences are marked. For the purposes of art, or at least of publishing, it might be convenient if a Guide to Devon and Cornwall could be a description of a homogeneous region and people. History has decreed otherwise.

For several centuries before the Romans came, and right up to our own time, Cornwall has been inhabited and cultivated by people of Celtic origin. These people were themselves invaders, arriving in Cornwall in the earliest centuries from Gaul, from Ireland, from the north. Refugees, driven west from Celtic Devon by later invaders from the Continent, swelled the numbers but did not dilute the blood. Cornwall became known as 'the land beyond the land', not immune from the waves of conquerors from the east but resistant to more than titular rule. Most of the waves of conquest became ripples and washed back across the Tamar.

The Romans founded the city of Exeter, built roads leading to it across the western counties and posted galleys to protect its sea approaches from Saxon and other raiders. They penetrated into Cornwall in search of metals, but once assured that it offered no threat to their security they tended to leave it to its own devices. After the power of the Roman Empire had been withdrawn, the Saxons drifted further and further west, first sharing Devon with the Celtic Britons, but gradually overrunning them and driving them across the Tamar; and in the succeeding centuries following them into the border areas beyond the river. Thus Poundstock and Whitstone in Cornwall have Saxon names, not Celtic. Devon has very many names that indicate towns and villages founded by the Saxons of Wessex, and later fortified against the Danes.

When the Norman Conquest came, it too lost much of its impetus by the time it had moved so far west. In Cornwall the new conquerors were content to be overlords: they built, or rebuilt, castles to establish their command, as at Restormel, Launceston, and Trematon, but except in church matters, where the monastic ways of early Celtic Christianity were superseded by a more hieratical system stemming from Rome, most of the population lived virtually unchanged lives.

Over the next centuries the English language, being the language of commerce, gradually overcame the old Cornish in the eastern parts of the county, and in the

ports and sea villages around the coast. The Tudors went further and anglicized the administration, so bringing the rocky peninsula more closely into the English influence. The later Tudors also created many new parliamentary boroughs in Cornwall, putting in Crown nominees in order to strengthen the royal party, and for nearly three centuries Cornwall returned 44 members to the Commons; as many as the thickly populated counties of Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland put together.

Nevertheless, until the building of the railways and the invention of the car Cornwall remained obstinately a place on its own: 'the land beyond the land'. Devon was more important, Devon was larger, wealthier, more enterprising. When America was first discovered, and trade and conquest looked over the horizons of the sea towards new lands and new opportunities, it was from Devon that the seamen mainly came. Plymouth, the main port of the west after Bristol, is immortal in English history for the seamen it sent out to fight the Spanish, to defeat the Armada, to explore and to conquer and to trade. By the end of the 16th century Devon had become an important and influential part of England. When in November 1688 William of Orange with his 60 men-of-war and 700 transports, 'laden with the fate of empires', as Macaulay puts it, sailed from Hellevoetsluis in the Netherlands to claim the throne of England, it was to Torbay that he made his way, and in Exeter that four days later he shakily established his first headquarters.

Devon is characterized by its deep valleys. If you look at a relief map of the county you will see the way in which the rivers, rising in the extensive wet moorlands of mid-Devon, have made their way north to the Atlantic coast and south to the English Channel, creating the lush, deep valleys densely forested with beech trees, oak and ash, and the fertile farmlands which have given rise to the small market towns – of which it is said there were 38 even in Elizabethan times. By English standards it is a large county: 75 miles long by 73 in depth. Cornwall, by contrast, though some 80 miles long, is at its greatest depth barely 45 miles, from which it rapidly tapers away to a rocky, granite-hard, wind-swept, sun-and-shower peninsula. Wherever you go in it you can never get more than 20 miles from the sea.

Devon, apart from its great sea-going traditions and its many other activities, has always been a county of huntsmen. Until recent years anyone in Devon who was anyone hunted. It did not seem so much to matter whether it was stag, fox, badger, otter or hare, so long as it was something to gallop after. A writer in Victorian days said 'practically every parish in the county has its pack of harriers, and besides these not less than eight established packs of foxhounds and numerous other packs.' One enlightened gentleman called George Templar maintained two packs himself. With one of them he hunted wild foxes, with the other tame foxes which he had imported and kept in regular training. When one of these 'bag' foxes was turned loose a boy would run after it with a whip to get it going. Then the highly disciplined pack of hounds, which were known as the 'let 'im alone' pack, would follow in full cry. When eventually after a good chase they closed in on the fox, the first rider up would give his shout of 'let 'im alone!', whereupon the fox would fight his way out from the centre of the yapping, snarling pack unharmed – to be petted and fed and saved for the next time.

Many parsons of Devon and Cornwall were famous – and some of them infamous – for their hunting, their neglect of their duties, their many talents, their eccentricities,

their enormous families. Two of the best known were both Devonshire men, though one is often described as a Cornish poet because he spent most of his life over the border. Robert Stephen Hawker, who was born in 1803, was a promising but indigent young man who married his godmother (21 years his senior) and she, a lady of modest means, was able to see him through his studies. In 1834 he was appointed to the living of Morwenstowe, then a wild, wind-swept and demoralized parish with a ruined vicarage and drunken, ignorant and debased parishioners. There had been no resident vicar for 100 years, but there Hawker lived in happiness with his wife for the next 40, lavishing charity on shipwrecked sailors and the poor and sick of his parish alike. He restored the church, built and maintained a school, and wrote books and poems about it all. His famous 'Song of the Western Men' ('And shall Trelawny die?') about the 17th-century bishop Sir John Trelawny, who was arraigned for high treason under James II, was for a time accepted as a contemporary ballad, and deceived such people as Walter Scott, Macaulay and Charles Dickens. When Hawker's first wife died he was 60, but the following year he married the daughter of a Polish aristocrat, by whom he had three daughters. To end it all, he caused a late scandal by becoming a Roman Catholic on his death bed.

The other, Sabine Baring-Gould, who was born in 1834 and lived to be ninety, came of an old Devonshire family and was vicar of Lew Trenchard, a parish halfway between Launceston and Okehampton and on the edge of Dartmoor. There he lived for 43 years, hunting, travelling and writing with unabated vigour. In all he wrote more than a hundred books, including *The Lives of the Saints* in 15 volumes, poems, hymns (including 'Onward Christian Soldiers'), and many romantic novels. He also wrote perhaps the best Cornish short story ever, *Polly Postes*.

Additionally he had five sons and nine daughters. There was an occasion when his wife decided to give a children's party, and there was much laughter and frolicking going on. Baring-Gould came down from his study, benignly tolerant of the noise, and saw a little blonde girl sitting on the last step of the stairs. He patted her on the head and smiled and said: 'And whose little girl are you?' She looked up at him and burst into tears. 'Y-y-yours, Papa,' she replied.

This was told me some years ago by a daughter of the 'little girl' whom I happened to meet in San Francisco.

Having accepted history as the dominant factor in the dissimilarity between the two counties, we see geography as the qualifying influence. Cornwall, geographically, is Devon writ small. Smaller rivers rising from narrower, lower central moorlands, cutting sharp, verdant, sparser; more wind-swept valleys on their way to the sea. If in earlier times the Devonshire man, surrounded by endless hills and dales, found communication difficult between village and village, town and town, in Cornwall it was more so. With roads scarcely existing – or when they existed scarcely connecting – the usual means of travel was by sea. Before the railways came Devon had a few good roads leading east and north towards the centres of power. Cornwall had none such. Devonshire men might like to think of Exeter as the centre or capital of Devon and Cornwall. Cornishmen would hardly know it. They went to London and Bristol by sea. They kept to their own communities, and interbred, and developed self-reliance, and did not need or much like strangers. Except for a few of the gentry, and except when outside events affected their religious observances, they cared little for what went on elsewhere. Rather like the early Greeks, they were tough, active,

enterprising within their limitations, smallish and muscular, humorous and obstinate: though sometimes susceptible of the longueurs of the Celtic twilight. Their situation made them tremendously insular – or indeed peninsular – and this has persisted to the present day, and is not directed solely towards strangers. Some years ago I was talking with a man, himself elderly, about who was likely to be the then oldest inhabitant of Perranporth. I mentioned a man called Harry Mitchell. ‘Gerraway,’ said my friend with great contempt. ‘That edn no good. Harry edn a Perranporth man. He come from B’linge.’ Bolingey is a mile from Perranporth.

Here and there in Devon, but more particularly in Cornwall, ruined chimneys still scar the landscape with memories of the days when mining was prosperous. Alas it is all gone, and alas some of the chimneys have fallen or been pulled down. Sufficient remain to remind us of the industrial revolution of the 19th century, when demand and opportunity released a spring of talent and genius in the Cornish character, and men like Richard Trevithick, Humphry Davy and Goldsworthy Gurney were in the forefront of mechanical and scientific invention and innovation. But later in the century the total collapse of tin and copper mining forced wholesale emigration upon the miners, so that the county was denuded of many of its most enterprising citizens.

When in 1859 Isambard Kingdom Brunel built his great bridge across the Tamar to carry the railway into Cornwall, he found the steep valleys of the Duchy constantly cutting across his progress. Travelling west by train today, you will find the line skirting one side of a valley until it can get no further without too steep a gradient, then a bridge has been built to carry it to the other side of the valley; and so round the corner to the next similar obstacle. The diesels of today, though proceeding with circumspection round the sharper bends, have so much greater acceleration than the

The Tamar road bridge (left) and Brunel’s railway bridge (right) (see p. 120)



old steam trains that they easily knock half an hour off a 50-mile journey.

For the many thousands who never travel except by car, a train journey to the west is strongly recommended. Between Exeter and Newton Abbot there is the splendid run by the sea, in and out of tunnels and among the red rocks of Dawlish and Teignmouth; then out of Plymouth across Brunel's bridge with its splendid bird's eye view of the Sound; later, glimpses of the lovely lower reaches of the Tamar; mid-Cornwall, green and verdant; west Cornwall, treeless and ghost-ridden with old mine chimneys; then the slow unveiling of St Michael's Mount to crown it all.

Since the trains began to open up the west – and of course very much more so since the end of the Second World War, with the spread of the mass-produced car – many have come from other parts of England to settle in the more temperate seaside villages and towns of the West Country, either to retire, or to open or buy small businesses and make their living away from the rat race and the pressures of city life. The Cornish Riviera, so publicized by the old Great Western Railway, and the Devon Riviera with it, are to some extent advertising myths. The average rainfall in the West Country is much higher than in London, the winter winds can be as bitter as anywhere in England and rather more ferocious, and the snowfalls of Dartmoor are notorious. But the compensation is the underlying presence of the Gulf Stream, easing the frosts of the uplands, usually preventing them at sea level, the clarity of the high skies, the softness of the air, the washed blues and greys and purples of the hasty clouds. Semitropical plants, though buffeted by rough cold winds, flourish in a way they cannot do further east. Daffodils and most spring flowers are weeks earlier than in the rest of the country. In my garden on the *north* coast of Cornwall – where I created a large pocket of peaty ground – I used to feel aggrieved if I did not have

Detail of the west front of Exeter Cathedral (see p. 82)



camellias in flower by mid-December. I have an old horticultural map marking the limits of what was regarded as the most temperate part of England: this draws a line from Exmouth on the south coast, bisecting Exeter, and going up to Combe Martin on the north coast. And the further west you go from that line, and the nearer the sea, the better for most subtropical plants. For conventional gardening, however, covering the generality of flowers and vegetables and shrubs, the richer soils of Devon give much better results. I remember as a young man going to see my uncle, who lived in Newton Ferrers, and being astonished at the thickness and vigour of his rose trees compared to what I was able to grow in Cornwall.

So the South West – Devon, of course, but in a greater proportion Cornwall – has suffered, or enjoyed, a peaceful invasion of settlers, following in the footsteps of the Romans, the Saxons and the Normans trekking ever west; and whereas Cornwall threw back, often more by fortune than design, the other and earlier invaders, she has had no defences against these friendly people from up-country who have settled everywhere in the peninsula.

Nor could she have afforded to withstand them even if the wish had been there. The total collapse of the fishing industry, of copper mining, and then of tin mining, has left the county woefully dependent on tourism to sustain the barest standard of living.

There are, first, the tourists, who come yearly over barely a four-month period, flocking in their thousands like the pilchards that once flocked to her coasts, and then are as quickly gone: they provide a transfusion of life-giving money to the county, and much of Cornwall is now geared only to receive them. And, second, there are the people who come to settle, also in their thousands, buying bungalows and building small homes – ‘they are smiling o’er the silvery brooks and round the hamlet fanes’; these also help to keep the county in a minimal degree of prosperity, and during the winter months too. My only fear is that there is a danger of turning the Celtic twilight into an Anglo-Saxon rest home.

Devon has been better able to assimilate and deal with these developments in West Country life because of her size and because she has had longer to do so. Also, as has been said, she is more closely integrated with the economics of the rest of the country. She has the great naval port of Plymouth, besides substantial market towns and some valuable light industries, additional to sheep and dairy farming. She is, over all, a richly verdant land, a place of ancient oaks and ancient inns, of long-woolled sheep, of heavy comfortable cattle, of clustered white cottages and moorland farms, and a substantial and not un-prosperous habitancy. The population of Exeter, the county town of Devon, is 96,000 as against the 16,000 of Truro, Cornwall’s capital. Torquay has 108,000 inhabitants as against Newquay’s 15,000. Plymouth has 225,000 compared with Falmouth’s 18,000.

Yet each county, taken separately or with its neighbour, rewards the closest or the most casual exploration, as Paul Pettit’s comprehensive gazetteer shows. There is nowhere like the West Country – though men will even differ as to what that phrase ‘West Country’ implies. To a Londoner it will include Salisbury and Bath. To a Cornishman the West Country ends at Exeter. It is a matter of perspective but not at all of appreciation. Devon and Cornwall have two of the finest cathedrals in the land, again greatly contrasting: Exeter is 12th to 14th century, its completion delayed by the epidemic of the Black Death – a gem, surrounded by a green close and cloistral



Pendennis Castle, Falmouth (see p. 172)

calm, with some of the best 13th-century woodcarving in the world. Truro Cathedral, built between 1880 and 1910, is 19th-century Gothic and therefore attracts criticism for its anachronistic style; but a superb building, designed like the French cathedrals to exist in the very centre and bustle of traffic, fairly towering over everything, physically and architecturally, particularly over some squalid modern buildings which have done nothing to improve the charm of this attractive town.

In Devon and Cornwall you will find interesting churches galore, some of the most individual and arresting villages, the best beaches in England, the clearest and most brilliant sunlight, the cleanest rain, the wildest and most wayward winds, and escape from pressure, economic, social, political, literary or romantic. Many men and women have chosen to settle or to stay for a while in the West Country as a way of escaping from their problems – or facing their problems in a new way – and reassembling their lives. Those who were born here and have had to go away, long to return. It used to be said in Truro of doctors that if they were appointed to spend a year in the area, and outstayed the year, they would never leave again. Most of them did not. Why should they?

* * * * *

(12) MY POLDARK CHARACTERS by WINSTON GRAHAM

*From Redruth County Grammar School Souvenir Magazine 1907 – 1976;
1974 – 1975, pages 26 and 27*

I am sometimes asked how the names in the Poldark novels were chosen, what particular principles or preferences, if any, guided me in the search for suitable names.

Long years ago when I first began to consider a novel about 18th-century Cornwall, and a family living on the north coast in those days, it seemed necessary that I should find a surname for them which would sound essentially Cornish and yet which would not be the name of an actual family with whom these people could be identified or confused. At that time my closest friend was a young man called Polgreen, and the change – from Polgreen to Poldark – seemed to be just what was necessary, not merely because the change was slight but because it gave the name a heavier and more memorable sound.

Later, when the novel was already under way, I was seeking a Christian name for the Illogan girl who is picked up as a waif at Redruth Fair. Again it should be unusual and Cornish but I did not want a conventionally romantic Cornish name such as Morwena or Loveday. Then, driving across the Goss Moors one day, I saw a signpost marked Demelza, and it seemed at once not merely to be right but to give an added vitality and personality to the character already in being.

Similarly, in looking for a name for the banking family who came to represent the powerful new mercantile class and the natural opposition to the Poldarks, a place-name provided the answer. Warleggan was not only the right length but, I believe, gives the right impression – of power and industrial strength. Sometimes a name comes into one's mind before there is a character attached to it at all. Such a one is Tholly Tregirls, who appears for the first time in "The Black Moon." The name existed in my

mind for several years before it began to take on the rudiments of the character who finally emerged. Many names in the books, of course, come direct from reading 18th century – and earlier – Cornish history. Ezekiel Scawen, Will Nanfan, Hugh Bodrugan, Charlie Baragwanath, Nick Vigus, Kerenhappuch Smith, are examples.



Tregirls Beach, Padstow

So far as place names occur as place names, descriptions of towns are as accurate as I know how to make them; but where north coast topography is concerned I use a little licence: for instance, the original of Mongoose House is not in Mongoose village. Trenwith House is further east than one would suppose and is partly modelled on Trerice. Bolingey River was known in the 18th century as Mellingey River. Thurston Peter has a theory that Perranzabuloe took its name not from Peran in Sabulo or Perran in the Sands, but from the Irish village of Saul – in Gaelic Sabhull and in Latin Zabulum – which was where St. Piran originally came from. Hence my use of the name Sawle to describe a village partly based on old Perranporth.

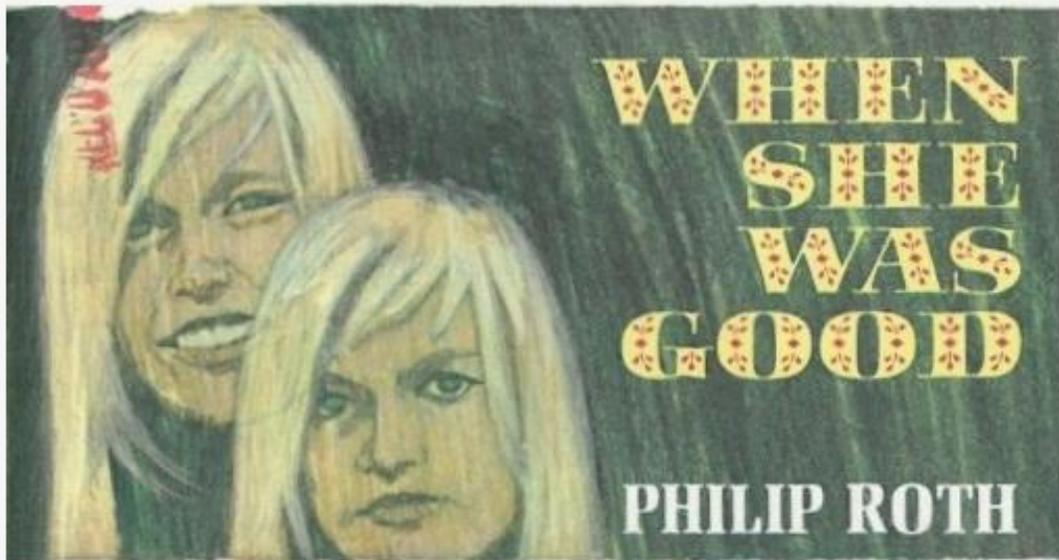
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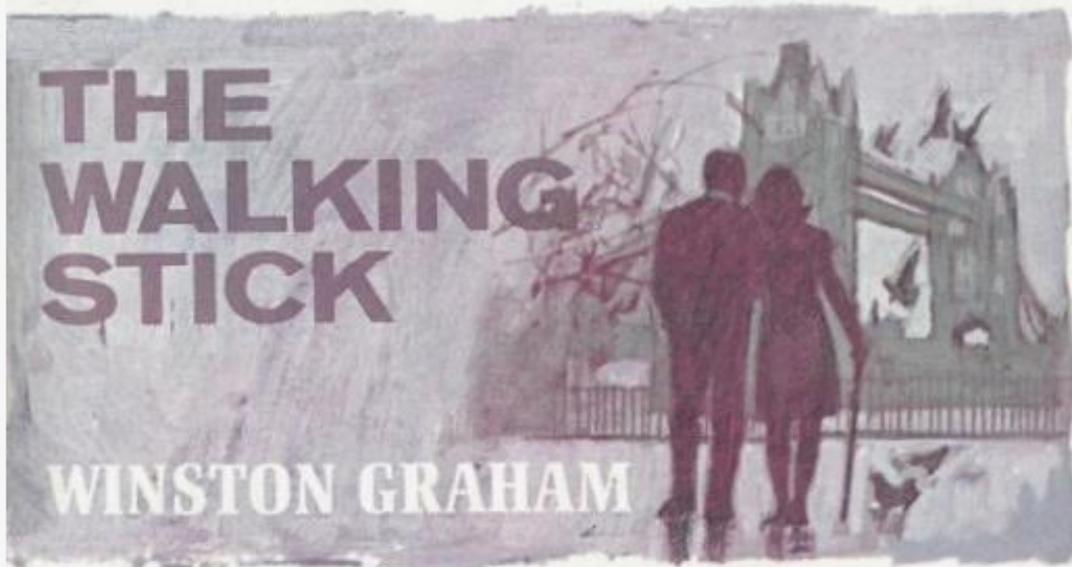
(13) *The Literary Guild Preview*, July 1967

The Literary Guild PREVIEW

July 1967

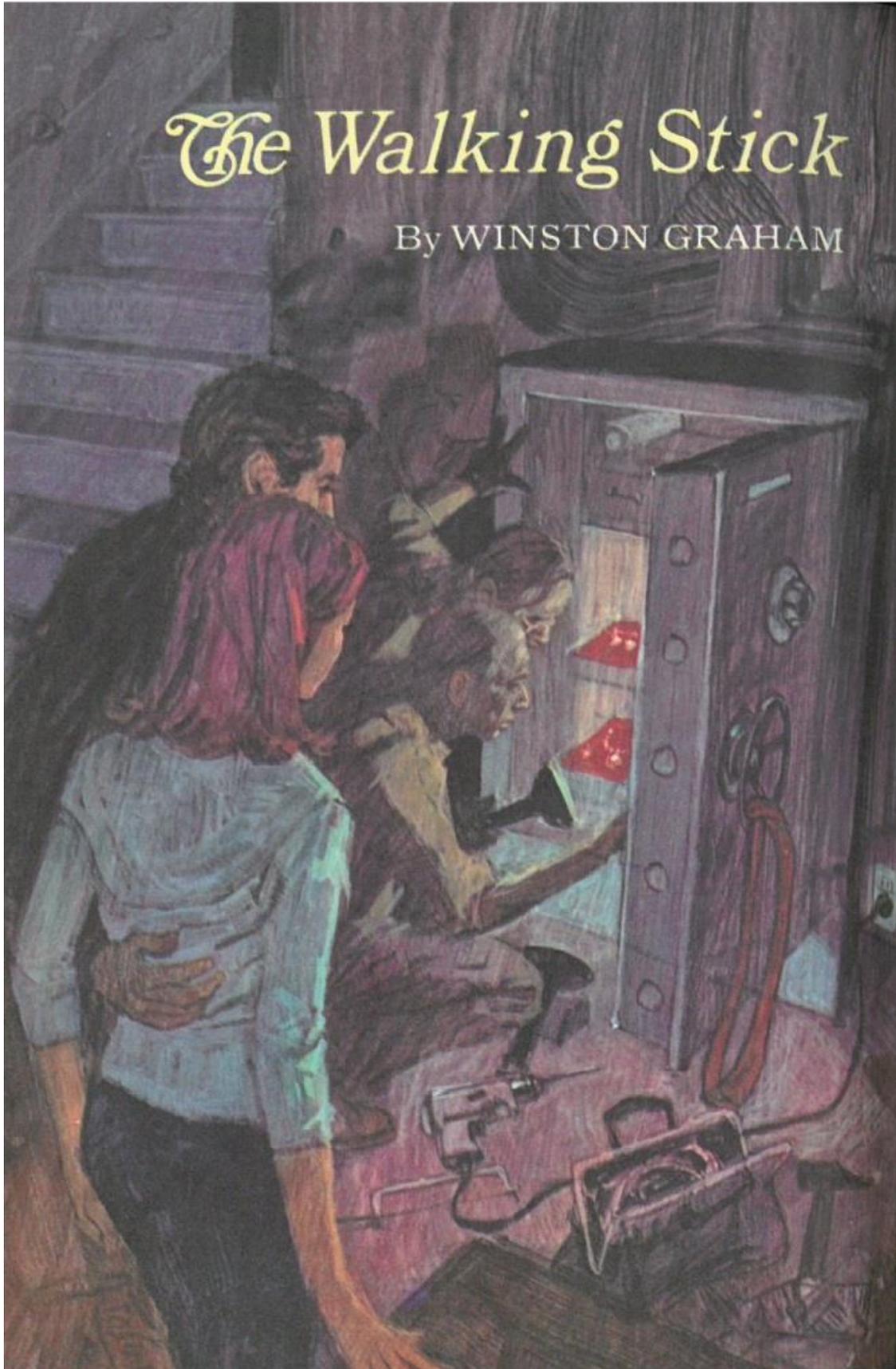


A DOUBLE SELECTION



The Walking Stick

By WINSTON GRAHAM



BECAUSE we do not want to spoil your pleasure in one of this season's most spellbinding novels of suspense, we will tell you very little about its plot. We will begin, however, by explaining that the "walking stick" of the title belongs to the heroine, a young woman lamed by polio as a child. She is using it to walk with at the beginning of the story and, at the very end, she is using it again. It is in the period when she walks without it that this well brought up, intelligent, idealistic daughter of two London doctors becomes willing accessory to a stupendous crime.

At twenty-six, copper-haired Deborah Dainton was living in her parents' town house and working as a specialist in porcelain at one of London's most distinguished auction galleries. Convinced that men were not for her, she wanted only to go on living the life she had patiently worked out for herself.

Leigh Hartley changed her mind. Though she met him at one of her sister Sarah's parties, he did not belong in their sophisticated, comfortably monied world. A would-be artist with the wrong accent and the wrong clothes, he was as matter of fact about Deborah's lameness as he was dazzled by her beauty. And step by protesting step, he freed her from her cane. She was already in love with him when she discovered that he had a wife.

That should have ended it. It might have, if Deborah, with her connections in the world of art, had not innocently been the means of crushing Leigh's dreams of recognition as a painter. Somehow that crippling blow to his ego made them equals. They became lovers. And so slowly that she scarcely flinched, Deborah began her descent into the underworld from which Leigh sprang—the world of the fat, sinister fence, Jack Foil; of sleek, dirty-mouthed Ted Sandhurst, and—finally—the gaunt, gentlemanly safecracker called John Irons. . . .

To a story whose action is as vivid, as fast, as nerve-tightening as a thriller like *Rififi*, Winston Graham has added the still greater psychological suspense of a climax which turns solely on the character of his winning heroine. As the *San Francisco Chronicle* says, "Mr. Graham has a way of making his dilemmas so acute that there seems no way out, and his people so appealing that the reader longs to have them escape."

And that, we feel, is all we should tell you about a novel you will read just as fast as you can turn the pages—a book that, once begun, you will absolutely have to know "how it comes out."

The books in this month's special double selection are selling in the publisher's editions for a total of \$10.90. The Guild editions will be available at the members' price of only **\$4.50 for both books.**

Winston Graham tells about *The Walking Stick*

When I was twenty-two I fell in love with a girl who was lame. She had a lovely face – one of the most lovely I have ever seen. But it had a hint of strain. To suggest that it had been refined by suffering would give quite the wrong impression. I don't know that she had ever suffered – she used to go on long walks limping with her stick, and always seemed to be in excellent health and spirits – but certainly it had a fineness of line you don't often see in a girl of twenty-four.

We got on well together – we liked each other – she had a marvellous mind and a quick wit; but although we often went on walks and although I took her out a few times in the evening, she firmly rejected anything further. Even when I kissed her she would turn her mouth away. Accepting the fact that I did not attract her, I began to see her less often; but still we met sometimes with great pleasure, and our families met also.

She was very secretive about what had been wrong with her, and her family was too. A silence fell whenever the subject was approached, and no one was crude enough to press the point. So I never learned. Then her family quite suddenly sold their house and moved to a town three hundred miles away. Although we corresponded for a long time, I never saw her again.

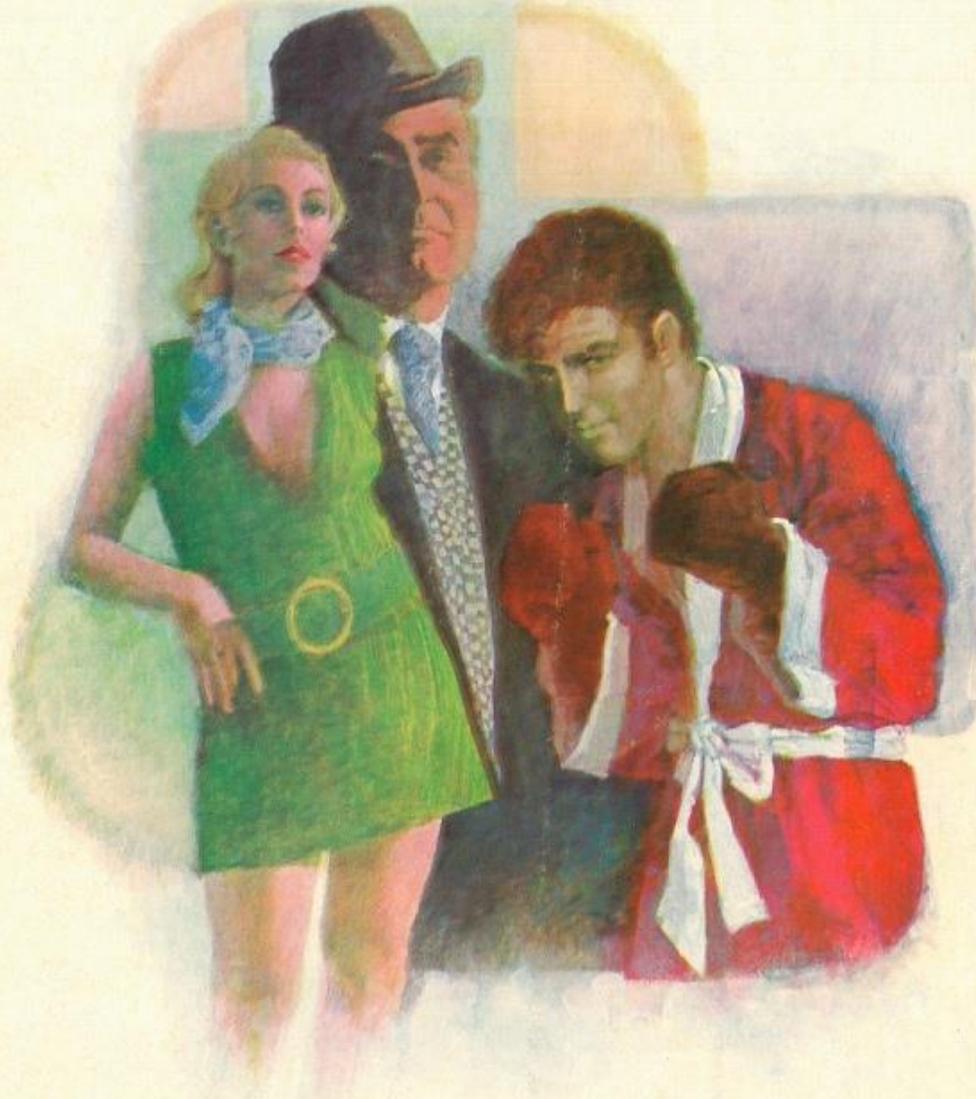
It was many years later that I learned that the reason they had moved was because she told her parents she was in love with me.

Novelists are perhaps fortunate in one respect, in that – consciously or subconsciously – they sublimate many of their personal problems, their disappointments, their minor tragedies into new forms within their novels. Often, when they have achieved a fair body of work, themes recur. I find – although I had entirely forgotten it while writing *THE WALKING STICK* – that a lame girl appears in a very early novel of mine called *The Merciless Ladies*. Then about six years later as a minor character in *Jeremy Poldark* (misnamed *Venture Once More* in the U.S.). But in *THE WALKING STICK* this at least partly subconscious preoccupation with an old love, which had been with me all my adult life, has for the first time been given full scope.

Winston Graham was born in prosaic Manchester, but soon moved to more exotic Cornwall, scene of many of his novels. Today he lives with his family in comfortable Sussex and enjoys a reputation for suspense from Sweden to Hindustan (he's been translated into Urdu). A sizeable bit of his worldwide fame rests on Marnie, which Alfred Hitchcock made into a memorable movie.

the Literary Guild magazine

THE SELECTION FOR JANUARY 1970



Angell, Pearl and Little God

BY WINSTON GRAHAM

author of *The Walking Stick*

(14)

Winston Graham tells about Angell, Pearl and Little God

GENERALLY speaking, the novels I write can in their genesis be divided into two forms: those which develop from an event (real or imagined) and those which develop from a character (for whom there is always a factual base but over which the imagination takes charge and amends or develops to a greater or lesser degree).

ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD developed entirely from character, as most of my later novels have done; but unlike *The Walking Stick*, for instance, where a woman commanded almost my sole attention, this book—as perhaps the title implies—came into being as a result of an equal interest in—one might almost say an equal contest between—three characters.

Angell came first, and the impulse to begin this novel sprang from the attraction of telling the events of his life, or of a certain portion of his life, from his point of view. It has always been a particular inclination of mine to tell a story in the first person singular—using the “I” form not merely as the most direct form of narrative but in order that the person by his very method of telling the story shall reveal his character, as it were inadvertently and without any “interference” on the part of the author. In *Marnie*, I think the queer character of the girl thief revealed itself in this way, though you might suppose that she was not aware of it.

Well, here was another such enticing prospect. A stout, middle-aged solicitor with many odd sides to his character, whose character would reveal itself by the way he wrote, and who would claim a sympathy from the reader that most readers would not be prepared to give. So it began.

And then came Pearl. Here was a pretty young girl who worked on the perfumery counter of one of London’s great stores. She

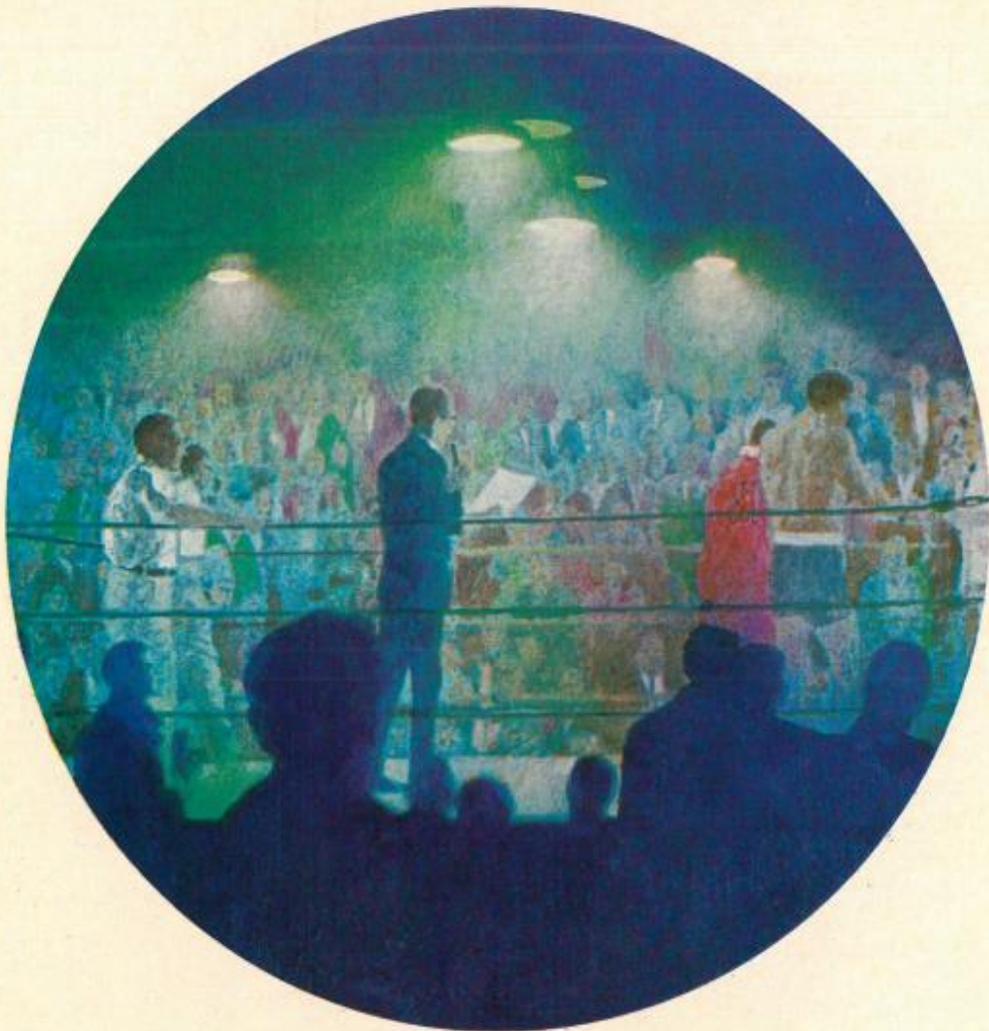
could be observed through Angell’s eyes, and was so observed when I began to write the novel. But Pearl had existed for a long time in a never-finished short story. Could she now as a character be observed only externally? Already important to me, she gained the importance and interest as I wrote about her. It became increasingly impossible not to want to tell the story from her viewpoint instead.

After that, “Little God.” Here was a young man in the world of boxing, a milieu that I then knew little of, and that only superficially. Another inducement to write, another challenge.

Through friends I was able to make friends in this world. I talked to champions and those who would never be champions; I sat in dressing rooms, in the offices of big and small promoters, I attended the weigh-ins, talked with the “regulars”, those who travel from fight to fight, to whom boxing is something of a religion. On some of these occasions, especially in pubs and in gymnasiums where fighters meet, it was useful to take on a protective colouring. As a successful novelist I should have been looked on with a certain amount of suspicion. So I borrowed a torn, dirty raincoat and used an old turned-down trilby hat of my own. With one hand thrust in the coat pocket and my right foot turned out to cause a slight flat-footed limp, I was able to mix easily and raised no comment.

But when I came to write all this, the world I had entered was so vastly different from that of Angell’s and indeed Pearl’s, that it seemed that Godfrey merited a novel on his own—and told through his eyes.

I cannot say what imperative dictated that all these disparate characters had to appear in the same book; only that it so occurred; and that in the junction of the three, acting as a linchpin between them, both connective and



**Intrigue blends with old-fashioned
readability in this suspenseful novel of a
fat London attorney, a pugnacious
little boxer and the beautiful young woman
who brings them dramatically together.**

axial, a fourth character, Lady Vosper, came upon the scene.

So, having written a substantial part of the novel, I scrapped it and began with Pearl as the central character; and then stopped again and handed the reins to Godfrey. In a third version each character was allotted a section of the book to tell his personal story in his or her own words, each part dovetailing into another.

It still didn't seem right; this switching of viewpoints looks new but it is in fact old fashioned and slightly unsatisfactory—so when I had written about half the book I stopped once again and began a fourth time, and adopted the oldest fashioned of all methods, the directive narrative in the third person, with the author as the omniscient but entirely unobtrusive narrator.

Reading the book you may wonder why I did not do this in the first place and save all the trouble. Again I cannot say. Without wishing to be pretentious, I can only remark that the creative urges have to be given their head, otherwise they have a nasty habit of turning sour on you.

The disadvantage of doing this, of course, is the labour and the time apparently lost. If you spend two and a half years writing a substantial historical novel the chances are that much of the research will be obvious in the outcome, irrespective of the actual success or failure of the novel itself. And studiousness in the writer is often mistakenly seen as a virtue in itself.

Experimentation in technique, on the other hand, leaves little to show for the time and trouble. Possibly there is one reward—though this is something only the reader can judge and not the author. Writing a book in this peculiar way, the author is vouchsafed more *views* of his characters than any straightforward narrative could in the first place possibly provide. Lamps shining from different directions help to create form and shadow. The characters become perhaps a little more sculptural, a little more seen in the round.

And, although this is a long book, a lot has been left out. I think it is probably always a good thing for an author to have written more about his characters than he can possibly include.

PHOTO: ALEX GOTFRYD



About Winston Graham

A dedicated writer since the age of twenty-two, Winston Graham's big success came immediately after the war when he began writing novels which were not only acclaimed by the press and the public but were also selected by book clubs and bought by movie producers. Many of his books are set in Cornwall, where he has lived since his mid-twenties and which he explored thoroughly during the war years with the Coast Guard Service. Others have a background of Manchester, where he was born. Some reflect the time he lived in the south of France. His books are as different as the modern *Marnie*, made into an overwhelming film by Alfred Hitchcock, and *The Grove of Eagles*, a vivid historical novel climaxing in the defeat of the second Spanish Armada.

Winston Graham is tall and distinguished looking in a typically English way, with blue eyes, dark hair and the sophisticated charm with which he sometimes endows his characters. He takes his writing seriously—working in longhand every morning. Afternoons he may play golf but is more apt to concern himself with rose gardening or wall building. He and his wife have two children, and travel several months of each year.

(15) From *The White Elephant Cookbook*, Collins 1973

A Cornish Pasty

Makes 1 pasty

rough puff pastry

6 oz skirt beef

1 oz ox kidney

2 medium-sized potatoes, peeled

1 onion

milk

salt and pepper

Roll the pastry into a circle.

We use a plate 8 inch in diameter!

Slice the potatoes very thinly onto the pastry, but not too near the edge.

Cut the meat very fine, and put on top of potatoes.

Then the kidney, also cut fine.

Slice the onion, varying amount to the tastes of your family.

Add salt and pepper.

Damp the edges of the pastry and 'crinkle' together.

Brush over with milk.

Place on greaseproof paper on a tin.

Bake at 450 °F, gas 8 for 20 minutes in the top of the oven, then put it (or them) on a lower shelf and cook for at least another 30 minutes.

Wrap in foil to keep hot, and eat with mustard.

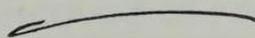
Drink beer or a light wine.

We have made these for many of our friends both English and American.

They have eaten every bit and have not complained of indigestion!

Bad for slimmers but ideal for a picnic!

Winston Graham





For thirty years from 1960, Mayfair's White Elephant Club was one of the most exclusive haunts of London and the wider world's social elite until, in 1992, the site passed into private hands. The business was opened by Victor Brusa, who died in 1965, and his wife Stella Richman (1922-2002), a television producer and former actress who chaired the enterprise

from 1960-68.

The first (slipcased) edition of *The White Elephant Cookbook*, edited by Stella Richman, was published by Collins in 1973 (above), with a second slightly revised edition following from Weidenfeld & Nicolson in 1979 (right); all profits to the NSPCC. Both books include WG's recipe for a Cornish pasty.

* * * * *





This copy of the Collins 1973 edition includes a handwritten annotation by WG revealing that the page's last four sentences were "added much later" (than his Perranporth years) and that "The Cornish would drink" not "beer or a light wine" but "a strong tea."

mustard.

* ~~Drink beer or a light wine.~~

We have made these for many of our friends both English and American.

They have eaten every bit and have not complained of indigestion!

Bad for slimmers but ideal for a picnic!

Winston Graham

Added much later

* *The Cornish would drink a strong tea.*

Winston Graham

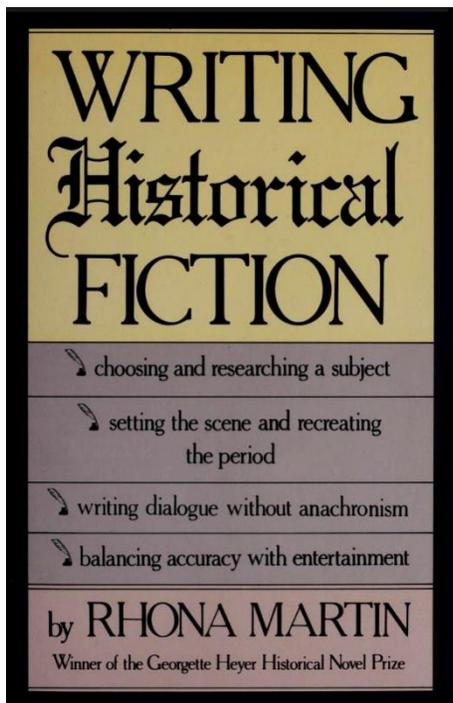
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(16) From *Writing Historical Fiction* by Rhona Martin, St Martin's Press, 1988

There are numerous examples of WG re-cycling passages of prose in assorted places, so it is no surprise to find that the short contribution he made to Rhona Martin's book is not wholly unique to that volume. In her last chapter, "Wisdom From on High", she passes on "personal advice from successful historical authors", the second of whom (of fourteen) is WG. Here's what he had to say:

Winston Graham (The *Poldark* series) I think the most important element in writing a historical novel is that the book should have a historical truth as well as a truth to human nature. Man has not changed, but his reaction to certain life patterns has changed. Unless the writer can understand these and transmit this understanding to the reader, his characters are simply modern people in fancy dress.

But one mustn't become too preoccupied with history. Avoid the smell of midnight oil. Novels are about life. A successful historical novel strikes a delicate balance in which the characters are of their time but are not weighted down by its trappings.



The first six of these seven sentences appeared previously in slightly revised form in the second chapter of *Poldark's Cornwall* (The Bodley Head, 1983) and again subsequently in *Memoirs* 2.8 (Macmillan, 2003). Only the last is either exclusive to Martin's work or from a source as yet unknown.

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