The Grove of Eagles (Hodder & Stoughton, 1963) was WG's twenty-seventh novel and seventh period novel – though his first for ten years. It is also, by some distance, the longest he ever wrote. Excluding Night Journey (1966) and Cameo (1988), both revised, neo-anachronistic versions of once-contemporary works,¹ he wrote seventeen period novels in all, i.e. twelve Poldarks plus The Forgotten Story (1945), Cordelia (1949), The Grove of Eagles, Tremor (1995) and 1998's The Ugly Sister. Of these, the one pitched furthest back in time² and the one which most deeply engages with the history of not one land and its people but two is The Grove of Eagles.

Though it must have been clear to the author from the off that the successful realisation of such a book would demand a huge amount of research, hindsight suggests that WG underestimated the scale of his self-imposed task even so. Some two years after finishing the manuscript he reflected:

> It was a monumental undertaking, and occupied nearly three years in the writing and the research. It began as a labour of love, and to some extent continued so all through,
but I certainly had no idea at the outset that, apart from English history, it would involve me in so much Spanish history as well. Spanish documents are troublesome to come by and even more troublesome to read. But it is good to have [written it].

I did once think of a sequel ... but at present I am still suffering from the 'combat fatigue' of the writing of this book; and modern novels, though by no means easy, seem such relatively uncomplicated tasks by comparison.³

WG loved both history and tackling the meticulous and often extensive study—he "researches like a detective" said Valerie Grove⁴—that underpins so many of his books with a solid foundation, but about the process of writing itself was ambivalent. In Memoirs he recalls that drafting Demelza in a wooden chalet bungalow overlooking Perran Sands during the summer of 1946 was "among the high spots"⁵ of his life and a quarter of a century on, that elusive feeling of intense gratification which comes to an author when work is going particularly well would return as he completed The Black Moon:

... the book gave me such pleasure to write that I count the last few months of [1972] as among the happiest of my life.⁶

But memories fade and when Susan Hill asked in 1987 if he still enjoyed writing, he replied:

No, I never have. It's like the lunatic banging his head against the wall – nice when it stops

and would concede only enjoyment in "having done it".⁷

So, how did WG determine, when planning a new novel, what to write about, or in what genre? Not necessarily by any conscious means:

One doesn't always choose subjects. They may come partly from conscious decision, partly from outside pressures, but usually and mainly from a subconscious urge from within.⁸
Commercial considerations seem to have played no part: he wrote, he said, what he wanted to write and not what he thought the public wanted. He responded to "a stimulus"; he needed, to give of his best, to feel stretched; to take on the challenge of something new:

I don't like to go on repeating myself. I know that it's an advantage in some ways to keep on writing the same sort of book but I feel that one grows more by having a shot at something else. 

All the same, it was important to take aim wisely, because

I know that, at least for myself, once a subject has been chosen there is no going back.

Thus, since most of his novels took at least a year to write, and some as long as three, a misstep at this stage would inevitably result in much wasted time and effort.

But if the choice was subconscious, what store of ideas was being drawn upon, and how, when and with what was the store being stocked? Though such questions can seldom be simply answered (other than to say "by life") clues do sometimes emerge. Though The Grove of Eagles was not published until December 1963, WG records that the seed from which it sprouted was planted more than a decade earlier in the form of a single sentence. In the course of Poldark research some three or four years after the war, he read of "one, John Killigrew, captain of Pendennis Castle, Falmouth, who in 1597 sold his castle to the King of Spain" – a statement WG considered so "outrageous and outlandish" that he knew one day he would have to follow it up.

A prolonged gestation period between first stimulus and first draft is typical of WG's very deliberate working method. Though he read the short story that sparked Ross Poldark to life in 1928, it was not until 1945 that the novel appeared. He introduced The Green Flash's Shona to the world in 1986, after her real-life counterpart had beguiled him twenty-six years earlier, in 1960. He set 1995's Tremor in an earthquake-devastated Agadir on the basis of memories of a visit there with his wife more than thirty
years before. When precisely he first began to act on his wish to look further into the matter of the 1597 sale of Pendennis Castle is difficult to say – however, a biographical sketch published in November 1955 reported that WG was

*working on a modern novel dealing with electronics, and another set in the mid-seventeenth century – in Cornwall.*

The first of those would be *The Sleeping Partner*, published in 1956, and the second, surely, (though the century is not quite right) *The Grove of Eagles*.

It is interesting to note that WG's American editor Ken McCormick claims some credit for the book's eventual emergence. He regularly pitched ideas for novels, albeit with little success – indeed, in a memo dated 1 July 1971 to Doubleday colleague Sam Vaughan, he acknowledged:

*Historically ... I have never been very successful in planting an idea in Winston's mind. He mostly has them himself ...*

but then added:

*The classic exception was THE GROVE OF EAGLES.*

Fifteen months later, in a letter to WG's American literary agent Carol Brandt, McCormick referred again to his part in the novel's genesis:

*Lee [Barker, another Doubleday colleague] and I worked on him for years to write it and one day he finally gave in.*

In view of WG's *Memoirs* recollection above, that the initial inspiration to write *The Grove of Eagles* came from Ken McCormick seems unlikely; however, the two men did enjoy a close working relationship, and that WG might have informed his editor at an early stage of his interest in the novel's subject, after which McCormick gave him regular and enthusiastic encouragement to advance his scheme is entirely plausible, even to the extent that, by the time a manuscript was finally delivered, McCormick might have come to believe the primary impetus acting on the author came
from him. After visiting WG in the spring of 1969, McCormick wrote a letter of thanks dated 16 April and, in it, recalls a midnight stroll through London during which the author discussed with his editor the possibility of writing "the lives of the train robbers seen through the eyes of one of the wives". McCormick declared himself "particularly taken" with the idea, of which he hoped to hear more— and, though he did not, what becomes plain is the degree to which confidences were sometimes shared. (But, elsewhere, McCormick also acknowledges WG's tendency to be reticent about the nature of work-in-hand, "partly because he doesn't want to admit to failure or because he wants to experiment on his own."

Although WG may have been mulling over the bare bones of *The Grove of Eagles* as early as 1955 (see above) and perhaps continued sporadically to tinker with the idea after that, it was only after completing first *Marnie* in 1959 then a move from Cornwall via London to the South of France early the following year that he began in earnest the long and arduous grind of researching and drafting his first Elizabethan epic, with the project now officially installed as his next novel.

Though he took a number of reference volumes with him to Cap Ferrat, the relative inavailability of "endless books to read" was one of several reasons he cited for finally deciding not to settle there— "I was a bit out of touch with sources," he recalled in 1983—but, following his return in September 1960 into temporary accommodation in Uckfield, then after yet another relocation in January 1962 into his new Buxted home, still the work went on.

As if having to study and write in such chaotic circumstances was not bad enough, the fates seemed to conspire against him in other ways too. Eric McKenzie, a sales director at Hodder (then WG's publisher) had a daughter living in Madrid and WG enlisted her help in sourcing research materials there. She duly gathered the documents he wanted but then, frustratingly, before she was able to send them, during a move between digs, they "went missing". In a letter dated 11 September 1962, McKenzie offered, if WG would resend him the relevant details, to liaise with his daughter with a view to repeating the exercise. What happened next is not known, but the vexation of the hard-pressed author on learning of yet one more setback is not hard to imagine.
Doubleday (USA), 1964. 12,922 copies of this first "trade" edition were sold, which just tops *The Walking Stick*’s 12,595 (despite much heavier promotion), with *Night Journey* (9,664), *Marnie* (9,547) and *Angell, Pearl and Little God* (8,143) all trailing well behind. Arthur Shilstone’s jacket illustration (above) was his fourth WG / Doubleday title, after *Demelza* (1953), *Venture Once More* (1954) and *The Last Gamble* (1955). Though the cover refers to the "second" Armada, it was in fact the third.
By the summer of 1963, Hodder at last had the novel in proof, at which point the question arose: how best to sell it? John Attenborough, the firm's deputy chairman, was acquainted with Dr. A. L. Rowse (Hodder had published him after the war), a Cornish-born Oxford History don whose specialism was the Elizabethan era. Though a notoriously prickly character, Rowse's imprimatur would, if given, be of great value to Hodder's sales team, so, on 19 August, without having consulted WG, Attenborough sent Rowse a copy of the proof, with this letter:

Dear A.L.R.,

I don't think I have ever before asked you to read a novel in proof; but I am now enclosing proofs of a novel called THE GROVE OF EAGLES in the hope that you will share my enthusiasm for it and say so ... You will ... recognise the name of the author, Winston Graham as a modern novelist of considerable literary distinction and great story-telling gifts. This is the first time since he reached maturity as a novelist that he has married his gifts to his positive love of Cornwall and celebrated the union in a historical novel. As an amateur historian and a professional publisher, I am immensely impressed by the result.27

It may be remembered that, when Hodder poached WG from Ward, Lock in 1949, they did so with a promise to publish his modern novels with enthusiasm whilst eschewing his period work, in which they showed no interest. Clearly this sniffany attitude to the Poldarks et al. did not change with time. Attenborough's extraordinary penultimate sentence can only be taken to mean that he considered the writer of the magnificent post-war Poldark quartet "immature", which leads one to question his judgement – or possibly, since they were published by Ward, Lock, he never actually read them.

Though it was inevitable that WG's work would sooner or later come to Rowse's attention, it was a prospect about which the author was nervous. Full details of Rowse's response to Attenborough are not known, but the following sentences – the first in particular recycled widely since – make plain its positive tenor:
Winston Graham has such a knowledge of Elizabethan Cornwall, such fidelity to fact and atmosphere, that I am conquered, as no doubt his many readers will be. It is Kingsley brought up to date – but better, and truer in spirit to the age.\textsuperscript{28}

On receipt of this boost, Attenborough informed WG of what he'd done and with what result, after which, on 7 September, WG himself wrote to the historian:

\begin{quote}
If there was an opinion I feared in respect of this novel it was yours – not unnaturally! – so if there is an opinion I value more than any other it is also yours. I couldn't be more pleased that you like this book, or more grateful for the generous way in which you have expressed it ... I feel happier about this book now than at any time since the enterprise was begun.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

\* \* \* \* \*

\textit{The Grove of Eagles} was published in the UK on 2 December 1963 and in the USA in the first week of January 1964 and drew a number of warmly appreciative notices. Here are four examples:

\begin{quote}
Mr. Graham's new novel is set in the years just after the defeat of the Spanish Armada of 1588. England is alert for another attempt by Philip of Spain to conquer this Protestant people, relying on a fifth column of devotees of the Old Faith, and their preparations within the country against the coming of a still larger Spanish fleet. It came in 1597, but again the weather was on the side of Queen Elizabeth and her fabulous band of semi-pirates whose names are still household words; Drake, Ralegh, Howard, Essex and the rest. All these figures are evoked in Mr. Graham's tale. We meet also Francis Bacon, and even have a fleeting glance at Cervantes during one of the scenes at the Spanish Court. It is an opulent picture, with all the gold and glitter of the Renaissance world.
\end{quote}
But we are also shown the squalor, the cruelty, the superstition, and the dreadful uncertainties that combined to set the tone of melancholy and even of despair in the poetry of the period, especially that of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Spenser. Mr. Graham’s book is also of that mood. Uncertainty of personal fate, wild hopes and violent reactions, mark the goings-on of these Elizabethan characters, in an age when as one of the Queen’s courtiers says, "Brother is against brother, friend against friend. It is little for the son of a slain man to become the ardent supporter of the murderer, for husbands and wives to bear witness that will see the other to the block. There are only two motives which reign undisputed, advancement and survival" ...

[The novel’s account of Essex's sacking of Cadiz] ... is detailed and masterly. But the book is more than picturesque. It is rich in moral force and sane historical judgment. [It]s inner meaning and purpose ... may be found in a passage toward the end: "It is when human beings are above human logic that they perhaps show their affinity with God". The whole movement of this long and elaborate story is conditioned by that belief. For pure story-telling, The Grove of Eagles may be classed with The Count of Monte Cristo; for romantic warmth, with Lorna Doone. In addition, it has, along with all of Mr. Graham's tales, a balance of shrewd assessment of human nature, its subterfuges, its pleas, and its gradual discovery of virtue in the most unexpected of characters. (Richard Church)³⁰

This long novel never falters ... It is in the established series of period pastiches which Graham alternates with his modern entertainments … The form is conventional, but the straightforward sweep and complexity of the plot and characters bring the book stirringly to life. (Kirkus, undated)

The canvas is wide, the picture stirring and brilliantly detailed. This is a rich, absorbing tale of a corner of England during hazardous times ... (Oxford Times)³¹
WINSTON GRAHAM’S *The Grove of Eagles* is a long (more than 570 pages) and ambitious historical novel set in the closing years of the first Elizabeth’s reign, with Cornwall very largely as its background.

As a historical novel it has many virtues. Despite its length it is taut, remarkably free from those longueurs which so frequently add tedium to accuracy. Though written in the first person and with a proper respect for the idiom of the period, it never descends into archaism for archaism’s sake. It is built carefully around a real Cornish family, the Killigrews; though, where it has suited his purposes, Mr. Graham has not hesitated to alter slightly the facts as they are contained in various manuscripts—an entirely legitimate device on the part of a novelist. Mr. Graham makes all the necessary apologies for this last action in an appendix nicely entitled “Postscript for Puritans.”

Mr. Graham’s hero is a bastard son, with a career to make and a mother to find. As a hero he succeeds in both, though the career is still a trifle tenuous as the story ends; but that is as it should be, since Maugan is still a young man. Intertwoven with his many adventures at sea, in Spain and at home is the story of his love for Sue Farnaby, with his marriage to whom the story ends. But these are only the bare bones of a highly atmospheric novel for which Mr. Graham must have steeped himself in the available literature: he has done what is now called his homework very well indeed, and the result, which could have been dull, is thoroughly exciting.

Battles at sea, aristocratic debts, friends at court, transient love-affairs, Spanish prisons, ambivalent attitudes towards religion, an auto-da-fé, all find a place in Mr. Graham’s rich and varied canvas, together with some sharp characterisations of historical personages, not least King Philip of Spain and, inevitably perhaps in a novel of the period, the great Sir Walter Raleigh himself. It is a book that will make a particular appeal to West Country readers; apart from the Killigrews themselves, there are scattered throughout it the names of famous Cornish and Devonshire families.

As a historical novel *The Grove of Eagles* is a more than usually satisfying piece of work.

Falmouth Council adopted this official crest in 1961, on the three-hundredth anniversary of the granting in 1661 of the town’s charter. The double-headed eagle at its centre is from the Killigrew coat of arms (see page one image). The gold towers on the eagle’s wings represent the castles at Pendennis and St Mawes, built in Tudor times to safeguard the harbour. At the top, the Falmouth packet ship, resplendent in full sail, recalls the mail packet service, in operation between 1688 and 1852, which provided gainful employment for Poldark’s Captain Blamey. The adze and pin maul, shipwrights' tools held by the lions, represent the local shipping industry. "Remember" – the last word spoken by Charles I – invites residents to recall the English Civil War, the siege of Pendennis, the Restoration, the Charter of 1661 and the building of the parish church, dedicated to King Charles the Martyr.
Inevitably, there were detractors too:

Although The Grove of Eagles lacks the stature and distinction of the finest modern historical novels, it is a grand tale. Lovers of historical melodrama should delight in it. But more demanding readers should find it mature and deft and continuously enjoyable [also]. (Orville Prescott, New York Times, 3 January 1964)

A. L. Rowse ... says The Grove of Eagles is better than Westward Ho! ... Modern versimilitude, however, can be as stultifying as Victorian padding and the practised reader will miss the swift uncluttered narrative brought to this sort of story by Dumas, Stanley Weyman and Conan Doyle. (N.B., Canberra Times, 4 January 1964)

One could make a good case for the absolute impossibility of writing historical novels. We do not see or feel or pray as men prayed and felt and saw 500 years ago, and we have only the remotest idea how men behaved at the time of Socrates. Only the geniuses can leap into the past; those who are not geniuses make the journey by a hundred hesitant approximations; by a series of cunning manoeuvres. The past is more elusive than we think and much, much farther away.

Winston Graham is a good, even an excellent historical novelist – though we are made continually aware that he is an adept at cunning manoeuvres and his approximations remain approximations. In his new novel, The Grove of Eagles, he does not wrestle with the angel; the fire of the past does not burn very brightly. He goes about the task of describing Elizabethan England with a scholar's load of proper mischief. He has soaked himself in local lore, knows his history, his towns, the shape of the vanished land; he has read the account books and he can follow his people through the daily round, hour by hour and minute by minute.
Something is still missing. We are never completely convinced that it happened as he says it happened; the blaze of conviction is absent. One needs a kind of perversity in order to make the leap: one must get out of one's skin and become someone else; as in her perverse fashion Dame Edith Sitwell became Elizabeth when she wrote about Elizabeth. She wrote of Elizabeth from the inside. Mr. Graham writes of the Queen, her court and her sometimes disloyal subjects from a safer distance ... ...

It is all excellent, beautifully and carefully studied. The characters talk too much and say too little – but that is a common fault in long novels. What one misses is the fire from heaven, the thunder, the trumpets, the light in the eyes, the spurt of blood. It is all a little too leisurely.

As a Cornishman, I applaud this picture of an Elizabethan Cornishman, but I wish devoutly that Quiller-Couch had not troubled the waters. "Q" left his imprint on literary Cornwall and it may take another generation to wash it away. Mr. Graham has much of "Q's" insight and elegance. One only wishes he had more of Dame Edith Sitwell's perversity.

(Robert Payne, New York Times, 12 January 1964)

* * * * *

The novel's first edition is presented in forty-nine chapters divided into five books totalling 572 pages (plus postscript). This must have been a difficult novel to deliver in any circumstances, let alone those challenging ones outlined above. No wonder, even two years after finishing it, WG still felt "combat fatigue" from the sustained effort its writing cost him.

A Graham story rooted in Old Cornwall with a prominent, landed but cash-strapped Cornish family at its core – it was always going to be hard for Poldark saga aficionados to approach The Grove of Eagles with a wholly open mind, and crossover names – Enys, Boscawen, Basset, Godolphin – and places – Cardew, Caerhays, Tregony – serve only to tie the presumed bond tighter still. But readers are more likely to enjoy the novel if, before
opening its cover, all such unhelpful preconceptions are set aside. Some degree of association is undeniable, of course – but *The Grove of Eagles* doesn't *feel* like a Poldark novel. Its tale is told with more detachment; without quite the same depth of heartfelt compassion for its protagonists; it also lacks the swarming surfeit of 3-D characters, some of whom quickly become friends for life (even if the kind of "friend", like George, one loves to hate). Then again, it's one book (albeit a *long* book) not twelve, and a first-person narrative to boot and, while not Poldark – a second cousin, perhaps – it was never *meant* to be Poldark. All the same, *The Grove of Eagles* does possess a quiet distinction all its own, and its considerable merits, if given half a chance, will impress as readily.

Now as then, the promontory of Pendennis guards the entrance to the Fal Estuary. The remains of Pendennis Castle can be seen at the centre of the image, on top of the rise. Arwenack House stands on the isthmus that connects promontory to mainland, with Falmouth and Penryn beyond.

Like some other WG period works – *Cordelia* and *The Black Moon*, for example – the novel starts slowly, and the early slew of names – so many courtiers, friends, neighbours, extended family members, hangers-on, servants, sea captains and their crew, merchants, stewards, clergy, even a witch – does nothing to help ease the reader's way. But with the advent and prolonged celebration of Christmas 1592 (another link to Poldark, in
which few Yuletides pass uneventfully), the story takes firm hold and thereafter doesn't let go.

The carefully-woven plot comprises two broad strands linked by a lesser but still compelling third, all voiced by Maugan, base son of John Killigrew of Arwenack ("biggest house in Cornwall"), the debt-ridden Governor of Pendennis Castle, which commands the mouth of the Fal. The first domestic strand tells of Maugan's coming of age and of two love affairs – one prosaic but sweet, the other unconventional and decidedly, at the last, bittersweet. WG early on plants a mystery – that of the identity of Maugan's mother – which is satisfactorily resolved only in the book's closing pages. The challenges and uncertainties of late-sixteenth century life are vividly portrayed. Strand two considers the war between England and Spain from the Spanish perspective. Three times held captive, in Madrid, Lagos then Seville, Maugan comes eventually to sail with the third Armada towards an England utterly undefended, a prize waiting to be plucked; only the chronic failure of a sclerotic executive to act decisively when fortune beckoned saves the day.

One of many pleasing features of the Poldark novels is the number of cameo appearances made by real-life historical personages – the Prince Regent, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Liverpool, George Canning, Humphrey Davy, Robert Owen, Goldsworthy Gurney, Richard Trevithick and more – and similarly, in a memorable scene towards the end of *The Grove of Eagles* we encounter Queen Elizabeth presiding over a meeting of her Privy Council, with Essex and Cecil in attendance, to determine the fate of John Killigrew. But no such figure in all the Poldark canon, or elsewhere in *The Grove of Eagles* is granted so prominent a centre-stage role as Sir Walter Ralegh. We meet him first, briefly, at Arwenack, giving the kind of authoritative geopolitical summary in which WG excels. Then, after he takes Maugan on as his secretary, we travel with him for an extended stay at his Sherborne, Dorset home, where, made privy to his interests, passions and moods, the true nature of his character and intellect is revealed:

> Such men as he are born once in a century. The warriors who are thinkers. The scholars with the courage to fight. [He is] a man chock full of faults ... but also a man so full of talents and inspiration that he is like one with a quiverful of arrows,
each sharp and true. A born leader, the greatest living strategist, a poet, a philosopher, an essayist, an orator, a skilled musician, a soldier, an explorer, a founder of new England overseas. The crowds hate him, the leaders of the country ignore him, the Queen banishes him. But we who know him ... live to serve him!

From here, it's off to sea as part of an Anglo-Dutch fleet intent on forcing Cadiz harbour and sacking the town, an action masterfully described in a skilful blend of documented fact and imagination. When Ralegh departs the narrative after eighty-odd pages, it is poorer for his passing.

The book is widely but not universally admired; some deprecate it simply because it's not Poldark and others are put off by lengthy passages of languishing in close confinement, time spent aboard ship or fighting the battle of Cadiz. The attitude of other publishers reflects this dichotomy:

(1) In the period 1960-70, the Bodley Head issued hardback reprint editions of every novel published by WG between 1945 and 1965 with the single exception of The Grove of Eagles.

(2) In the USA, Doubleday's Ken McCormick pitched the book to Reader's Digest (who had previously taken both The Sleeping Partner and Marnie) but they declined it "with heavy respect".34

However,

(3) Book club editions of the novel appeared in both the UK (Book Society)35 and US (Doubleday Book Club), and

(4) Harper & Row president Luxton Arnold was so impressed with The Grove of Eagles that he proposed WG should write an illustrated book on the Spanish Armadas for UK publisher George Rainbird Ltd – which, eventually, he did.36

* * * * *
The Grove of Eagles in translation: (1) Dutch, (2) German, as The Long Road to Arwenack, (3) Spanish, (4) French
Another German softback edition from Lübbe, 1979
WG gifted presentation copies of *The Grove of Eagles* to Alfred Hitchcock, Gregory Peck and Alan Price—what did they make of it? It could hardly differ more from *Marnie* (his previous novel) and probably disappointed his agents and publishers, who perhaps wished for another in that vein. But the book sold well (see page six) and, more than fifty years on from its first publication, remains in print—what is more, if the online comments below are anything to go by, it continues to find and please new readers still:

*[In] Maugan Killigrew ... Winston Graham has produced an extraordinarily honest portrayal of a young man who is many times less than a hero but who emerges for all his frailties as a character in the round, believable, sympathetic, and, above all, a person of his time. In this brilliant combination of the state of nations with the fate of individuals, Elizabethan England comes vividly to life, as do the Cornish men and women who play such a notable part. Much original research has gone into the writing of this novel, and there are many outstanding character studies—not least that of Walter Ralegh. In *The Grove of Eagles* great events, great characters and great narrative writing fuse into a huge and significant whole. It is an absorbing and completely authentic novel. (Angela Cisco, 21 November 2009)

Once again we are in Cornwall, which Graham knows and obviously loves. He brings all his characters to life in such a way that one feels they are real people. A fascinating story about a real event. (Joan Armstrong, 25 September 2013)

Graham is a master at writing scenery; evoking the sights, smells and sounds of a different era; what it felt like to be on board a tall ship, inside a royal court or locked in a cell. He captures the high drama of battles at sea and the visceral fear of capture or death; religious intolerance; political rivalry; romance and passion. It's a long novel... but the story is so absorbing I didn't really notice ... A masterpiece of historical fiction. (Brisgirl, 18 July 2015)
The highly detailed account of Maugan Killigrew’s adventures veers between quotidian existence in the family home to audiences with the English Queen and Spanish King. Instead of court intrigues, marriages and love affairs, here is a Tudor novel presenting the Earl of Essex and Raleigh in virile military action. Graham takes us into the mindset of these venturing Elizabethans and effectively represents the conflict from both Spanish and English perspectives.

The descriptions of sea-battles and sailing with the fleets are extraordinarily evocative. Maugan’s relationships with Sue and the servant girl Meg are deftly handled, as is his gradual loss of innocence and idealism ... Superior historical fiction writing. (Tracey Warr, The Historical Novel Review, November 2016)

Winston Graham’s ... historical accuracy and the gentle rebuilding of characters both actual and imaginary blow life into dusty archive pages. Written in [the early 1960s] without benefit of the internet, he worked away with long-forgotten papers and in libraries to open a window to those far-off days ... Precise, scholarly, courtly language makes [The Grove of Eagles] a pleasure to read. A tremendous amount of domestic detail – beautifully descriptive, historically correct ... abounds. [There is] much plundering, battling, riding, falling in love. WG, the celebrated author of Poldark, shows his readers little mercy, just keep up; this busy tale takes us from castles to dreadful prisons, Cornwall to Spain, to London, below decks aboard ships, hiding in country hovels, eating and drinking in manor houses. Maugan, the pivotal character, is, like Ross Poldark, always in some kind of trouble. This book could have supported a sequel, perhaps intended and abandoned by the author when his more popular Poldark, which is written with a lighter touch, came to the fore. (Katharine Kirby, 11 November 2017)

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Macmillan launched its Pan Heritage Classics series in October 2015 with Jill McGown's *Murder at the Old Vicarage*. Third title of the collection's twenty-one (to date) was *The Grove of Eagles* (February 2016). More than half a century on from its first publication, WG's "labour of love" attracts readers still.
NOTES AND SOURCES

1 From Night Journey (1941) and My Turn Next (1942) respectively
2 Only twice did WG recall an age more bygone still, in short stories VIVE LE ROI about William the Conqueror and BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD, set in the time of Christ
3 Letter to Commander Tredinnick dated 13 October 1965; in private hands
4 Poldark's Romantic Climax, The Times, 7 May 2002
5 Memoirs of a Private Man, Macmillan, 2003, Book One, Chapter Five
7 Bookshelf, BBC Radio 4, 26 February 1987
8, 12, 14 Memoirs, 1.10
9, 23 Memoirs, 1.8
10 Memoirs, 2.11
11 The Novel is Suffocating Itself, Books and Bookmen, October 1959
13 The Craft of the Historical Novelist, The Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, New Series, Volume VII, Part 4, 1977, in which WG recalls reading the seed sentence "in the late 1940s" and states that the castle was sold in 1597; Memoirs, however – frequently unreliable concerning times and dates – cites in 1.10 "while writing the third or fourth Poldark novel" (i.e. later) and "1596"
15 For more, see ACORNS, pages one and two
16 Gregory Peck's mother-in-law, Alexandra "Chouchoune" Passani
17 Memoirs, 2.7
19, 22 Memo from Ken McCormick to Sam Vaughan dated 1 July 1971; source as 6
20 Letter from McCormick to Carol Brandt dated 3 October 1972; source as 6
Letter from McCormick to WG dated 16 April 1969; source as

Woman's Weekly, 30 July 1983

Letter from J.R. "Eric" McKenzie to WG dated 11 September 1962 in the Hodder & Stoughton files held by London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, Farringdon, London, EC1R 0HB

Figures from various documents in the Library of Congress Doubleday archive. The most surprising thing about them, given the size of the market, is how modest they are – though subsequent, much larger book club/reprint sales would still guarantee profits for all.

Letters in the correspondence section of the University of Exeter's archive of A L Rowse Papers

Advertising copy used by Hodder & Stoughton to promote the book; see Observer, 8 December 1963 et al.

Church reviewed the novel in Country Life on 2 January 1964 but sent WG a pre-publication draft of his text, a copy of which is held by the University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Center in their Richard Church archive

Date not known

In a letter to Frank Swinnerton dated 16 December 1963, WG describes the book as "long and tedious" [to write].

Similar passages in No Exit, 2.4 and The Four Swans, 3.7 spring to mind

Letter from Jack Beaudouin to Ken McCormick dated 27 July 1971; source as

Records in publishers' archives show that a Choice nomination from the Book Society meant a guaranteed additional order of 7,000 first edition copies – an enormous amount when typical hardback sales to bookshops and libraries were on average between 3,000 and 5,000 copies. (Dr Nicola Wilson, Broadbrows and Book Clubs, British Academy Review, No. 29, January 2017)
36 *The Spanish Armadas*, designed and produced by George Rainbird Ltd and published in 1972 by Collins in the UK and Doubleday in the USA

[Image: Pendennis Castle]

37 To Hitchcock and Peck in 1963 and to Price in 1977. The letter accompanying the Hitchcock copy is archived at the Margaret Herrick Library, the Fairbanks Center for Motion Picture Study, 333 South La Cienega Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California, 90211, USA; the other two copies, each with an accompanying letter, have lately been offered for sale in the used-book trade.

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