

part two

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(2) short fiction



“Winston Graham was a master of the short story too: a model for the aspiring author. Construction, shape and pace are in all his stories, short and long. He shows the importance of conflict and dilemma, his characters developing in the eye and the imagination of the reader like a photograph in the photographer's darkroom.”

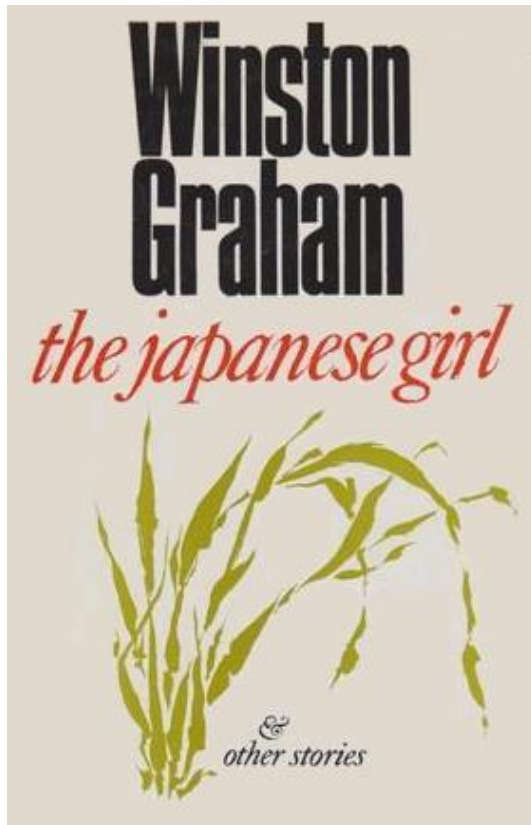
Fifty famous Cornish Folk, Cornishman, 2000

(a) COLLECTED: THE JAPANESE GIRL & OTHER STORIES

Publisher: Collins, London, 1971

Pages: 255

Dedication: none



When an acknowledged master of one literary form turns with equal excellence to another, his readers can anticipate a double pleasure. The many thousands who have enjoyed WG's novels will find in this collection of short stories the same narrative skill, subtle evocation of setting and powers of characterization that have distinguished such best-sellers as The Grove of Eagles, Angell, Pearl & Little God and The Walking Stick. Lovers of the short story, starved of fare which is both contemporary in theme and in the great traditions of short story writing, have here a banquet, where the only problem is what to savour first ...

Comprising fourteen WG short stories as follows:

THE JAPANESE GIRL, THE MEDICI EAR-RING, COTTY'S COVE, THE ISLAND, GIBB, AT THE CHALET LARTREC, VIVE LE ROI, THE CORNISH FARM, THE WIG-WAM, THE OLD BOYS, I HAD KNOWN SAM TAYLOR FOR YEARS, THE BASKET CHAIR, JACKA'S FIGHT and BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

THE MEDICI EAR-RING is one of the first short stories Winston Graham wrote and his first published, in 1935.¹ THE JAPANESE GIRL and AT THE CHALET LARTREC (first published in 1947² and here substantially revised) both impress. THE ISLAND is of interest because, partly autobiographical, it features brief pen-portraits of both of his parents as well as remembered

details of his own childhood.³ In 1982, the last eight of the fourteen stories listed above were republished in large print format by Chivers Press, Bath, as *The Cornish Farm*. Though often cited as a second volume of WG short stories,⁴ *The Cornish Farm* contains nothing not previously found in *The Japanese Girl*.

Reviews

The Japanese Girl & Other Stories by Winston Graham

Winston Graham is always a very practiced entrepreneur of a genre which incorporates a good many traditional features and primarily suspense and you will recognize many of the backgrounds here (Cornwall, the [boxing] ring, Sotheby's) which have occasioned some of his novels.

There are fourteen short stories here of assorted length and strength: the disappearance and / or discovery of a "Medici Ear-ring" which becomes an affair of qualified trust; the lifelong vigil in Cornwall for a sailor who comes out of the mist; the convict who breaks jail, steals a car and borrows a bicycle to see his own child, a hit-and-run victim; the phantasmagoria of "The Island" and further possession in a tenanted "Basket Chair"; while the title story deals with the best-laid plan to make off with a large sum of money, deliberately serve a jail sentence, and then enjoy it fully when ...

Mr. Graham needs no introduction and his showmanship is so assured that it does seem decisive. (*Kirkus*)

A collection of short stories by a master craftsman. (Daily Telegraph)

The Japanese Girl by Winston Graham is a collection of short stories, of which [the title story] is perhaps the best. It would do credit to O. Henry and is nearly as good a yarn as [that writer's] classic "Gift of the Magi". One or two of the stories are rather slight; almost fragmentary – for example "The Island" which I felt fell short of the mark. "The Medici Ear-ring" and "At the Chalet Lartrec" are excellent and none of the stories is dull. I do enjoy short stories as well as poetry as a change from my more constant diet of novels and this is an extremely good collection. (*The Lockhart Post Register*)

Throughout The Japanese Girl there is displayed a masterly professionalism.
(Sunday Telegraph)

The Japanese Girl by Winston Graham, [though] a mixed bag, is definitely a worthwhile read.

"The Medici Ear-ring", a mystery that tries the friendship of all those present, [features] a twist ending; possibly an early foray into the realm of the unreliable narrator concept.

"Cotty's Cove" is ... an atmospheric tale about unrequited love ... Graham has the pleasant knack of putting the reader in the scene, whether it's that cove or elsewhere: "... the frost has come down like thin icing sugar on branch and brick and flag, and the pools in the dented road are glazing over like the eyes of a man dying." Or this: "The bay windows spread wide like an alderman's waistcoat." I particularly liked this: "Then with sweat crawling all over him like a nest of worms, he jerked ahead."

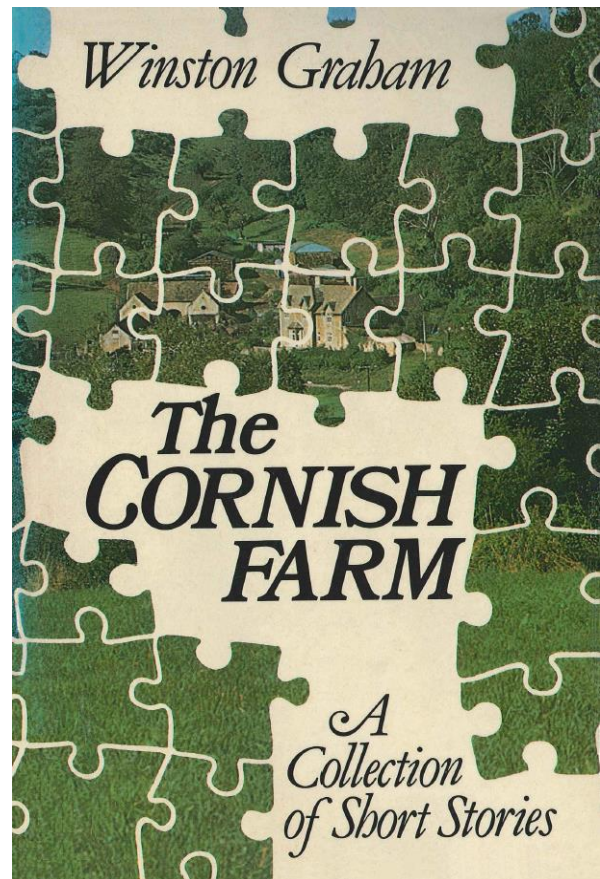
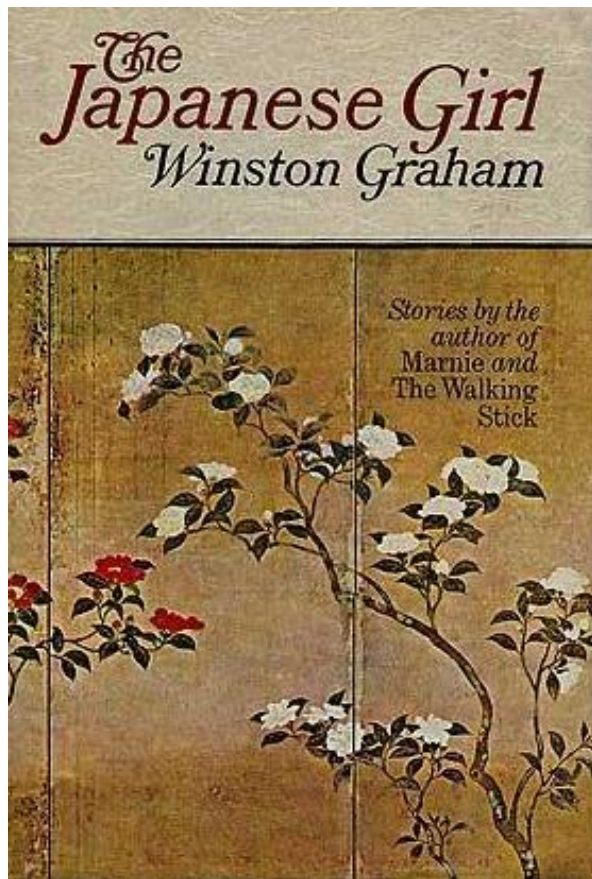
"At the Chalet Lartrec" comes of "being benighted on the Bernina Pass in the first snow of winter", Graham says ... He creates eeriness with few words: "There was no one about, and the wind whistled through the slit between the houses like an errand boy with bad teeth." ... Another fine twist in this tale, too.

"The Cornish Farm" ... has plenty of atmosphere, as well as humour ... A tale of mystery and perhaps madness; the reader must decide.

"The Basket Chair" is a ... clever tale in the Roald Dahl tradition.

"Jacka's Fight" ... is ... an excellent pugilistic tale.

At the book's publication, the *Sunday Times* said, "Real versatility in setting and background." That sums up this collection. If you appreciate short story writing, you should enjoy many of these examples. (Nik Morton)



(b) UNCOLLECTED, PUBLISHED

WG was not a prolific writer of short stories. Nonetheless, in addition to the fourteen pieces collected in *The Japanese Girl*, at least eight others were published during his lifetime:

- (1) CRYSTAL CLEAR (in *Windsor Magazine*, Volume 84, # 502, October 1936)
- (2) MYSTERY AT BROME (in *Windsor Magazine*, Volume 88, # 526, October 1938)
- (3) THE SUNCHURCH WONDER (in *John Bull*, 7 June 1958)
- (4) THE CIRCUS (in *Winter's Crimes Volume 6*, ed. George Hardinge, Macmillan, 1974; also in at least twelve other short fiction anthologies⁵ and the *Australian Women's Weekly* of 23 April 1975)

(5) NOTHING IN THE LIBRARY (in *Winter's Crimes Volume 19*, ed. Hilary Hale, Macmillan, 1987)

(6) ECLIPSE (in the *Sunday Express Magazine* of 8 August 1999, to help publicise the Pan Macmillan paperback edition of *The Ugly Sister*)

(7) THE HORSE DEALER (a Jud Paynter story serialised in three parts in regional newspaper the *Western Morning News* on 23 April, 30 April and 7 May 2002, to promote *Bella Poldark*)

(8) MEETING DEMELZA (another Poldark spin-off, this time in *Scryfa*, Volume 1, ed. Simon Parker, Giss 'On Books, March 2003)

In May 2002, Simon Parker interviewed WG in his St. Austell hotel bedroom to help generate publicity for the then newly-published *Bella Poldark*. In 2015, he recalled the encounter:

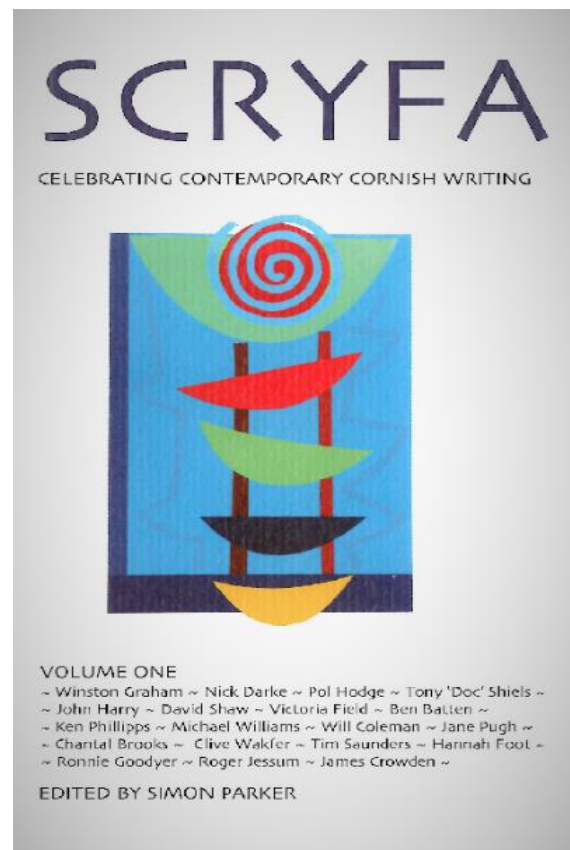
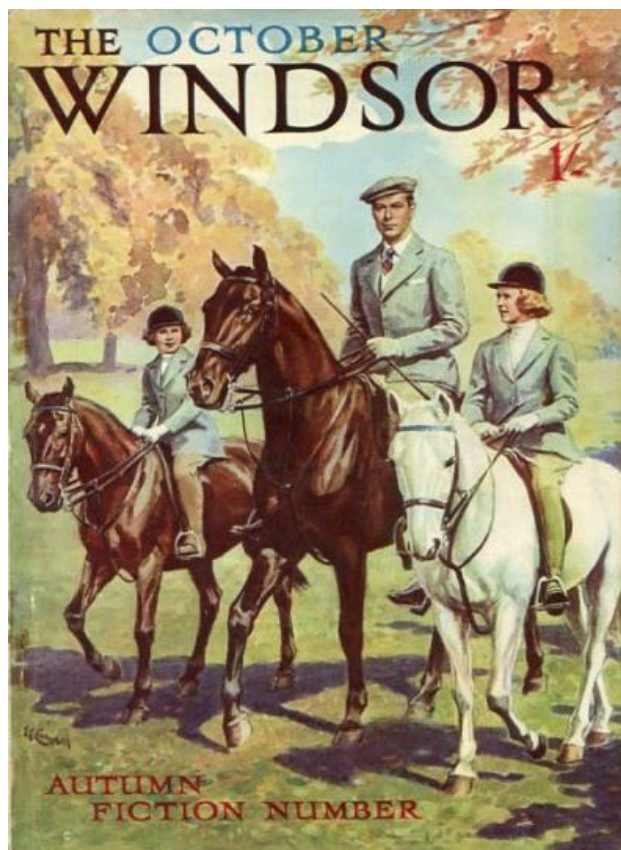
At the time of our meeting, I was also about to unveil a new venture, a journal called Scryfa which intended to celebrate the best of contemporary Cornish writing. Scryfa eventually ran to twelve issues, but ahead of its launch I was looking for a high profile idea to help promote that first issue.

Ever interested in what other writers were up to, Winston was fascinated to hear of a journal that promised to be a worthy successor to Denys Val Baker's Cornish Review [\[see page 390\]](#) ... and Sir Arthur Quiller Couch's Cornish Magazine ...

Quick as a flash, he said: "I'll write you a story for Scryfa!"

Slightly taken aback by such a generous offer from this giant of Cornish literature, I nevertheless metaphorically bit his hand off.

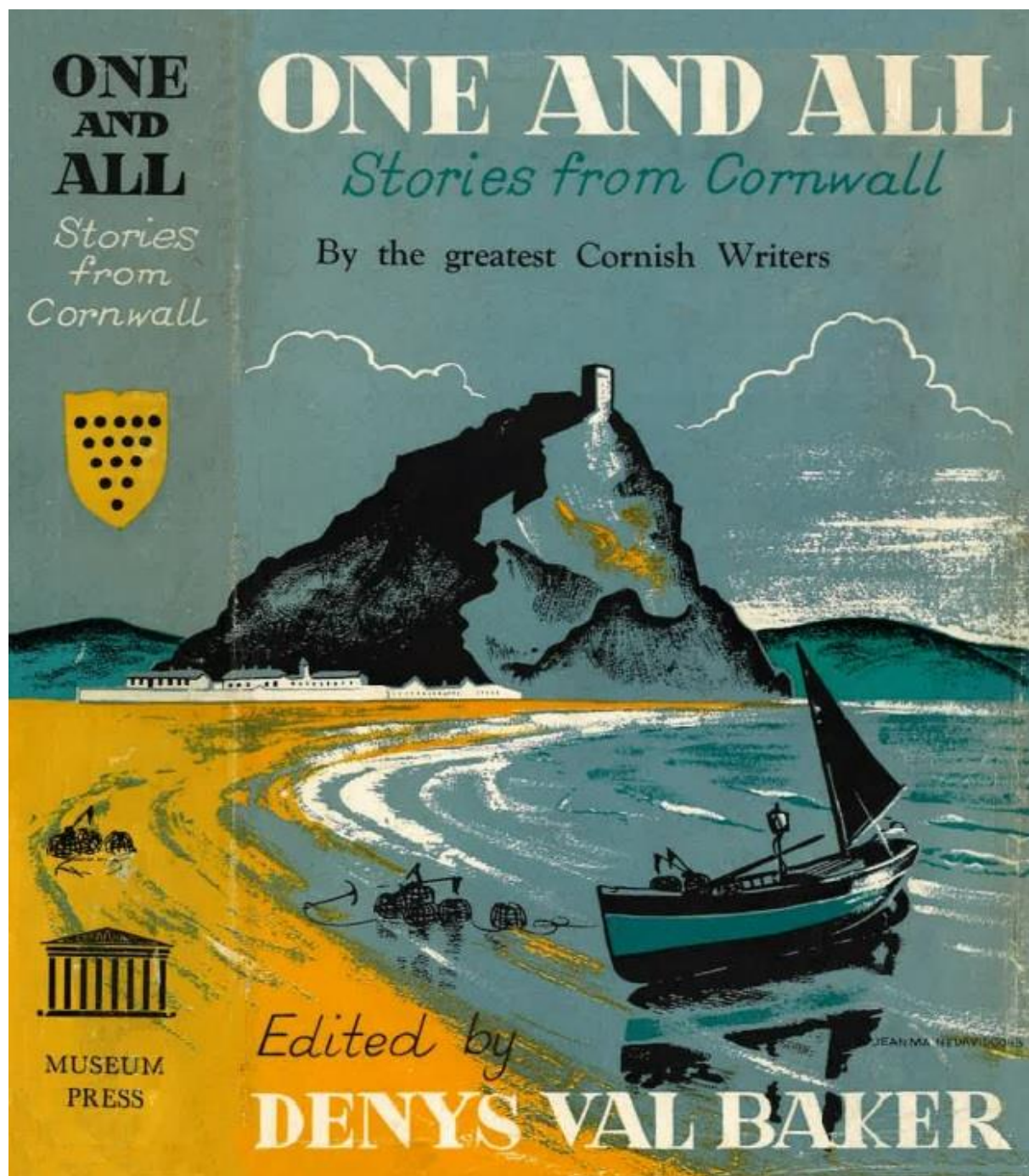
*The result was Meeting Demelza ...*⁶



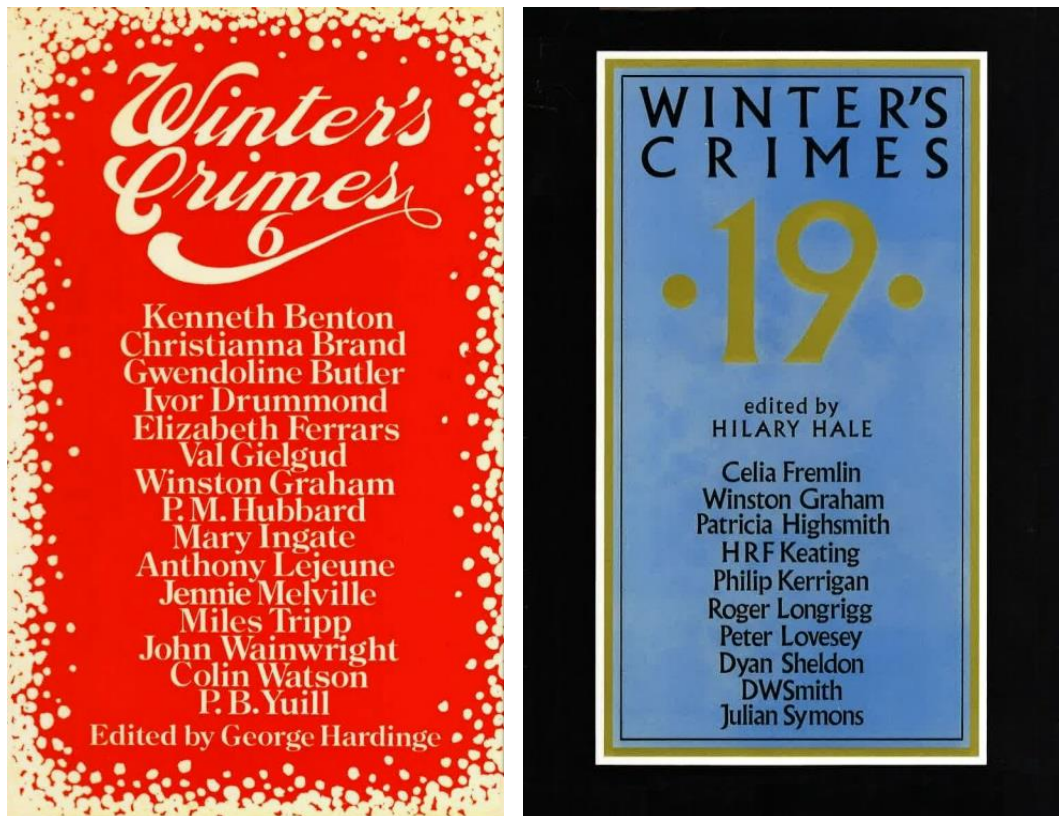
In the period 1935-8, *Windsor* magazine published three WG stories (Oct. 1938 issue shown) / *Scryfa*, Volume I, Giss 'On Books, 2003 / Between July

1965 and May 1971, *Argosy* published ten WG stories (Sept. 1970 issue shown) / Between May 1947 and January 1959, *John Bull* published five serialised WG novels and three stories (7 June 1958 issue shown).

Below: WG's COTTY's COVE first appeared in this Denys Val Baker-edited anthology published by the Museum Press in 1951. In the period 1975-83, Baker anthologised a further ten WG stories for William Kimber and one (JACKA'S FIGHT) for Penguin.



Note: THE MAN FROM THE MOOR (*John Bull*, 24 January 1959) is an early version of GIBB, anthologised "stories" "Dinner at Trenwith" and "Jud's Funeral" are nothing more than chapters excerpted from *Ross Poldark* and *Jeremy Poldark* respectively, the 1954 North American syndicated "complete novel" *Cornish Masque* (see page 110) is a heavily abridged version of *Warleggan* and the BBC Radio 4 Extra story "Ross and Demelza", first broadcast in March 2014, is another *Ross Poldark* lift – thus nothing new.



Macmillan, 1974 and 1987

(C) UNCOLLECTED, UNPUBLISHED

The RCM Graham archive holds manuscript copies of four unpublished WG stories:

(1) SIGH NO MORE, LADY

An undated typescript of 29 pages or about 7,000 words, SIGH NO MORE, LADY opens in the compartment of a passenger train in Milan station. George Carroll is alone. A young lady in a light grey suit, attractive but

agitated, steps in, deposits her suitcase and leaves. When the train starts to move and she hasn't returned, he looks out to see her standing at the end of the platform in animated conversation with a man. In order that she might not be parted from her luggage, he throws it out of the window. A few moments later, the lady re-enters the compartment. "I'm fearfully sorry," he blusters. "Foolish confusion of light grey costumes ..."

She's a vexed Swiss miss called Vreni Hemminger and you can probably write the ending for yourself. Fun of the forgettable kind.

(2) THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

A short and patently true story of a broiler chicken that, having escaped its crate when factory-bound, finds itself in WG's garden. The bird is adopted, rehabilitated, christened Tuesday and eventually, due to the Grahams' travel commitments, re-settled with an obliging neighbour.

Probably dates from 1961, the year WG spent, between homes, in Uckfield. Six typed pages.

(3) MILLENNIUM

The lead character in ECLIPSE (see page 255), Miss Hester Trelawney-Trewoofe, is reprised in this weak handwritten late-era story of 3,530 words. Though the RCM catalogue dates it "2002/2003", that cannot be right, for it is followed in its notebook by jottings concerning Paul and Daisy Kellow that WG must have set down during the composition of *Bella Poldark*, which was published in May 2002. MILLENNIUM was probably written in 2000.

(4) CHRISTMAS AT NAMPARA, 1820

In the closing chapter of the final Poldark novel, *Bella Poldark*, Demelza tells Mrs Pelham:

I am planning this Christmas party ... Ross and I and Bella are leaving for home next Thursday. Christopher will come down with Edward and Clowance on Saturday. Dwight and Caroline

will certainly join in with their children. Then my daughter-in-law Cuby – who I think you have never met – with my granddaughter, will certainly be there ... For me this will be a very important party. It will be quite small, but I did want all my friends, and you, dear Mrs Pelham, I count as one of the dearest.

The book ends before the party takes place – but it took place nonetheless, described by WG in a 24-page typescript that, potently nostalgic, reads as though it was originally conceived as a capstone for novel and saga both (though, like the published text, the extant notebook manuscript concludes – see page 238 – with the crossing of the Tamar). All the same, coda or not, within Bella or without, CHRISTMAS AT NAMPARA, 1820 remains for Ross and Demelza, for Dwight and Caroline, for Clowance and Edward, for Cuby and Philip, for Bella and Christopher, and for Winston Graham, creator of them all, the true Poldark adieu.

(5) SERGEI'S BROTHER

The RCM archive also includes a letter dated 23 December 1937 from WG's first literary agent, R. P. Watt, of A. P. Watt & Son. He writes:

Dear Mr. Graham,

I am glad to be able to tell you that we have received a very favourable report on your "SERGEI'S BROTHER" and as I think that it may be of interest to you, I quote below an extract from it. Our reader wrote:

"This story is neither a commercialised affair, written mechanically to a formula, nor is it a shapeless product of esoterism. It has a plot, very good background, and it is about something. This theme is religious, suggesting that the experiences of a priest flying incognito from Russia in 1917 may be related to the feelings of Peter in Matthew Ch. 26. This is my own crude version: Mr. Graham is careful to underline nothing."

and he added:

"This story seems to me to possess real literary distinction: I have a high regard for Mr. Graham's writing."

Unfortunately, although the RCM catalogue lists two typescripts of SERGEI'S BROTHER, both are missing from the archive.



Illustration from ECLIPSE, *Sunday Express Magazine*, 8 August 1999

in his own words (i)

I have never done creative work on a typewriter. There is to me a lack of empathy ... I find that a sentence, a page, a book, assumes a different nature when it is first in manuscript, second in typescript, and third in page proofs. There is a separate, a welcome change, and each time one is able to see it in a new light. (*Memoirs*, 2.10)

(On the temptation to overwrite): An author is naturally reluctant, once he has discovered something at great trouble to himself, not to make the most of it. But the temptation should be resisted ... What is not relevant is irrelevant. (*Poldark's Cornwall*)

It would be death for me not to be constantly renewing my impressions by going out and meeting people and seeing things and living a normal life and living at times perhaps a slightly abnormal life in order to find out how people work and live and tick ... I don't actually go into brothels, as Balzac did, but otherwise I go and meet people, certainly, and discover how they work – even thieves. (Trerice, Newquay, 27 March 1974)

The committed writer will write whatever happens. Nothing will stop him. Without that kind of commitment, he will fall by the wayside. (*Sussex Express*, 28 October 1977)

I had six novels made into films. Three of them were quite close to the originals, three varied enormously – I mean, some were so distant that one could hardly recognise the novels ... But [though it made me angry] I felt that a professional writer writes a novel and any attempt to alter that novel by one comma is something that he must resent and refuse to accept with all his might, but once a novel is sold to a film company, a novelist cannot then break his heart over something that is happening in another medium. It's part of the professional hazard, as it were. (To Ted Harrison, 22 December 1977)

It is very fine to talk of drawing your characters from life – but although it's an essential part, by itself it is simply not enough. When you describe an acquaintance – or draw a sympathetic portrait of a friend, or the unsympathetic portrait of an enemy, you are merely doing a good job of reportage. And a novelist's job is not to report, it is to create. When you take a character entirely from life that character remains objective when it should be at least largely subjective. A good writer should never just feel *with* a character, he should feel *in*. He mustn't merely describe, he must beget. Sympathy, though desirable, is not enough; there must be empathy. One can see this well in *The Forsyte Saga* – Galsworthy's great success with the Forsytes themselves and his relative failure with his working class characters. (*The Craft of the Historical Novelist*, 1976)

I find the process of writing the first draft [of a novel] the worst – sheer agony. You are faced with a blank sheet of paper and it's all there to be made or unmade. (To David Clarke, *Cornish Life*, January 1985)

I [have] never [enjoyed writing]. It's like the lunatic banging his head against the wall. Nice when it stops.

What do you enjoy? The working it out ahead?

I enjoy having done it.

(To Susan Hill, *Bookshelf*, 26 February 1987)

I like change [when writing]. I always find the impulse to write again if I write something different ...

You can go anywhere you like from this point.

Yes, that's true. But what I don't want to do is go nowhere.

(To Victoria Kingston, *Sussex Life*, February 1999)

I'm not very enthusiastic about doing [my memoirs]. It requires no imagination. (*Western Morning News*, 3 August 1999)

(3) other books



“ *A good novelist is never altogether a free man and never quite a whole one. The stuff of his life is the stuff of his writing, and vice versa, and he can't escape.* ”

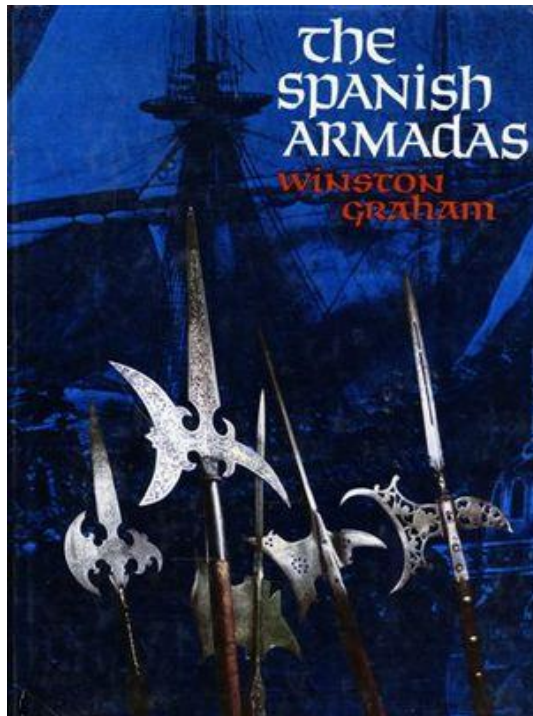
Memoirs, 2.4

1. THE SPANISH ARMADAS

Publisher: Collins, 1972

Pages: 288 (including Bibliography, Notes on the Illustrations and Index)

Dedication: To Luxton Arnold



This history of a great naval war reveals a wealth of interest and excitement unknown to the general reader. For most people the conflict between England and Spain in the sixteenth century consisted solely in the destruction of the Great Armada in 1588 by Drake, Howard and the English weather. These pages place that Armada in its true position, as only the most spectacular of many attempts by the Spanish to conquer England and make it Catholic, first by friendship, then by the marriage of Philip to Mary, and later by battle.

A vivid summary is made of the disruptive forces in Europe that, through thirty years, broke down the tradition of amity between England and Spain. It shows how, from the meeting in 1554 between Philip and Elizabeth, the two maintained their respect for each other and a facade of peace long after the wish for peace had gone.

Although the clash of the two great fleets provides the central theme of this work, it makes clear that the defeat of the First Armada did not mean the end of the Spanish navy but rather its beginning on new lines. After 1588 England had only one other real success against Spain, at Cadiz in 1596. Spain launched three more Armadas.

Little-known aspects of this extraordinary combat, upon which so much of the later history of western Europe depended, are strikingly brought to life in this book by a writer who is steeped in the spirit of the period. Winston

Graham's fame has so far been built on his novels, and the storyteller's gifts are very evident in the swift-moving narrative and brilliant characterisation of this book. But he is also a scholar who has explored the byways of Elizabethan history, and in The Spanish Armadas he has made a real contribution to history as well as providing a superb story of human hostility and passion.

Reviews

Mr. Graham has been known up to now as a novelist rather than an historian. But his gift for narrative and firm knowledge of his subject combine to make [*The Spanish Armadas*] an excellent piece of popular historiography. The catchpenny title is misleading, since the real subject of the book is the Elizabethan war with Spain. The war is never described as a whole and the operations in the Caribbean are omitted, together with their vital economic consequences; nor are European operations confined to armadas ... (*Times Literary Supplement*)

I thought the Armada was that brief 1588 interruption to Sir Francis Drake's game of bowls. Wrong. There were three more Armadas launched against England. Graham's book tells the whole story of the row between the two countries, starting with Philip of Spain's marriage to Queen Mary (she was the second of his four wives), and following right through to the end of the Tudors. This is painless and entertaining history, with 32 colour plates (16th century masters) and more than a hundred black-and-white illustrations. (Australian Women's Weekly)

'Ever higher prices, the infirmity of central government, the infiltration of the new rich everywhere ... the raising of rents ... disregard of public rights ... corruption and profiteering on a scale hitherto unknown' – it sounds like 1972, but it has all happened before. It was the prologue to the glories of the Elizabethan age.

Mr Graham covers all Spain's naval crusades against Britain, from Philip's matrimonial raid of 1554 to Spinola's last throw in 1603; and he shows that 'crusades' is the word, for over the Holland canals and the Spanish Main, the bogs of Meath and the court of His Most Catholic Majesty, all through the long reign of the Sun Queen, lies the miasma of blind faith, the madness

and mindless religiosity which ravaged, demoralised and bankrupted Spain, England, Scotland, France and the Low Countries.

The Great Armada, the one we enjoy sinking in retrospect almost as much as the Bismarck, is closely studied. Several myths are demolished: before 1588, England suffered sixteen invasions, and all but two were successful. Picturesque notions of a David-and-Goliath encounter between a few leaky trawlers and a mighty fleet of galleons are revised: Frobisher's *Triumph* was as big as anything on the Spanish side; the English had about half as many ships to begin with, but when reinforcements joined they outnumbered the Spanish; England had the better guns and would have had complete superiority in firepower had not some patriotic gentlemen of Sussex made a fast ducat selling arms to the Spaniards.

But what a curious action it was, that week-long running skirmish – one is reminded of Wolfe's remark after Falkirk: "'Twas not a battle, for neither side would fight." Destruction was not total: well over half the Spanish fleet got home all right. Most vessels were lost through acts of God and the hazards of navigation. (Uncanny, how warships which regularly convoyed treasure fleets across the Atlantic went to pieces as soon as they started working their way up the English Channel.)

The heaviest casualties were among British sailors, ashore, from neglect and starvation, after the danger had passed.

Mr Graham's is the sort of book reviewers dread, because they have to read every word, and some twice over. He disentangles the complex threads of sixteenth century European history with a novelist's expertise and calls up a host of brilliant characters to give the era its proper flamboyance.

The Spanish Armadas is a pleasure to read and to handle. For beauty of design and illustration it is quite out of the ordinary. The printer and binder – Jarrold of Norwich, as we might have guessed – deserves particular mention. (*Blackwood's Magazine*)

Admirable ... The author has put an important period of history in its proper perspective. (Sir Charles Petrie)

In 1973, whilst in Australia to help launch *The Spanish Armadas*, WG gave an interview to *Australian Women's Weekly*. Here is part:

"Ideas for stories seem to come automatically. I've always been interested in people, and I feel the only reason for a strong story line is to 'meet people'.

"Do I use real people? Occasionally. Every author does. I can put myself inside another character and think and feel as he does ...

Winston Graham is a Jekyll-and-Hyde character as regards writing, he told me. He likes modern suspense such as Marnie, which Alfred Hitchcock directed, but he also likes an occasional incursion into history.

The 16th century has always interested him. His historical novel The Grove of Eagles was set in the period of the Spanish armadas naval expeditions; and a series of works set in Cornwall belongs to the same period.

That is why he hesitated when first approached to write a book about the second Spanish armada, the big one in 1588. "I said the subject had been covered too often.

"My publishers' reply was, 'Well, why don't you write about the four armadas? Few people know that there were more than one.'

"After The Grove of Eagles and the extensive research I put into it, my knowledge about the second and third armadas was extensive, but I knew little about the fourth, the expedition to Ireland, an attempt to link it with Spain and oust the British.

"So I accepted and wrote it in a year. One of the greatest problems was finding out about the Spanish captains. Luckily, I got hold of a book, written by a Spaniard about 1890, which gave character studies of these men.

"You see, I was interested in everyone who took part in those great battles. Generally in history it is only two or three figures, two or three incidents, that capture the imagination and eventually come to monopolise the pages to the exclusion of other only slightly less worthy incidents and people.

"I went to Spain, to Toledo, Cadiz and Madrid and read in the State archives. Thank God for photostats! When I got back to England I knew what I wanted, so was able to send for it.

"The historical tensions between England and Spain had been of long standing, going back 30 years – to the first armada to sail from Spain to England, one of peace, taking Prince Philip II to marry Mary of England.

"Then, to my mind, the third armada of 1597 put England in greater danger than the second. The whole of the English fleet was off raiding in the Azores and the country was not on the alert in any way when a great fleet of Spanish warships began to rendezvous off the coast.

"I knew very little about the fourth expedition, to Ireland, a landing which was very substantial. I found its history fascinating, and discovered so many things for myself that it gave me pleasure to share them with others.

"Here were great characters, including Brian Mac Hugh Oge Mac Mahon. How many people have heard of him?"

The result of Winston Graham's twelve months' work is The Spanish Armadas, an exciting, brought-to-life history of the thirty-year conflict between England and Spain in the 16th century.

The characters come through vividly. Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, Sir Walter Raleigh, Drake, Spain's Henry II, the Duke of Parma, and the inquisitors of Spain; and so does the clash of the two great fleets ...

Graham likens the 16th century to pre-war Germany with its concentration camps, spies, secret police and intimidation.

"Yet, there was honour. One of the points I made in this book – one not made by any historian before – is that when the big armada sailed for Calais, its captain, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, successfully brought it through the English Channel with the loss of only two ships out of 142, with Drake hunting him all the way.

"The Governor of Calais, M. Gourdan, was a Catholic, and Medina, assuming he would help, appealed for more ammunition. It had actually been promised him by the Duke of Parma, who should have been there to meet the armada.

"Gourdan refused, but sent the Spaniards fruit and vegetables, and the French flocked around the vessels to sell food at exorbitant prices.

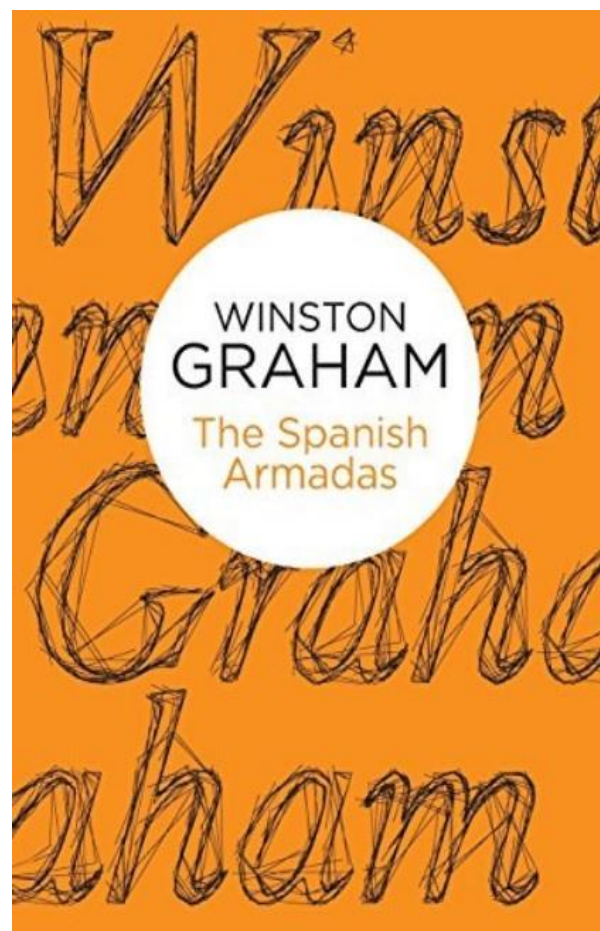
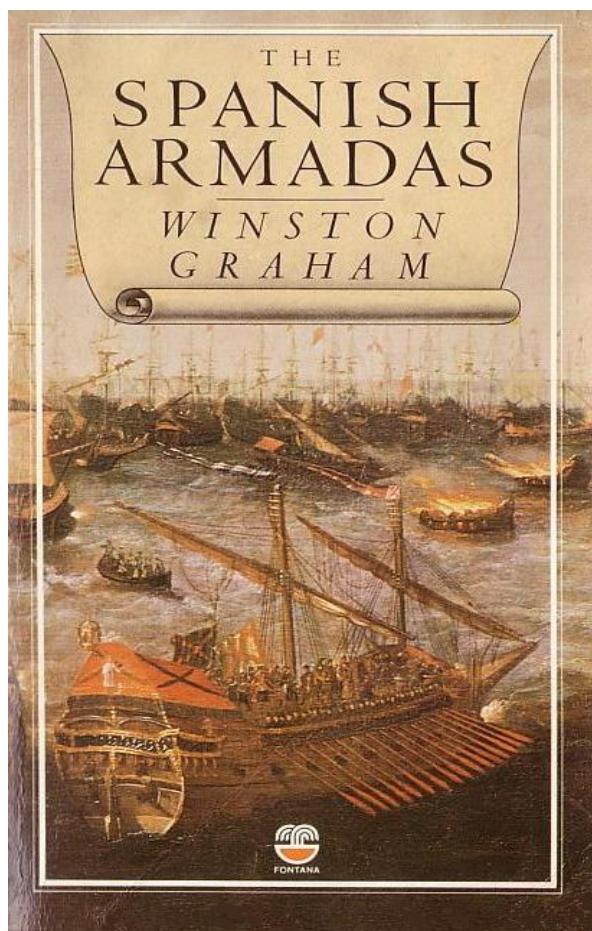
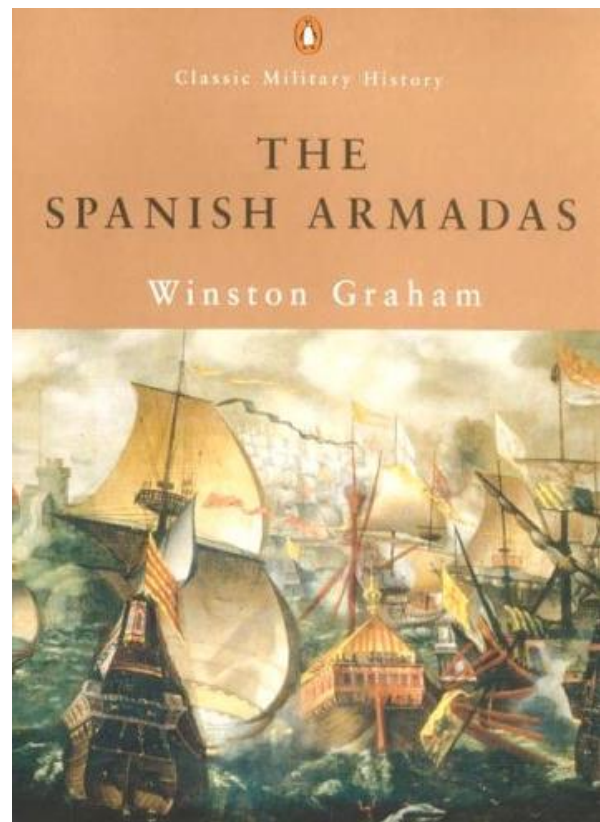
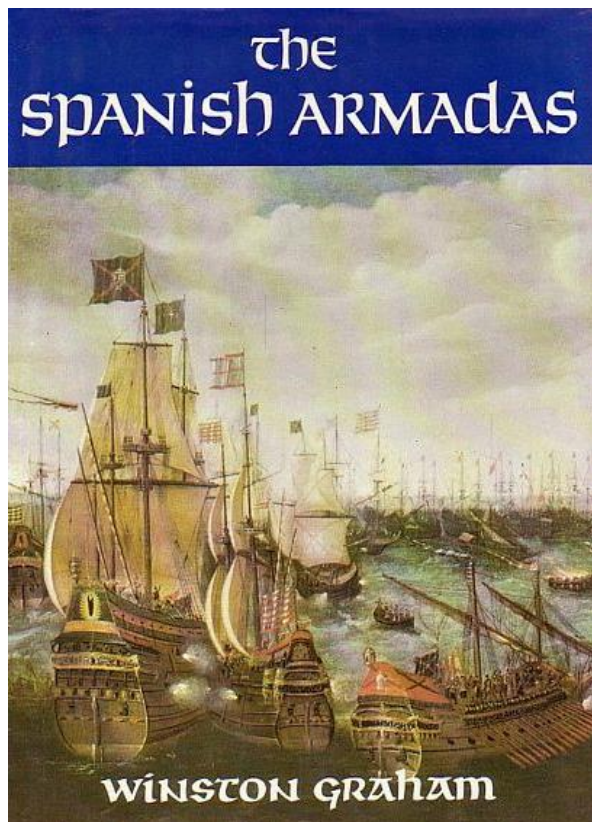
"It never seemed to have crossed Medina's mind that he still had 18,000 trained soldiers aboard his ships.

"Calais had only a small garrison and it would have taken the Spanish half a day to capture the town and gain a splendid harbour in which to refit for an invasion of Britain.

"But France was a neutral country and Medina an honourable man. Could you imagine the Germans, or any other race for that matter, doing that today?" ...

His wife, whom he married in 1939, is not herself a writer but "an author's friend." "She always reads my books and is the only person I can discuss them with. She is most able in her judgments."¹

* * * * *



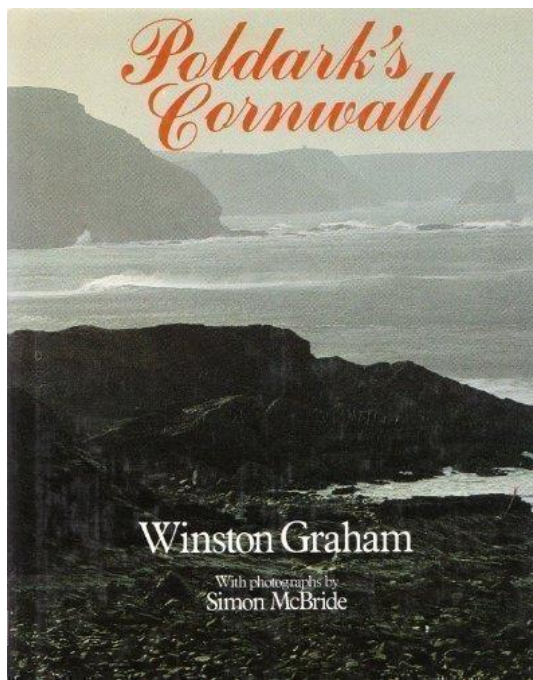
Dorset Press, 1987 / Penguin, 2001 / Fontana, 1976 / Bello, 2013

2. POLDARK'S CORNWALL (with photographs by Simon McBride)

Publisher: The Bodley Head, London and Webb & Bower, Exeter, 1983

Pages: 224

Dedication: I dedicate this book to my son and daughter, Andrew and Rosamund



Winston Graham's saga of Cornish life in the eighteenth century has established itself as a classic, and a phenomenal publishing success. The television series kept large audiences enthralled all over the world.

The romantic imagination of readers and viewers alike was stirred by the marvellous scenery and atmosphere which Graham evokes:

"Clouds of spray had begun to lift off the sea and drift away like sand before a storm, as if the forces of a gathering

anger had been bottled up for a month and must be spent in an hour."

Much of the Cornwall that forms the background and inspiration of the novels has changed little since the eighteenth century, when it was a perilous world of pirates and shipwrecks: the rugged beauty of coast and sea, the mysterious smugglers' coves, the unique characteristics of villages such as Boscastle and Portquin, Porthluney Beach, the tin mines, the churches, the houses and the people.

Winston Graham describes the Cornwall he loves and knows so well and tells the story of how Poldark came to be written – what inspired him, who inspired him – and how the television epic came to be made.

Simon McBride has worked closely with the author to produce a book that captures a land of beauty, excitement, romance and imagination.

Reviews

A must for all lovers of Poldark

Poldark's Cornwall is a must for all lovers of the Poldark series of books by Winston Graham, or followers of the two TV series. The first part of the book is partly autobiographical explaining Winston Graham's connections with Cornwall, and providing a really evocative presentation of the wonderful Cornwall county abundantly illustrated with beautiful and well-selected photographs by Simon McBride.

Many of these are linked with areas used as settings in the books and for the TV series, and this is especially so in the later part of the book, where the author explains how certain places or names in Cornwall were used in his books and also how the filming for the TV series was undertaken.

This provides ... a fascinating account [of] and background to these books and films and leaves the reader wanting to visit Cornwall to see more for themselves at first hand.

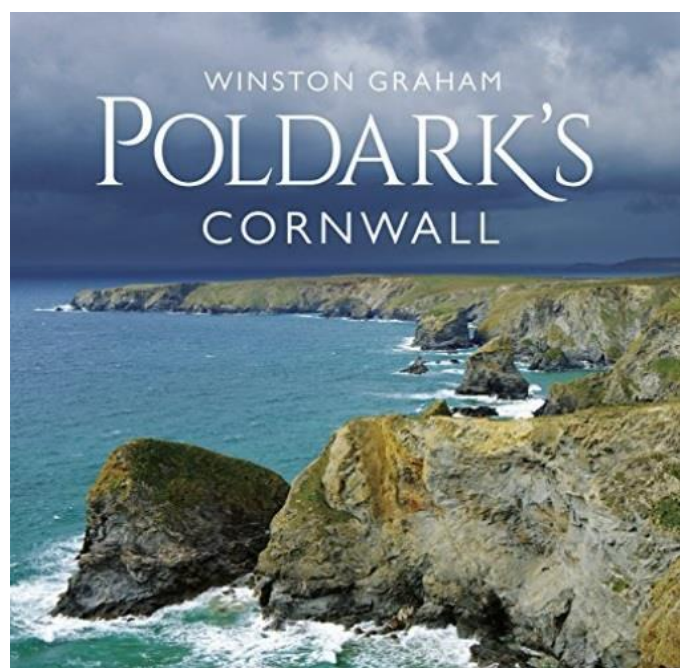
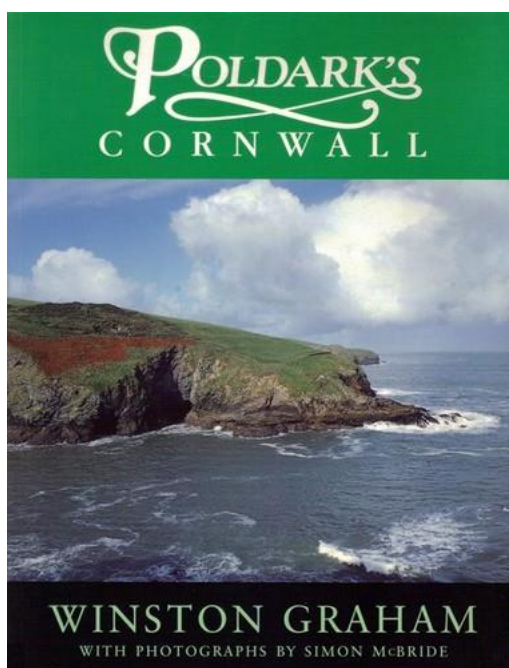
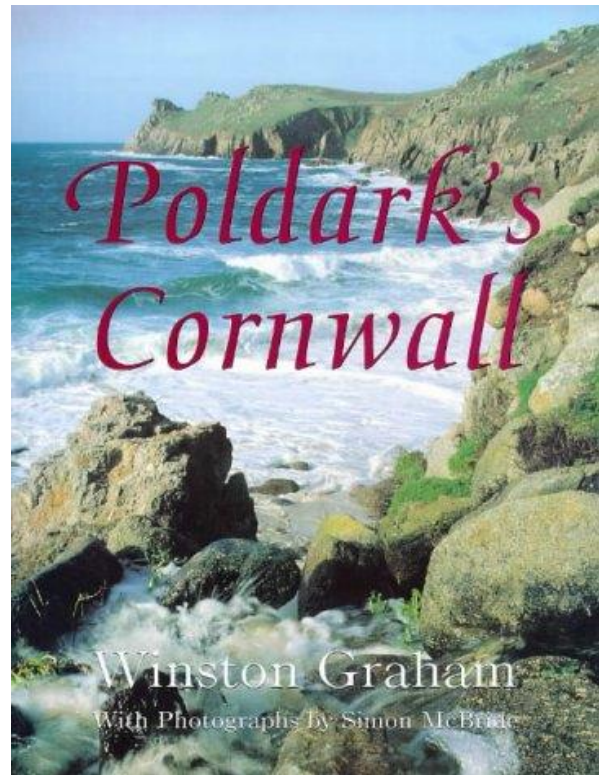
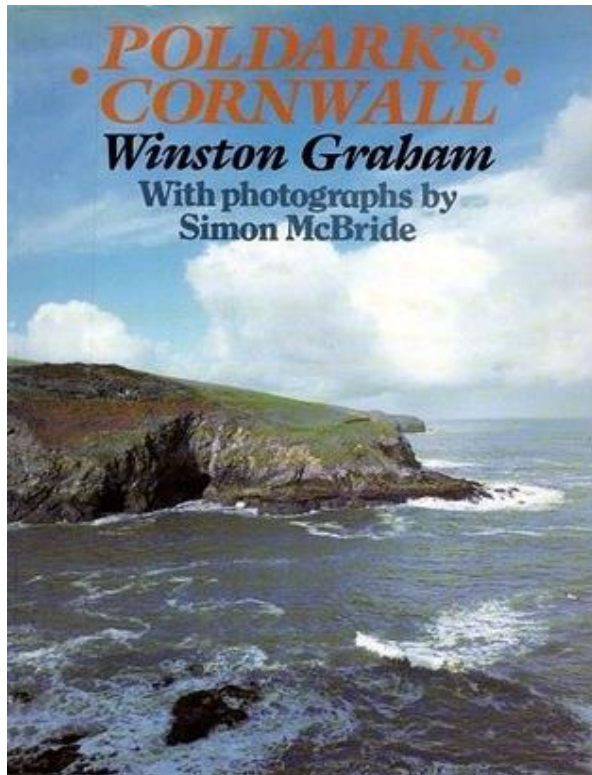
An excellent book in all respects. (Colin Wells)

One of the most handsome books ever published about Cornwall. (Michael Williams)



Page 273: Godolphin Hall, Breage *aka* "Trenwith" in the first (1975) *Poldark*. At the end of the series (though not in the books) rioting miners burn it to the ground. Photo by Simon McBride.

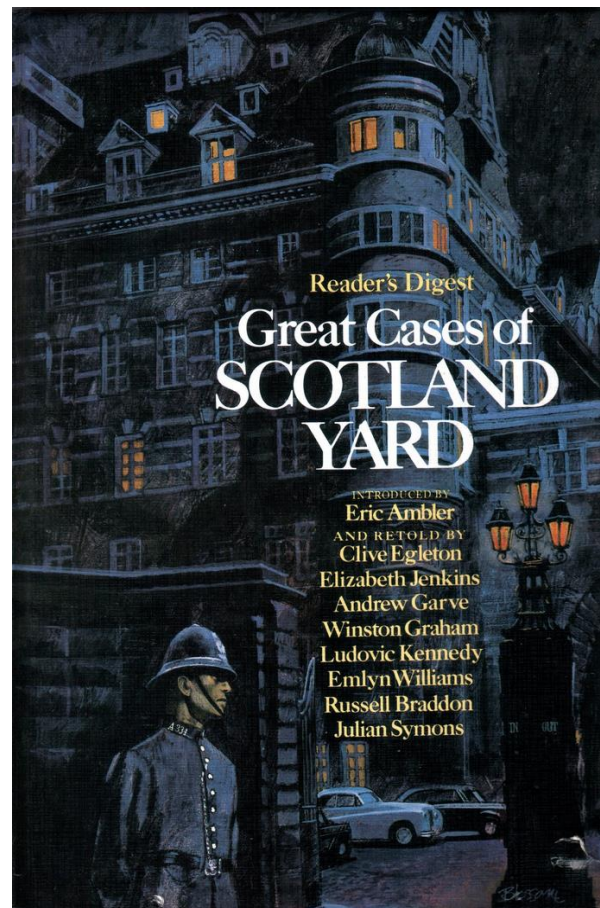
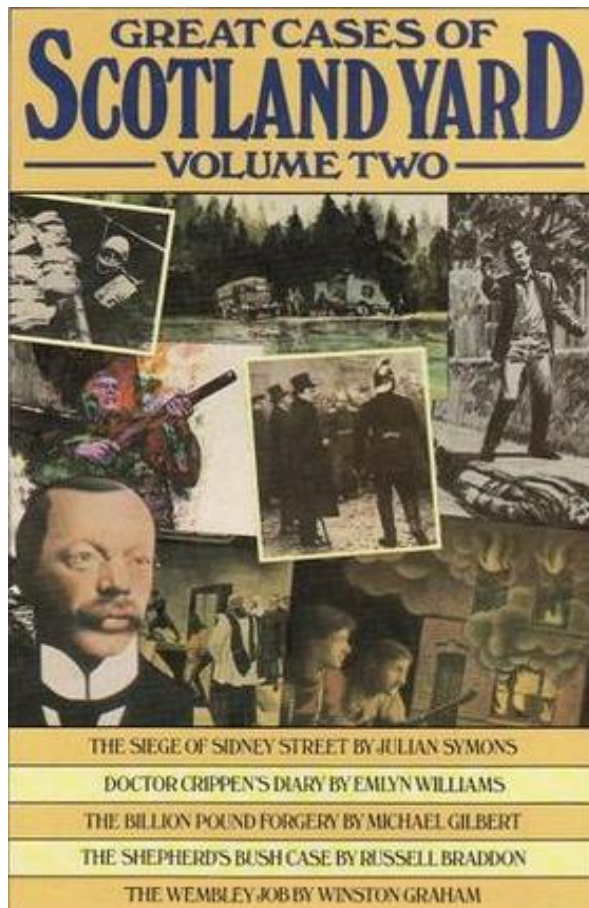
Below: Michael Joseph, 1989 / Trafalgar Square, 1998 / Chapmans, 1994 / Macmillan, 2015 (revised edition)



3. GREAT CASES OF SCOTLAND YARD incl. THE WEMBLEY JOB by WINSTON GRAHAM

Publisher: Reader's Digest, 1978

Pages: UK (two volumes): 414 / 398; US (one volume): 690



Published by Reader's Digest in 1978, Great Cases of Scotland Yard recalls some of the Yard's most famous and highly publicised criminal investigations, each dramatised by a distinguished author especially for this work. The UK edition [above, left] comprises two volumes each recounting five cases; the American [above, right] comes in a single volume recalling eight cases. (In the former but not the latter, FLANNEL FOOT by Michael Innes and THE BILLION POUND FORGERY by Michael Gilbert.)

Both editions include THE WEMBLEY JOB by Winston Graham.

It is 1972. 58 major robberies in the past two years, more than £3 million stolen – the police are struggling to cope with a crime wave of unprecedented proportions. Some of the most daring blags – in Brighton, Hatton Garden, Luton, Bournemouth – are down to a seven-man gang known as The Frighteners. Their February 1970 raid on Barclays Bank, Ilford netted £237,000, then a robbery record. On 10 August 1972 the gang hit Barclays again – this time the Wembley branch – and snatched £138,000 in 90 seconds. But this would prove a turning point, with the Met, having reorganised its resources, at last beginning an effective fightback. At the heart of both sides' stories, club owner, petty then not-so-petty criminal and eventual first "supergrass" Derek "Bertie" Smalls.

Skilfully, WG sets the scene for then relates the inexorable unfolding of events after the Wembley job over 43 pages of lucid prose supplemented by five Sanford Kossin illustrations.

... The Wembley Bank Robbery case was important in three respects. It created a sort of legal history ... it provoked Scotland Yard into forming the ... Robbery Squad (which) removed for ever partitions within the police force (and it) marked, so far, the peak of this form of crime in England ...

As is typical of RD, editions are not confined to a single year or language:



French, 1980 / Dutch, 1980 / German, 1987

Though German editions from 1983 and 1993 are not shown, WG's THE WEMBLEY JOB features in all seven of the Reader's Digest publications depicted or mentioned. In the French, the story is re-titled *Échec aux Pilleurs de Banque* or *Checking the Bank Robbers*, while both the Dutch – *Het Karwei [The Job] in Wembley* – and German – *Der Coup von Wembley* – retain the original sense. The Dutch book title is also a literal translation of the English; conversely, both the French, with *Scotland Yard Leads the Investigation*, and German, with *Chess the Crime*, opt for something different. For more on WG and Reader's Digest, see page 115.



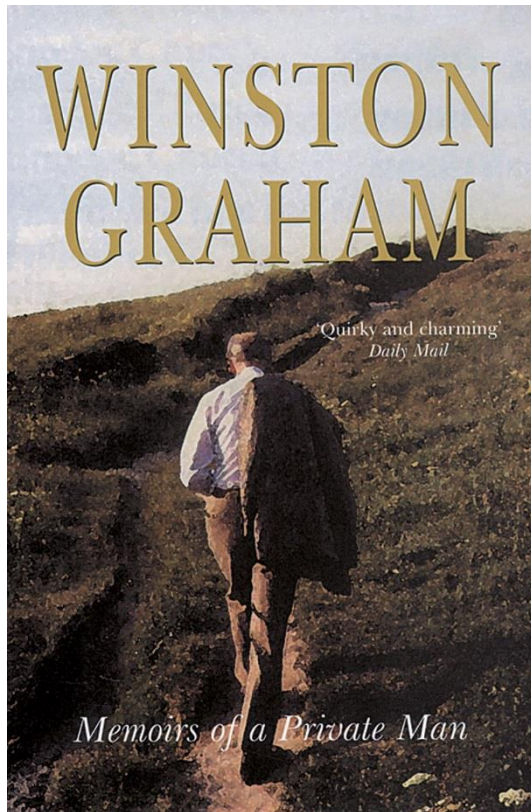
The Wembley Job : one of five Sanford Kossin illustrations

4. MEMOIRS OF A PRIVATE MAN

Publisher: Macmillan, London, 19 September 2003

Pages: xii, 324 (including index), 16 plates

Dedication: For Jean, who read most of it before she went away



I have always been more interested in other people than myself – though there has to be something of myself in every character created, or he will not come alive ...

With more than forty novels to his name, writer Winston Graham, creator of the celebrated "Poldark" series, at last found the opportunity to turn his pen to that subject he found least attractive: himself. Consigned to his safe for years, the result is a remarkable book, free of what he calls "the fashionable sins", but rich in charm and anecdote.

Memoirs of a Private Man follows the rise of a delicate Manchester lad from the isolation of Cornwall and creative anonymity to writerly fame and the glittering London film scene. Its pages are peopled by luminaries, among them Alfred Hitchcock, Gregory Peck and Somerset Maugham, and by a vivacious circle of friends, many of whom have found their way as characters into Graham's novels. His was a life of great success, yet he never lost sight of its foundations: his love of his wife Jean, companion of fifty years, and his love of words. From musings on his philosophy of writing to the challenges of adapting for the screen, Memoirs of a Private Man offers an insight into the unassuming side of the writer whose bestselling novels and their TV adaptations have won over the hearts of millions.

Equally at home in the distinguished company of the Savile Club, in Henry Cooper's gym in the Old Kent Road or in bed with his wife in his coat and

fur hat, Winston Graham had a gift for telling stories that are by turns witty, eccentric and intimate. Fans of his novels will be thrilled not only to know more about their genesis and inspiration, but also to meet the private man behind them, and to come away feeling as if they had spent an evening reminiscing in his delightful company.

* * * * *

Memoirs was the last book that WG finished – he submitted the completed manuscript to his publisher on 15 November 2002² – but not the last he wrote, since "most of it" was drafted before the loss of his wife in 1992 (see dedication). WG writes frankly about certain aspects of his life whilst remaining reticent about others (e.g. his playwriting). He describes the public life of an author as "hell" and directs those wishing to know him better to his novels. WG died on 10 July 2003, with *Memoirs* published just ten weeks later.

Reviews

To read [WG's] memoir is to meet a charming, decent, old-fashioned sort of character with an enormous capacity for friendship and a wonderful interest in other people. He fears that an autobiography in which 'I have not committed any of the fashionable sins such as murder, burglary, sodomy, child abuse, gang rape ... may be too conventional to appeal to today's gossip-hungry readers.' On the contrary. Every gentle page offers us a shining example of prolific creativity and a good life well lived. Graham ends his book with the moving disclosure that: 'I have had one wife, and I loved her and she loved me. I did not terrorise, browbeat or woefully neglect my children. I do not get drunk and disorderly. All very dull.' Not true. Modest to the end, this much-loved author ... has brought pleasure to millions and if snooty critics consider him lowbrow, so what? It's the book sales that count and on that score Graham is still on top. (Val Hennessy, *Daily Mail*)

... to learn about boxing when writing Angell, Pearl & Little God, he spent so much time in the Thomas à Becket pub in the East End that he was treated like a regular, and big fight promoters like Mike Barrett – and big boxers like Henry Cooper – treated him as a friend. Graham sums it up thus:

"I have never been clever enough – or egotistical enough – to spend 300 pages dipping into the sludge of my own subconscious." Of course not. He was much better than that, as this autobiography shows. (Osman Streater,³ Camden New Journal)

Winston Graham once told a reporter that he was the most successful unknown novelist in England. The remark was taken as typically English modesty and self-deprecation, but this unconfessional autobiography, published [two] months after his death at the age of [95], makes it look more like a boast: he was proud of being a best-selling novelist who had never needed to "parade his personal private doings before the public". As he explains in the book, he called it "Memoirs of a Private Man, for this is what I have always wanted to be." ...

[Graham's] fiction gives the impression of an author who inhabited a darker, more sinister world of the imagination than appears in this cheerful, optimistic self-portrait. (Jessica Mann, *Sunday Telegraph*)

When Winston Graham died in July, his obituaries stressed his delightful personality and his essential niceness shines through in this endearingly self-effacing autobiography. (Maggie Pringle, Daily Express)



With Angharad Rees in 1998⁴

WG's dedications

24 of WG's 50 books include a first-edition dedication:

Wife and family: Three books (*The Riddle of John Rowe*, *The Angry Tide* and *Memoirs*) are dedicated to his wife (though the first pre-dates their marriage and the last post-dates her death), *The House with the Stained Glass Windows* is to his mother, *Woman in the Mirror* and *Poldark's Cornwall* to one or both of his children, *The Loving Cup* to his three grandchildren and *The Dangerous Pawn* to his Aunt Mollie.

Special friends are cited in *The Giant's Chair* (Tom Attlee), *Warleggan* (Peter Latham), *The Black Moon* (Marjory Chapman, who is probably also *The Twisted Sword's* "May"), *The Four Swans* (historian Fred Harris and his wife Gladys), *Stephanie* (George Astley) and *Bella Poldark* (Max and Joan Reinhardt).

Helpers: Late-era novels *Tremor* and *The Ugly Sister* are dedicated to employees who served him well, namely housekeeper Gwen Hartfield, her assistant Tina Creelman, gardener Robin Brown and typist / researcher Ann Hoffmann, and other titles to people – boxing promoter Mike Barrett (*Angell, Pearl & Little God*), ophthalmologist A. Gerard East (*Night Without Stars*) and cosmetics executive Desmond Brand (*The Green Flash*) – who helped with specifics of background. Luxton Arnold (*The Spanish Armadas*) was the US publisher who first suggested that that book should be written.

Two men – one "who had rocketed from being a mechanic to owning his own factory in ten years" and another "who was actually building a scintillation-counter" – played key roles in the realisation of *The Sleeping Partner* and it is not unreasonable to surmise that the "Tony and Tony" of that book's dedication refers to them.

Take My Life is dedicated to Valerie Taylor, with whom he co-wrote the screenplay (see pp. 86-90) from which the novel sprang.

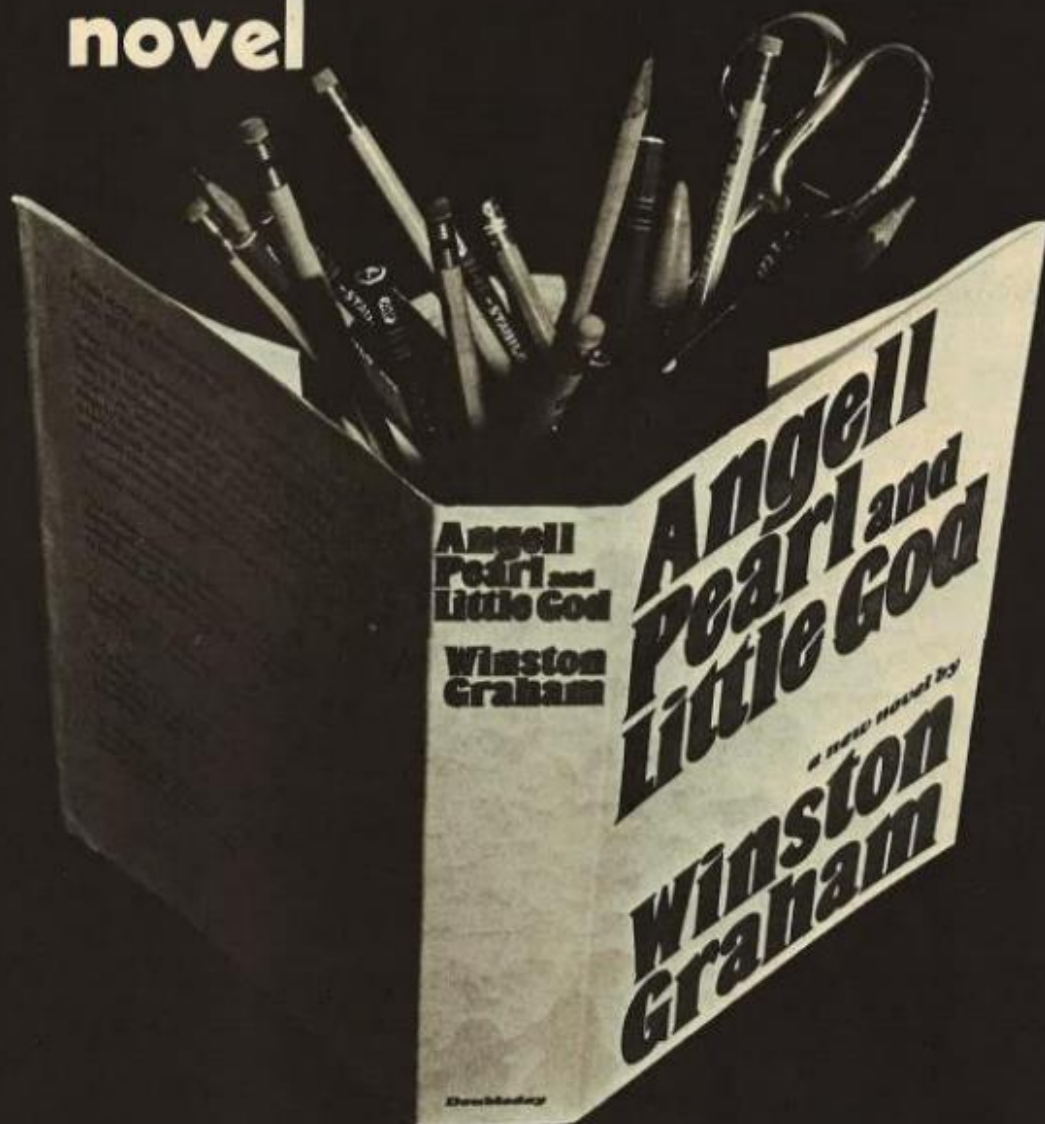
Finally, *Greek Fire's* "Gene" remains a mystery.

* * * * *

(4) other published original writing

This Doubleday author wrote his last novel four times—the first three from the viewpoint of each principal character, and finally settling on the third-person, omniscient-author version. Here's how he analyzes

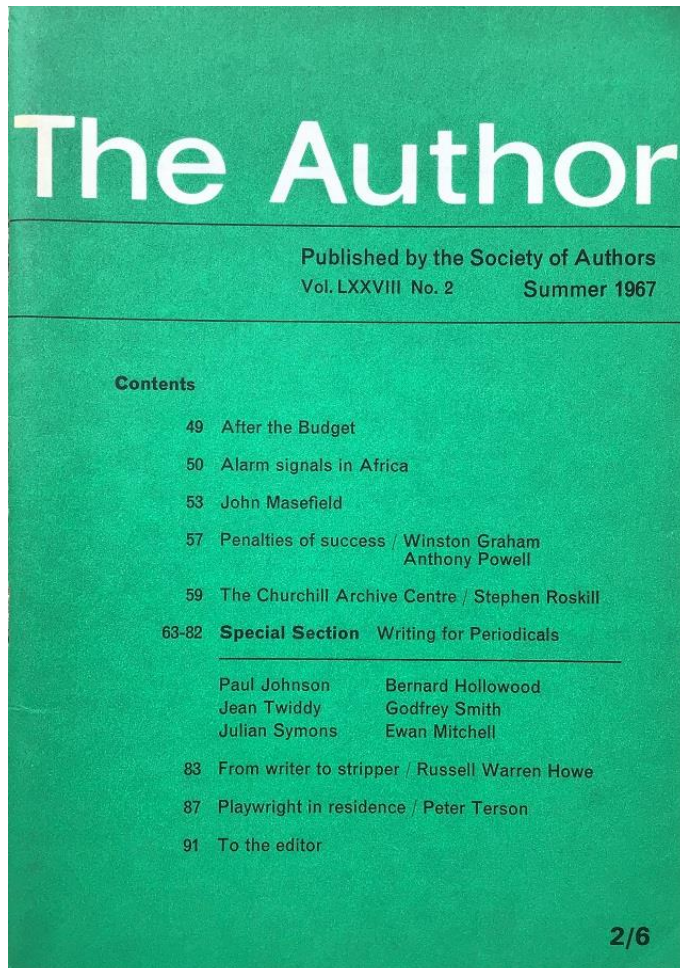
viewpoint in the novel



by Winston Graham

1. THE AUTHOR, 1958-1984

Publisher: The Society of Authors, 84 Drayton Gardens, London, SW10



WG joined the Society of Authors in the spring of 1945 and remained a member for the rest of his days. He served four three-year terms on the Society's Committee of Management, starting in 1955 (under the chairmanship of John Moore, when WG still lived in Cornwall), 1962, 1966 and 1972; from July 1967 to July 1969 WG himself chaired the Committee.

He also contributed original text to at least six issues of the Society's in-house quarterly journal, *The Author*, commenting in the Spring 1958 edition on serialised books, in the Summer

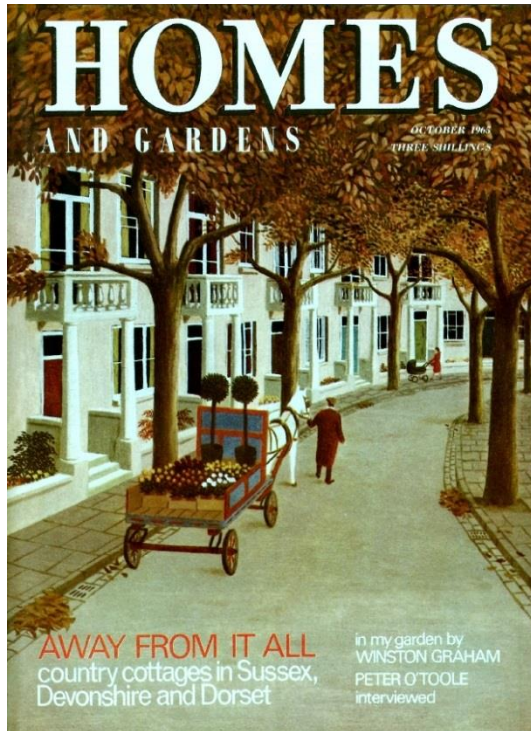
1965 edition on anonymous reviewing and in the Summer 1967 edition (above) on the penalties of success. In the Spring 1968 issue, whilst serving as Committee chair, he announced the launch of a very successful Foundation Fund and in the editions of Autumn 1979 and Summer 1984 (the Society's Centenary Edition) he recalled longtime Society employee Elizabeth Barber and fellow author and Savile Club member Denys Kilham Roberts respectively.

Additionally, the Winter 1955 issue of *The Author* features a half-page profile of WG (then a new Committee member) which proves to be the usual canny mix of fact and fiction.

* * * * *

2. HOMES AND GARDENS, OCTOBER 1965

Publisher: Country Life, Ltd



WG declared his passion for gardening both directly in *Memoirs* – "I have recently rediscovered ... the pocket diaries covering my early twenties. To read them, one would think me a gardener and not much else." (WG) / "He spends all his time with a head in a seed catalogue." (his sister-in-law) – and indirectly through some of his characters. Thus in *The Giant's Chair* Agatha Syme is a "gardening expert" who writes "much-syndicated gardening articles for the Press"; she and dinner guest Christopher Carew swap knowledgeable table-talk on the subject. Fifty-four years on, in *Stephanie*,

James Locke is not only another keen gardener but also "on the Chelsea Flower Show Committee". In *The Ugly Sister*, Emma Spry's enthusiasm for gardening is briefly touched on – and, of course, the earthy Demelza gardens. "How are your hollyhocks?" WG asks her in MEETING DEMELZA, and, a few lines later, when she's gone, sees only "waving grasses and some bracken and hart's-tongue fern."

But for the author's frankest account of his gardening bent, search out the October 1965 issue of *Homes and Gardens*. In a two-page feature headed IN MY GARDEN he relates his struggle to convert a newly-acquired five-acre garden "just discernible among rank weed and overgrown bushes" into something to savour. He also reflects upon the particular importance, to a gardener, of *foresight*:

In a garden planted sixty years ago it is a constant astonishment to me that the original owners apparently never had a thought in their heads beyond the commonest trees. Admittedly the old place is extremely beautiful anyway in the spring:

a dozen great cherries make the garden for two weeks look like a wedding; and the hundred odd apple trees – preserved for their blossom, which we cut extravagantly, and not for their fruit, which is an unmitigated nuisance – are splendid to look on with a carpet of daffodils at their feet ...

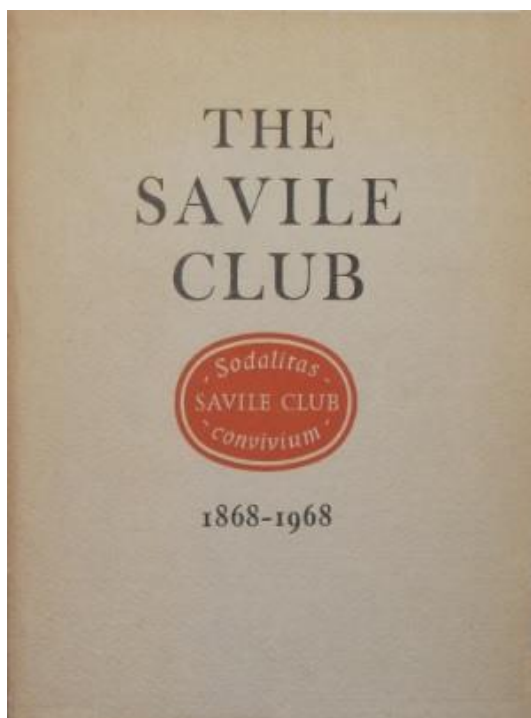
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3. THE SAVILE CLUB 1868-1968

Devised and edited by Monja Danischewsky and Stephen Watts

Publisher: The Savile Club, 1968

Pages: 32



This "souvenir book", produced to help commemorate the centenary of the Savile Club, to which WG was elected in 1950, contains articles, reminiscences, poems and drawings by club members including J. B. Priestley, John Le Carré, Ralph Richardson and Winston Graham, whose "Brief Encounter" is an affectionate two-page remembrance of fellow Savilian Gilbert Harding (1907-1960).

* * * * *

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.

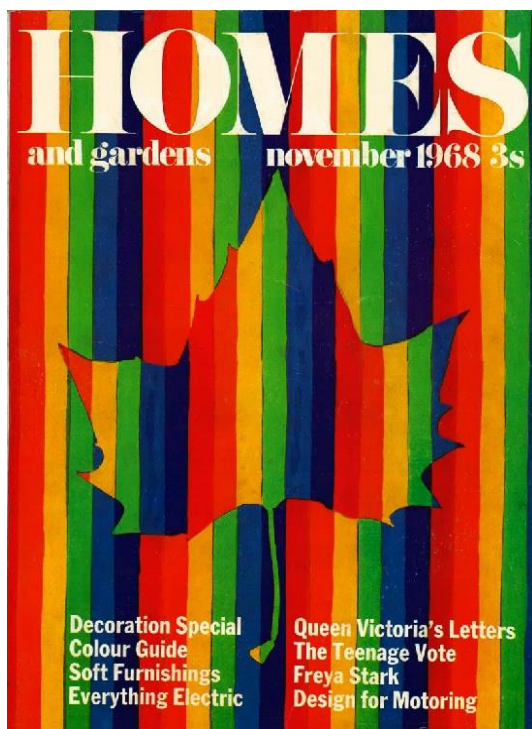
At the end of one story, when I was laughing with the rest, he suddenly fixed me with a furious eye and boomed out: "You! Who are you? You look an arrogant fellow!"

For a revised version of this text, see *Memoirs*, 2.11.

* * * * *

4. HOMES AND GARDENS, NOVEMBER 1968

Publisher: Country Life, Ltd



In which WG considers the "topical question" SHOULD TEENAGERS HAVE THE VOTE? [Note: this was a current issue at the time; the *Representation of the People Act 1969* lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, with effect from 1970.] His article opens with a quotation from *The Winter's Tale* then asks:

What is a teenager? I dislike the term, which is journalese and has a pejorative overtone. A teenager is someone born at some date subsequent to November 1948. Nothing else. They are not

different creatures from ourselves marked off by peculiar and distinguishing characteristics. They are exactly and precisely the same. They are not even different from what we were at their age, except that they have more freedom and more money to spend ... They are human beings in the process of growing up, and some will grow up more quickly and more elegantly than others. Some will not grow up at all.

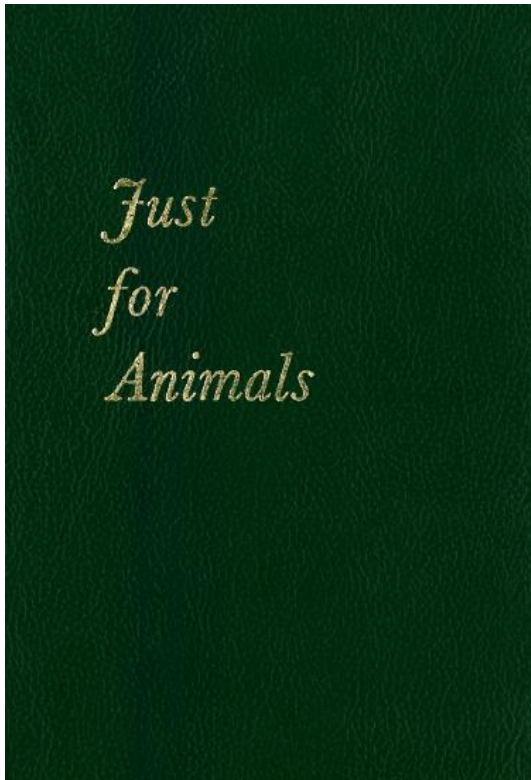
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5. JUST FOR ANIMALS by M. Raymonde-Hawkins

Privately published in 1970

Pages: 177 (unnumbered)

Dedication: to YOU (name space) and all other Friends of Raystede



Just for Animals is the second in a series of books (*Dogs, Donkeys and Ducks; Wings, Whiskers and Wagging Tails; Sensible Pets and Silly People* etc) privately published by Miss M. Raymonde-Hawkins MBE and sold to help support her work at the Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare at Ringmer, East Sussex (i.e. some ten miles from WG's Buxted home). Founded by Miss R-H in 1952, the Centre remains open to this day.

Potential contributors to *Just for Animals* 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?" Respondents included Yehudi Menuhin, Sir John Betjeman, Harry Secombe, Jack Warner, Joyce Grenfel, Beverley Nichols, Sir Adrian Boult, Lord Soper, Sir Stanley Rous, Winston Graham and more.

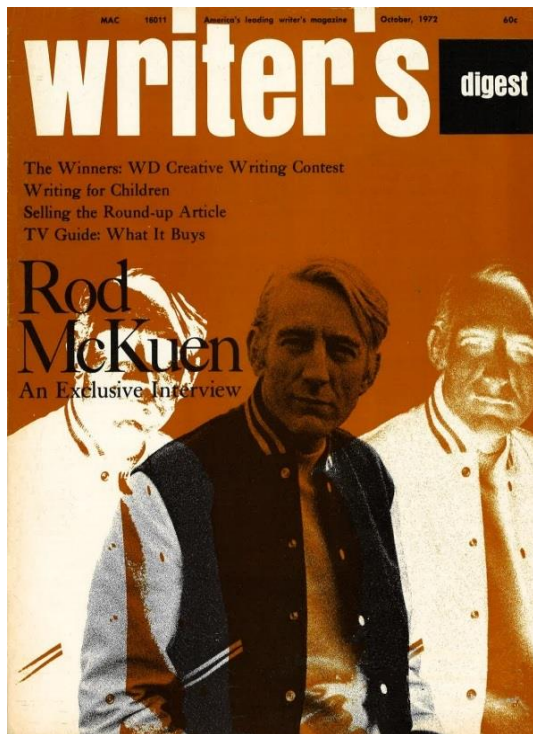
WG's offering is a banal, tongue-in-cheek, five-verse, 25-line, 174-word untitled poem that begins:

*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.*

* * * * *

6. WRITER'S DIGEST, Vol. 52, No. 10, October 1972

Publisher: Richard Rosenthal



Includes "Viewpoint in the Novel", a three-page article concerned mainly with the difficulty WG had in writing *Angell, Pearl & Little God*:

[After describing how Little God had turned in his mind from "a tough little rowdy on the make" into "a man with a career in boxing and the ability and the ambition to get to the top"] ... By this time fascination with [pro boxing] had taken over from any mere matter of duty-research, and it seemed abundantly clear that I could write a book entirely

about the boxing career of Little God. The world of prize-fighting had become much more interesting to me than the world of law offices or even of a pretty girl on the perfume counter of a big store.

Yet since I generally find it a mistake to be diverted from original intentions, I began to write the novel in the first person of Wilfred Angell, middle-aged Bachelor of Law.

At first it went well. To begin, it is all Angell's adventures: his consultation with the doctor, his visit to Switzerland, his meeting with and courtship of Pearl. It is fascinating and right to see all this through the slightly distorting eyes of a stout, selfish, greedy man. But very soon I began to appreciate how much I should lose ...

This article is reprised in revised form in *Memoirs* 1.10.

7. THE JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF CORNWALL, New Series, Volume VII, Part 4, 1977

Includes "The Craft of the Historical Novelist"

Author's Note

The Address I gave to the Royal Institution of Cornwall in June 1976 was intended as a more or less personal statement made to a few friends and to those members of the Institution who cared to come and hear me. For that reason, at my request, the press was excluded, and for that reason a good deal of what I said was not intended for printed publication. This extract comprises about two-thirds of the original Address.

Here's a brief excerpt from its most informative seven pages:

... history is not an objective science. Historical truth is not mathematical truth. The past has really no existence other than that which our minds can give it. Even the pure historian is at the mercy of his sources, and his sources usually are other fallible, or prejudiced, or forgetful human beings.

There may be a few amongst you who have read my one book of short stories. In it is a short story [\[VIVE LE ROI\]](#) about the death and the burial of William the Conqueror. Well, all the material facts for that I got from a contemporary account by Ordericus Vitalis, which is as near as even the most conscientious historian can get to the truth of the matter ... But in fact Ordericus Vitalis was thirteen when William died. In other words he depended on an eyewitness, or possibly even hearsay, and who knows how good his information was?

Once more, portions of this text reappear in both *Poldark's Cornwall* and *Memoirs*.

8. MY FAVOURITE STORY, edited by Denys Val Baker

Publisher: William Kimber, 1977

Pages: 240



Every writer of short stories ... inevitably has a special sort of affection for one or two examples of his work and for all sorts of varied and interesting reasons. In this outstanding collection, Roald Dahl, Daphne Du Maurier, Dennis Wheatley and many others pick their favourite story and explain why this story gives them particular satisfaction.

WG is one of fourteen contributors to this Denys Val Baker-edited anthology. The story he chooses is "almost the first short story I ever wrote and certainly ... the first I ever sold." He gives an amusing account of its publishing history which reveals, among other things, that between its first appearance in Ward, Lock's *Windsor* magazine in 1935 and its second in

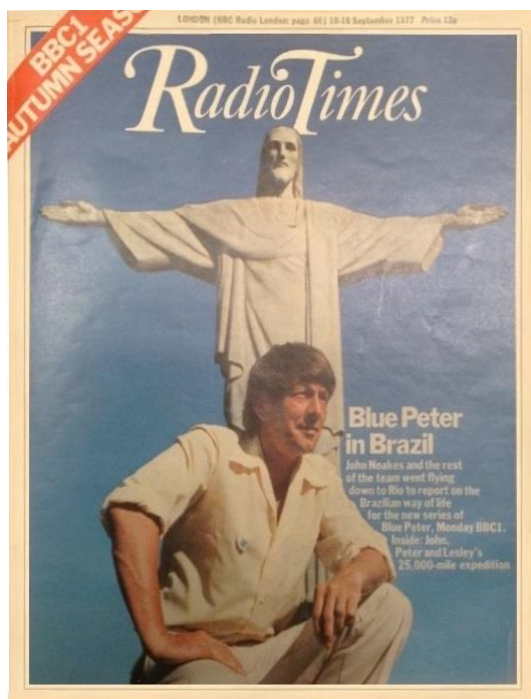
Argosy thirty years later, he "brought it a little more up to date." For more on this, see pp. 118-122.

The story's third sale [\[to the *Ladies' Home Journal*\]](#) in the early seventies earned WG fifty times more than *Windsor* paid him:

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

* * * * *

9. [RADIO TIMES, issue 2809, 10-16 September 1977](#)



Back in the seventies, after the BBC's first 16-part series of *Poldark* ended on 18 January 1976, fans had to wait almost twenty months before the start of Series Two on 11 September 1977. To refresh memories and whet appetites, *Radio Times* ran a handy WG-penned résumé:

... On the horizon looms George Warleggan, son of a new-rich family, whose business conduct reflects a standard of ethics that the Poldarks instantly and openly reject. When Elizabeth, widowed

in a mining accident, agrees to marry George, Ross, goaded beyond endurance, calls upon her one night and takes her by force. This does not, however, prevent the marriage, nor does it stop George, unaware of what has happened, from establishing himself in the old Poldark home, only four miles from where Ross and Demelza live ...

in his own words (ii)

[As a boy] I discovered the public library and read a novel a day for years. (*Daily Express*, 18 November 1995)

I am fascinated by weeping trees – they are always more beautiful than their erect counterparts, and they seldom grow as tall, an advantage for someone loving sun and light. (*Homes and Gardens*, October 1965)

I remember coming into the ballroom and seeing Jean Williamson sitting with some friends at a table across the floor. She had changed greatly from our first meeting. I looked at her carefully and then said to myself: "She's the girl I'm going to marry." (*Memoirs*, 1.4)

I have never been able to look after myself very well. I've got hands which I use all the time for writing, because I write in longhand, but they're not much use, I would have thought, for building a boat or constructing a house or a shed and I've never cooked much for myself all my life. (*Desert Island Discs*, 26 November 1977)

I have a dry sense of humour, but so did Jean. She could reply in a flash – and yes – certain things about Jean went into Demelza's character, particularly her gamine sense of humour and ability to find happiness in small things. We both swore that if one lived longer than the other, as one obviously would, that the one left would live life to the utmost and I've been doing so. (*Daily Express*, 18 November 1995)

I have lived a marvellous life and would not have had it any other way. (*Sussex Express*, 28 October 1977)

Later [WG's brother Cecil] was sent to France ... One day my mother got a telegram from the War Office. With terrified fingers she fumbled it open to see that her lance corporal son

had been "wounded but remained on duty". In fact a shell splinter had cut his face just below the eye. Had it been an inch higher it probably would have killed him and so altered not only his destiny but mine and that of scores of other people, since without his pressure we might not have moved to Cornwall. So all one's destiny is controlled and decided by the direction of a flying splinter. (*Memoirs*, 1.2)

(On Cornwall): I love the smell of the air, the sound of the real Cornish voices, the bleakness, the cliffs, and of course the beach. I used to sit on the beach endlessly at one time and I can think of few more enjoyable pastimes. (*Western Morning News*, 14 May 2002)

I don't think [Cornwall] is ruined ... If one compares it for instance to some of the places on the Costa Brava or in Greece, Cornwall is marvellously unruined. But I naturally grieve for the extreme growth of ... bungalows – what Quiller-Couch called "bungaloweczema" – and I grieve for caravan parks which ... after being there fifteen years don't even have a tamarisk tree to mask them from the rest of the countryside, and I'm sorry for some of the commercial development. (To TSW reporter Mike Whitmarsh, 5 August 1983)

(On his decision to leave): A writer is an odd bird, and often does not reason like other people. As I became more and more successful it seemed to me that I was becoming too comfortable too young. Everything slotted into place so easily ... No doubt that ugly word Ambition nudged at my elbow. If one doesn't have ambition to write better at that age it is a poor look-out. Whatever the cause, I became convinced that to move would broaden my outlook ...

A friend of mine, a well-known writer ... decided, possibly for similar reasons, to make such a change. In the course of six months he changed his place of residence, his club, his publisher, his agent and his wife. I only changed my place of residence. (*Poldark's Cornwall*)

Men – and women – have treated me well. I have never been betrayed or let down by anyone important to me. I have never in my life had to ask a favour of anyone, and therefore have never known the bitterness of being refused or – so I'm told – the resentment of being granted it. This does not mean I have not known sadness and disappointment, ill-health or the chagrins of failure. Nor does it mean that I am full of the milk of human kindness or that I believe human beings to be more admirable than they really are; but it may just explain why the characters in *Poldark* are, if one balances the coin, a little more in the sun than in the shadow. As far as critical acceptance goes, this has been of great detriment. (*Poldark's Cornwall*)

Please don't refer to [the Poldark novels] as "bodice-rippers". It's a term I dislike. I've always said I'll give £100 to anyone who can find any bodice-ripping in the books. (To Jennifer Selway, *Observer*, 22 September 1996)

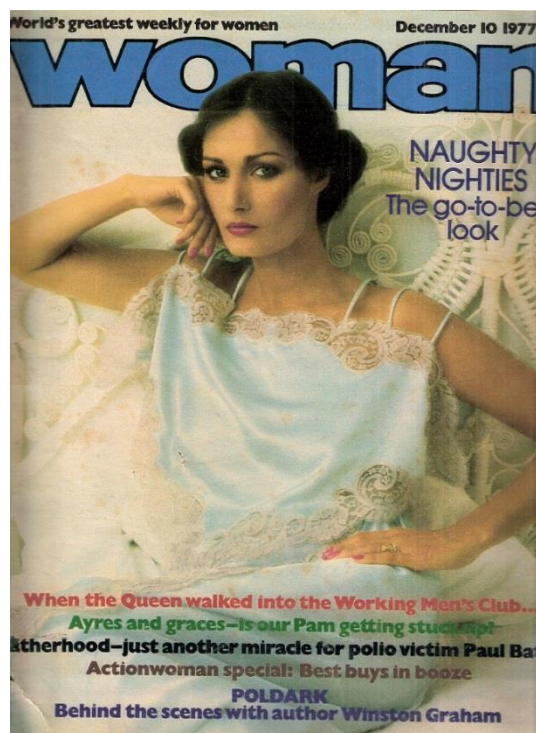
I don't really like sagas which go on and on, from one generation whistling through to another and so on [but] four or five years later, with [the BBC's] words whispering in my ears and a lot of letters flooding in and my own *addiction* to Poldark, as it had become by then, I thought, "Well, there's no harm in going on one generation more ..." (To John Dunn, the *John Dunn Show*, 27 June 1991)

In the second [*Poldark*] series there was a great sort of pressure by various people on the set ... that I should ... do a Hitchcock on it, you see, so they put me in as a yeoman farmer greeting a clergyman as he came into church ... and what I had to say was "Mornin', Zur!" and I did it very well, I thought. Not even Olivier could have done better with the shortness of the script. But when it came out, I wasn't in it. (*Wogan*, 1 February 1988)

The printed word is on the defensive against the insidious influence of more easily assimilated media – but the stronger influence is the urge of man to write, to give and leave proof of his existence. (*Cornish Guardian*, 25 July 1957)

10. WOMAN, 10 December 1977

Publisher: Time Inc., UK



To help their readers adjust to the gloomy prospect of no more *Poldark* (with Series Two having concluded the week before), on 10 December 1977, *Woman* magazine ran a breezy WG-penned "exclusive" entitled "Poldark – how it all happened". Here's a brief excerpt:

Captain Fortescue, who owns the great estate of Boconnoc, arranged with Robin Ellis and Ralph Bates that a charity cricket match, Poldarks v. Warleggans, should take place on his ground. A few hundred spectators were expected and about four thou-

sand turned up ... Highlight was when Ross Poldark was scoring runs all around the wicket and George Warleggan had exhausted all his regular bowlers. He called Mrs Warleggan up from the boundary and asked her to bowl. Jill Townsend, who is American, knew nothing whatever about cricket and had to be told where to stand and what to aim at, whereupon she bowled Ross Poldark first ball ...

* * * * *

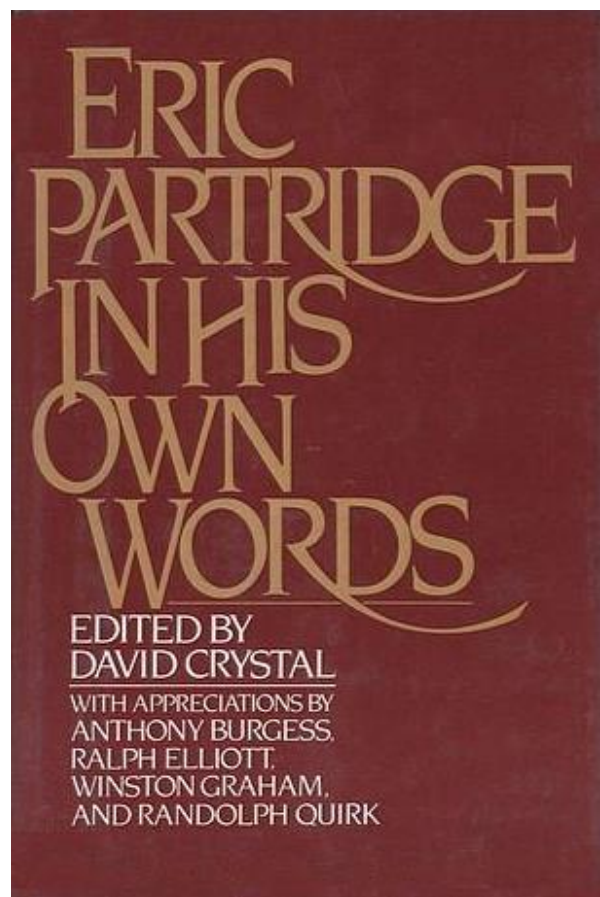
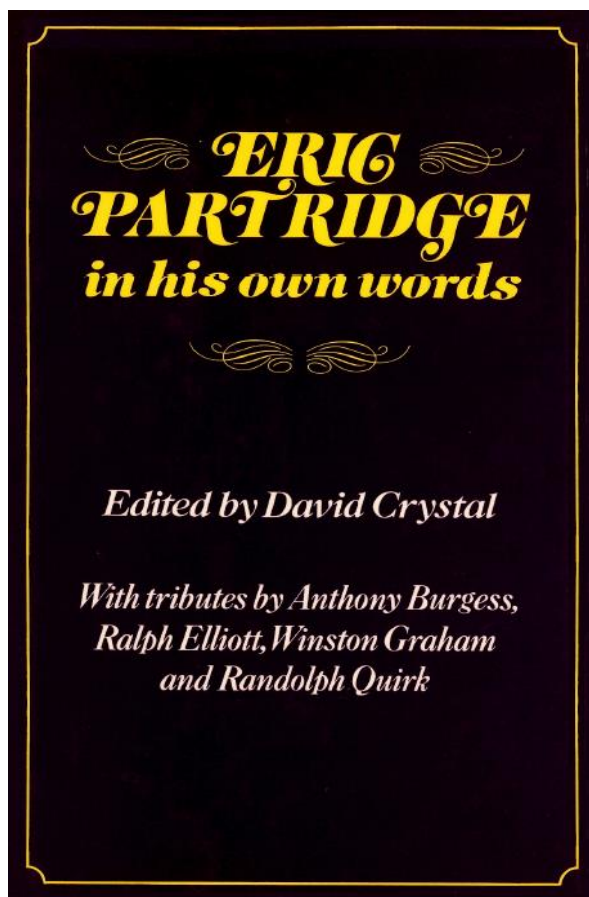
11. ERIC PARTRIDGE IN HIS OWN WORDS, edited by David Crystal

Publisher: André Deutsch, 1980

Pages: 251

After serving in the Great War then completing his education at Queensland and Oxford universities, New Zealand-born lexicographer Eric Part-

ridge (1894-1979) settled in the UK, eventually writing, compiling or editing more than seventy books, mostly on the English language (his specialty its slang) but also including, under the pseudonym Corrie Denison, a short story collection and three novels. A year after his death at the age of 85, the remembrance below was published on both sides of the Atlantic. *Eric Partridge In His Own Words* comprises thirty selected excerpts from Mr. Partridge's lexicographical writing followed by a brief account of his short (1927-31) career as a publisher. But preceding all of that are appreciations from English professor Ralph Elliott, linguist Randolph Quirk, Anthony Burgess and Winston Graham.



[André Deutsch, 1980 / Macmillan \(NY\), 1980](#)

WG's two-and-a-half-page tribute is headed "Some Club Reminiscences" and begins:

Eric Partridge and I were elected to the Savile Club in the same year, 1950. There we met, casually, and exchanged names and views once or twice. I knew him of course as a distinguished

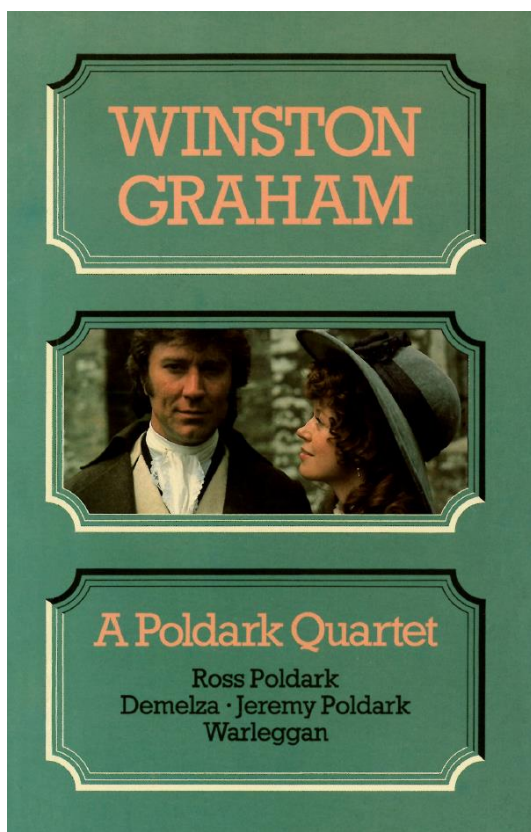
etymologist, but I didn't then know that he had included a passage from one of my novels in his book, British and American Usage, which was to be published the following year. Then one day he invited me to his birthday party, which he was giving for a few friends at the club, and our acquaintanceship ripened into the warm friendship that persisted until the day he died ...

* * * * *

12. A POLDARK QUARTET

Publisher: Collins, London, 1980 (a "Collectors' Choice" edition)

Pages: 1227



When William Collins published *The Black Moon* in 1973, both its author and his Poldark saga were relatively well-kept secrets. Two years later the BBC changed all that. After airing in the UK from 5 October 1975 to 18 January 1976, their sixteen-part screen adaptation of the first four novels eventually sold around the world to more than 40 countries. Life for WG would never be quite the same again. Collins, meanwhile, following up with *The Four Swans* in 1976 and *The Angry Tide* a year later, could surely not believe their luck. Indeed, such was the new-found appetite for Poldark that in 1980 they reissued the first four titles in the hardback Collec-

tors' Choice edition pictured here, thus bringing the entire saga to that point within their imprint. And while the book's content was of course not "new" WG, they did persuade the author to contribute an exclusive two-and-a-half-page foreword. It begins:

My parents moved to Cornwall from the north of England when I was seventeen. The change for me was an extreme one: this sudden transfer from the suburb of a big city to a small wind-swept 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 ...

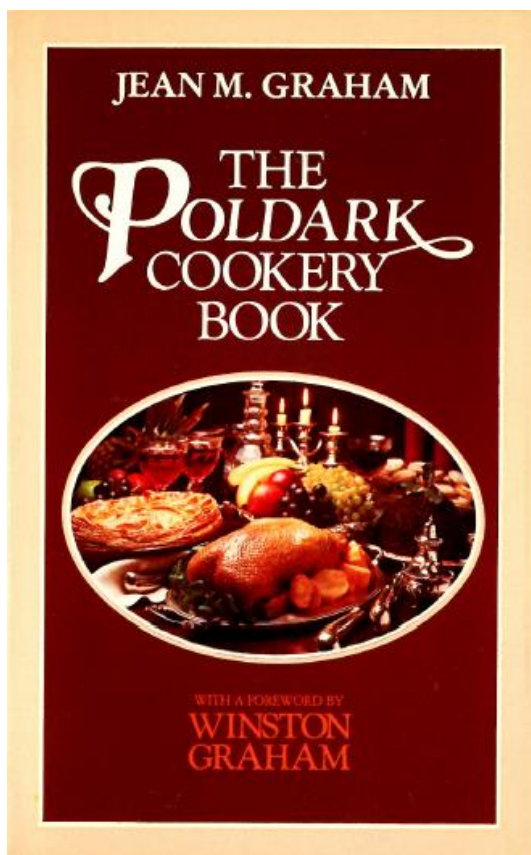
* * * * *

13. [THE POLDARK COOKERY BOOK](#) by Jean M. Graham

Publisher: Triad / Granada, 1981 (also Macmillan, 2017 – not shown)

Pages: 160

Dedication: none



The foreword WG wrote for his wife discourses primarily on where to find information concerning late 18th century food and dietary practice. However, he also discloses in his three and-a-half pages that, while keen as ever to sustain period authenticity, he felt less compunction than usual to tackle culinary studies when working because of

... the existence of someone ... whose knowledge of 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.

In her introduction, Devon-born Mrs. Graham vividly recalls her childhood holidays in Cornwall: *many of my recipes are of what I remember from those days*, she writes. So, then, nettle soup or lardy bread, saffron cake or syllabub, if you want to know how, this is where.

* * * * *

14. **SCHOONERMAN** by Richard England

Publisher: The Bodley Head, Ltd., 1981
Pages: 300

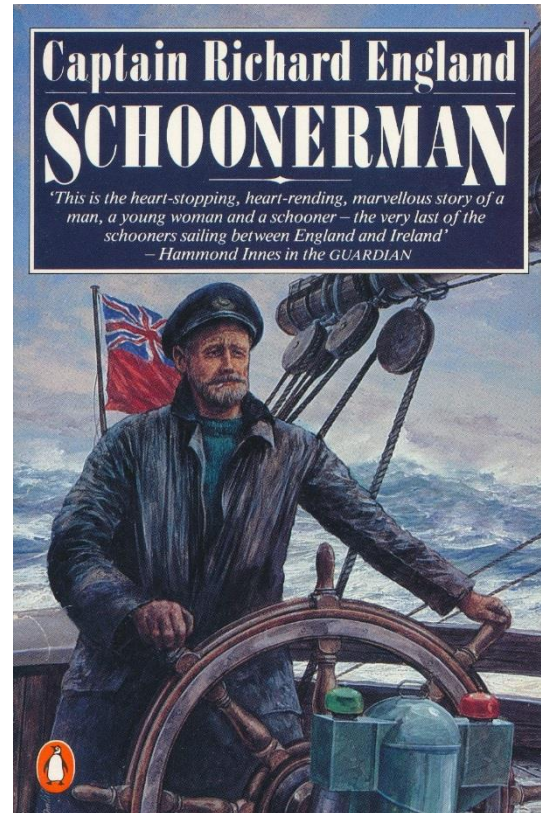


In contrast to the other titles noted in this section, the link between WG and *Schoonerman* is not immediately apparent. In his brief (316 word) text, he confirms that he never met Captain England, who died in 1982. Perhaps the book – an autobiography cum detailed history cum loving tribute – particularly impressed him, for it does indeed make excellent reading. The closing lines of his foreword suggest as much:

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 the narrative: Sic Transit Gloria Mundi.

However, author and sailor are notionally associated by lapsed opportunity. In 1949, with cargoes increasingly hard to find, Captain England chartered his schooner the *Nellie Bywater* and crew to London Films for the shooting of Michael Powell's French Revolution swashbuckler *The Elusive Pimpernel*. That job done and eager for more such work, he then struck a verbal agreement with production company Gainsborough Pictures to advise on and appear in their film adaptation of WG's *The Forgotten Story*. But within a week of shaking hands, and before any further progress was made in the matter, the company folded and that, for Captain England and crew, was that.



Penguin, 1983

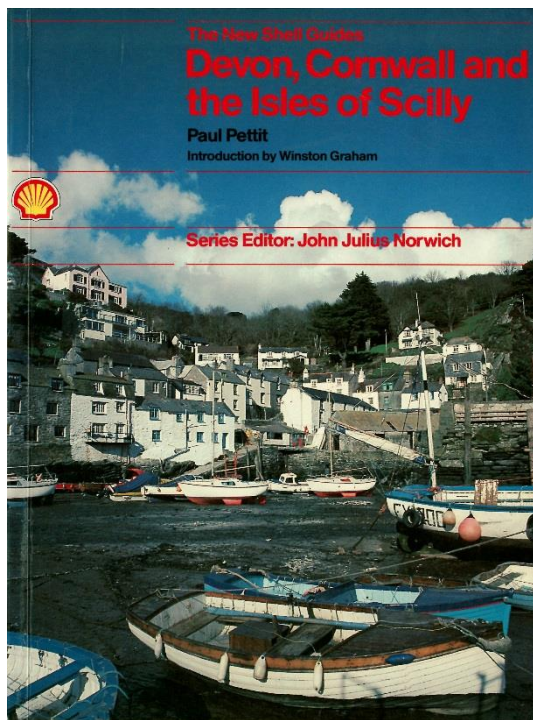
A six-part adaptation of *The Forgotten Story* would eventually be produced by HTV (see pp. 336-42), though not for another post-*Poldark* thirty years.



15. DEVON, CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY by Paul Pettit

Publisher: Michael Joseph, Ltd., 1987

Pages: 227



In a long (seven-page) and thoroughly enjoyable introduction to this gazetteer, Winston Graham begins with an erudite thumbnail sweep through the contrasting histories of England's two most westerly counties before moving on to topography, hunting men, famous (or infamous) parsons, train travel, gardening, social history (with particular reference to population) and cathedrals, of which Devon and Cornwall, he says, have "two of the finest ... in the land." He also names "perhaps the best Cornish short story ever."²

Though it's not hard to guess why WG was asked to write this introduction, it should be noted that the word *Poldark* is not mentioned once. More surprising still, given the book's title, and even though one of his early novels (see page 26) is set there, nor are the Scilly Isles! Here's how his introduction ends:

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 sunshine, the cleanest rain, the wildest and most wayward winds, and escape from pressure, economic, social, 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

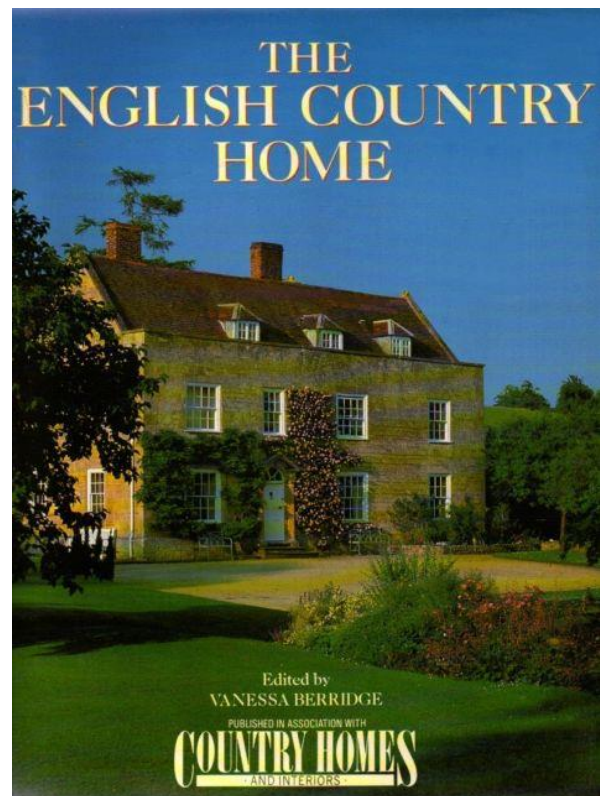
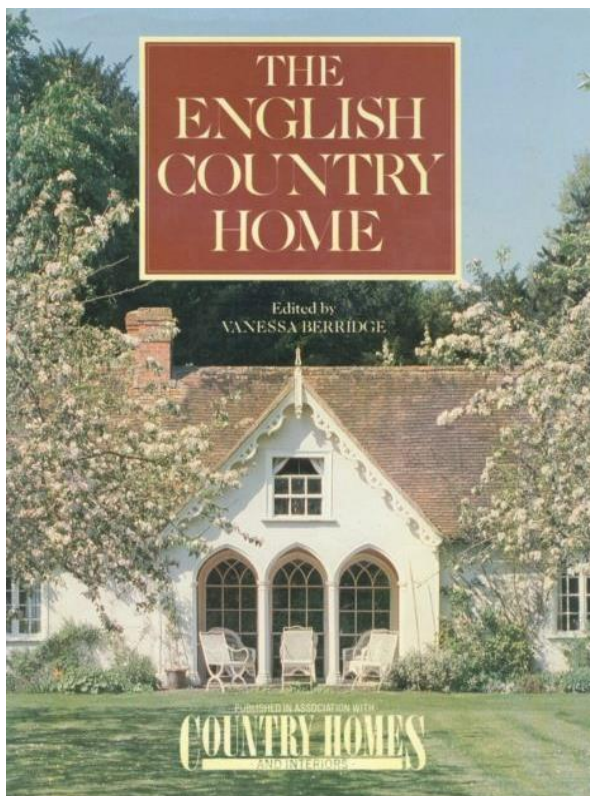
had to go away, long to return. It used to be said in Truro of doctors that if they were appointed to spend a year in the area, and outstayed the year, they would never leave again. Most of them did not. Why should they?

* * * * *

16. **THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOME**, edited by Vanessa Berridge

Publisher: Weidenfeld & Nicholson (UK – below, left) / Salem House (USA – below, right), 1987

Pages: 192



The English Country Home rounds up some of the best writing to have appeared in *Country Homes and Interiors* during the magazine's first eighteen months of publication. Beautifully illustrated throughout, the book focuses on the country house in all its variety – from Norfolk stately home to rambling, rose-clad Somerset cottage – but also embraces many other delights of life in the country. It contains features on fine gardens, on

homes ingeniously created by their owners from chapels and school-houses, on unspoilt countryside and on the lifestyles of country people, both well-known and otherwise.

Country Homes and Interiors magazine launched in April 1986 and one of its early issues included *Of Cornish Coves and Cliffs : Winston Graham in Poldark Country*, a charming reminiscence reproduced (with photos by Simon McBride) on pages 124-7 of *The English Country Home*. Here's a taste:

The vegetation of the north Cornish coast could hardly have been more different from Manchester where I was born and bred. Trees – there were hardly any trees at all as I knew them. Nothing, of course, near the sea. Even valleys such as Perrancombe could only boast a few wind-tortured elms. But the undergrowth was altogether different. This rampaged and flourished everywhere. The hedges, the verges, the commons, the railway banks, were choked with weeds, which in their season became wild flowers. In the spring, campion and milkmaids and bluebells fought with each other in patriotic colour, disputing their ground with fern and bracken and gorse and cow parsnip and wild garlic and a dozen other rivals for a place in the rain and the sun. Some years the colour of the gorse would be so outrageous as to hurt the eye.

(It should be noted, in fairness, that this is *not* quite original writing since the piece was composed by lifting a dozen paragraphs from the first 100 pages of *Poldark's Cornwall* and stitching them together to make something "new" – another of numerous incidences of WG reusing suitable material as and when opportunity allowed.)

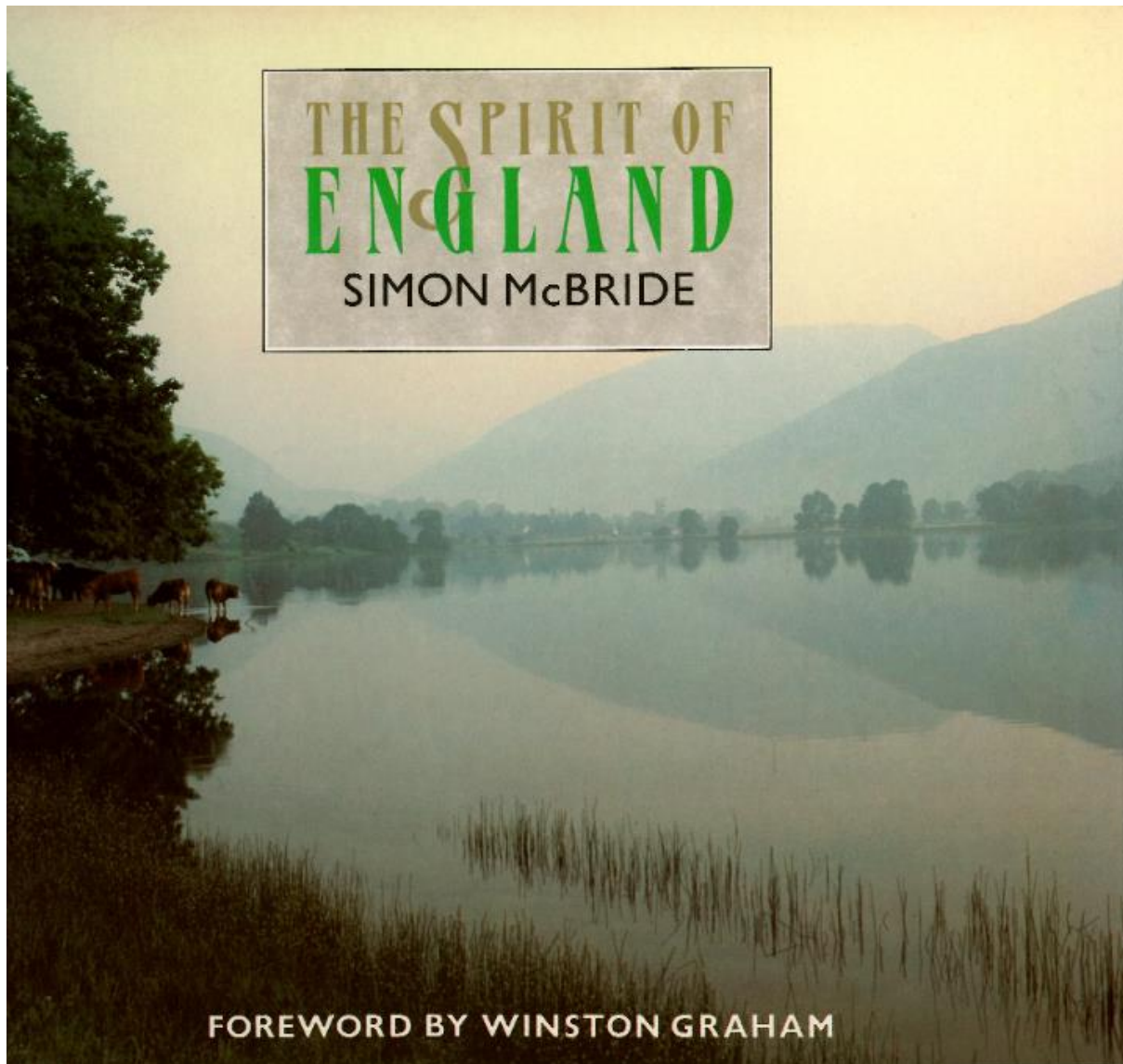
Addenda

(i) "A Sketch of Historical Perranporth" in *Perranporth Official Guide, 1956* (Perranporth Chamber of Commerce, 1956); (ii) "My Poldark Characters" in *Redruth County Grammar School Souvenir Magazine, 1907-1976*; (iii) "Golf Stew" in *Writers' Favourite Recipes*, compiled by Gillian Vincent (Corgi, 1978)

17. **THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND** by Simon McBride

Publisher: Webb & Bower, Ltd., in association with Michael Joseph, Ltd.,
1989

Pages: 128



Simon McBride took the photographs that appear in *Poldark's Cornwall* (see page 272). Perhaps by way of tribute, eight years later WG contributed a lovely 1,000-word foreword to McBride's book, topped and tailed with lines of Mrs. Browning. Here's how it begins:

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 blackberries³

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

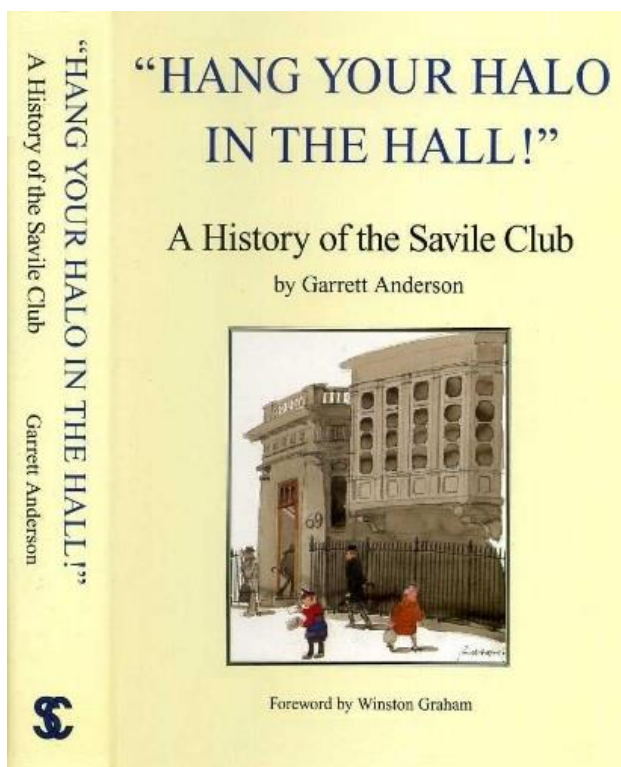
It is the responsibility and the pleasure – or should be – of every poet, artist, photographer, writer to see "the burning bush", as it were, and to convey to his readers, gazers, critics, admirers, something of the world of nature or human nature, which he personally discerns and can offer specially 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.

* * * * *

18. "HANG YOUR HALO IN THE HALL!" A HISTORY OF THE SAVILE CLUB by Garrett Anderson

Publisher: The Savile Club, 1993

Pages: 430



According to his own testimony,⁴ WG first visited the Savile Club in 1945 (presumably some time after VE Day) as a guest of his friend Peter Latham. The two men first met during the war when Lieutenant Latham, a gunnery instructor, was stationed at Penhale Camp, just along the coast from Perranporth, where WG and his wife ran a B&B. Latham's wife Angela and their daughter came to stay for a few weeks to see more of Peter, and he them. Thereafter WG remained in touch with both

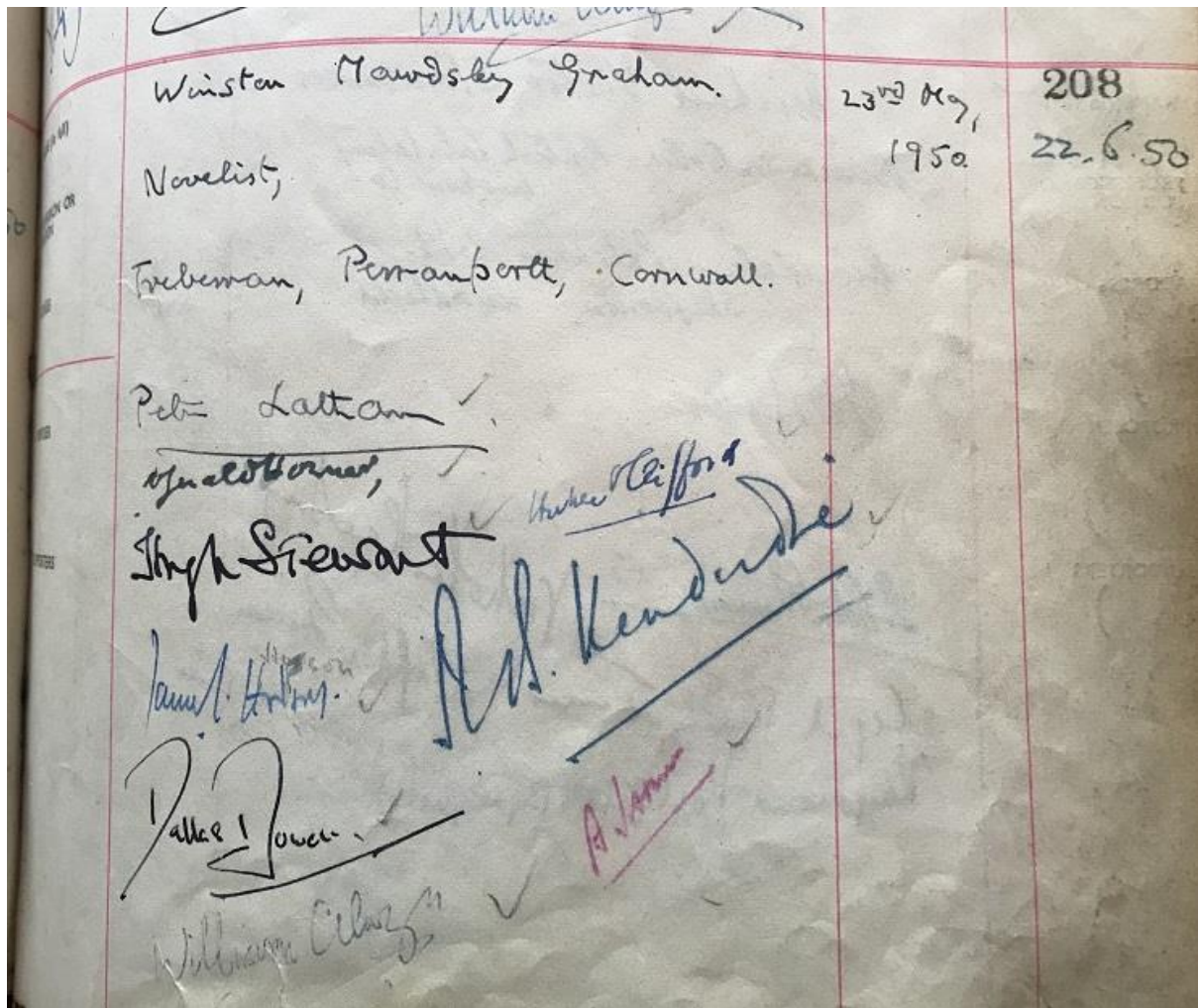
Peter (a musician and musicologist whom he described as "the jolliest and most lovable of men") and Angela (a fresco artist) until death took first him and then her.

When Latham suggested that WG should consider Club membership, the author wasn't keen. Because he'd always been "so much a loner, club life did not appeal at all" and his first taste of it tended to confirm that view. After dining next to eminent zoologist Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell and opposite H. G. Wells, neither of whom "were exactly apostles of lightness and joy", WG "pleaded the excuse that (he) lived in Cornwall and wasn't really the clubbable type" and so the matter languished.

But in the five years following, life for WG changed a great deal (see pp. 84-91), so when in 1950 another friend, Hugh Stewart, again suggested he should join the Savile, WG, "having seen so much more of London in the interim," agreed to give the question more serious consideration. A lunch at the Club with Stewart and Latham led to his "name (going) down in the book" (see next page) and on 22 June his membership was confirmed. "Within a year," he wrote, "I began to feel that, in addition to Cornwall, I had another home."⁵

In 1993, Savilian Garrett Anderson published an entertaining and informative history of the Club called "*Hang your Halo in the Hall!*" WG not only wrote clearly detailed and extensive reminiscences to assist his fellow author, but also read most of the book in typescript, made "many valuable suggestions" and penned the book's foreword. Anderson comments:

It was fortunate for the Club that Hugh Stewart and Peter Latham persuaded Winston Graham to overcome his diffidence and throw in his lot with the Sodality at Brook Street in 1950, for this "unclubbable man" has been a pillar of the Savile ever since. Apart from his ability to dispel and longueurs in the Sand-pit [a Club meeting room] or at the long table he has served for some years on the committee, is an ex-trustee⁶ and, perhaps above all, was one of the triumvirate who transformed the fortunes of the Club in 1976 by "auditioning" Peter Aldersley for the part of secretary,⁷ one of the few of his creative inspirations he is prepared to boast about.⁸



Above is the page of the Savile Candidate's book on which, on 23 May 1950, Peter Latham put forward WG as a prospective member. The eight supporting signatories are:

[possibly] The Revd Jerald Howard

Hugh Stewart (1910-2011), a film editor and producer

Hubert Clifford (1904-1959), an Australian-born British composer and conductor and latterly the BBC's Head of Light Music

James L. Hodson (1891-1956), novelist, playwright, diarist, journalist

Captain Richard (Dick) Kenderdine R. N. (1893-1960)

Dallas Bower (1907-1999), film and television director and producer

[possibly] A James

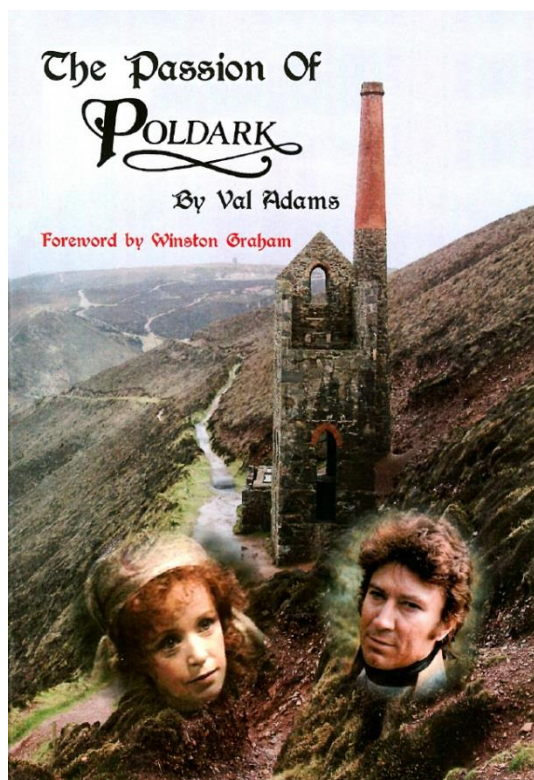
William Alwyn (1905-1985), composer, conductor and music teacher⁹

As with previous examples cited here, some of the WG-penned material found in Anderson's book resurfaces in *Memoirs*.

19. THE PASSION OF POLDARK by Val Adams

Publisher: SMADA Publishing, 2nd edition, 2013

Pages: vii + 122



Not Cornish-born, but "Cornish in (her) heart and soul", Val Adams loved *Poldark* so much that in 1987, with WG's blessing, she founded the Poldark Appreciation Society. Then as the millennium turned she wrote and privately published *The Passion Of Poldark* (SMADA, 2000) a 180-page celebration of the two BBC series (though not the HTV afterthought), actors, locations, her Society and more.

Though she didn't presume to ask WG to write a foreword for her book, after he'd read it he told her that in years to come she should produce a revised second edition including a foreword

that he would be pleased to contribute – and so, eventually, it came to pass. Note that, added foreword aside, the two books are substantially different. The 129-page 2013 edition contains "much updated material" including "many previously unseen photographs" (indicating, given its pagination, the exclusion of previous content also). WG's posthumous remarks are typically warm and sincere. They conclude:

When Val Adams founded the Poldark Appreciation Society in 1989 [sic] she provided a focus of interest for enthusiastic viewers and readers all over the world.

Without her they could not have coalesced and met together as they do; it is good that she has a book published telling how it all came about.

* * * * *

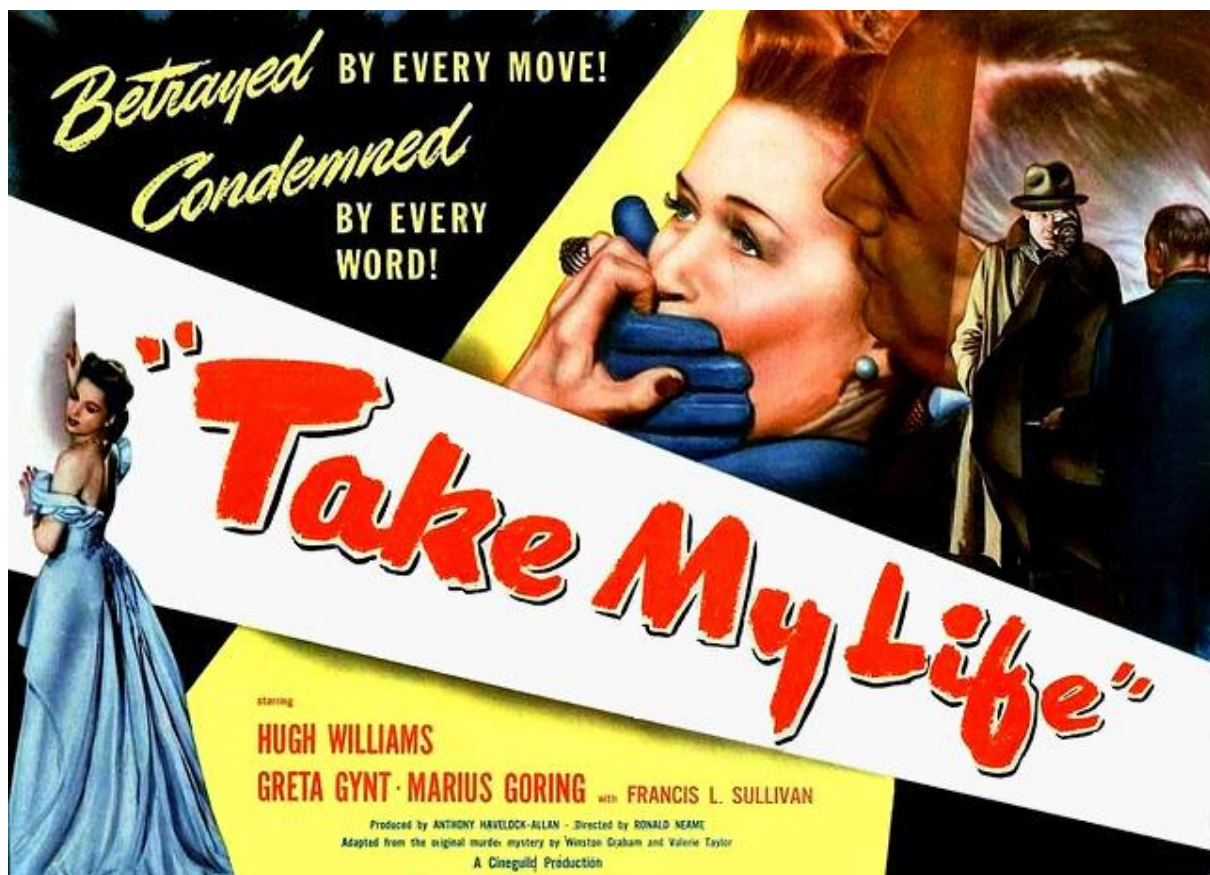
(5) cinema and television



(i) cinema

WG wrote five screenplays – three from his own novels (one produced, two not), one from an original idea by Valerie Taylor, and one other. In all, five of his books were filmed and one screenplay (*Take My Life*) was "novelised".

(1) *Take My Life* (1947)



Production: Cineguild / J. Arthur Rank Organisation

Director: Ronald Neame

Author credit: Adapted from an original screen story by Winston Graham and Valerie Taylor (with) additional dialogue by Winston Graham and Margaret Kennedy

Running time: 76 minutes

When, after the war, WG began to establish himself through his work, it was probably inevitable that the film industry – always on the look-out for new talent – would take him up. But his entree proved to be not one of his

novels, or an agent's recommendation, but actress Valerie Taylor (see pp. 86-90). She encouraged him to write a screenplay, which he did, and, once it was done, Miss Taylor's efforts to place it had important consequences for his career. First of all, he became a client of Christopher Mann Ltd, who would remain his film business agents for many years to come. Once Mann had sold the property to the Rank Organisation, Rank contacted the writer, inviting him to London to "consult on the making of *Take My Life* and other possible films."¹ With *Demelza* not quite finished, WG declined. They offered him, in response, £80 a week,² a free flat in Hallam Street, a secretary and chauffeur-driven Rolls, which he accepted.

In April 1946, he took his wife Jean to London, leaving his two young children at home in the care of their grandmothers and a nursemaid called Christine. "Reliable and intelligent", her name is of interest only because her idiosyncratic personality helped shape, by and by, that of the disturbed Marnie Elmer. Only later did WG come to appreciate "the risk taken in putting one's beloved child into the care of a comparative stranger." "A few years later," he reports, "she committed suicide."³

After a unproductive two weeks spent doctoring a Frank Tilsley script called *Pleasure Beach*, WG began the development of *Take My Life*. Co-author Miss Taylor was otherwise engaged (*Cymbeline*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Macbeth* at Stratford), so he was on his own.

Philippa Shelley, the film's heroine, was originally a concert pianist, but with recent hit *Brief Encounter* so heavily scored with Rachmaninoff, it was felt that music of a different kind was needed. So leading lady Greta Gynt came to play an opera singer turned sleuth, opposite Hugh Williams as her husband, under the direction of Ronald Neame. WG, remaining in London, "saw a lot of the filming from the studio floor" but also used his spare time productively to transmute script into novel (also *Take My Life*) such that, when the film came to be released, Ward, Lock would have a book to sell on the back of it. *Take My Life* duly premiered on 24 May 1947 at the Empire, Leicester Square and was well received:

Take My Life ... tries to say something about life, about people rather than corpses, and so contrives to be endearing. (Geoffrey Bell, *Spectator*)

Most intelligently written. (Alan Dent, News Chronicle)

That rare article, a credible thriller. At once unpretentious and brilliant. (*Manchester Guardian*)



Take My Life (1947): set design drawing

The dialogue must have been a pleasure for the actors to speak.
(Catherine de la Roche on the BBC)

What a good film this is! How I enjoyed it! (Helen Fletcher,
Sunday Graphic)

*Seldom has such a theme been more intelligently treated. The
dialogue is unusually literate and worth listening to.* (Punch)

What suspense! (Jympson Harman, *Evening News*)

References above to "writing" and "dialogue" must have pleased WG particularly – although one American critic seemed to divine that he and Miss

Taylor were screenwriting novices (*Take My Life* was also Neame's first director credit):

Winston Graham and Valerie Taylor have concocted a knotty enough series of circumstances to keep their screen play about a man who is falsely charged with murder bubbling with excitement. But they did not write with the camera in mind, and since Director Ronald Neame apparently was not able to break through the static barriers set up by the script, "Take My Life" slowly succumbs to inertia. (*New York Times*)



Take My Life: Marius Goring as Sidney Fleming

Through 1947, WG worked "intermittently on one film and another" then scripted a film of his 1945 novel *The Forgotten Story*, Gainsborough Pictures having bought the rights to that book and *The Merciless Ladies* the year before. Talks to put the film into production were at an advanced stage, when, in October 1949, Gainsborough Pictures went into liquidation and the project foundered.

By then, WG had long been back in Cornwall, having become disenchanted with his film industry role of "writing something to order" ... "bits of boiled down action and dialogue" ... then hearing it "discussed, and most often pulled to pieces".⁴ If you take at face value his words reproduced on page 15 – *I just wanted to be a novelist* – it's hardly surprising that studio hack work would not long sustain him. Though scriptwriting may be an honourable calling, its end product is not so much a work of art as a means to an end, which may or may not be a work of art, but is in any case always the result of the concerted efforts of many people, of whom the scriptwriter is but one, and generally a peripheral one. Filmmaking is first and last a collaborative enterprise; the novelist, in contrast, works alone. No master, no one (except, perhaps, an editor) to answer to, he shapes his own destiny and survives (or not) on the strength of his own character and abilities. If he's lucky. Scriptwriters (unless in their off hours) don't write books, they reduce them, distil them, mine them for their marrow, which, once extracted, may or may not retain some semblance of integrity and coherence. WG came to understand this. In December 1963 he wrote to Alfred Hitchcock:

*I feel when a film is made the book has to be unpicked almost to the original idea and then rebuilt in the new medium, maybe using a lot of the book material but only if it contributes in the best way to the re-telling.*⁵

In 1973, when discussing *Take My Life* with Gloria Newton, he said:

*When I took a look at the finished product I didn't recognise it. Now when I sell ... screen rights I just hand over the book and leave it to the company. Does it hurt? Sometimes, yes. Especially when they destroy my characters. Only one [\[Carnival of Crime – see page 321\]](#) was so mangled that I refused to have my name associated with it. It was just bare bones, all the characters gone.*⁶

As a would-be scriptwriter, WG – sober, studious, methodical, meticulous – was about as far from the hard-drinking, fast-living Raymond Chandler / Scott Fitzgerald stereotype as one could imagine. Which doesn't mean he couldn't do it, or wasn't cut out for it, but rather that it would be unlikely

to satisfy – would, indeed, frustrate – his innermost desire: to be a novelist. He wanted to write, yes, but also wanted something more substantive than flickering images on a screen to show for his diligent application; something, also, that, for better or worse, was all his own.

(2) *Night Without Stars* (1951)



Production: Europa Film / J. Arthur Rank Organisation

Director: Anthony Pelissier

Screenplay by Winston Graham, from his novel

Running time: 82 minutes

Though four more of his novels would eventually be dramatised by others, *Night Without Stars* was the second and last WG-penned screenplay to make it into production. By his own estimation, he was chosen as writer thanks only to an "inflated"⁷ reputation. Scripted and produced in 1950 and released on 4 April 1951, the resultant film, it is fair to say, was less well received than 1947's *Take My Life*. Here's what *New York Times* critic Bosley Crowther told his readers:

It is not that the story is so potent or the drama so breathlessly intense. Winston Graham's little plot is only average and the telling breaks down toward the end. But there's something

about the casual manner in which the picture initially unfolds that captivates moderate interest and excites a favorable respect. And then, as the romance develops ... and the force of Mr. Farrar [as Giles, below] emerges, the attraction gains stature and strength.



A few other opinions:

(An) adequate mystery (Leonard Maltin)

(An) enjoyable romantic mystery (Britmovie)

Predictable and dull (TV Guide)

And, from *Memoirs*, an even more scathing assessment from the author himself:

... after I had gone [abroad] Tony Pelissier ... decided he didn't like my screenplay and [rewrote] it as he thought best ... The whole film ... turned out a disaster.⁸

Indeed, it hasn't aged well. The one good thing to come out of the *Night Without Stars* debacle was the spiking of WG's "inflated" reputation, precipitating a return full-time to the thing he did best: writing novels.

(3) *Fortune is a Woman* (1957)



Production: Individual Pictures / John Harvel Productions

Director: Sidney Gilliat

Screenplay: Sidney Gilliat, Frank Launder and Val Valentine from Winston Graham's novel

Running time: 95 minutes

The posters are French (as *Manor of Mystery*) and German (as *Hanging by a Thread*)

And, though he no longer looked or was asked to script them, he still wrote books that others wished to film. 1952's *Fortune is a Woman* went into production at Shepperton Studios in 1956, with Jack Hawkins and Arlene Dahl playing the lead roles under the direction of Sidney Gilliat, who also

co-wrote the screenplay. *Fortune is a Woman* was released in the UK on 13 March 1957 and in the US the following year under the title *She Played with Fire*.

How do book and film compare? As is so often the way – look no further than *Marnie* for another example, and there will be hundreds more – cinema takes a nuanced, cohesive, carefully worked out novel and turns it into a trite, dumbed down, anaemic shadow of its former self. In this case, key characters – Dr. Darnley, Victor Moreton, Henry Dane – are dispensed with wholesale, as are Oliver and Sarah's back-stories. Clive Fisher is given so little screen presence that his production at film's end as villain of the piece is decidedly *deus ex machina*. Yes, we are faithfully served up the book's central fraud, but precious little else – like a Sunday lunch of roast beef and *none* of the trimmings: deficient, disappointing, unsatisfactory.

Fortune is a Woman was the third film (after *Take My Life* and *Night Without Stars*) to be based on a WG story. The author claimed in *Memoirs* that the unsympathetic rewriting of his *Night Without Stars* script during his absence (see page 316) finished him with the film industry – but did it? In the 10 December 1977 issue of *Woman* he wrote:

Six films have been made ... from my books ... and I have been variously involved in the production of them

which is not quite the same thing. Certainly the only *Fortune* screen credit he receives is as writer of the source novel – the named screenwriters are Sidney Gilliat (who also directed), Frank Launder and Val Valentine. But in 1948 WG wrote a screen adaptation of his 1944 novel *The Merciless Ladies* which opens with the camera looking out through the windscreen of a car driving through rain – which is just how *Fortune is a Woman* starts too. Coincidence? Perhaps. Or maybe WG mentioned his idea to *Fortune's* scriptwriters, who elected to use it – or maybe he was involved in the writing, albeit uncredited, along with the other three. There are a couple of tenuous reasons for believing this might be so: first, a photo published in *Memoirs* of WG with the film's male lead Jack Hawkins and director Sidney Gilliat shows (see next page) the three standing together with, in WG's hands, what appears to be a script. If he had no personal involvement, why so? Second, a formally-attired WG attended the film's UK

premiere at the Odeon, Leicester Square on 13 March 1957 (second image below): again, if he made no contribution (beyond writing the source novel) to the film's production, why so? After all, even though he exchanged correspondence with Hitchcock concerning the screen development of *Marnie*, he was not invited to that film's premiere – indeed, was eventually obliged to see it along with his son as a paying customer.⁹



Reviews

Fortune is a Woman (1957) ... is another stab at a Hitchcockian thriller, based on a novel by Winston Graham, whose *Marnie* would be filmed by the Master in 1964. Beginning with another of Gilliat's stunning dream sequences (a ticking metronome transforms into a windscreen-wiper as we roar down a country lane at night ...) the film quickly declines into torpor due to mis-casting (the excellent Jack Hawkins is no Cary Grant) and too much ordinary stuff between the highlights ... As always with Gilliat and Launder, amusing cameos boost the entertainment value and prevent the thing from completely flagging. (David Cairns, 26 August 2008)¹⁰



Columbia Pictures made some fine thrillers in the UK in the 1950s with Hollywood stars at the helm – Faith Domergue in Spin A Dark Web, Victor Mature in The Long Haul and, here, Arlene Dahl in ... Fortune is a Woman. Ms Dahl [above, with WG] is very good in her usual "Is she or isn't she a femme fatale" mode. (Gregory Meshman)¹¹

(4) *Sócio de Alcova* (1962) / *Carnival of Crime* (1964)



Production: Herbert Richers / Twin Films Productions

Director: George Cahan

Screenplay: Bill Barret from Winston Graham's novel

Running time: 82 and 90-minute versions circulate

The Sleeping Partner is the source novel of *Sócio de Alcova* (*The Bedroom Partner*), a 1962 film for which no one who's seen it has a good word. Shot on location in Brasilia (then still under construction) and Rio by an American director whose four leads were French (Jean-Pierre Aumont), American (Alix Talton), Brazilian (Tônia Carrero) and Argentinian (Luis Dávila), it seems to have been a multinational casualty of good intentions not realised. The film was released in South America in June 1962 as *Sócio de Alcova* (also shown subsequently as *Carnaval del Crimen*) and in the US in June 1964 as *Carnival of Crime*.

Carnival of Crime is definitely the strangest WG screen adaptation for several reasons. The title of his source novel was a subtle one, for Lynn was her husband's sleeping partner in both his bed and his firm; when she disappeared he came to suspect she was the sleeping partner of some other man too; she was also, unknown to him, "sleeping" under the coals. But the two titles used for this film – *The Bedroom Partner* and *Carnival of*

Crime – manage to jettison all of that subtlety while making only empty promises in return. For though the first suggests a steamy excursion into *Emanuelle* territory and the second a *Bonnie and Clyde*-style hoods-on-the-rampage bloodfest, and though the film's subject matter is indeed promiscuity, philandering, betrayal and murder, the end result is surprisingly, disappointingly, almost defiantly tame. Though we are, in its last flashback, shown Lynn Voray's demise, a less brutal, shocking or convincing "murder" has seldom been put on screen.

This delicate sensibility may have been influenced by the filmmakers' primary intention, which seems to have been to showcase the nascent Brasilia as a major project in the process of glorious realisation and therefore, by association, Brazil as a progressive and forward-thinking country. The closing line of dialogue pulls no punches on that score, and to have attempted delivery of that message in a gritty, X-rated, *film noir* package would have been to exclude half its target audience. The natural beauty of Rio's setting and the excitement of its carnival are also hinted at, albeit artlessly and perfunctorily. One senses a minuscule budget.

It would be interesting to know how much WG was paid for the right to adapt his book, since, had not four of his original character names (Mike, Lynn, Ray and Margot) been retained, the film's reworked and relocated plot could surely have been passed off as original with no secondary attribution considered necessary. It doesn't help that leading man Mike speaks throughout *wiz a szick Fransch accante* (though hardly his fault, since the actor is indeed French). The wacky terrorist subplot introduced early on in the 90-minute cut of the film is omitted from the 82-minute version and good riddance. "John Curtis", a key character in WG's original plot, is written out of the screen adaptation, but the biggest change is in Lynn Granville / Voray's nature.

When Jack Pulman was tasked to adapt WG's 1945 novel *Ross Poldark* into the first four episodes of *Poldark* (BBC, 1975), the scriptwriter famously upset the author by recasting Demelza's character – the book's young innocent became the serial's knowing little minx, who offers to "take 'em off for a shilling" – and so here. Lynn Granville in WG's book has an affair with one man and is murdered by him when his attempt to throw her over escalates into a fight. But under the pen of screenwriter Bill Barret Lynn

becomes, in the words of the film's trailer, "the world's most amoral woman, searching for love from any man ... every man ... until the 'Carnival of Crime' reveals her body!" "Her life was filled with men," it insists. "Which of them would want to put an end to her insatiable demands?"



Carnival of Crime: Jean-Pierre Aumont as Mike

Not surprisingly, the film seems to have made little impact either upon its release (in 1962 in South America and 1964 in the USA) or subsequently. In *Memoirs*, WG dismisses it as "an even damper squib" than *Night Without Stars*, but, since it "was taken wholly out of my hands ... I feel no responsibility for it."¹³ "Fortunately," he observed in 1967, "it has never been shown in England."¹⁴ Even if it had, he would have been justified in laughing all the way to the bank.

* * * * *

(5) *Marnie* (1964)



Production: Universal Pictures

Director: Alfred Hitchcock

Screenplay: Jay Presson Allen
from WG's novel

Running time: 130 minutes

(The poster is Italian)

Having purchased the rights to *Marnie* early in 1961, Hitchcock turned the book over for development first to *Psycho* screenwriter Joseph Stefano and then to *The Birds* screenwriter Evan Hunter (aka Ed McBain), neither of whom was able to catch in words the essence of the director's vision. In mid-May 1963, after reading a play called *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* from Muriel Spark's novel of the same name, Hitchcock was impressed enough to contact the writer, 41-year-old Texan Jay Presson Allen. He offered her the *Marnie* brief; she accepted and within three months had presented him with a first draft of the screenplay that would eventually form the basis of his film.

In December 1963, the director and WG exchanged correspondence concerning Allen's script: Hitchcock detailed a number of changes from the novel; WG replied: "I'm not frightfully fussy about keeping to the letter of the book."^{15, 16}

Opening in the UK on 8 July 1964, *Marnie* received a lukewarm reception:

Hitchcock without Thrills ... somewhat monotonous ... an experiment, worth making, perhaps, but certainly not worth repeating: not, at least, unless Hitchcock realizes [his] fallacy ... of thinking the springs of behaviour more interesting than the behaviour itself. (*Daily Telegraph*)



Marnie: Tippi Hedren in the title role and Sean Connery as Mark

... *over-expository and under-inspired* ... (*Sunday Telegraph*)

A strong suspicion arises that Mr. Hitchcock is taking himself too seriously ... When a director decides he's so gifted that all he needs is himself, he'd better watch out. (*New York Times*)

Film Review's 1964 critical retrospective concluded that *Marnie* "seemed to be well below the best Hitchcock standard. It is perhaps significant that the further Hitchcock gets away from his true *métier*, the thriller, the less impressive he is."

Neither WG nor his son liked the film when they saw it;¹⁷ nor did WG warm to it in later years, as other have done – indeed, in 1995 he told Victoria Hinton:

*I didn't like the film at all; the story was distorted and a lot of subtler points were lost. When it came out, the critics disliked it, but now they look on it as one of the most important of Hitchcock's canon. God knows why.*¹⁸

Though opinions concerning the merits of the film remain divided, it's probably true to say that *Marnie* proved of considerably more help to WG's career and reputation than it did to Alfred Hitchcock's.

(6) *The Walking Stick* (1970)



Production: Jerry Gershwin-Elliott Kastner / MGM / Winkast Film Productions

Director: Eric Till

Screenplay: George Bluestone (screenplay), WG (novel)

Running time: 96 minutes

The posters on the previous page are Danish (as *Step by Step*) and Polish (as *Girl with a Cane*)

In 1961, by moving quickly to secure the screen rights to *Marnie*, Hitchcock avoided an expensive bidding war, and by transacting business through a third party, he guarded against escalation of the asking price by the revelation of his personal interest. But, with *The Walking Stick*, all that changed. Presumably WG's agents saw it as their job to make the Hollywood studios aware of the novel's forthcoming publication. In any case, interest was quickly aroused and competition to secure the rights led to their eventual sale to MGM, before the book was published, for "over £80,000."¹⁹ Such competition, WG noted drily, "is to the author's great advantage."²⁰ The film, starring David Hemmings and Samantha Eggar under the direction of Eric Till, was released on 5 June 1970.

Reviews

"Who wants a girl with a withered leg? Imagine in bed: one good leg, and the other just hanging there like the tail of a lizard." ... Deborah ... the artistic daughter in a family of London doctors ... is really an easy mark for the handsome young painter ... who woos and wins her and then begins the series of betrayals that constitute the dramatic substance of Eric Till's "The Walking Stick," an uneven movie of unspectacular virtues – which, by grace of careful if quite conventional plotting improves as it goes along ...

"The Walking Stick" begins as a women's picture, becomes crime melodrama, and ends as a much superior kind of women's picture. By its changes it grows slightly richer and tougher, and thus shares with its heroine a few of the stoic satisfactions (for example, development through adversity) that are the rewards of traditional fiction ... Samantha Eggar gives a beautifully restrained and evocative performance. Utterly unsensual, vulnerable, ultimately strong, she creates a character that is quite simply more interesting and cohesive than I am used to seeing in movies (even in better movies than this one). In this she is helped both by the visual concentration

of Mr. Till's direction, and by the screenplay, which makes of Deborah a genuine point-of-view character. But almost as a corollary, David Hemmings has too little to do as Leigh to create a viable characterization. Immensely attractive at the beginning, he becomes indistinct toward the middle, and positively murky by the end – when he has grown younger, vaguer, and little more than the enabling influence in one woman's moral self-determination. (*New York Times*)



The Walking Stick: Hemmings and Eggar as Leigh and Deborah

Although ... flawed ... The Walking Stick is valuable as a showcase for two of the brighter talents to emerge in the British cinema of the 1960s ... While it tries hard to be an understated meditation on love, desire, evil, and other aspects of humanity, it's a little afraid to go as far as it needs to in this direction. Instead, it falls back on some melodramatic plotting, which undercuts its effectiveness as observational drama. (Craig Butler)²¹

Rather too stolidly directed by Till, with meticulous fidelity to Winston Graham's novel, it is reminiscent enough of *Marnie* (also from a novel by Graham) – here, rather than the colour red, the heroine's problem is a claustrophobic aftermath of her time in an iron lung – to make one wonder whether Hitchcock could have screwed excitement out of the situation as well as sympathetic character studies. (*Time Out*)

(7) Options and Rights

We've already noted that options to film *The Merciless Ladies* and *The Forgotten Story* were sold to Gainsborough Pictures in 1946. The RIC archive holds a 153-page, WG-penned *Merciless Ladies* script dated 19 May 1948, though no production resulted. WG also scripted *The Forgotten Story* with production green-lighted when Gainsborough's sudden closure in 1949 wrecked all plans. *After the Act* (1965) provoked interest from filmmakers in the US and France – a script called *Horoscope* by J. A. Ross set the story in New York – but neither was able to transfer it to the screen. In 1970, Paramount bought the rights to *Angell, Pearl & Little God*. "At great expense, [they] got three scripts, all equally lousy, so the film was never made ... One ... was sent to Marlon Brando, with the offer of a million dollars [to] play Angell. He did not bother to reply."²²

Here's how WG's *Merciless Ladies* script begins:

The main titles of this film appear and are blurred by spots of rain, which begin to fall on the screen as on glass. Then two motor-car screen wipers swing across the dripping letters, wiping them away and leaving in their place the next set of titles. As the last set of titles go we hear the hum of a car above the introductory music and FADE IN TO:

THE FRONT OF A CAR driving quickly along a suburban road in the rain. It is late afternoon. There is one man in the car. He is in a mackintosh and trilby hat. We do not see his face for the CAMERA is behind him, looking out through the streaming glass. We see the car turn a corner, move through traffic, accelerate towards the open road ahead.

THE NARRATOR'S VOICE:

Go and see Holly ... Reason ... there's no reason in it. Only instinct and the need to see her again. She is at the centre of it all. It began with her and will end with her ... End? ... Yes it will end now ... Years ago ... when she was nothing. And Paul ... an uncouth boy. That was the beginning. That week at the Lynns'

...

(8) Other

The RIC archive holds three other Graham scripts or treatments:

(i) *Top Secret – Next of Kin*

A 69-page screenplay seemingly written with actor William Franklyn in mind to play the lead role of Peter Dallas. The story opens in a graveyard in the outskirts of the South American city of San Viviano, at Dallas's funeral. Cut then to Buenos Aires and the office of Garetta, who, suspicious at news of his friend's untimely death, decides to travel to Encantado to investigate. The tale of espionage and intrigue that develops includes all the staples of the genre – the Communist agent *femme fatale*, the corrupt chief of police, the freedom fighting idealist (in this case, blind, female and attractive), suspect French and Mexican diplomats and gunplay to close. The plot turns on an idea previously used in 1941's *Night Journey*, proving if nothing else that good writers waste nothing.

The date of Dallas's supposed demise (24 June 1961) and the author's address on the script's front page – post-Perranporth, pre-Abbotswood – both indicate a writing date of late 1961.



William Franklyn (1925-2006)

(ii) *Find the Lady*

A film scenario comprising 35 scenes in 37 pages. The story, set in London's fashionable West End, concerns a complicated jewellery hustle involving impersonation, con and counter-con. Undated.

(iii) *The Gaming House*

An undated 75-page "draft treatment of an original story by Winston Graham, based on an idea by Kenneth Harper." Unfortunately, the story – if indeed it was ever written down – is not in the RIC archive, but this long and detailed treatment tells it plainly enough.

Set in the 1820s, it centres on the life of Oliver Smith, a man of humble birth with a gift for advocacy. After unsuccessfully defending his poacher brother Charles, who is hanged, Oliver emigrates with acquaintance William Cobbett to the USA. Both rise in the world, Oliver eventually coming to run his own law firm. Meanwhile, back in England, dissolute 29-year-old Lord Stanbury (whose game Charles had poached) gradually fritters away his family's wealth and estate in the gaming house built in his grounds.

Oliver and Cobbett return home. After freeing his father from debtor's prison, Oliver buys up Stanbury's promissory notes and land and tells the locals that the land lately enclosed by Stanbury will soon be theirs again. But, worse for drink, they reclaim it too soon, resulting in a pitched battle with Stanbury's gamekeepers during which the onlooking Earl is shot and killed. Longlands, his home, must be sold to meet his debts. Though he has no other use for it, Oliver buys the property because two parliamentary seats come with it. These in due course are taken by Oliver and Cobbett.

Stanbury's sister Camilla, a feisty free-thinker, what today would be called a feminist, is integral to the flow of the story, and its end.

* * * * *

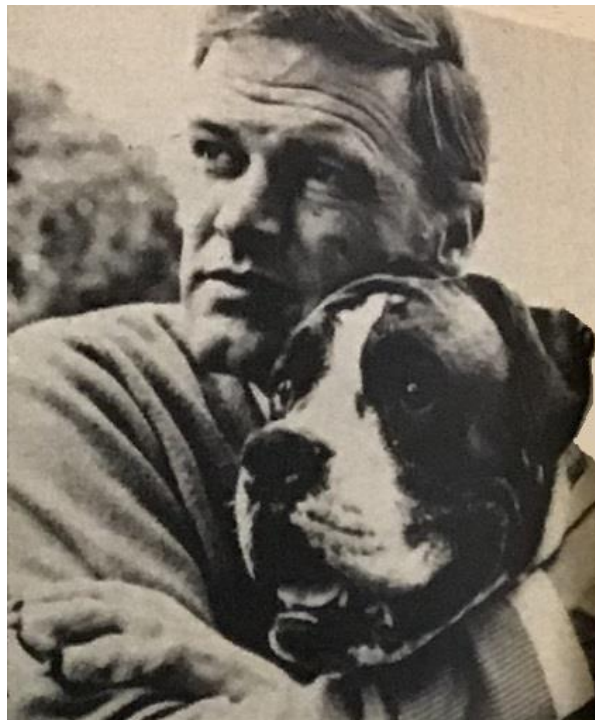
(ii) television

By the mid-1960s, four WG novels – *Night Without Stars*, *Fortune is a Woman*, *The Sleeping Partner* and *Marnie* – had been made into feature films, with a fifth – *Take My Life* – reworked from a produced film script co-written by WG and actress Valerie Taylor. In addition, two books – *The Little Walls* and *Take My Life* – had been dramatised for radio in 1956 and 1964 respectively with short story *The Cornish Farm* read on air in 1947; but none of his work to this point had been produced for television. The screen debut of *Poldark* was still a decade away with HTV's *The Forgotten Story* another eight years beyond that. But, in 1967, ITV's Summer Playhouse season opened on Monday 3 July with *The Sleeping Partner* and WG's small screen duck was broken. Scripted from his 1956 novel by Patricia Highsmith and Anthony Steven and directed by John Jacobs for Anglia Television (then franchise holder for the east of England), the production ran for ninety minutes (including two advertising breaks) from 8:30 to 10 p.m. across the independent television network. Though 1967 was the first year in which some colour TV was seen in the UK, this programme was recorded and broadcast in black and white.

(1) *The Sleeping Partner* (1967)

The playwright faces a number of challenges the novelist does not: *War and Peace* runs to more than a thousand pages; *Moby Dick* to 135 chapters plus an Epilogue – but a book, of course, may be read over weeks or months; the dramatist's tale, taken at one sitting, must be succinct. A novelist can conjure up a cast of thousands from this world and, should he wish, others; the size of the playwright's cast is limited by practical constraints of cost and staging. The novelist can visit innumerable places, inside, outside, on land, at sea, in the air, either real or imagined; can, in short, go anywhere he chooses in whatever timeframe he pleases; the playwright enjoys no such untrammelled freedom. Thus, when a novel is adapted for the stage, it is hardly surprising that radical changes are frequently and necessarily made to setting, cast and plot. In the case of *The Sleeping Partner*, the novel features forty-five characters with speaking parts; the teleplay slashes this to thirteen, of whom only twelve are seen. The novel's action moves between the Granvilles' home, Mike's works, Glyndebourne, Harwell, Quaglino's nightclub, an empty theatre, the

Curtises' cottage, a Welsh aerodrome, a remote Brecon hut, occupied and vacant London flats, solicitors' offices, a gentleman's club and a hotel overlooking Hyde Park with car journeys and a rooftop chase thrown in for good measure; the play, taking advantage of the relative freedoms offered by a studio rather than theatre setting and being recorded rather than performed live, uses a dozen sets with a few minutes of introductory location footage tacked on to establish Mike's status as a prosperous (own factory, top-of-the-range sports car, grand country house) electrical engineer. The writers remain much more faithful to the novel than was the case with its filmed version (see pp. 317-20): thus most character names and occupations are retained, so too (though uncredited) Kent the bull terrier – albeit metamorphosed here into a boxer:



Keith Michell ("Mike") with "Kent"

"Bill Read" is written out, the whole industrial relations thread of the story is jettisoned and the manufacture of a scintillometer is (perhaps no surprise), referenced minimally. Lynn's novel-friend "Hazel Boylon" and landlady "Miss Lord" are combined into the play's "Pamela Ford". Inspector Baker makes a much earlier entrance and is given a bigger role – conversely, that of John Curtis is severely reduced; an important character in the novel, with much of interest to say and a vital, self-sacrificing role to play, he becomes on screen a mere cipher. The lack of characterisation and

of illuminating back-stories, imposed by the overriding imperative to prune and pare, is dismaying. Yes, WG's basic plot is presented, but in stark, bare bones fashion. Thus Mike and Stella's life-changing journey back from Wales is reduced to a brief intimate moment (below) in a fog-shrouded car. Ray French is intent on marrying Margot in both novel and play – but only in the book do we learn the real reason why: because a wife can't testify against her husband and, though she doesn't realise it, she knows enough about Ray's last meeting with Lynn to tie him to her death. In the novel, Mike engages in a race against time to stop the wedding; in the play that dramatic element goes unexploited. When in the penultimate scene the two men come to blows, their fight is unconvincing. (Novel-Ray was an ex-Commando; in the play his "hobby" is karate.)



Keith Michell as Mike and Barbara Shelley as Stella

American Patricia Highsmith (1921-1995) published her twelfth novel, *Those Who Walk Away*, in 1967 (her first in 1950 was *Strangers on a Train*; her fourth in 1955 *The Talented Mr. Ripley*) so it comes as something of a surprise to find her name among the writing credits. But, though born in Fort Worth, Texas, Highsmith led a peripatetic life and from November 1963 to June 1967 lived in the eastern English county of Suffolk. In a letter

to her friend Peggy Lewis dated 29 July 1964 she wrote: "Would love to learn to write for TV." Ten months later she was commissioned by the BBC to write a play subsequently broadcast as *The Cellar* on 22 September 1965 as part of their *Wednesday Thriller* series. Having read the script, her biographer Andrew Wilson declared: "it's obvious that dialogue was not Highsmith's forte."²³ This gives some clue concerning the division of labour between herself and cowriter Anthony Steven (1916-1990), though details are not known. After successfully bringing this project to screen, Steven wrote an adaptation of WG's 1955 prize-winning novel *The Little Walls*, which, though well-spoken of over the next three years,²⁴ was never produced.

When director John Jacobs (1924-2001) wrapped this production for Anglia Television in 1967, he wasn't finished with WG adaptations; fifteen years later he helmed HTV's six-part dramatisation of *The Forgotten Story* – see pp. 336-42 below.

(2) *Mord nach der Oper* (1969)

From 8.15 to 9.50 p.m. on 8 May 1969, German television channel WDF broadcast *Mord nach der Oper* (*Murder after the Opera*), a 91-minute adaptation by Helmut Pigge (who also produced) of WG's *Take My Life*. Michael Braun directed; the lead roles were taken by Monika Peitsch (Philippa Shelley), Johannes Grossmann (Nick Talbot), Paul Albert Krumm (Sidney Fleming) and Gitty Djamal (Margaret Rusman).

Monika Peitsch is said to have practised the arias from *La Traviata* and *Force of Destiny* for weeks in a Munich hotel, reportedly disturbing other guests' sleep. The on-screen singing was done by Mariza Alemao, a Mexican diva from Salzburg's State Theatre, but Peitsch still had to "perform" (particularly lip-sync) persuasively enough to convince the viewer, which she does. Pigge chalked up fifty-two teleplay credits over a screenwriting career spanning thirty-three years (to 1990).

A review from 2011 comments favourably on the music of Bert Grund and the "exterior shots, filmed in the British Isles, that give the film a particularly beautiful thriller feel"; it concludes: "the ninety-one minutes go by pretty quickly and leave a positive impression."²⁵

(3) *Poldark* (1975-7, 1996, 2015-19) – see pp. 398-444

(4) *The Forgotten Story* (1983)

In 1982, some 33 years after the collapse of plans to film *The Forgotten Story* (see page 329), independent television company HTV shot a six-part adaptation of the novel to bring it to screen at last. The serial was broadcast twice in the UK, from 5.30 to 6 p.m. on Sunday 9 January to Sunday 13 February 1983 with a repeat screening from 4.20 to 4.50 p.m. on Wednesday 27 June to Wednesday 1 August 1984.

Written by Arden Winch (*Colditz*, *Wings*, *Blood Money*) and directed by John Jacobs (also responsible for *The Sleeping Partner* – see pp. 332-5) the production starred Angharad Rees as Patricia, Jonathan Kent as Tom, Alexis Woutas as Anthony, Lila Kaye as Madge, Van Johnson as Perry and John Stratton as Joe. Rees, of course, was no stranger to WG aficionados, having previously played Demelza so memorably in the BBC's two seventies *Poldark* series.

Though it is not known to what extent WG was involved in the production of *The Forgotten Story*, he probably paid at least one visit to the set, as the following anecdote suggests:

When veteran Hollywood star Van Johnson was in the West of England last year making ... The Forgotten Story ... actor and ... author met for the first time. The impulsive, extrovert American put his arms round the publicity-shy English creator of the Poldark books and kissed him. "But you look so young," said Johnson. "I thought you were dead!" "A lot of people do," replied the author.²⁶

And how faithful was adaptation to source? We have already noted the practical constraints imposed on screenwriters by time and budget; in this instance, a third – target audience – pertains also:

(i) Screen time

Average episode length, exclusive of credits, is 23 minutes, giving screenwriter Winch a total of just two hours and eighteen minutes to put his

rendition across. The book – and it is not a long book – tells four stories: of Madge's black-hearted villainy, of Pat's and Anthony's coming of age and of *The Grey Cat's* fateful last voyage. The screen adaptation gives us most of Madge's tale, though with a dismayingly perfunctory wrap-up, Pat's is sketchily addressed and *The Grey Cat's*, due presumably to insurmountable production difficulties, is dispensed with altogether (the storm that besets the ship is recreated tolerably well but of wreck and rescue the viewer sees naught). Likewise, Anthony, voice of the novel, assumes on screen a more peripheral role, his contribution reduced for the most part to mere "Yes, Tom" / "No, Uncle" support; his character, despite reciprocated affection, intrigue, derring-do and shipwreck, "grows" not one iota. The book's *graffito* incident in which he resolutely defends Pat's honour is cut, so too his interactions with both Fanny (another down-written part) and the patrons of the Ship and Sailor. He delivers the novel but hefts in its adaptation little weight.

(ii) Production budget

The book opens with Pat meeting Anthony at Falmouth Station, after which the pair stroll together through the streets and alleyways, past the urchins and cabbage-stalks, the sailors and crooked bow windows, through the sights, sounds and smells of the turn-of-the-century seaport town, so introducing both Anthony and the reader to its briny cosmopolitan milieu. On screen, this journey is taken in a darkened coach, for the simple reason that it could then be filmed on a rudimentary set with a minimum number of actors rather than requiring location filming, expensive set dressing and many extras in period costume. The scriptwriter, we conclude, must tailor his work to fit his producers' budget.

But paper and ink are cheap and thus it is with blithe unconcern that WG uses his author's licence to take his readers to Falmouth police court, to the town cemetery to put flowers on a dead mother's grave and afterwards to Swanpool to feed the swans, to an itinerant drama troupe's tent-show on the Town Moor where Anthony hears augury concerning Joe, to the Ship and Sailor tavern where veiled aspersions concerning Madge and Perry fly, on a late night cross-country journey to Maenporth, on foot and by farmer's cart on the way there and via the cemetery on the way back, where Anthony is drawn, moth to flame, to a lamplit double exhumation,

on rowing boat excursions on and across the Fal, on a landau-ride out to the Norway Inn and back; of all this the TV viewer gets precious little (though a moonlit cemetery path is mocked up and the show tent becomes a theatre). The adaptation's action, rather, sticks in the main to Smoky Joe's café with brief excursions into a darkened coach (as previously mentioned), a boathouse, the deck and cabins of *The Grey Cat*, Tom's office and sister's home, the cemetery (for Joe's burial) and an unnamed Sawle inn bedroom to close. No more than a few seconds of film were shot on location in the entire series. In short, the book ranges free as its begetter's imagination; its adaptation sadly not.



Angharad Rees as Pat / Lila Kaye as Madge

(iii) Target audience

HTV's serialisation of *The Forgotten Story* was broadcast early on Sunday evenings, when viewers of every age down to the youngest might be watching – yet WG's tale is a grim one, featuring an eleven-year-old boy whose mother has just died and whose father doesn't want him, a pair of estranged newlyweds, one of whom is driven by unrequited love to assail the other, filial treachery and the cold-blooded depredations of a vile multi-murderess. It was inevitable, then, that the story's darker elements would be downplayed and characterisations softened accordingly. The adaptation sends Madge's character through an arc from domineering and shrewish to brazenly scheming (planning the metamorphosis of Smoky Joe's café into the Harbour Restaurant – Fine Food and Wines whilst its proprietor lies sick in bed upstairs) to outright murderess and Lila Kaye plays the part she's given commendably well – but only in the novel is Madge grotesque from the outset. Joan Sims would have been perfect for

the role, though to have brought WG's character to the screen as originally written would have been to offend Sunday teatime sensibilities too grievously.

Joe, too, is redeemed from the book's narrow, mercenary misanthrope to a sentimental soul, gruff but genial, who hopes to have found in Anthony the son he never had. By the end of the novel's fourth chapter, Anthony is ready to declare, on minimal supporting evidence, that "the old man's bark was worse than his bite" but, on screen, much of the serial's third episode is given over, in scenes not penned by WG, to uncle / nephew bonding (so setting up that episode's conclusion, in which Joe dies and Anthony weeps). Indeed, after an affecting two-hander in the café in which Joe teaches Anthony how to carve meat, a continuation up in Joe's room as he lies mortally ill in bed is arguably the most touching and memorable passage of the series:

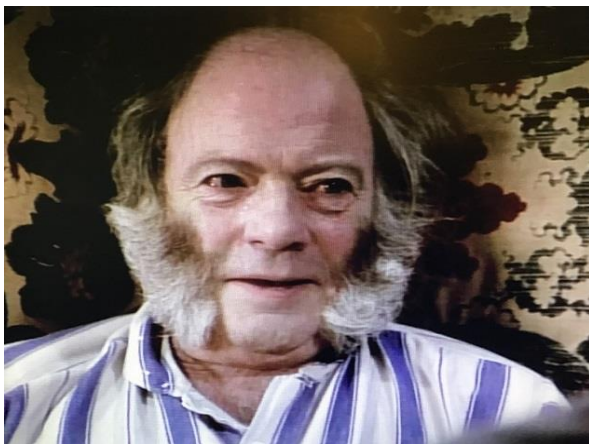
Joe: If you're with us long enough, there's a lot I'll teach you. Never had a son, you see. How to sail a boat, how to groom a horse, all the knots the sailors use, how to tell what the weather'll be by looking at the sky and the birds and the way the sea's running. And navigation. They make a holy mystery of navigation but if you can know the stars it's not that difficult. How to pick a joint of meat at the butcher's. You'll know that. You'll never get fobbed off with all that stuff they just want to be rid of. How to fire a rifle – see? Oh, I'll teach you about all the strange peoples of the world. The women who put great wooden discs in their lips so that they look like a walking stack of plates [chuckles] and the girls in Burma, they got rings round their necks so that they get longer and longer, like a giraffe [chuckles]. And the Chinese women who tie up their feet so that they're no bigger than a box of matches. And men with bones through their noses [chuckles] and them that has a dozen or more wives, and the ones who run around stark naked as the Lord made them because, poor heathens, they don't know no better. Maybe your own father's told you all this, eh?

Anthony: No, he was away most of the time, but my mother taught me quite a lot.

Ah, women. Look, no disrespect to your mother, but women don't know about these things. They've got their uses, I'm not denying that, but they don't know what's interesting and what isn't. The trouble ... [seized with pain]

Are you alright, Uncle Joe? Shall I go and get Aunt Madge?

No, no. She's a good woman and a good nurse but I can't stand all that praying. Her by my bed muttering prayers. I can't abide that.



John Stratton as Joe / Alexis Woutas as Anthony

In the book, letters from Anthony's father are kept from the boy as a result of Madge's closeness and Joe's reluctance to spend money on his schooling. In the adaptation, the reason is both simpler and more benign: because Joe wishes to become Anthony's surrogate father.

The fight in the café which in the book is vicious and ugly (knives are brandished, blood is spilt, an arm is broken and four men are rendered unconscious) becomes on screen a powder-puff *pas de deux* that, presented in slo-mo over a jaunty soundtrack with no hint on any side of threat or menace, lurches closer to comedy than confrontation. Tom removes Pat not through a window and so off the premises but merely through a door and into a storeroom, where his pent-up passion finds momentary release ("We are married, you know," he reminds both her and the viewers) with a kiss which, after prior reluctance, she appears to accept with muted pleasure.

Ned's proposition to Pat to go with him to Australia is followed up in the book by two kisses she accepts and then a third which she does not. The screen pair, wholly chaste and *not* married, don't even touch hands.

The novel finishes strongly. In marked contrast, the final quarter of an hour of the serial is feeble. We hear that Madge no longer recognises Pat and is "quite mad" – but see nothing of her. The fate of the ship and its crew is not mentioned. That Tom and Pat should reconcile was to be expected, but with these words by Tom?

Quite a long time ago I got worried about your father. His skin looked dry and he handled things so clumsily, as though he had no feeling in his fingertips. I thought perhaps he was taking some sort of drug, so one night ... I took away the remains of his supper and had it analysed. It contained traces of arsenic. I went straight to the police but the traces were so slight. You see, I wasn't certain of anything and there was nobody I could ask. I'd quarrelled with Joe and you and I, we'd hardly speak to each other. I tried to drop hints but, well, quite naturally, I suppose, you thought that I was just trying to frighten you so you'd come back to me. Then Joe died ...

He goes on to tell her that she's "the only woman that I'll ever love" which, of course, is enough to win her completely. But would Pat have been pleased to hear that Tom knew her father was being poisoned but did nothing to stop it? More likely, surely, that it would have turned her against him more resolutely than ever.

Tom and Pat's boathouse interlude is one of the novel's seminal scenes, through the course of which she passes, thoroughly "shaken up", "bruised and breathless", but not the victim of "conquest", from girlhood to womanhood – a transition noted and eloquently described ("her face was beautiful then rather than pretty in its strange suppressed wildness") by the keen-eyed Anthony. We are given to understand, in other words, that far from being traumatised or brutalised by this encounter, it has *quickened* her; has infused her with an irrepressible radiance which is the essence of beauty; has taken her to a new plane of comprehension from which there will be no going back. Her principal complaint on leaving her

husband after three weeks of marriage was that he was too lawyerly and cold-blooded. She had discovered this night that he was not always so, and something fundamental about her own nature too.

If the book pulls its punches in describing this liaison, of course the TV serial – teatime family viewing, remember – inevitably follows suit, offering in evidence only the single kiss described above; as a direct consequence, the encounter's key relevance to the futures of Tom, Pat and Anthony is too little stressed. But such nuance is not this scriptwriter's currency. His brief was to render WG's visceral, dark-hued tale into anodyne, innocuous, family-friendly fare, pruning, twisting and subverting as necessary, and that – formulaic, by-the-numbers melodrama, bargain basement Graham – is what we get. Provided you don't hope to see the book or anything much like it before your eyes, you might even enjoy HTV's offering, for it is played with enthusiasm by all its cast (though young Woutas is too earnest and Johnson gratingly broad). But finally this *Forgotten Story* confirms, like so many other productions before and since, that the successful transfer from page to screen of quality literary fiction is a trick more often tried than pulled.²⁷

(5) *The Tumbled House*

When Salisbury Playhouse presented WG's *Shadow Play* for three weeks during October and November 1978 (see pp. 347-70) the author's bio in the accompanying programme included this snippet:

... eight [WG novels] – seven of them the Poldark novels – have been seen on television. A ninth, The Tumbled House, is shortly to be done by Granada as a seven-part serial.

Another project, like Anglia's plan to produce *The Little Walls* (see page 335) that failed to deliver, which is a shame, because, of WG's non-Poldark work as yet unadapted, *The Tumbled House* and *Angell, Pearl & Little God* are the two obvious candidates for a successful transition to the screen, either big or small.

* * * * *



Perranporth beach: the figure in the foreground is WG. The building at top centre is Lech Carrygy, where most of *Demelza* was written (see 1.67-8). It burned down in June 1984 – the picture could have been taken at any time before that.

(6) the plays of WG

His remains lie in the churchyard of St Margaret the Queen, Buxted Park and on the headstone that marks the site of his grave are inscribed name and epitaph:

WINSTON GRAHAM
NOVELIST AND PLAYWRIGHT



And it's true that young WG was a twice-produced playwright before publishing even one novel. Nonetheless, that spare summation of the late author's professional life puts a surprising and somewhat fanciful spin on the facts: the evidence suggests that in a seventy-year writing career he

penned just three full-length plays (plus a small unknown number of shorts) of which two were produced, one was professionally produced and none were published¹ – all in stark contrast to his prodigal and latterly hugely successful achievements as a contemporary and historical novelist. Indeed, he is sure to be remembered for his books for as long as books are read. But, were there no books such that his reputation was required to survive solely on his output as a playwright, the fading into obscurity of his name would not be an issue, for it would be a name not made or known in the first place. Who chose the epitaph, or why, is not clear. But let us now consider in turn the works that, between them, serve to validate, just barely, WG's "playwright" status:

(1) *SEVEN SUSPECTED – A PLAY IN THREE ACTS*

WRITING AND FIRST PRODUCTION

WG left an account of the genesis of this, his first play, in *Memoirs*² (see Book One, Chapter Three), confirming that he took the project on at the suggestion of someone who had noted his ability to improve the dialogue of Am Dram productions in which he performed. Written in six weeks, it was staged for three nights at Perranporth's Palace Theatre³ from Tuesday 30 May to Thursday 1 June 1933 and well received (see reviews below).

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Mrs Entwistle
Margery Entwistle
Valerie Drayton
Herr Frederick Kragen
Mrs Farrow
Dr James Dale
Pierre
Miss Violet Ormsby
Arthur Drayton

SCENE

"The Grey Chalet" – a private hotel three miles from Zermatt, Switzerland. September.

ACT ONE

The public lounge of above. Time: 7 pm.

Act One serves to introduce us to the characters of the play. We discover that the hotel is owned and run by Arthur Drayton with the help of his daughter Valerie. Among the guests are Mrs Entwistle, an imperious, sharp-tongued dowager and her niece companion Margery, a mousy, put-upon chit of a girl. Herr Kragen is "a foreigner of something over 30" and Mrs Farrow a woman of the world, "awfully nice", just arrived from Madeira where she habitually goes to sit out her divorces (this latest her third). Dr Dale is engaged to Val, who is a bit ditzy, Miss Violet Ormsby is a soulful poetess, and the hotel butler, rendered mute by a war wound, which sets up a couple of easy jokes about the "dumb waiter", is Pierre.

When Herr Kragen and Mrs Farrow are introduced as strangers they show signs of previous acquaintance. She then mildly needles him, first forgetting his name then calling him "Herr Jargon". Margery, Val, Mrs Farrow and Mrs Entwistle settle to play bridge but unfortunately Val is unfamiliar with "Contract Bridge". However, Miss Ormsby the poetess knows the game – perhaps she'll play when she comes in. Pierre the butler enters with three letters, followed by Miss Ormsby, who begins to declaim poetry to a polite though reluctant Herr K. Mine host Arthur Drayton enters: two of the three letters are for him and the second is clearly "bad news". Visibly shaken, he's escorted off by his daughter Val to get some air. The bridge game fizzles out. Some amusingly acid exchanges between Mrs Entwistle and Mrs Farrow precede all others exiting to leave Herr K and Mrs F alone. We now learn that he was the first of her three husbands. They exit and Arthur Drayton returns. Alone on stage, he goes to his safe, opens it and reaches in to take out an envelope. A gloved hand holding a gun appears through the lounge door and shoots him. He is able to throw the envelope back inside the safe and lock the door with a muttered "Haven't got it yet!" before collapsing to the floor.

ACT TWO

As before, five days later.

The curtain rises to reveal seven seated across the stage as follows:

	Dr Dale	
Valerie	Mrs Farrow	
Mrs Entwistle		Miss Ormsby
Margery		Herr Kragen

We learn from Dr Dale that Drayton, who had a weak heart, was "shot and wounded" but died two days later. Police or other medical assistance had not been sought at the dead man's request. We learn, too, that, on the day before his death, Drayton made a new will, with a special "Clause Two" stating that whoever discovers the identity of his mystery assailant will get Drayton's "formula for the production of synthetic ambergris". We learn that Drayton and a colleague named Robert Sexton had sponsored an analytical chemist called Wood to synthesise artificial ambergris, which, when sold to perfumiers, would stand to make all three of them very rich. But Wood absconded with the formula, Sexton shot him dead and Drayton, wanting no part in murder, turned Sexton in to the police. Sexton received a ten-year jail sentence and the letter bearing "bad news" had informed Drayton that Sexton was now back out and had asked "Is the formula safe?" Mrs Entwistle: *You don't mean to insinuate that one of us is Sexton?* Yes – he may be using a front or even be disguised as a woman. No one is above suspicion: thus "seven suspected".

Enter Pierre, in a state of agitation. He writes a note: *I have committed a great sin. The master* – at which point Dr Dale stops him. Mrs E announces that the note clearly implicates Pierre, so, as the first to denounce him, she claims the formula. All exit except Herr K, who twiddles with the safe door. It opens. He extracts papers. Dr Dale enters with a gun and takes back from Herr K and replaces the formula. Dale examines the safe door. The tumblers have jammed so it opens easily. Dale fixes the lock. Herr K reveals that he came to the hotel to offer to buy the formula from Drayton on behalf of the perfumery firm he works for in Leipzig. Dale agrees to take steps to check his story in the morning. Margery enters and Herr K asks her to walk with him "as far as the pines and back". Though reluctant, because dutiful, she exits then returns with her coat on. They leave together while, off stage, Mrs Entwistle yells *Margery! MARGERY! M A R G E R Y !!*

ACT THREE

Same scene, 10 pm the following evening.

We learn that Pierre has gone; Dale says to visit his sick grandmother; Mrs E thinks he's been "done away with". She says she saw Dale carrying a sack down into the cellars and though it couldn't have contained a dead body, it might have contained parts of one. Dale and Val give her a key and send her off to search the cellars. We learn that Dale and Val are in cahoots about Pierre, though not criminally. They exit and, with the house lights having (in)conveniently fused, Mrs Farrow walks onto and gropes her way around a dark stage, looking for her bag by striking matches. Her third one shockingly illuminates the dead face of Arthur Drayton. She screams and exits. With fuse mended and lighting restored, others come back on. There is no body to be seen. Five sit down as follows:

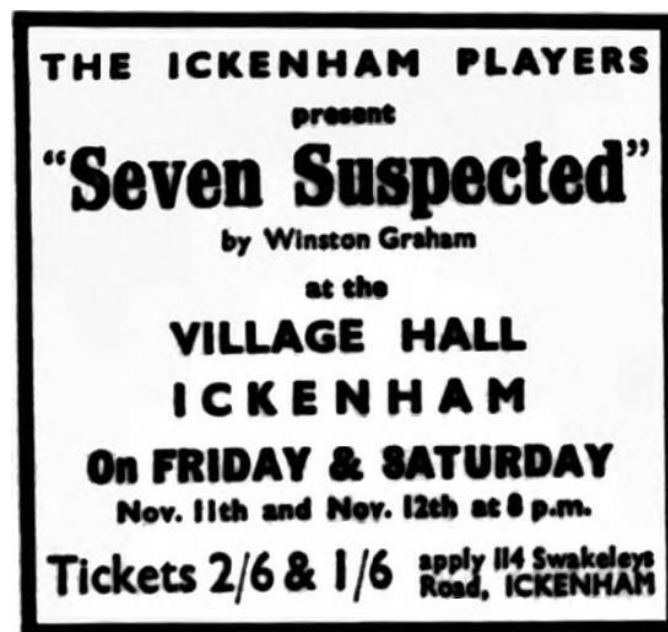
	Dr Dale	Valerie
Miss Ormsby	Mrs Farrow	Herr Kragen

Margery enters, newly confident, groomed and radiant; ugly duckling turned swan. She reveals that Herr K proposed to her and she accepted. Mrs E, outraged, very "Lady Bracknell", forbids it. All leave except Dr Dale and Miss Ormsby. She asks him to lock the room, which he does. She says "I know who shot Arthur Drayton – I did." She then pulls a gun on him, ties him to a chair, finds the safe combination in his pocket, reveals that she's Robert Sexton's loving sister and that Sexton died in prison. Dale discloses that the formula is not worth much since the artificial ambergris lacks some of the essential properties of the natural product. Val and Mrs Farrow see through the keyhole that Miss O is rifling the safe, find a spare key and enter the lounge. She covers them, finds the formula and is about to leave when the supposedly dead Arthur Drayton walks in. He reveals that his "death" was a trap to expose the writer of the letter and that for the past few days he's been hiding in the extensive cellar network beneath the hotel. When Mrs F saw him in the dark, he'd been caught coming to fetch some food for himself, since, with Pierre gone to his grandmother's, there was no one to look after his needs. The company agree that they will probably hush the matter up and let "Miss Ormsby" off. Val hands Mrs E a note from Margery – a copy of her marriage certificate, issued in Zermatt

that morning. She, we're told, has just ridden off in the hotel's one pony and trap with her new husband Herr K. Mrs E wishes to give chase, but the only other conveyance on the premises is Pierre's bicycle ...

SUBSEQUENT PRODUCTIONS

After its three-night debut in Perranporth, the play went on to be produced by amateur companies "in Truro, Camborne, Hayle, Bury, Hendon and elsewhere." The dates of three of these productions can be verified from contemporary reviews in *The Cornishman* of 2 April 1936, *The Cornish Guardian* of 7 April 1938 and *The Uxbridge and West Drayton Gazette* of 18



November 1938 which report performances by Hayle Players on Thursday 26 March 1936, Bodmin Amateur Dramatic Society on 6 and 7 April 1938 and Ickenham Players on 11 and 12 November 1938 respectively.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

(i) Perranporth: the following lines are excerpted from an unsigned report headed PERRANPORTH PLAYERS; LOCAL PLAYWRIGHT'S CLEVER THRILLER in *The West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser* of Thursday 1 June 1933:

Perranporth Amateur Players scored a great success on Tuesday and last evening [30 + 31 May 1933] in their presentation

of "Seven Suspected," a play in three acts, by Mr. Winston Grime, of Perranporth. The players acquitted themselves brilliantly, and the witticisms of the play and cleverly conceived plot were a great personal triumph for Mr. Grime. The proceeds of the effort were devoted to the funds of the Personal Service League [a voluntary organisation helping to ameliorate poverty during the Great Depression].

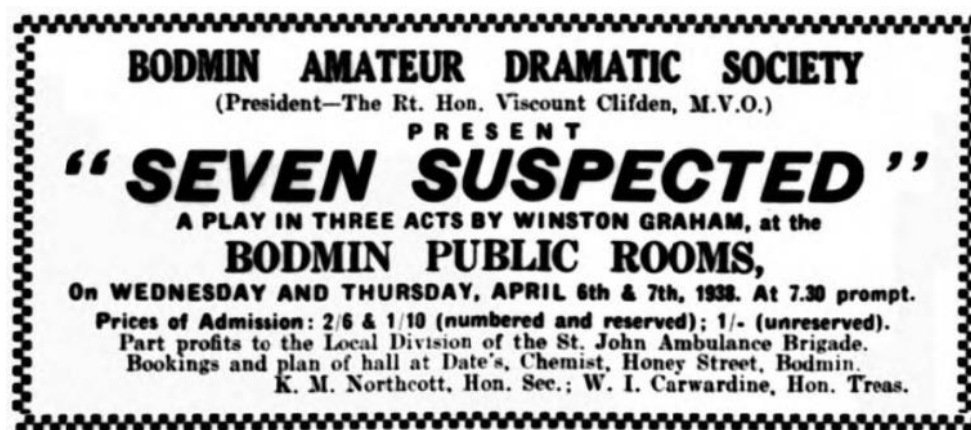
[Outline of plot omitted]

Nora K. Bawden accomplished much effective work in the role of Mrs. Entwistle, and her witty retorts and bickerings contributed in a large measure to the fun of the play. As her niece, Margery, Jean M. Williamson acted in an easy and natural style, as also did M. Jennie Ralstone as Valerie Drayton. Both were very successful. The part of Mrs. Farrow was taken by Claire Letcher, who displayed considerable talent, her enunciation being particularly good. Mary H. Neale had an exacting role as Miss Violet Ormsby, and her performance was of the highest order and easily one of the best in the play. Of the male impersonators [i.e. actors], Ronald F. J. Lawn (Redruth), who was allotted the part of Herr Kragen, came through with flying colours. Norman V. Pearson (Truro), as Dr. Dale, was highly successful, and T. Gilbert Hughes (Redruth), as Arthur Drayton, and Winston Grime as Pierre were also good. All the players fitted into their parts well, and from start to finish the entertaining features were effectively brought out. Marjorie E. P. Payne was the producer, and Winston Grime stage manager.

Mr. Grime and the players received a great ovation ... on Tuesday, and, in response to calls, Mr. Grime acknowledged the enthusiastic way in which the play had been received, and expressed appreciation to all who had materially helped to make it such a success. He particularly thanked Mr. Kenneth Pope, who had made practically all the framework for the scenery, and Mr. John Tremewan, who had worked exceedingly hard. The players had been rehearsing for about a month, and, without detracting from the excellent work put in by the ladies, he desired particularly to mention Mr. Norman Pearson (Truro) [and Messrs.] T. G. Hughes and R. F.

J. Lawn (Redruth), who had attended rehearsals four evenings each week. Considerable praise was also due to Miss Payne, their hon. Secretary, treasurer, and producer, who had taken great pains at the rehearsals.

So, three surprises: (1) that the first offering from WG's pen to be set before the public should bear the name Grime rather than Graham, (2) that both WG and his future wife Jean Williamson were in the cast, and (3) that the character created by the author for himself is, pointedly, a man unable to communicate except by writing!



(ii) Elsewhere: *The Cornishman* review of the 1936 Hayle Players production (which was attended by WG, who afterwards thanked the cast for "a worthy performance") recalls an evening "packed with drama (with) an attractive leavening of humour"⁴. When Bodmin Amateur Dramatic Society formed early in 1938 they chose *Seven Suspected* as their first production: a lengthy review of the opening night in the *Cornish Guardian* (with photo – see below) reports a "capable" performance of "entertaining fare".⁵ WG, who attended the second night, said he could hardly believe this was the Society's first venture. He thought the acting "splendid" and reserved special praise for Mrs Farrow (Patricia Dedman), Herr Kragen (Aldis Nurse, who also produced), Mrs Entwistle (Kay Northcott) and Miss Ormesby (Nina Date).⁶ WG was also able to attend the Ickenham Players' performance of 11 November 1938, having travelled from Cornwall to London to attend a book fair.⁷ That troupe's production of *Seven Suspected* was probably the play's last, which is a shame, since, though standard murder-mystery / drawing room fare, it is fun to read and would doubtless have been fun to stage and view also.



Bodmin Amateur Dramatic Society: *Seven Suspected*, 6 April 1938

(2) AT EIGHT O'CLOCK PRECISELY

WG's *Seven Suspected* follow-up was performed – apparently just once – at Redruth Wesley Methodist Chapel's two-day Springtime Floral Festival and Bazaar in the town's Memorial Hall on Wednesday 18 April 1934 and duly reported in the *Cornish Post and Mining News* three days later:

The [festival's first day was] concluded by a very fine entertainment in the form of a two-act play which was well performed by Miss Nora K. Bawden and friends, from Perranporth. The play, AT EIGHT O'CLOCK PRECISELY, was written by Mr. Winston Grime, a member of the cast. Comedy, drama and thrills were all included in this entrancing little play, and Miss Bawden and friends are to be heartily congratulated on giving such a wonderful and entertaining evening. The cast was as follows: MATHILDE: Jenny Rilstone; PEACE: Winston Grime; PANSY: Molly Saunders; MISS WATER: Nora K. Bawden; LUCY: Jean Williamson; LADY: Clair Letcher.

So, just three weeks before his first novel was accepted for publication, we find WG still writing and performing under his birth-name, the only male in a cast of six, again alongside his wife-to-be Jean.

(3) VALUES

In chapter 2.4 of *Memoirs*, WG refers in passing to "the one-act plays I wrote [in the 1930s]." How many of these there were is anybody's guess⁸ – but one was called *Values*. The following abstract is compiled from reports in *The West Briton* of 27 April and *Lake's Falmouth Packet and Cornwall Advertiser* of 1 May 1936:

At the Cornwall Federation of Women's Institutes' Annual Drama Competition Festival, which was held at Truro Training College on Saturday 25 April 1936, performances by teams from Looe, St. Germans, Lostwithiel, Perranporth, Polzeath, Falmouth, Madron, St. Agnes and Devoran were adjudicated by Cornish Open-air Shakespearian Festival co-producer Mr. Alexander Marsh.

Mr. Marsh considered the overall standard to be very high. He liked Lostwithiel's scene from As You Like It, but noted too much unnecessary movement. St. Agnes Institute's scene from The Merchant of Venice he thought quite adequate, although their stage arrangements were rather cramped. He was particularly impressed with the groupings of Madron's scene from The Winter's Tale, which were excellent all through. Lostwithiel's short play Christmas Legend, written by their producer Mrs. A. J. Beal was very charming. Another original play, Values, by Mr. Winston Graham of Perranporth, performed by that team, Mr. Marsh considered excellent, though it suffered in playing from lack of pace. Similarly, presentations by St. Germans, Lostwithiel, Perranporth and Falmouth of All Night Service, Bernard Merivale's popular one-act comedy for women, each took forty minutes, whereas a professional company would have taken twenty-five.

When all marks were tallied, the winning team was Falmouth.

With no copy of *Values* in the RCM archive⁹ or mention of it in *Memoirs* or anywhere else (the above press reports excepted), this "excellent little play" is surely now, like *Eight O'Clock Precisely*, lost beyond recall. Judging

from the *West Briton* photo below (note Jean Williamson, last on right) its production required an all-female cast of seven; possibly WG wrote it specifically for his local W.I. team to perform at the festival. Whether or no, those two contemporary accounts of its apparently ephemeral existence are intriguing.¹⁰



Women's Institutes' Drama Festival: the Perranporth team, who presented "Values," a play by Mr. Winston Graham, of Perranporth

* * * * *

(4) FORSAKING ALL OTHERS

WRITING

WG states in *Memoirs* that *Forsaking All Others* was written "around the time of [my] sixth novel" i.e. circa 1938. The RCM archive holds no manuscript copy of the play, which was never produced, and it is unlikely that any exists, since WG (who didn't even retain manuscript copies of the first four *Poldark* novels) came to think very poorly of it: *not nearly as good as Seven Suspected*, he wrote, *more self-conscious, more pretentious ... full of second thoughts ... trying to go deeper and, on the whole, failing*. He eventually reworked the play into his eighth novel *Strangers Meeting* which he

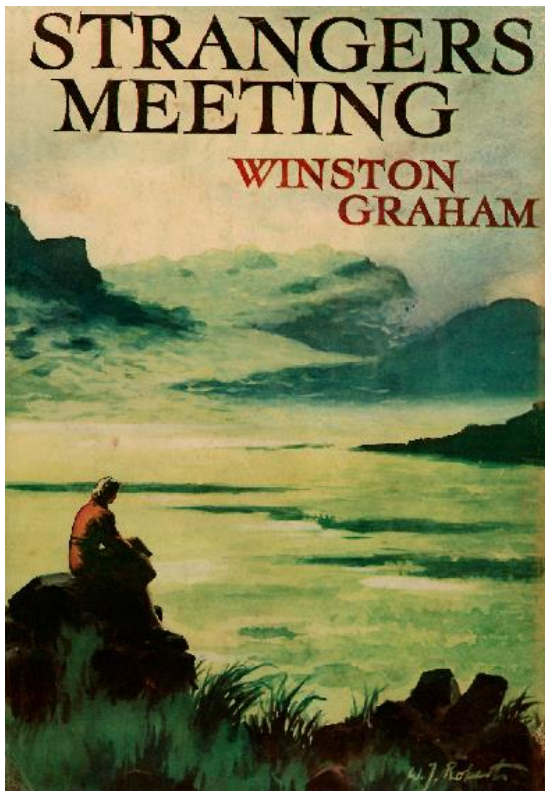
dismisses in *Memoirs*, perhaps because of its unfortunate lineage, but unfairly nonetheless, as "the worst novel I ever wrote".

The novel comprises three books of unequal length, reflecting, no doubt, the three-act structure of the source play. For the purposes of this article, I assume that the plots of play and novel are the same.

PLOT (*ex STRANGERS MEETING*)

BOOK ONE (three chapters, 46 pages)

In South Africa, 36-year-old expat farmer Gerald Tollis meets and courts 20-year-old expat Susan Grey. In Stoke, factory worker Sheila Thompson (22) wonders whether to accept an invitation from her employer William Fawcett (about 45) to go away on holiday with him. In Norfolk, the Herridge family, father John (40), mother Helen (36) and their two young sons, enjoy a Sunday breakfast. We learn that Susan Grey – now engaged to Tollis – is Helen's half-sister and that, when John married Helen eleven years previously, she was a forlorn young widow whose tea-planter first husband of two years, Harvey, had died in India.



Strangers Meeting (1939): not as bad as WG claims

BOOK TWO (twenty chapters, 197 pages)

The action moves to and hereafter remains in Trembeth, a remote west Cornwall fishing village, population 83. At Mrs Spargo's Guest House, long-term resident Peter Crane (late twenties, quasi-consumptive, poet) is joined by Mr and Mrs Herridge, Sheila Thompson and William Fawcett (posing as Mr and Mrs Fawcett) and Gerald Tollis and Susan Grey. Crane

becomes attracted to Sheila, who soon tells him she's not married to Fawcett. At first sight, through a window, of Tollis, Helen has a fainting fit. She suggests to her husband that he's probably the same sort of bad lot her first husband Harvey was, but then unaccountably begins to spend time with him. Fawcett reports seeing them together in the sandhills, which they both deny. Sheila tells Fawcett she won't be returning to Stoke with him. We learn that Tollis has previously travelled "in Rhodesia, Ceylon and Mysore". An uncharacteristic coolness grows between Helen and Susan. Tollis, driven to his bed by a touch of malaria, doses himself with quinine and whisky to throw it off, then, in the King's Head with Crane, reveals cynical, worldly and abrasive sides to his nature previously undisclosed. Sheila asks Mrs Spargo where locally "a friend of hers" might hope to find a job. Mrs S overhears Tollis propositioning a woman – not Susan – who turns him down. Later that evening, Fawcett overhears Tollis and Susan arguing upstairs, Crane sets off to the village to post a letter, Tollis strides off to an undisclosed location and Helen goes out to get some air and then call on casual acquaintance Mr Penrose, leaving John, Susan, Sheila and Fawcett behind, each in a separate room (and thus with no alibi) at the Guest House. Crane, returning via the quarry path from the King's Head, where he'd had a drink with Penrose, stumbles on a prostrate body.

BOOK THREE (seven chapters, 64 pages)

At the inquest at Trembeth School upon the body of Gerald Arthur Tollis, we learn that Tollis had lived for three or four minutes after Crane found him, managing to say just one word – "Susan" – before he died; also that a derelict hut close to the point where Tollis fell from the lip of the quarry showed signs of recent use, as for an assignation. Back at the Guest House, Sheila declines to return to Stoke with Fawcett. He asks her to marry him. She refuses and he leaves alone. Mrs Spargo recounts to Sheila the bitter argument she overheard that morning between half-sisters Helen and Susan. Crane, walking back from the inquest (verdict: death by misadventure), reveals that, before dying, Tollis had actually said "Helen", not "Susan", also some "queer stuff" – evidence he had chosen "in common decency" to suppress. He meets Sheila and rejects her overtures. The two part unhappily. We learn that Helen and Tollis have a past (though, unsatisfactorily, nothing more about it either here or later) and that, in the past week, he'd been attempting to blackmail her "not for money". Crane and

Sheila meet fortuitously in the woods and are reconciled. Crane sees the Herridges off and, in parting from John, returns to him the jacket button he'd found clutched in the dead Tollis's hand.

PRODUCTIONS

None, either amateur or professional

CRITICAL RECEPTION

N/A



These two undated typescripts, preserved in RCM's Graham archive, comprise the lifetime achievement of "playwright" WG

(5) *SHADOW PLAY / CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE / INDIZIENBEWEIS*

WRITING

WG's fifth play was written, presumably during the mid-1970s, with the working title of *Strangers Will Now Withdraw*¹⁰ before making its stage debut as *Shadow Play* at Salisbury Playhouse in the autumn of 1978. It then disappeared for seven months before eventually resurfacing under the revised title *Circumstantial Evidence* at Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, where it ran for three weeks with further single weeks at Richmond and Brighton to follow.

No further UK production appears to have been mounted and the play is wholly ignored in *Memoirs*, perhaps indicating that its author was not fully satisfied with either iteration of his work, even though contemporary reviews were – see below – for the most part warmly complimentary.

It would be interesting to know to what extent the play was revised between its first and second productions. But though the RCM archive holds a manuscript of *Circumstantial Evidence* (see previous page), there is none of *Shadow Play* with which to compare. However, the cast of characters as presented to the audiences in 1978 and 1979 confirm that minor changes, at least, were made:

CAST

(i) *Shadow Play* (1978)

Raymond Palmer
Mary Volgis
Lord Scarton
Peter Thomas
Clerk of the Court
April Durgan
Maurice Durgan
Vivien Palmer
Arthur Matthews
Dudley Robinson

(ii) *Circumstantial Evidence* (1979)

Raymond Palmer M.D., B.Ch.
Mary Volgis
Lord Scarton M.V.O., F.R.C.P.
Vivien Palmer
Peter Thomas
Arthur Matthews
Clerk to the Committee
Stenographer
Doctors (2)
April Durgan

John Digby, President's Adviser
A Doctor
Other Members of the Committee and Staff

Maurice Durgan
Dudley Robinson

PROGRAMME NOTE

The Disciplinary Committee of the General Medical Council of Great Britain meets twice yearly to consider cases of alleged professional misconduct.*

These cases can range from Disregard of personal responsibility to patients, to Misuse of drugs, or Abuse of professional position to commit adultery.

The Committee consists of a president, a qualified legal adviser, and a number of medical and lay members, who hear the cases and pass judgement.

If a doctor is struck off the register, he ceases to be entitled to practise.

The procedure of the Committee is closely akin to a court of law, but the Committee and its president act as both judge and jury.

Winston Graham

* Revised in the *Circumstantial Evidence* Programme Note to "two or three times a year". No other changes.

THE NAME OF THE PLAY

When it comes to selling tickets, *Circumstantial Evidence* sounds like a rather better prospect than *Shadow Play*, since the first title gives some idea of what the play is likely to be about, whereas the other does not. But when you read WG's conception of how the play was to be staged, you realise why he made his initial choice and, marketing difficulties notwithstanding, how apt it was.

He envisions the scene as

*a large room with a judicial-like bench with three chairs behind. The centre chair is a high-backed, ornate armchair. There is a witness stand, tables for legal representatives etc ... **Mainly by lighting** but occasionally by the movement of a piece of furniture this set is made to do for four other rooms ... It is essential that each act is played as a continuing whole ... A longish hexagonal table centre front can serve for all sorts of purposes ...*

Thus the play unfolds with discrete parts of the stage serially illuminated to create intimate and individual spaces in which the actors relate their tale – whence *shadow play*. The problem is, of course, that you'd only come to understand this after the event, which is presumably why a less subtle but more commercially viable alternative title was chosen instead.

ACT ONE

- - - The day before the hearing begins - - -

Dr Palmer and Mary Volgis, his defence counsel, are in a room. She is holding a sheaf of press cuttings re the inquest of April Durgan, a former patient of Palmer's. She reads: "Husband accuses doctor of murder ..."

- - - They take their places in court as others enter and take their places. All rise as Lord Scarton enters. The charge is read: the adultery of Dr Palmer and Mrs Durgan. He pleads Not Guilty - - -

We learn that Dr Palmer and his wife Vivien became friendly with Mr and Mrs Durgan and began exchanging social visits. On one occasion, neither Mrs Palmer nor Mr Durgan could keep a pre-arranged date, so Dr Palmer and April Durgan dined out together alone.

- - - In the restaurant - - -

The pair – she is a strikingly attractive, vivacious and alluring woman, he a handsome professional man – become increasingly chummy. We learn that

she moved with her parents from her native Bolivia to London but then, on their return home, stayed to earn her living as a club singer, albeit an indifferent one. She married a husband for whom she no longer cares; the two have a "sex-hate" relationship. He slights her as a *ladino* (meaning "half-breed"). Though she tries to lead the doctor on, he resists her increasingly obvious blandishments. Seduction, it seems, is not for him.



Shadow Play, Salisbury Playhouse, 1978

- - - Back to the courtroom - - -

Mr Durgan gives evidence about the start of his suspicion that his wife might be having an affair. He goes to see Dr Palmer, who reassures him. Then a neighbour complains about a green Volvo that's always being left

in the way whenever Durgan is away from home ... and Dr Palmer has a green Volvo (though so, too, does Lord Scarton). We learn that April Durgan committed suicide and with an intemperate outburst Durgan blames Palmer for causing her death. Lord Scarton admonishes the distraught witness, who is on the verge of tears.

- - - To Dr and Vivien Palmer with Mary Volgis (counsel) and Arthur Matthews (solicitor), Palmer's defence team - - -

Mrs Palmer expresses reservations about Mary Volgis having to work closely with her husband. Can they be trusted together?

- - - To Volgis and prosecuting counsel Peter Thomas - - -

We learn that Dr Palmer lost his only son (to a first wife) in "a street accident" and that he's considered a good doctor.

- - - Back to Durgan's evidence - - -

We learn that Durgan was obliged to travel to Stockholm on business and asked Dudley Robinson, a neighbour, to watch his flat during his absence. We learn that after Robinson reports two visits from Dr Palmer, Mr and Mrs Durgan quarrel bitterly, after which he insists he is leaving her. He then slams out of their home and goes off drinking. Having changed his mind about leaving, he returns home at midnight and gets into his bed, adjoining his wife's, thinking her asleep. He wakes at seven the next morning to find her dead. He calls Robinson, Dr Palmer and the police. He claims that, very soon after his arrival, Dr Palmer admitted to him the love affair between himself and April.

- - - Cross-examination of Durgan by Volgis - - -

Volgis suggests that Dr Palmer tried to help Durgan during their consultations, that Durgan had always been jealous of his wife and that he was making up the doctor's "admission" of an affair between himself and Mrs Durgan.

- - - Dudley Robinson (neighbour) giving evidence - - -

Confirms Palmer's visits during Durgan's absence in Stockholm, also the bitter row between the Durgans on Mr Durgan's return, then Durgan leaving home in a rage and then *a further visit, in Durgan's absence, from Dr Palmer.*

- - - April Durgan and Dr Palmer, at her home - - -

She urges him to go with her to Bolivia to start a new life together. He advises her to go to bed and take a couple of sleeping pills. She then tells him she's admitted to her husband her affair with him. He gives her three pills and persuades her to try and get some sleep. They can talk more in the morning.

- - - Dr and Mrs Palmer, at home - - -

They row about his affairs, though at least "you've kept off patients until now, thank God." He tells his wife that he wants to stay with her and their two children.

- - - Volgis cross-exam of Robinson - - -

An important discrepancy of evidence: Robinson states that he distinctly heard Durgan (or someone he assumed was Durgan) return home at 10.30 pm, and not at midnight as Durgan claimed.

- - - Durgan and Robinson, in Durgan's home on the morning of his wife's death - - -

Durgan is in a state. Robinson reminisces about his own wife's death. Dr Palmer arrives, goes into the bedroom and comes out with an almost empty phial of pills. He sends Robinson to the kitchen to make coffee. Durgan and Palmer argue. Durgan accuses him of killing his wife to stop her making trouble for him.

- - - Palmer and Volgis at the end of the first day - - -

"Did you commit murder?"

"All doctors do."

- - - Palmer and wife - - -

He (quoting from a clipping): "Husband accuses doctor of murder."

"It was only a headline."

"The tip of the iceberg."

"Is that how you see it?"

"Isn't that what it is?"

ACT TWO

- - - Dr Palmer in the box, Volgis examining - - -

Palmer says he was offering Mrs Durgan "counselling" by way of treatment and, when pressed, acknowledges that this was "unwise" but no more. We learn that he's in a one-man practice with 3,000 NHS and 400 private patients which, together with his hospital duties, means he usually works a twelve-hour day. He considers Mr Durgan "unbalanced" and denies having admitted to him any form of improper relationship with his wife.

- - - Mary Volgis and Vivien Palmer in a pub - - -

We learn that Mary Volgis's father was a surgeon; also that Dr Palmer's interest in children's medicine increased after his first child was killed at the age of thirteen in a hit-and-run accident. Volgis asks if Mrs Palmer ever met her husband's first wife and Vivien confirms that she did. Did Vivien like Mrs Durgan? Yes, at first, but then she realised that April's brightness was false. Did her husband's attraction to other women concern Mrs Palmer? Well, he had a "pretty little actress" three years ago; it lasted "all one winter – but she wasn't a patient." Vivien then asks: "Do you think him guilty and would it make a difference if you did?" "No – I carry out my solicitor's instructions. The court is there to judge, not me." "Even if guilty, how do you weigh that bad against all the good he does?" "If guilty, he will be struck off to defend the basis of trust on which doctors attend women patients." Mrs Palmer asks whether standards have been relaxed in recent years. Mary Volgis says they have to some degree, for example, if cited in a divorce case, there would be no comeback unless the doctor could be shown to have "abused his position of trust" – which is what Durgan is accusing him of here.

- - - Dr Palmer in the box with Peter Thomas cross-examining - - -

Dr Palmer visited April Durgan on the evening of the 25th, found her "upset" and stayed half an hour. During that time, he gave her two sleeping pills and put her to bed. "Didn't it occur to you to take away the rest of her sleeping pills?" No, because he didn't consider her the suicidal type. Thomas asks whether she did it (i.e. killed herself) for Palmer's sake, but, after an objection, the question is withdrawn. Was the doctor's statement "It's all over now" the sort a professional man would address to a bereaved husband? No, but Dr Palmer was merely trying to bring him to his senses. When Robinson went to make coffee, Palmer was able to direct him to where in the kitchen the coffee jar was kept. How did he know? Because he'd made a cup for Mrs Durgan the previous evening.

- - - Dr Palmer on the phone at his home. Evening, two days later - - -

He talks with a colleague about a case. We establish that it is now Sunday evening and that the hearing is expected to conclude tomorrow. Dr Palmer agrees to come to the hospital to attend a patient.

- - - Volgis and Vivien Palmer, same place; Dr Palmer now out - - -

Volgis states that she cannot continue to act in the case. She says that while Vivien was worried that she, Volgis, might become emotionally involved while working with her husband, she has become, rather, *morally* involved. She began to read back and the more she read, the more afraid she became, since nothing was what it seemed, with the GMC trial a sort of shadow play. Why? *Because the real questions haven't been put.* Suppose all the accusations were true. It would be quite a strong motive, wouldn't it?

"For what?"

"Murder."

Volgis acknowledges that Palmer could not have injected Mrs Durgan, or the puncture mark would have been reported at the inquest. But he could have got the rest of the tablets into her stomach by artificial means. The neighbour Robinson heard someone go into the Durgans at 10.30. "Did your husband go out again that night?" Mrs Palmer concedes that he did. Referring to the phone call made to Dr Palmer by Mr Durgan

immediately after he found his wife apparently dead in her bed, Volgis states that Palmer told Durgan that April's "life had been thrown away" *before he was told she was dead*. This is dismissed as more lies from Durgan. As Mrs Palmer berates Volgis, Dr Palmer enters quietly, unobserved. Volgis tells Vivien that Palmer's first wife Rosalind died whilst they were holidaying in Kenya. She committed suicide. She was a Catholic, for whom suicide is a cardinal sin. She died of the same pills, given at the same dosage, in just the same way as Mrs Durgan. Palmer discloses his presence. "It's true, of course. But did you know my first wife was a *lapsed* Catholic? She also took to drink." Volgis says that she received confirmation from the authorities in Nairobi yesterday that Rosalind had throat bruises to indicate that she had been stomach-tubed. Palmer asks whether April's throat showed similar signs and Volgis confirms that it did not. Palmer then outlines in meticulous detail how a murder done this way could be made to look like suicide by someone with sufficient medical knowledge. His account is so specific that it is tantamount to a confession of the murder by himself of his first wife – someone who had gone to pieces after the death of her child such that the ending of her life could be seen as a merciful release. But he then goes on to say that it's all a coincidence; that what he described is what *might* have happened; but that in fact both deaths were suicides. When his first wife died, he was 100 miles away visiting a National Park with two friends. Her apparent throat bruising could be readily explained by *post mortem* change induced by heat. During the crucial period ref April Durgan, he was operating at the hospital in front of five witnesses; facts all easily verifiable.

- - - Back at the GMC hearing - - -

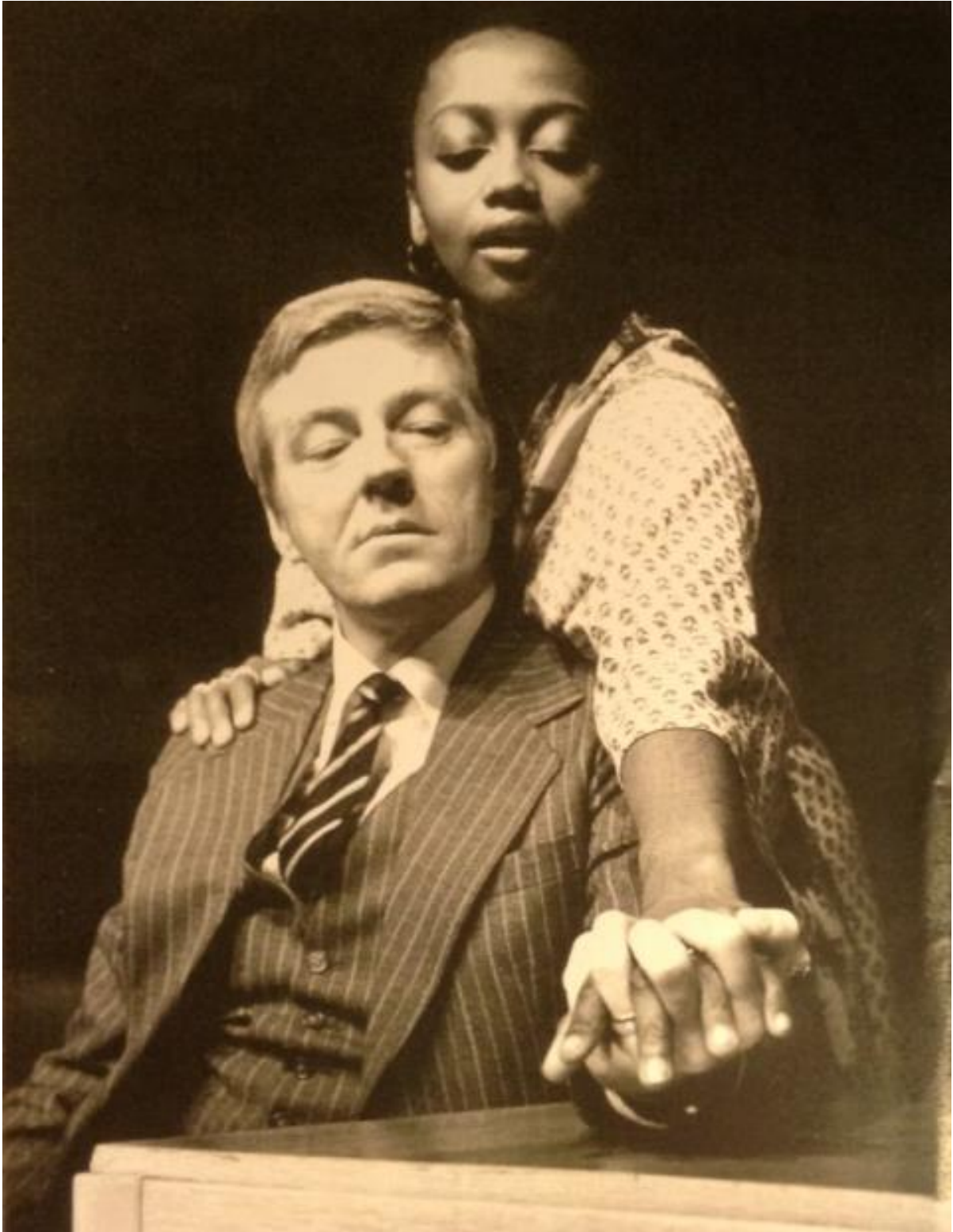
Volgis gives her closing speech, the Committee deliberates briefly and the case is dismissed.

- - - Volgis and Vivien Palmer - - -

Volgis learns that, before her marriage, Vivien was a "research pathologist". She also establishes that Vivien was in Mombasa when the first Mrs Palmer met her death there.

- - - Dr Palmer and Mary Volgis - - -

It is clear that Dr Palmer and Volgis both now see that Vivien Palmer is a double muddress, "but civilisation forgives a lot if one can hide it. You'll help me hide it, Mary Volgis, won't you?"



Shadow Play, Salisbury Playhouse, 1978: Gilbert Wynne as Dr Palmer and Muriel Odunton as April Durgan

PRODUCTIONS

(i) as *Shadow Play* at Salisbury Playhouse from 19 October to 11 November 1978.

(ii) as *Circumstantial Evidence* at Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford from 19 June to 7 July 1979, at Richmond Theatre, Richmond upon Thames from 23 to 28 July 1979 and at the Theatre Royal, Brighton from 30 July to 4 August 1979.

(iii) as *Indizienbeweis* (a translation of *Circumstantial Evidence* into German by Else Marie Nybo) by Landesbühne, Hannover from 31 December 1998 (number of performances unknown) and at das Theater an der Marschnerstrasse, Hamburg from 28 to 31 October 2004.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

(i) *Shadow Play*

A big success

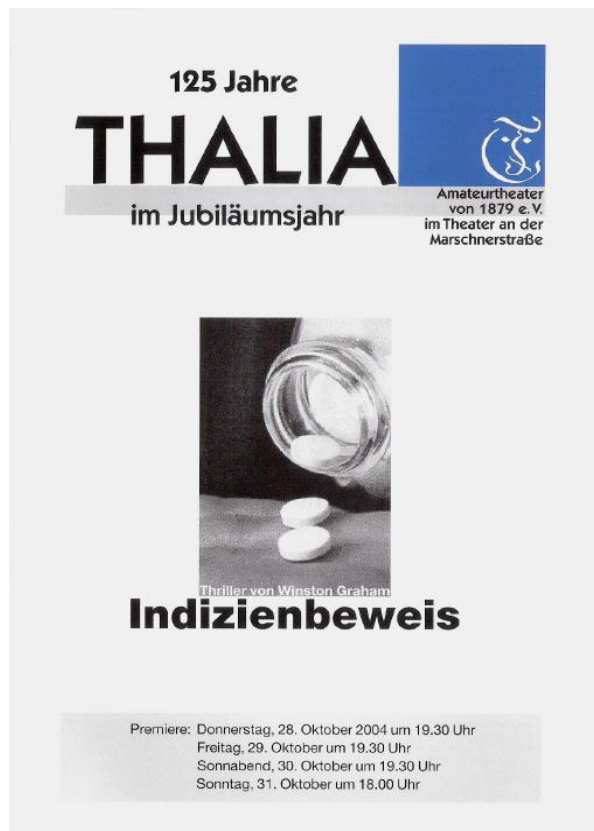
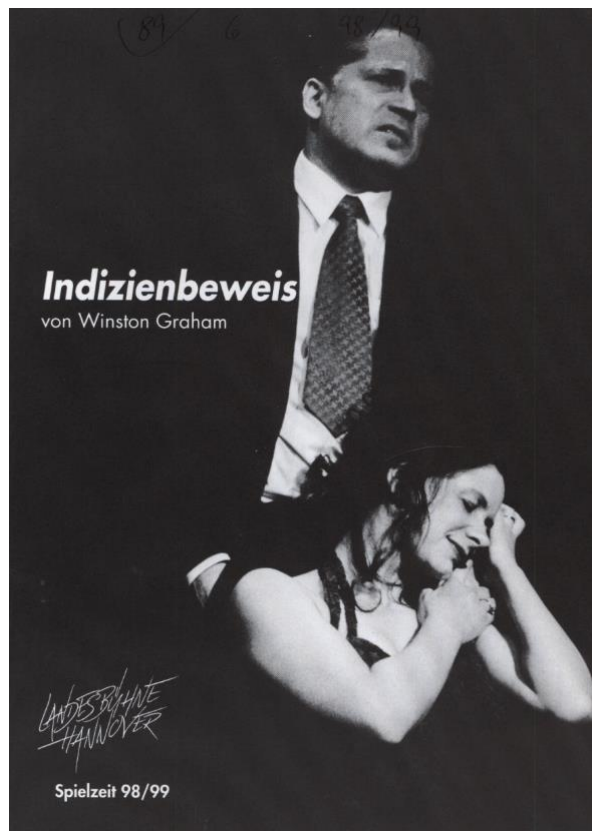
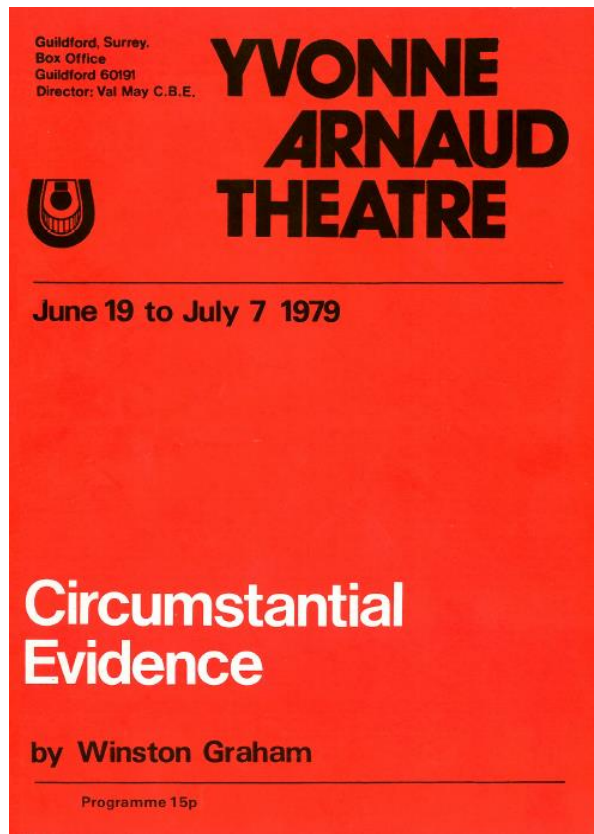
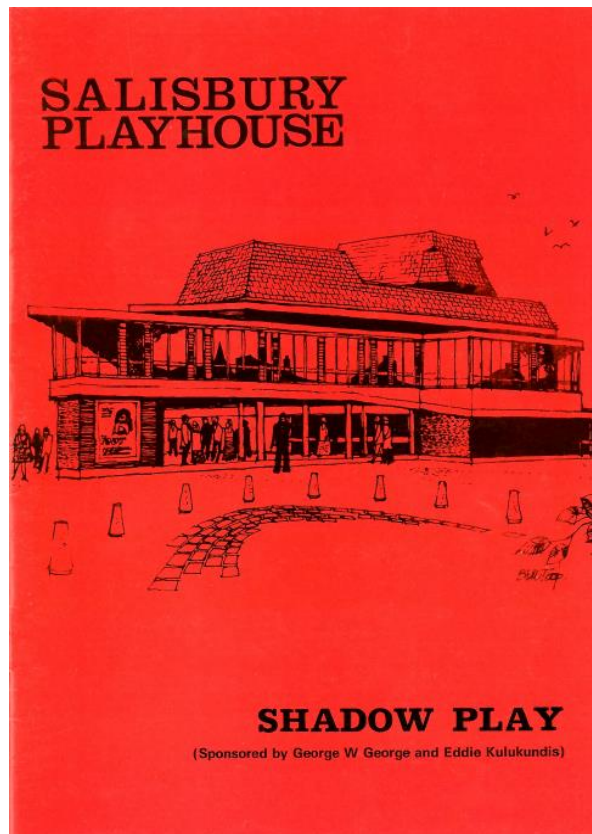
R. M. Williams (*cf* next review), *Stage and Television Today*, 26 October 1978

[Shadow Play] is drawing the crowds, whose attention is absolutely riveted by what goes on, so much so that they watch in silence, only to show their enthusiastic pleasure by their applause at the end of the first act and at the conclusion after they have had a big surprise sprung on them ... This play ... topical and played with great authenticity ... is just what the doctor ordered.

R.M.W., *Salisbury Journal*, 27 October 1978

Winston Graham has written an intensely absorbing modern mystery ... which is enthralling and intriguing near-capacity audiences The conclusion is surprisingly satisfactory.

L.I.F., *Salisbury Journal*, 27 October 1978



Programmes: (1) *Shadow Play*, 1978 (2) *Circumstantial Evidence*, Guildford, 1979 (3) and (4) *Indizienbeweis*, Hannover, 1998 and Hamburg, 2004

(ii) *Circumstantial Evidence*

Circumstantial Evidence is ... an unconvincing story convincingly told ... [Director] Val May swings the action about in a determined effort to keep us enthralled. He succeeds, but in a purely mechanical manner, with the aid of the now obligatory double or triple twists.

John Frayn Turner, *Stage and Television Today*, 5 July 1979

Ethical reflections, murder techniques and motives are briskly treated ... in this mystery thriller, novelist Winston Graham's first [sic] stage play. The plot, though sometimes contrived, is taut and fast moving. The production is replete with tele-stars animating, for the most part, two-dimensional characters and the set (Crown Court out of Star Trek) is effective.

Unsigned, *Bare Facts* #358, 22 June 1979

Young WG opened his playwright's account with an uninhibited, straightforward, no-nonsense whodunnit, unsubtle but effective, in the style of Agatha Christie and probably ideally suited to those few amateur companies who chose to put it on. Then – passing over the evanescent *Eight O'Clock Precisely* and *Values* – older and better versed, he looked to add depth and dimension to the characters of his next play; to make them more than mere ciphers moved by rote about the stage, through their puppet paces, only to find that trick rather more difficult to pull within the necessarily limited confines of a drama than in the broader, more liberating expanses of a novel. Indeed, *Strangers Meeting*, though no more than the fortuitous by-product of a failed theatrical experiment, stands its ground, circa eighty years post publication, as a modestly accomplished if somewhat derivative work of fiction. The protracted emergence then apparent dismissal from mind of WG's last play suggest on its author's part both an enduring desire to master the medium and a final acceptance of his inability (despite one very early success) to find satisfaction there.

Perhaps ultimately he was too much of a perfectionist for his own good. He concludes *Memoirs*, his personal valediction, with lines – that "sum up

something of my philosophy," he says – which clear-sightedly acknowledge the snare such a mindset lays. The lines, he notes, were written "a few years ago, after reading through a novel I had just finished." And yet, if you read *Strangers Meeting*, reworked from his second three-act play and published in 1939, a full sixty-four years before *Memoirs* appeared, you'll find, courtesy of the pen of "Peter Crane", short-winded twentysomething poet and WG *alter ego*, the selfsame words:

Perfection is a full stop.

*Mark this the comma of imperfect striving ...*¹²

So the writer, this "private man", this "novelist and playwright", mines, reimagines, obscures his past, his self, his story to the end.¹³ No matter. As for the plays, though you may live your life through with no chance to enjoy even one on the stage, where two at least belong, return instead to the welcoming embrace of his books to reaffirm yet again that, while the intriguing promise of his epitaph's third word may prove illusory, that of its first, happily, does not.

* * * * *

(7) Dear Swinny ...



– Correspondence –

Letters are a biographer's life-blood, a portal into the past, into the lives of those, no longer here, who wrote and received them. Sadly, when biographers of the future look back at subjects living their lives today, they are likely to find slim pickings, because one of downsides of our digital age is that the writing of personal letters using old-fashioned pen and paper has become virtually a thing of the past.

Fortunately for us, WG was a pre-digital sort of chap who would have no truck with computers: "I always distrust people who say word processors are marvellous. I'd rather do it my own dirty, difficult way," he told Angela Wintle in 2001¹. As befitting a wordsmith, he had favourite typewriters – an old manual Imperial (see page 250) that's now housed in the Royal Museum of Cornwall and an electric Adler he would pay over the odds to get repaired rather than replace² – but wrote his novels in longhand, with a ball-point pen in notebooks, in his "own dirty, difficult way." The existing evidence suggests that the majority of his personal correspondence was also written by hand, with some typed also.

But what "existing evidence" is that? In comparison to some other literary figures, WG does not appear to have been a prolific writer of letters. He kept up a sporadic correspondence for years with a number of friends – Frank Swinnerton, Richard Church, Max Reinhardt and Denys Val Baker to name four – and several archives around the world preserve evidence (in the form of letters and postcards) of those associations and others: for example, the majority of Swinnerton's papers, including six letters from WG, are held by the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, Richard Church's papers, including fifteen letters from WG, are split between the Universities of Manchester and Texas at Austin whilst the Max Reinhardt Papers in the British Library include six letters and ten postcards from WG as well as two Bodley Head business letters. Some twenty-five more of those, plus two more postcards and two letters to journalist, writer and critic J. C. Trewin, are held by the University of Reading. Correspondence between WG and the BBC, some of it likely to be highly revelatory, is held at the Corporation's Caversham Park archive. Churchill College, Cambridge holds a letter from WG to journalist, poet, dramatist and novelist Cecil Roberts (1892-1976) and the University of Warwick an exchange of letters between WG and publisher and humanitarian campaigner Sir Victor Gollancz (1893-1967). A little of the business correspondence between WG and his first

literary agent A. P. Watt is held by the University of North Carolina. The Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills holds three letters, extensively quoted in Tony Lee Moral's *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*, The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2013, from WG to Alfred Hitchcock as well as another dated 30 January 1967 to Gregory Peck, asking him to consider appearing in the (then proposed) film adaptation of *After the Act*. (Peck expressed reluctance due to the story being too similar to his 1965 film *Mirage*.) The Cornish Record Office in Truro (due to relocate to Redruth in 2019) holds a voluminous Denys Val Baker archive that includes seven letters and a postcard from WG as well as two photographs, one unique to that collection. (The same Office also holds the original Perranzabuloe Parish Church Register of Marriages 1900-1940 which records on page 123 the wedding on 18 September 1939 of Winston Grime and Jean Williamson.) Gloucestershire County Archives hold a letter of condolence written by WG on 3 August 1967 to Lucile Moore, widow of John, following the latter's untimely death a week earlier at the age of 59. Finally, a search of British newspaper archives discloses that between 1951 and 2000, at least twenty-five letters signed or co-signed by WG were published in the UK national press: fourteen in the *Times*, seven in the *Daily Telegraph*, three in the *Guardian* and one in the *Independent*. Two of these, the first lamenting the Chancellor's decision "not to grant book publishers the concession on S.E.T. [Selective Employment Tax] for which they have been fighting"³ and the second arguing cogently in support of Public Lending Right (i.e. financial restitution made to authors whose books are loaned by public libraries, with consequent potential loss of sales),⁴ were written in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee of Management of The Society of Authors, two were co-signed with other authors and the remainder were penned on his own behest as a private citizen.

More, now, about the four long-term correspondents cited above:

(1) FRANK SWINNERTON

Frank Swinnerton (1884-1982) was a prolific author, President (1962-66) of the Royal Literary Fund and twice a castaway on BBC Radio 4's Desert Island Discs – the second time on his 90th birthday.⁵ From 1937-43 he was also literary critic of the *Observer* and it was this aspect of his work in particular that first attracted WG's attention.

The aspiring author was reluctant to contact the critic for fear of being thought to court favour – however, no sooner had Swinnerton announced that he was about to resign his position than WG took the plunge and wrote. After expressing admiration for Swinnerton's novels "*The Two Wives*, *Thankless Child*, *Harvest Comedy* and *The Georgian House* (in that order)"⁶ as well as the older man's evocative 1935 critique *The Georgian Literary Scene*, which WG described as "a book on the art of writing more valuable than the vast majority of treatises recommended to the aspiring author" and "simply delightful", he went on to explain that what had caused him, "a complete stranger", to set pen to paper was his "regret" at the other's retirement from "the post of reviewer to the *Observer*". He continued:

Since you took over from Gerald Gould – and the time seems more than six years – I have read your reviews regularly with pleasure and advantage ... Your articles have always been read for themselves, especially for that little homily on some aspect of fiction writing which generally presaged the review proper.

For this and other reasons I have sometimes in the past thought of writing to thank you, but have been deterred by one very simple obstacle, that I write novels myself and have always felt that to send such a letter to a reviewer would be to lay oneself open to the suspicion of cupboard love. Anyway, that obstacle is now removed

I have not previously written to any author or critic whom I did not know. This occasion, by seeming to demand it, overcame both indolence and diffidence.⁷

Swinnerton took just six days to respond. WG's letter, which "gave (him) great pleasure", was, he concludes, "a good and kind deed". After explaining why he was leaving the *Observer* (overwork, a change of literary editor and a proposed 40% pay cut) and discussing aspects of those of his books that WG had mentioned, FS notes that "I don't remember ever to have seen one of your novels."⁸

Looking back in August 1985 at his long friendship with Swinnerton, who had then been dead for something under three years, WG recalled that, in response to that last remark:

... after a while, with the rashness of youth [albeit a "youth" in his mid-thirties], I sent him one. He wrote back a bit later, giving me a lengthy and all too generous criticism of the book (which I now think pretty poor) ...⁹

The timeline and that last dismissive comment suggest between them that the book WG sent was probably *My Turn Next*, published in July 1942, since, by the time *The Merciless Ladies* was published in January 1944, the two men had already been corresponding for a year. Alternatively, of course, he may have sent both. In any event, by the time of the next FS letter to hand, dated 21 May 1946, the older man makes clear that he has read both *The Merciless Ladies* and December 1945's *Ross Poldark*. What's more, he is full of praise:

This book [RP] seems wholly to justify your belief in it. It is very good, very well written and both charming and powerful. It is a story which would have been easy to sentimentalize : you haven't sentimentalized it. On the contrary, you have kept it steadily moving, always sure and sincere, and full of human nature. The dialogue is good and unforced, the relations beautifully natural (more difficult than ever in a 'period' story), and the invention never otherwise than serenely confident. Some of the scenes in particular, e.g. that of Ross's first arrival at his old home and that in which Demelza goes out of doors after her first night with Ross, gave me particular pleasure. They are extraordinarily vivid. I felt less assurance over the Reuben scenes¹⁰ and over the poaching episode, which are both a little conventional; but the scrap between Ross and Demelza's father is first-rate. I mustn't forget to say how excellent I thought your handling of a former age. That is difficult to keep in perspective, but you score complete success. Indeed, I could have done with more of it of the same quality. And this leads me to say of the book as a whole that it seems to show a real advance, not only in writing but in original perception of character (some of the perception particularly fine) on 'The Merciless Ladies'; and if you can write a modern story of the same calibre fairly soon I think there can be no doubt that you will fully establish your reputation. I hope 'Ross' did well and

*received proper treatment from the reviewers. I congratulate you on it as an achievement.*¹¹

Less than a month later, FS writes again, this time in response to WG's news about being taken up by the Rank Organisation: "Film work has not only its financial rewards, great as these are : it will increase your contacts and broaden your approach to life and books, and is in fact a sign of important growth. Good luck in it."¹²

WG noted that the correspondence between the two men, though "sporadic (and) often at lengthy intervals ... lasted through the years and finally developed into an annual exchange of Christmas letters". In addition to matters related above, early exchanges discussed "the merits and demerits of various publishers (for few people knew them better than he)" as WG considered a change of stable. Though "chance took the decision more or less out of my hands", he wrote, still he "greatly appreciated the kindness and consideration which led [FS] to devote so much time and thought to the affairs of a casual pen friend."¹³

After three years of correspondence, the two men met for the first time in 1946 while WG was at Rank in London working on the production of *Take My Life*. Invited by FS to lunch at The Ivy in Covent Garden:

*I went along in some apprehensiveness at the thought of what I should say to the author of "The Georgian Literary Scene" ... I need not have worried about my conversational gifts; they were not needed. He talked wittily and entertainingly all through lunch, and, tipping the waiter ten shillings – a big sum in those days – he strode out, pausing only to exchange a pleasantry with [publisher] "Jamie" Hamilton on the way.*¹⁴

FS writes again on 26 July 1947, having just finished *Demelza*, and again offers fulsome praise:

I have now read 'Demelza' with great admiration and interest. Its 'architecture' is extraordinarily able; and the power of many of the scenes is remarkable. So is the beauty of some of the others. The play of character and incident is quite outstanding.

*I won't say that I think it is a better book than 'Ross', because I doubt if there is anything to choose between them; but the loss of novelty in the second book – so much of its intrigue having already been foreshadowed in the first – suggests that as the interest is certainly equal, 'Demelza' is a particularly sustained effort. I never lost the essential curiosity in the people or their doings. So I congratulate you most warmly on doing such an admirable job.*¹⁵

After a page-and-a-half about other matters, FS then returns to the subject of WG's writing and shows, almost thirty years ahead of BBC1's *Poldark*, great prescience:

*I hope your film work continues to give you the interest you found in it earlier. I thought some of the scenes in 'Demelza' would be magnificent material for development into such work and feel that you have a particularly strong sense of dramatic scenes and settings. Indeed, the wealth of such scenes – the gaol rescue, the riots, the gambling scenes and the wrecks, e.g. – in this book seems to suggest that you are a mine of material for drama of a kind which is both psychologically and scenically exciting.*¹⁶

The last of the five available letters from FS to WG from this period is dated 22 December 1947 and returns to the topic of *Take My Life*, which had by then been on general release for seven months:

I must tell you that we [i.e. FS and his wife Mary] have been to see several films this Autumn, and that, when we saw that 'Take My Life' was at the Cranleigh cinema we made up our minds to go ... We enjoyed this film tremendously. We had just previously seen several which were more ambitious – e.g. 'Great Expectations' – and we agreed that there wasn't one of them that we had enjoyed so much as 'Take My Life'. It was very well acted; but the dexterity of it, and the incidental ingenuities, coupled with the suspense and dramatic power, belonged to the whole conception. I do not wonder that it got good notices. Since then my wife has read 'The Merciless

*Ladies' with absorbed attention; and now she is deep in 'Ross Poldark.' This is a real testimony, as she gets little time for reading, and is several books of mine behind.*¹⁷

By the late 1950s, a friendly Yuletide exchange of news and Christmas wishes was the norm. In 1959, in a letter dated "Christmas Day in the Morning", WG discloses that the Graham family's imminent departure from Cornwall has them in "great turmoil":

... now that we have burned our boats, the rational gets infused with the emotional, and I fear in my case the psychological, so that a mere uprooting operation takes on altogether too much importance.

This letter, by the way, starts with the salutation "Dear Swinny" and ends with a handwritten postscript plea that FS should not "in retaliation, I pray you, call me Winnie!"¹⁸

By the end of 1960, after a summer on the Riviera in a Cap Ferrat villa "about a mile from W.S.M." (i.e. W. Somerset Maugham), during which time he "did practically no work", WG was back once more in England. He reports having started on "what promises to be an impossibly long historical novel [i.e. *The Grove of Eagles*] ... For many years [American publisher] Doubledays have been hanging out lures and at last I have fallen."¹⁹

On 14 December 1961 the disorganised state of his desk is on WG's mind:

It is a relief to hear of someone else who lives and continues to be creative in the midst of minor chaos: most of my friends seem to have such tidy habits.

He then reports the opinion of their common friend Edmond Segrave, editor of *The Bookseller* and seeming first coiner of "Swinny", that FS's latest novel "was by far the best you had written for years". WG then describes his new house, bought but not yet lived in, as "rather horrid" and the process of its renovation as "completely fascinating" but also "the most delightful way of going bankrupt."²⁰

Two years on, by now settled into his new home, Abbotswood House, no longer "horrid" but "a Victorian-cum-Georgian mix-up (that) suits us very well", he praises FS's latest novel, *Figures in the Foreground*: "There's no one can write that type of book quite like you, or with the wisdom or the breadth of knowledge or the wit. I borrowed it to read but am getting it as a Christmas Present, so shall have leisure to read it again then."²¹

Though the Grahams' late 1960 relocation to Sussex brought the two men geographically much closer, WG stated in 1985 that throughout their near forty-year acquaintanceship, "actual meetings were quite few" – partly because for the first seventeen of those years one man lived in Surrey and the other in Cornwall and partly because Swinnerton's infrequent trips into London were usually taken up with engagements booked so far in advance that finding a mutually convenient date was not easy. But WG recalled a lunch he was able to stand his friend early in 1960. The Grahams were living at this time (just prior to their six-month sojourn in the south of France) in a fourth-floor flat in Harley Street. Concerned about the problem the stairs might pose his 75-year-old friend:

My wife instructed me to bring him up slowly; there were chairs on each landing and he might well like to rest on the way. However, when he arrived he marched ahead of me up the stairs at a brisk pace talking all the time, and seemed not a bit out of breath when we got to the top. There he presented my wife with a bottle of Cointreau before tucking into a large and conversational lunch.

WG continues:

The last time I saw him (and it is sad it is so long ago) was in 1967 when I was Chairman of the Society of Authors and a dinner was arranged to commemorate the centenary of Arnold Bennett's birth. The Society was very reluctant indeed to invite anyone to speak who was not a member of the Society and never had been; but I said that unless F.S. was invited as the principal speaker I was not prepared to chair the dinner. So he was invited, and of course made an excellent speech. [In his younger days, Swinnerton had known Bennett well, having first

introduced himself, somewhat like WG, by sending the older man one of his novels.]²²

*In my introduction that night I said half jokingly that when it came time to celebrate the centenary of Frank Swinerton's birth I looked forward with pleasure to his being there in person. By what a small margin was that splendid occasion missed!*²³

The total number of letters the two men wrote to each other in forty years is not known. Just one a year each way would make eighty, but it seems that far fewer than that survive. The apparent loss of so much correspondence is regrettable. Nonetheless, the little which has survived gives a piquant flavour of the long and mutually satisfying camaraderie that first sprang up and then flourished between two of literature's unsung but most dedicated and loyal of servants, indicative of another virtue common to both: a precious talent for the making, cultivating, supporting and keeping of friends.

(2) RICHARD CHURCH

Richard Church (1893-1972) was an English writer. Though best-known as a poet and critic, he also wrote novels, essays, verse plays, travel books and fiction for children. His 1937 novel *The Porch* won the *Femina Vie Heureuse* Prize²⁴ and 1955's *Over the Bridge*, first of three acclaimed volumes of autobiography, the *Sunday Times* Prize for Literature.²⁵ Church, thrice-married, was made a CBE²⁶ in 1957.

Though Church and WG corresponded for at least the last fifteen years of the older man's life, exactly when and how their association began is unclear. It may well have been common friend Frank Swinerton who first brought them together. Church had become acquainted with Swinerton (who seemed to know everyone) in 1933²⁷ and their friendship ripened through the years via regular meetings and correspondence – and Swinerton had also been in touch with WG since 1943, as previously noted. A letter dated 14 February 1956²⁸ which records the three men lunching together provides the earliest documented confirmation of a WG / Church link (with Church not at that point having reviewed any WG novel). Possibly they met in the Savile Club, which WG joined in 1950 and to which Church

also belonged, or perhaps it was mere literary lunch happenstance. We'll probably never know.

But since friendships may be forged in myriad trivial or random ways, what does it matter? It matters only because the writer, in cultivating a critic, may have – or be seen or thought to have – an ulterior motive, as WG himself acknowledged in his first letter to Swinnerton, which he deigned to write only once the other's reviewing days were done.²⁹ That the same cannot be said about WG and Church is in no way to impugn or malign either man – but the lack of more detail concerning their first liaison *is* a pity all the same.

Of course, for as long as the author continues to cut the mustard, the impinging of friendship's obligation upon integrity and impartiality will not be an issue, leaving the critic free to pronounce with candour, conscience clear. What happens, though, when the reviewer's pal turns in a stinker? Where will his loyalties lie then?

Fortunately for all concerned, by remaining sure-footedly on his game, mid-career WG obviated any such question. The first of his novels to be reviewed by Church seems to have been *The Sleeping Partner* (1956), of which the critic wrote:

*Mr. Graham is no less skilled [than Eric Ambler] in realistic narrative. But he goes more closely to the personal exploration of motive and character. His tale is also told in the first person ... [Synopsis of plot] ... What happens after that I found quite terrifying. I shared the desperate peril in which this husband plunged himself as a result of his delayed hysteria after the climax. He was so obviously walking towards his doom, a fate quite undeserved. For Mr. Graham's book is, after all, a study in gentleness, with strong moral values quietly emphasised by a sense of nobility that pervades the book ...*³⁰

and, of 1959's *The Tumbled House*:

*He is one of those rare practitioners in the art of fiction who really does treat it as an art ... His new novel, I think, is his best.*³¹

Concerning correspondence, though nothing from Church to WG appears to have survived, fifteen letters or notes from WG to Church have been preserved, as detailed above. The earliest, dated 3 January 1957, is a short, handwritten note congratulating Church – "Well done, R.C., and well done literature" – on his receipt of a CBE.³² The next, dated 22 April 1961, thanks "my dear Richard" for taking "the trouble to write a personal letter about *Marnie*." We learn that Church found the book "arresting". WG confides:

*I too was worried about Marnie [his character]; but I refused the advice of my publisher and my agent, both of whom wanted me to soften the ending; and on the rightness of that I have no second thoughts. A psychiatrist who read the book in typescript said among other things: 'She'll be all right,' and from that I took a sort of comfort. He suggested that in these fairly enlightened days she might get off without even a prison sentence; but of that I have my doubts.*³³

In March 1963, Church reviewed the Bodley Head re-issue of WG's 1949 novel *Cordelia*:

*Winston Graham ... has a strong sense of dramatic tension, and some of his tales are almost unbearably exciting when he lets this element take command, as in his last two books, Marnie and The Tumbled House. Now he turns to the historic past ... [Synopsis of plot] ... All this would be a conventional story but for the quality of the treatment, and the wealth of minor characters and the dramatic situations that come crowding in to propel the tale along in the manner of Alexander Dumas. The people too have a vitality, with quirks of conduct and character to make them both dear and memorable to the reader. This period piece will add to the consideration that now begins to be given to Mr. Graham's work.*³⁴

On 23 March 1963 WG wrote from the Savile Club to thank Church for his "charming" review, for which WG was "most grateful".³⁵

The Book Society's December 1963 choice was WG's *The Grove of Eagles* and the man they chose to review the novel on their behalf was Richard

Church.³⁶ After reading a carbon copy of his friend's draft review³⁷ (see pp. 147-9), WG wrote an undated letter praising his "glittering and influential notice":

*... only a distinguished novelist ... could have written his appreciation with such insight and such breadth of judgment ... Thank you very much.*³⁸

He then responds to a comment of Church's concerning [\[influential academic and literary critic F.R.\]](#) "Leavis and the 'educated' young":

*When I first began writing I remember with great appreciation one or two books that Leavis wrote ... but in the last twenty years I have become a bitter opponent of his, and all the narrow, pseudo-superior exclusiveness that he and his disciples have thrust upon the literary world ... His apostles proliferate everywhere, often at second and third remove from the 'master', and the more second and third hand their judgments the more intolerant and intolerable they become.*³⁹

WG's next letter to Church, dated 11 April 1965, notes his concern on reading an article in the *Times*, penned by Church, disclosing that the elder man has been "confined for a long period" by illness. "In spite of what you say," writes WG, "I find it dreary to be indoors for long." He then suggests a lunch at Buxted with "Frank S"[winnerton] in "a couple of months" time.⁴⁰

Some three months later, Church published another enthusiastic review, this time of WG's then latest novel *After the Act*:

It is good to see at last that Winston Graham is receiving his due as a literary artist ... The author has a faculty for incisive, sparse presentation of character in conflict with temptation, and he does it in recognisable dialogue and circumstances that make the reader think: "There, but for the grace of God, go I." It is a disturbing faculty, with a moral authority behind it. What a theatre critic in the books says to the playwright narrator may have a slight reference to Mr. Graham himself, as an explanation of this faculty in action throughout his novels.

*"Fundamentally, you're the serious type – over-serious maybe; you take things too much to heart. But because of some curious quirk in your nature, what you put down on paper has a wry, off-beat twist to it, so that people look on it as the most advanced satire." But it also means that Mr. Graham's novels are based in spiritual honesty.*⁴¹

Once again this draws a warm (undated) letter of appreciation from WG in which he makes the observation previously recorded on page 153 that "the literary ectoplasm that stretches between" himself and the book's murdering playwright protagonist Morris Scott "is probably shorter, his profession being what it is, than in most of the characters I create."⁴²

WG's next two letters, both undated, appear to have been written one day apart in 1965: in the first, he expresses his "shock" and concern at learning, upon his return from "some weeks" in Sicily with Jean, of the "grave illness" of Church's second wife Katia and via the second he sends "our deepest love and sympathy" regarding "the tragedy [presumably Katia's death] that has overtaken you both." He goes on:

*I have struggled all my life to keep in existence a view of a benign element in the universe: as I grow older, this is more constantly attacked, not so much by the larger disasters as by the relatively small personal tragedies which are major in their effect on loving hearts.*⁴³

In a note written at the Savile Club on 21 December 1966, WG expresses, along with "our love and good wishes", his delight that Church has "resumed reviewing ... it is good to know you are with us again."⁴⁴ Then, on New Year's Day 1967 he wrote again:

My dear Richard

I was so glad to have your letter and so very pleased that you had found someone to share your life: it's too precious to be squandered, yet without some true companionship and affection it has too little purpose from day to day to make it worth while. We send our love and sincere wishes that all will be well with you both for many years to come.

He then goes on to lament that the forthcoming wedding of his daughter Rosamund to her American fiancé, though "a very nice chap ... heralds to some extent the break-up of our quartet in a way an English marriage would not."⁴⁵

In June 1967, Church offered his appraisal of *The Walking Stick*⁴⁶ (see pp. 163-4) and in a letter dated 27 June 1967, WG responded:

My dear Richard,

*I always think myself extremely lucky if I get a book out during one of the periods when you are back on regular reviewing, because you bring to your notices such generosity and such perception of an author's true motives and – one hopes – true worth, that he always feels – and perhaps is – a better writer for having these things said about him. You are a kind man, and a wise one; thank you.*⁴⁷

Though Church replied to this letter two days later, WG did not write again until 18 December due to his preoccupation through the latter part of the year with his wife's precarious health, though he did remember when writing to express his delight at news of Church's remarriage: "It is not good to be alone, and it will have been a great blessing that you had a good and kind friend to help you to try to reorientate your life."⁴⁸

Other than two inconsequential, partially dated notes (from 9 October, probably 1964⁴⁹ and from 14 January, probably 1969,⁵⁰ the first confirming a lunch date and giving directions to his home and the second passing on thanks for a Sunday lunch), there is just one more letter from WG to Church, once again written in response to an emphatically positive book review – in fact Church's last of a WG novel (this time *Angell, Pearl & Little God*) before his sudden death in March 1972:

Winston Graham is a novelist whose reputation grows steadily with every new book, because of his fidelity to the realistic technique on which he has founded his artistry ... I wonder if he has a photographic memory ... or does he carry a notebook? ... Whatever (his) method, here is storytelling that is powerful and professional in its architecture: so much so, that the reviewer

hesitates to offer a synopsis for fear of spoiling the pattern by over-emphasising one or other incidents, and prematurely exploding crises on which so much has turned, and has yet to turn again ... (Though) many writers of thrillers are skilled enough (in fictional mechanics), Mr. Graham has added to that expertise, as his interest in, and knowledge of, human beings as individuals deepens. I notice that book by book he tends to become almost painfully responsible for one or more of his characters, seeking to do justice to the person whose career is in his hands. But nowadays his purpose is to pass that responsibility to the person involved, and to move into the background himself, so that no suspicion of mechanical manipulation by the author can be fastened on him. This puts him into a major category as a novelist ... What subtle analysis of character Mr. Graham works into [Angell, Pearl and Little God], with minor figures, and above all, the evolution of the self-centred dilettante, mean and gluttonous, as he awakens to love for another person than himself, to be plunged into situations that might, in less masterly hands, be mere melodrama. Mr. Graham makes of them a catalytic agent, to precipitate the true character of Angell. I will not divulge what it is. I need only add praise for the clarity of prose style; its economy in descriptive writing, and its elasticity in the presentation of dialogue.⁵¹

Just a day after the publication of these lines, WG wrote:

My dear Richard,

What a lovely review. Thank you so very much – once again. Your notices of my books, by their thoughtfulness, by their appreciation, and by their depth of insight, seem to make me grow in stature while I read them! Bless you.

It is of course easy to appreciate the appreciator; yet I wonder if there is anyone else writing in England today who has the (apparent) leisure, the breadth of knowledge and the wide understanding of literary aims that you have and can so express themselves. Also I wonder if even you realise what value this sort of thing is to the (still) self doubting writer, not merely

because it helps him to think better of the book he has done but because it helps to solidify and stimulate his aims for the future. In this way criticism is genuinely creative.

As a matter of interest, I never ever carry a notebook – though when I come to the task of writing I almost always wish I had! When it comes to the business of writing dialogue which is not the kind I would speak myself I sweat endlessly, usually over-writing to begin, then cutting almost all the evocative or peculiar words out, then at a third attempt reinserting some of them, so that eventually it seems to read and sound right: a sort of tuning in process. And I suppose this sort of thing happens to some extent also in choosing incident and detail.⁵²

In all of this – in some part because of missing letters, but for the most part because even a full two-sided set would but hint at the fast-fading impression of a long, warm and very real human friendship – lurks a tantalising sense of the enduring bond between two of literature's most loyal servants, not to say unsung heroes (of which there are very many). Though the books of both men won prizes in their time,⁵³ Church is now little read and WG known mostly for his association with television's style-over-substance *Poldark*. But the faith they kept, and the gifts they left, endure.

(3) Max Reinhardt

Publisher Max Reinhardt, an only child, was born on 30 November 1915 in Constantinople (now Istanbul), Turkey to an Austrian father and Turkish mother of Austrian and, more distantly, Ukrainian extraction. His father spoke German to him, his nannies Greek, his mother's family French (the language of international Constantinople), he spoke Turkish in the street and attended the city's English High School.⁵⁴ Perhaps no wonder then that in *Memoirs* WG called him "a true cosmopolitan" as well as his "closest friend ... a man with a tremendous warmth of personality (and) supreme gift of friendship".⁵⁵ WG was one of the godfathers of Max's younger daughter Veronica (the other was Charlie Chaplin, whom WG came to know through this association). When between *After the Act* and *The Walking Stick* WG determined to change publishers, he relates that all his family wished him to go to The Bodley Head (then prospering under Max's

tutelage). Eventually, having sought unbiased professional opinion, he signed, despite domestic dismay, with William Collins. But, by then The Bodley Head had already published eight WG titles with twelve more to follow, making twenty in all between 1960 and 1991.

After her husband's death in 2002, Max Reinhardt's Papers (1967-1993) were donated by his widow Joan to the British Library. Included among them are ten postcards and six letters from WG to either Max or Max and Joan as well as letters to and from Bodley Head employee Jill Black and an order of service for the funeral of WG's wife Jean, which, no doubt, the Reinhardts attended.

The postcards are from Udaipur, India ("We had a lovely week in Goa") dated 25 February 1976; from Uckfield, Sussex, giving directions to Abbotswood House, dated 8 July 1981; from Crantock Bay, Cornwall, dated 21 October 1990; from Formentor, Mallorca, dated 1 September 1990; from Vienna, dated 29 April 1992; from Pollenca, Formentor, dated 30 August 1992; from Barbados, dated 25 February 1993; from Tonbridge, postmarked ? May 1993; from Morocco dated 14 October 1993 and from Vienna – written entirely in German – undated.

Of the six letters to Max, one is undated, with the other five all posted in the period February 1991 to March 1993. On 27 May 1991 WG wrote:

What a super evening – full of good food and old friendships! We did enjoy it. Thank you so very much. We whizzed home very happily: [WG's daughter-in-law] Peggotty and I in the Volkswagen trying desperately to keep in sight of the Jaguar's tail-lights forever disappearing into the distance.

One of my reasons long ago for moving to Sussex was so that we could see more of our special friends in London, chiefly you two, but alas it has not turned out that way ...

and on 21 January 1993 (just four weeks after his wife's death):

... the ghastliness of the last month is gone, but I rattle around in this house like a lost pea in a pod ...

On 25 January 1991, Jill Black of The Bodley Head got in touch:

This letter, after a long silence, is on POLDARK matters again. As you know, ours still have a small steady annual sale in hardback and we've always kept them in print. However, they do look rather old-fashioned now and the sale is not enough to make it possible to update their appearance and still charge the sort of published price that we could hope for in the library market.

She goes on to suggest, rather, a new omnibus edition of Poldarks I-IV. On 9 February, WG responded:

... the only time the four Poldarks have been packaged together – in a Collins Collectors' Choice – it ran to 1227 pages and was an enormous and unwieldy book ... As an alternative to your proposal and thinking over the situation and that you are slowly divesting yourselves of all my other books, I have been wondering whether you would consider selling the volume rights and the paperback rights back to me, and what you would want for them?

The 1152-page *Poldark Omnibus* (1991) was the twentieth and last WG title published by The Bodley Head.

(4) Denys Val Baker

Although known as a "Cornish writer" Denys Val Baker (1917-1984) was not actually a Cornishman (he was born in Yorkshire and grew up in North Wales and Sussex) – although his forty years in the county and his energetic promotion of the arts there through his *Cornish Review* and other publications should perhaps qualify him, like WG, as an honorary one.

Baker wrote a great many short stories – Michael Williams suggested he was possibly "the best short story author to have come out of Cornwall"⁵⁶ – as well as twenty-four popular volumes of autobiography and several novels. Between 1949 and 1952 he published ten issues of the *Cornish Review* then, between 1966 and 1974, with the help of South West Arts, a

further twenty-seven. He also edited, mainly for William Kimber, numerous short fiction anthologies and it was this element of his work in particular (see page 390) that brought him into contact with WG. Though the record suggests that their interactions were primarily business-based, the two clearly became friends also.

Kresen Kernow, Redruth holds a substantial DVB archive donated by Martin Val Baker after his father's death in 1984. This includes books, literary magazines, journals, manuscripts, correspondence (letters and postcards), press cuttings, articles and photographs. Though the archive is not comprehensively catalogued, meaning that full content details are unavailable, at least seven letters from WG as well as an undated postcard and two photographs are to be found.

In a letter dated 9 May 1968, WG thanks DVB for sending him a copy of the *Cornish Review* and says he will "bear in mind the possibility of a contribution ... but it's always agony to me to write an article."⁵⁷

In a letter dated 10 June 1971, apparently written at Falmouth's Greenbank Hotel, WG agrees to DVB's request to anthologise JACKA'S FIGHT.

In a letter dated 8 May 1974, WG writes: "If I pay in this cheque I shall have to pay a ridiculous amount of tax on it, so I am returning it to you ..."

In a letter dated 8 January 1982, WG writes:

When I had finished THE ANGRY TIDE I swore I had done with the Poldarks for ever – not because I was tired of them but because I had said all I wanted to say and I was determined not to go on just chewing over the old ground. However, after writing a play [Circumstantial Evidence] which had two different productions and toured the provinces but missed London by a hair, and re-writing an older book [The Merciless Ladies] and beginning a modern novel [The Green Flash] on which I got stuck, my ideas returned to the old Cornish scene, with the result [The Stranger from the Sea] that you are being so kind about.

Yes, I am doing another. Whereas I could have left THE TIDE for ever, the STRANGER, as you say, demands a continuance ...

The BBC badly wanted me to do another series when the last was finishing, but I wouldn't. Now, after four years, one can never be sure, for all the Top Nobs have changed, and new Top Nobs never like repeating the successes of the old Top Nobs. However, we shall see in due course ...

In a letter dated 26 January 1982, WG writes: "Oddly enough, I began a short story about a graveyard in Cornwall for "Winter's Crimes" ... but alas I never finished it. I expect I shall go back to it sometime." [NOTHING IN THE LIBRARY was published in *Winter's Crimes 19* (Macmillan; edited by Hilary Hale) on 19 November 1987.]

From a letter dated 3 July 1982: "Though I only drink wine, I always dread any form of hepatitis for fear of being put on the wagon ..."

On 9 February 1983, WG wrote from his Buxted home:

I'm afraid I have lost my reputation with you for "the quick reply" but I've had so many extra letters congratulating me on the New Year O.B.E. that I've had to ration the replies, otherwise I should have got no work done at all.

I haven't, alas, any short stories at all except those in ... "The Japanese Girl" and these I think you have already examined extensively. "At the Chalet Lartrec" might just conceivably be considered a ghost story, but even then it wasn't really haunted!

Glad you enjoyed "The Miller's Tale". By the time I got to the "end" I was just about pumped out with the effort, and I could see no other break, natural or unnatural, for another 70,000, which anyway would have made the book unduly long and the next (and I trust last!) probably unduly short, so I broke off when I did. It was, I fear, a bit abrupt.

After finishing it I took a busman's holiday and did 25,000 words of semi-autobiographical stuff for a picture book to come

out this July to be called "Poldark's Cornwall". Now I'm on Number Ten which, once again, I see as really the last ...

It's clear from preceding pages that WG and Val Baker communicated professionally over a good many years – by both post and telephone according to his son⁵⁸ – but was there a more personal or intimate relationship also? Martin Val Baker writes:

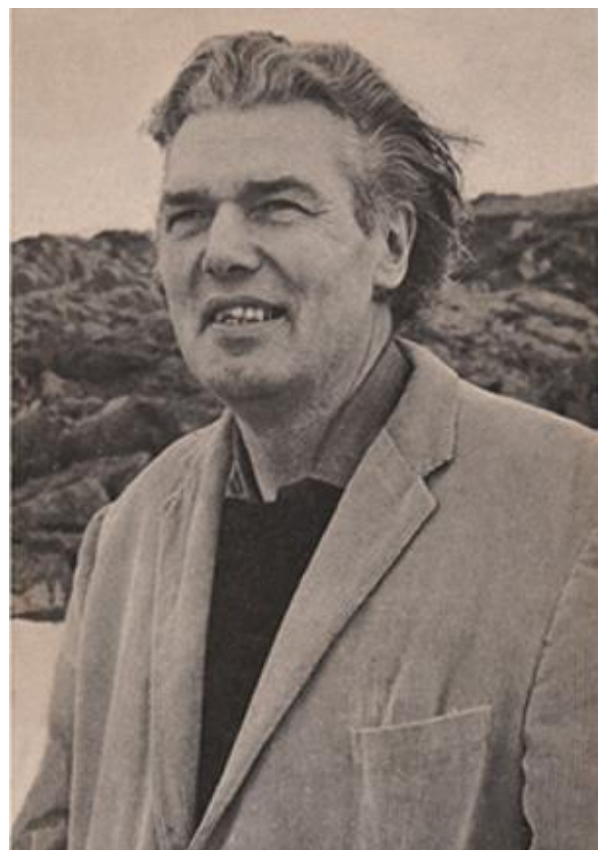
Father and WG used to meet up at various annual West Country Writers' conferences along with Henry Williamson, Howard Spring etc. Writing is a lonely profession and it was events like these that gave them the rare opportunity to "talk shop" ...⁵⁹

The documentary evidence suggests a relationship that ripened from an initial literary acquaintanceship and business association to warm, mutual, personal regard. Though both men lived in Cornwall through much of the fifties, their homes were twenty-five miles apart and, from 1960 on, WG decamped to Sussex, thus their liaison was, for the most part, necessarily more remote than face to face. But each left their mark and all the more effectively thanks to the help and encouragement of the other, which, in the case of two noted "honorary" Cornishmen, is as it should be.

* * * * *

And what about the other archival resources noted above? Do they repay scrutiny? What, if anything, does a study of the material reveal? In her will, Willa Cather (1873-1947), a great American writer, forbade the *post-mortem* publication of or even any quotation from her letters and it was not until 2013 that *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather* could be published. Of that book Joan Acocella noted:

Like so many other collections of letters, this one involves a great deal of non-earth-shaking material. "Dear mother," she writes, "The napkins you sent are so nice." "Dear mother, I'm so sorry you have a cold." Still, as in other collections ... these ordinary matters silt up to create a personality in a way that biography never can.⁶⁰



Four friends with whom WG maintained an irregular but ongoing correspondence: (1) Frank Swinnerton, (2) Richard Church*, (3) Max Reinhardt, (4) Denys Val Baker

* sketch by William Shackleton, 1923

I haven't read all of WG's archived letters by any means, and none of those I have read stand in danger of being mistaken for "literature" (which is fair enough, since that is not why they were written). Nonetheless, I have seen enough of them and found enough in them to recognise the veracity of Acocella's words. In *Memoirs* WG says that he reveals himself in his books, which is true to a point, but so, too, in his letters – slipped in among the family news and record of professional activities are snippets, often throwaway lines, that shed light: for example, despite professing to dislike public speaking, we learn that he not only undertakes it but on one occasion put off a "pretty big" operation in order to fulfil a *Yorkshire Post* Literary Luncheon speaking engagement;⁶¹ also that before his marriage he used to lecture in "this county" (i.e. Cornwall i.e. not just in Perranporth) to WEA and Toc H groups.⁶² He acknowledges his mother's "somewhat possessive nature".⁶³ He assures Richard Church just after his third marriage, "it is not good to be alone."⁶⁴ He reveals that (contrary to what he claimed in *Memoirs*) even before leaving the South West for a 1960 summer on the French Riviera, Sussex as an eventual destination was at the forefront of his mind.⁶⁵ We learn that Chapel Porth, St Agnes, looking west, was his "favourite Cornish scene".⁶⁶ He found it "dreary to be indoors for long."⁶⁷ As late as 1970, at the age of 61, he was describing himself as a "(still) self doubting writer" and confided thirty years later that "If I had my time again, I would wish for little different, except to be a better writer."⁶⁸ He said of proof-reading: "One needs microscope eyes."⁶⁹ After a conversation at a party, he sent Victor Gollancz a presentation copy of *Greek Fire* but only after removing its "pretty terrible" jacket.⁷⁰ He was a Galsworthy advocate⁷¹ and considered Swinnerton's *The Georgian Literary Scene* "a classic indeed and an outstanding volume in Everyman's Library".⁷² He professed himself "an admirer of [Hitchcock's] work for so very long"⁷³ but didn't like the director's *Marnie* one bit.⁷⁴ He records that the UK's devastating October 1987 hurricane left his garden looking like "a cross between Flanders fields and a timber yard".⁷⁵ He grouses about the relaxation of student dress code when already "99 per cent of the time undergraduates may dress like refugees, and often do."⁷⁶ He beseeches Glyndebourne admin to give patrons advanced warning of operas which are "the subject of experimental or very modern staging" so they may be more easily avoided.⁷⁷ He is in favour of a privatised train service.⁷⁸ The life sentence imposed on burglar-shooting farmer Tony Martin in April 2000 left WG with a "passionate sense of injustice".⁷⁹ He felt strongly enough about the

unfairness of points allocation in rain-affected cricket matches to devise and propose an alternative and allegedly more equitable system⁸⁰ and also deprecated moving the clocks back in winter resulting in the "hideous dreariness" of dark afternoons, wherein "the fall of night at four o'clock is like the war-time blackout which offers nothing better until the next day."⁸¹ He frets about "the inexorable move downwards of the Polar ice cap."⁸² *Windsor Magazine's* going rate for a short story in 1938 was fifteen guineas, with the publisher's advance on each new novel £25.⁸⁰ The writing of *The Grove of Eagles*, his "first truly historical",⁸⁴ which he found "tedious",⁸⁵ left him with "combat fatigue".⁸⁶ As early as 1937 he was selling serial rights to a Swedish translation of *The Dangerous Pawn* (see page 27)⁸⁷ – talking of which, though he "suppressed" his early novels and would have liked them "to sink without trace", he acknowledged in 1987 that "they were invaluable to me at the time".⁸⁸ He advised Tom Attlee that he would find the published version of *Cordelia* "considerably cut and some alterations made from the MS. I have tried to take the 'ringlets' effect out of Cordelia's character and to make Stephen less obviously a seducer; also [I] have re-written somewhat Mr Ferguson's confession of unfaith near the end. The book now ends more on the Cordelia-Mr Ferguson note than on the Cordelia-Robert Birch note."⁸⁹ We even learn that, back in 1959, there was still a postal delivery on Christmas Day!⁹⁰

* * * * *

So much for letters from WG in other hands, but what of the thousands he must have received through the course of a long literary life? Is the Truro Graham archive not bloated with myriad such missives? Though he didn't, it seems, go so far as to leave instructions concerning his papers in his will, WG does in *Memoirs* make a heartfelt plea for a clear distinction to be made between "an author's private life" and his "work"⁹¹ and, though there is ample evidence (see above) of correspondence over many years with friends such as Church and Swinnerton, there are no letters from either man in the Graham papers lodged by his children in 2011 with RIC – indeed, with very few exceptions, perhaps because he did not consider them "work", there are no letters from anyone at all.

It is perfectly possible, of course, that WG did not retain letters from friends – but we know that is not so, because when a Warwick University

PhD student wrote to him in 1985 asking for the loan of Frank Swinnerton letters to help with her thesis, he sent her five original such letters written in the period 1943 to 1947. Though she copied and returned them, they did not subsequently appear in the Truro archive. Indeed, the only non-business letters to be found there are a set of nine written by Tom Attlee in the period 1938 to 1954, and those concern the writer's opinion of assorted WG manuscripts rather than touching on anything more personal. So did WG, in accordance with his privacy-first policy, burn or otherwise destroy the letters of Swinnerton, Church and others? To have done so would have put him in select company: Dickens, Trollope, James, Whitman, Hardy and Maugham are six among many writers to have committed letters and papers to the flames in a fruitless and arguably misguided effort to keep researchers and biographers at bay. Possibly he was thinking less of himself than his correspondents – but Swinnerton and Church both sold their own papers to American institutions of learning in the 1960s, indicating personal unconcern regarding the prurience of posterity, so why should WG show altruistic concern on their behalf? In electing to destroy their letters to him (if that, as their absence suggests, is what he did), WG deprives scholars the chance to read their thoughts and so, perhaps, better understand the man – an opportunity that Swinnerton and Church themselves saw fit to offer by virtue of the sales noted above. The few letters from Swinnerton to WG that did chance to survive show that listening to both sides of a conversation is rather more than twice as illuminating as hearing one side only.

WG's contention that his works alone contain him is fanciful, of course; they may contain the greater, better part of him and the only one he cared to present to the world, but because he was human, he was multi-faceted, as are we all. He cites Tolstoy's contention that a great writer is incarnate in his works. Wilde – a man with more cause than WG to fret about want of privacy – expressed a similar thought: that good artists exist simply in what they make, and consequently are perfectly uninteresting in what they are.⁹² On the last page of his delightful if occasionally disingenuous memoir WG described his private life as "all very dull" (did he *really* see himself that way?) even though the three hundred pages that went before forcefully suggested otherwise. The little correspondence left behind hints at little more than a shadow of the man he was; raises as many questions as it answers, all of which is rather sad.

(8) the Poldark phenomenon



“ But providence was on the mother's side, and ... at a quarter after eight she was delivered of a baby boy, alive and well. There was a total eclipse of the moon at the time. ”

Warleggan, 1.1

(i) The novels

The twelve Poldark novels that Winston Graham published between 1945 and 2002 may constitute a saga, but were never planned as such and far from evenly spaced. His original intention was to write a single historical novel telling an apparently simple story inspired by something he read in the 1920s:

When I was in my late teens I read a short story – hardly more than an anecdote – by the German writer, Hermann Sudermann, about a beautiful woman who made a wrong decision in her youth, which ruined the lives of the two men who loved her. This remained in my mind and would not be banished; years later that seed came to life in the story of Ross Poldark, his cousin [Francis], and Elizabeth Chynoweth, whom they both wished to marry.¹

Dramatist and novelist Hermann Sudermann was a prolific journalist turned author perhaps best remembered now for his 1893 play *Heimat* (*Homeland*) and if WG's comment above is taken at face value, the likeliest candidate among his numerous short stories to fit the bill is *La Donna e Mobile* from *Im Zwielficht : Zwanglose Geschichten* (*In The Twilight : Casual Stories*) first published circa 1886 (the British Library's copy, dated 1891, is from the book's ninth edition). The title was published in English translation in 1928² (the year of its author's death) which chimes very closely with the time frame ("in my late teens") of WG's recollection above. Here is Sudermann's story in full:

La Donna e Mobile

by Hermann Sudermann

It makes me think of a woman whom I met yesterday in the street who looked at me with deep gratitude because I didn't greet her. You might find that strange. I agree, therefore I must explain things to you in more detail as it is psychologically of interest.

A few summers ago I'd spent a few weeks boating on the Rhine, and was on my way home to Berlin. Having deliberately got onto good terms

with the guard of the train at Frankfurt I had been able to remain alone in my compartment. Unfortunately not for long.

At the station of Elm, a delightfully located little village in Franconia, the guard regretfully shrugging his shoulders opened the door, and in came a thickly veiled, elegant lady with a voluptuous, still youthful figure. She had a handkerchief screwed up in her hand, which she pressed for a moment against her forehead. She then turned round towards the platform, from where a good number of pieces of hand luggage, a sunshade, a Russian leather vanity case, an embroidered travel pillow, a striped plush blanket and the like were handed up to her.

Then a dark-bearded man entered, looking to be in his mid-thirties, who politely doffed his hat before sitting down next to the woman.

They sat for a while, neither of them talking, he holding her hand and staring quietly at it. She did likewise though from time to time her body shook as if she was deeply upset.

She was the first to break the silence. "How much longer do we have?" she asked. It was a softly veiled voice that was pleasant to listen to.

"35 minutes," he said, looking at his pocket watch.

"Oh my god," she uttered painfully.

"You'll be in Berlin by evening, after it's dark" he said after a pause.

"When will you arrive in Zurich?" she asked.

"Tomorrow morning" he replied, "when there'll be 100 miles between us once more."

She squeezed his hand harder. "But you'll write to me often, won't you?"

He nodded.

"Every other day, as always?" she continued.

"Surely, my dearest", he replied quietly and lovingly. "How could it be otherwise? And you'll be responding immediately, like always. And do write to me about the children, you know how important they are to me."

"You are so nice!" she answered, quietly nuzzling her whole body into him then shivering at his touch, and, slowly lowering her head, sank onto his shoulder in intimate, unconscious devotion.

Once more they sat there quietly, each occupied with their inner thoughts.

They took no notice of me as an on-looker at all. Why should they? When two souls obviously joined in such fashion are soon about to separate there can be no-one else in the world.

Besides, I thought it appeared as if I really was engrossed in reading my book which according to the bookshop owner in Frankfurt was the latest and finest publication by "Guy de Maupassant", so they need have no fear for any public show of sympathy I might have felt for their situation.

She removed her veil. A full but pale face with interesting crinkles of tiredness came to light. The eyes, which seemed to be beautiful, were red from crying.

Poor woman!

They started talking again. It was an intimate conversation, one in which I was unfortunately only able to catch a few words, yet both their hearts were so full of each other that love knew no bounds.

The train whistled as the grotesque towers of the old town of Fulda came into view.

Immediately she started weeping loudly and as the train slowed she suddenly wrapped her shaking arms around his neck, crying out in terrible anguish.

He did his best to comfort her but, strong as he was, he could not hide his tears either. Then just in time he gently prised her away from him as the guard began to close the doors.

"Farewell," he said and, lips trembling, quickly jumped down onto the platform, closing the door with a bang just as the train started to move.

She didn't try to look for him. It was as if she had no power left and, sitting in the corner, began to cry piteously. As I thought it impolite to disturb her, I continued reading, though the words made little or no sense whatsoever.

When the train stopped half an hour later in Bebra, I heard her voice: "Sir, I'm sorry, I'm not feeling well. May I ask you to bring me a glass of water?"

That is how we met and within an hour or so I had managed to take her mind off her painful thoughts sufficiently enough to listen to me with a great deal of sympathy and even smiling from time to time. And there was more to come!

She told me that she'd met him in Hamburg and he had accompanied her as far as Fulda but was now returning to Zurich, adding that he had to remain in Switzerland because of his many business affairs whilst she had to stay in Berlin.

"Do you also live in Berlin?" she asked, a worried expression suddenly appearing. When I confirmed I did, she winced. From then on she became

quieter and after a while said that she was tired and needed to get a little sleep.

And she really did sleep too, with short interruptions for a good five hours, lying there, her small feet against a chair and her head in her pillow, her abundant bosom rising and falling with her breathing, though from time to time a nervous twitch would cross her face.

In Halle two new passengers entered which didn't interrupt her as she kept on sleeping. She only awoke fully just before the end of the journey.

"Ah, yes, we're nearly there" she said, looking out of the window.

The rest seemed to have done her some good as her cheeks were rosier with a little smile appearing on her face.

With a burst of energy she started collecting her luggage and the closer we came to the city the more expectant her expressions became, seeming as though she couldn't wait for the moment when we would reach the station, looking out of the window all the time and getting up and sitting down again.

Finally we arrived.

"Thank god," she said cheerfully and stretched a little, as one sometimes does when a secret fear combined with a happy expectation occurs in one's heart simultaneously.

"May I help you find a cab?" I asked.

"Thank you very much," she said with a puzzled smile, "but my husband is waiting for me."

Suddenly she stared at me horror stricken, her cheeks aflame and her face reddening in shame, and violently tried to snatch at the air as if wanting to retrieve and take back her words.

"Oh my god!" she said, striking her forehead, and immediately started sobbing loudly.

"My dear Madam," I whispered, but she didn't hear me.

Then the doors were suddenly opened.

"Rosa, Rosa," many voices shouted, "there you are!" In front of the train stood many ladies, old ones and young ones, also a gentleman holding two children's hands.

And, still sobbing, she fell into his arms ...³

Rosa's anomalous situation of loving two men at once is closely mirrored by that of Elizabeth in the opening pages of *Ross Poldark*. Clearly WG's

sprawling saga drew as it developed from much more than this one slight story. Nonetheless, his identification, some fifty years on from reading it, of its importance as a seed is persuasive. Once planted into the fertile soil of his imagination circa 1928, it not only sprouted, albeit slowly, to bloom first in 1945 (*Ross Poldark*), but was still producing (*Bella Poldark*, 2002) more than seventy years on.

* * * * *

The Poldarks first appeared on paper in the early days of World War II. WG, awaiting call-up, would walk a mile from his Perranporth home to his mother's empty bungalow to write and the story he began in 1940 concerned a group of characters already jostling in his mind. Here's how he described in 1976 how some of them came to be named:

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 [\[see pp. 71-2\]](#) 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 [see pp. 108-9]. Warleggan was not only the right length but, I believe, gives the right impression – of power and industrial strength.⁴

WG cited the Lemon family as the principal model for the Warleggans,⁵ with his son Andrew naming Sir William Lemon (1748-1824) as a basis for George.⁶ But, in respect of both George and Elizabeth, WG also refers intriguingly to templates of more recent vintage:

Elizabeth and George are based on people I knew. Most are composite characters. ... There are exact parallels to Elizabeth and George, but no one is exactly parallel to Ross Poldark.⁷

We do know that Ross's distinguishing characteristics – both physical and psychological – were based in part on a young RAF officer WG met on a train while travelling to Truro.⁸ As for *Ross Poldark*, after its tentative 1940 beginning, the book languished until 1945 (though four others were written in the interim), but, once published, was "a terrific success in Cornwall."⁹ *Demelza* followed in 1946, *Jeremy Poldark* in 1950 and *Warleggan* in 1953, since when the four early Poldarks have never been out of print. Significantly, WG did *not* regard the books following *Ross* as sequels, but saw the quartet, rather, as "one very long novel which broke off at convenient points."¹⁰

After *Warleggan*, WG put Poldark behind him. Ten other books followed, including some of his best (*The Tumbled House*, *After the Act*, *Angell*, *Pearl & Little God*) and most acclaimed (*Marnie*, *The Walking Stick*) as well as another historical romance (*The Grove of Eagles*) again set in Cornwall, but this time harking even further back to Elizabethan days of Raleigh¹¹, Drake and the Spanish Armadas. All, according to their author, "were infinitely more successful"¹² than his Poldark novels."

Throughout this period, he had no thought of ever reprising Ross, Demelza, Elizabeth or George:

I had drifted away to a different style and pattern. My work had become more sophisticated, less romantic. I was older. The mood had passed.¹³

But who knows what the future holds? In a foreword to his eleventh Forsyte title, published in 1930, twenty-four years after his first, John Galsworthy wrote, almost apologetically:

*It is hard to part suddenly and finally from those with whom one has lived so long ...*¹⁴

a sentiment that WG would surely share. Whether or no, in 1971 he determined to write one further Poldark novel, concerning the parentage of Valentine Warleggan. So began *The Black Moon*. This storyline took three books to work out, the last of which, *The Angry Tide* (Poldark VII), was published in 1977.

Poldarks VIII, IX and X – *The Stranger from the Sea*, *The Miller's Dance* and *The Loving Cup*, focusing on the next generation of Poldarks – followed one upon the other between 1981 and 1984. Then, after a six-year sabbatical that produced non-Poldark works *The Green Flash* (1986) and *Cameo* (1988), 1990's *The Twisted Sword* was published, like *Warleggan* before it, as "the final Poldark novel". And so, for twelve years, it was. But the story had a life of its own, as its author always understood. More than once he described it as "organic", meaning living; capable of spontaneous growth. No surprise, then, that, come 2002, come *Bella Poldark* (Poldark XII), its author almost 94. You can't help but feel that, had he not died the next year, the saga would be running still.¹⁵

But why Cornwall and why the 1780s?

The first is straightforward enough: though born and raised in Lancashire, WG had moved to Cornwall with his parents in 1925

*at an impressionable age, and immediately took a tremendous liking to the county ... For a number of years I remained an outsider, a visitor in temperament if not in fact [but] as time passed I slowly came to know the Cornish better, and I suppose they came to know me. And a sort of affinity – at least I believe it to be an affinity – grew up.*¹⁶

By 1948, indeed, he confided to a Plymouth audience that

*now [I] sometimes [feel] ... more Cornish than the Cornish.*¹⁷

Natural enough, then, that he would wish to tell his story about and set his story among them. But, as to period, why hark back 150 years to the late 18th century? By the end of WWII, he had already published three novels (*Into the Fog*, *Strangers Meeting* and *The Forgotten Story*) set in a Cornwall either contemporaneous (the first two) or of the then-recent past and would eventually produce two more (*The Grove of Eagles* and *The Ugly Sister*) set in the 16th and 19th centuries respectively. But, concerning his *magnum opus*:

*What, I believe, drew me to that particular period [i.e. the late 18th century] was a realisation that it held so much which has since been lost: 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 town houses – and obviously all the other aspects of life then: the smuggling, the beach-watching for wrecks, the poverty, the rise of Wesleyism, the beginning of banking as we now know it; and the new-rich mercantile families that grew up round smelting and the foundries.*¹⁸

*In the 18th century, Cornwall ... loomed far more importantly in the scheme of things than it does today. [It] returned 44 members to Parliament; there was also the productivity of its tin and copper mines and its strategic position in times of war. Society, too, in the county was much more self-contained and active.*¹⁹

So, a daunting choice necessitating copious, multi-faceted research involving miles of travel, mountains of correspondence and long months of study – *every novelist should know and thoroughly understand what he is writing about*,²⁰ he said – but the reward the reimagining of a bygone era chosen for its lustre, its vigour, its lost majesty, but also for the sharp contrast between the misery and hardship imposed by poverty and want existing cheek by jowl with affluence and privilege – grist enough, surely, for any storyteller's mill.

Research: rigour and reward

Without their creator's masterly way with words, the books would be nothing, of course, but what sets them apart as much as anything else and makes them so richly rewarding to read is the solid foundation of research and learning that underpins them – and which, crucially, as a foundation should be, *is hidden from sight*; is delivered with such a light touch that you don't even realise it's there.²¹ The quote on the title page of this chapter concerns the total lunar eclipse – the "black moon" – during which Valentine Warleggan was born and, though it may be wholly incidental to the development of WG's story, the fact is that there was just such a lunar eclipse across all of Europe and Africa on the date and at the time WG tells us. Nothing about the event is made up. With that, he sets his stall out for the chronicle to come, and what you find when you look is that this same scrupulous attention to historical exactitude extends into many areas. A sprinkling of readily recognisable historical figures – the Prince Regent, Wellington, Canning, Wilberforce, Owen, Faraday, Brunel – is used to root the texts in a recalled rather than an imagined past, but when Dwight Enys names three men he studied under in London – Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Leake and Mr. Percival Pott²² – those too are real people. Similarly, when he tells Ray Penvenen that "ninety years ago one of my ancestors was High Sheriff of Cornwall"²³, his claim is supported by the fact that in 1709 the holder of that office was indeed Samuel Enys. Similarly, the reader is informed that John Trevanion of Caerhays was "Sheriff of Cornwall at some early age"²⁴ – which is also true: Trevanion held the office in 1804, aged 24. We are told that James Blamey serves "under Admiral Gell"²⁵, which would be Admiral John Gell (1740-1806). Bull and Trevithick,²⁶ the two young Redruth engineers engaged by Ross to build a steam pump for Wheal Grace are strong steam pioneers Edward Bull (c1759-1798) and Richard Trevithick (1771-1833). After marriage to his sister Jane in 1797, Trevithick became the brother-in-law of Hayle Foundry owner Henry Harvey (1775-1850), whom we also meet. So too inventor of the compound steam engine Arthur Woolf (1766-1837) and polymath Goldsworthy Gurney (1793-1875).²⁷ All are genuine historical figures. Geoffrey Charles marries Amadora de Bertendona, whose ancestor Don Martin de Bertendona (1530-1604) "commanded a squadron of the famous Armada and ... each of the succeeding armadas"²⁸: quite true, as WG himself confirms in *The Spanish Armadas* (Collins, 1972).

He not only pays attention to but *exploits* historical events, for example, the action which sees Dwight shipwrecked on the French coast is based on a real naval engagement between British and French ships which took place in the western reaches of the English Channel on 23 April 1794, and the subsequent invasion into north-western France by Royalist sympathisers not only happened just as WG describes it, but was led by the men he names, who met, as related, the individual and collective fates he attributes them.²⁹ WG uses the invasion as a pretext for Ross to lead a small band into Brittany to free Dwight from Quimper prison – another real place, a former convert turned gaol. He accurately describes its appalling conditions and even namechecks one of its more notable inmates: Lady Anne Fitzroy, who was interned there for nine months after the ship she was travelling on from Lisbon was taken by the French. Thus Dwight's liberation by Ross and Co. is a fictional episode cleverly embroidered into documented historical fact.

In respect of geography and topography, the young WG perforce imagined Nampara and its neighbouring villages, coves, mines, estates and landmarks. But Nampara overlooks a very recognisable Perran Sands – renamed in the books Hendrawna – with nearby St Agnes (in which Stippy Stappy Lane runs down to Trevaunance Cove) thinly disguised as St Ann's. What is more, neither Nampara nor Hendrawna are made-up names – if you look on any old map of Perranporth you'll find them there; so too Ramoth (the half-blind horse Ross inherited from his father). Marazanvose is moved three miles nearer the north coast and Illogan becomes Illuggan, which is more or less where the faction ends.³⁰ For once the author shifts from this wellspring of his story into the country beyond, then places – Truro, Redruth, Bodmin, Falmouth, St. Ives, Launceston, Plymouth, Penzance, Roscoff – become real, adding verisimilitude (in contrast to Thomas Hardy, for instance, whose Wessex contained Casterbridge, Budmouth, Shaston and more but no Dorchester, Weymouth or Shaftesbury).³¹ As the saga unfolds, its canvas expands exponentially, taking us to London, the Scillies, northern Europe and Portugal before eventually withdrawing to its Cornish root.

Cornish families and family homes are authentically named and described, as are newspapers, periodicals and books. For example, in *Warleggan*, WG tells how, by innocently changing hands, a children's book called *The*

History of Primrose Prettyface becomes instrumental in unmasking an informer. First published by John Marshall circa 1781 and still in print today, the book is both real and period specific. References to foods, medical practice (such as it was), entertainments, folklore and fashion are consistently authentic, as, even, is table-talk and gossip ("Prinny ... has deserted ... Caroline altogether...")³². The names and locations of hotels, inns and taverns are usually historically accurate, as are those of churches. Days of the week are always "correct": thus when we read that All Hallows' Day 1795 (Dwight and Caroline's wedding day) fell on a Sunday³³ or that Christmas Day 1799 fell on a Wednesday³⁴ or that 17 January 1815 (Jeremy and Cuby's wedding day) was a Tuesday³⁵ – so they were. Though it may not seem important to the reader, WG adheres faithfully to the calendar at all times. He even diligently reports the weather.

You might think a novel's weather would be summoned up by its author and manipulated freely, within the bounds of reason, to serve his plot. After all, a warm year, a wet year, it makes little difference to the reader. But, as with so much else, significant weather events in Poldark are rooted in historical fact, thus pushing the tale ever closer to some version of recreated "reality". We are told that an exceptionally cold snowy winter set in on Christmas Eve 1794 and didn't let up until finally a spring thaw caused flooding in many regions.³⁶ And the real weather back then?

*The winter of 1794/95 was exceptionally severe, with the very cold conditions setting in on Christmas Eve 1794 (though it had been cold since November). The frost then lasted, with some breaks, until late March ... On 23 February, the Severn was frozen over, and so was the Thames ... April brought significant flooding.*³⁷

The summer of 1797 is described as "hot" and "lovely"³⁸ which is again in accordance with meteorological records. The winter of 1813-14 is described as "the hardest ... for many years"³⁹ – it was, in fact, "one of the four or five coldest" in the last 330 years⁴⁰ and the last (to date) in which the Thames froze over.

WG is equally scrupulous about the precarious fortune of harvesting and its effect on food supply (which perhaps explains his insistence on paying

close attention to the turning seasons). While the country was at war (which was nearly all of the time), food importation was compromised, meaning that the poor especially depended on a sufficiency of home-grown produce (i.e. a good harvest) to survive. Social unrest, including some riot and wrecking, fuelled by poverty and semi-starvation form part of WG's plot, as, given his self-imposed reportage straitjacket, was perhaps inevitable. Here is a brief account of the reality back then:

*The government was most anxious about the state of food supplies between 1795 and 1801. The year 1793 was a good average harvest year, but 1794 was below average, as was 1795 ... Reports from country districts of corn riots continued into the spring of 1795. The problem appeared to be at its worst in the West Country. Scarcity, high prices and concomitant unrest continued into the summer of 1795 and there was eager anticipation of the new harvest. [Its failure meant that] the produce of the 1795 harvest would not last until the future 1796 harvest [and] that further scarcity, high prices and unrest would certainly follow. This was indeed the case in late 1795 and early 1796. In fact the 1796 harvest turned out to be a good one ... and as a result a period of "relative" plenty existed. This lasted until the summer of 1799 ...*⁴¹

and what the reader finds is that WG reflects these conditions pretty much exactly. In fact, his regard for the historical record is such that when narrative purposes require him to deviate significantly from it, he feels obliged, almost apologetically, to point it out. Thus:

*I have taken some liberty with the dates at which the Truro elections took place, but the events as here recorded are otherwise very much as they actually happened ... The date of the Camborne riots differs from fact by a year.*⁴²

Language

On the third page of the first novel, we're confronted with the word *hornywink* (Odgers: "half-starved little hornywink though he is"). These lines come from the *Radio Times* of 4 October 1975:

[WG] was particularly pleased once when a Cornishwoman came up to him and said, 'I want to ask you something important. What is a hornywink?' ... He was able to tell her ... that it meant 'a downtrodden person.' She was delighted because she hadn't heard the word since she was a young girl.

Other sources claim that *hornywink* means *toad* (which best fits this context) or *lapwing*, but whichever meaning you choose to ascribe, the word serves as a colourful introduction to WG's sustained use of Cornish dialect and idiom, rendered not excessively or tiresomely but with judicious skill and care, just sufficient to lend authenticity and so enhance the reader's experience.

*What I have tried to do ... is write about [the Cornish] as they really are – or as I think they are – as I have known them, as I have read about them, as I have met them and liked them and laughed with them and talked to 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.*⁴³

If you read the complete canon you'll learn along the way that *veers* are young pigs and *meaders* mice, that a *whitneck* is a weasel and a *chet* a cat; that a *drumble-drain* is a bumble bee and *long cripple* (according to Jud) an adder, that to *teel* is to bury and that *croust* is a workman's lunch; that *half-saved* to a Cornishman means weak in the head and more besides. You may be left wondering about "nashed and allish", "Johnny Fortnight" and various other Paynter phrases.

In fact, WG was very particular about ensuring, as far as possible, that all his characters spoke with genuine eighteenth-century voices:

*Before I began to write ... I would always read Sterne, Swift, Gay, Chesterfield, Sheridan, in order to get something of the flavour and cadence of the speech of those days.*⁴⁴

He was upset during the production of *Poldark* (BBC, 1975) whenever the scriptwriters lapsed by putting twentieth century idiom (e.g. "You must be

joking!"⁴⁵) into the actors' mouths. In reading the books, his extreme care in the precise use of language is apparent throughout. Indeed, in the entirety of the canon, I can recall only two occasions on which a word or phrase jarred on my mind's ear: concerning Conan Whitworth, WG asks: "Was he too going to turn into a dude like his father?"⁴⁶ According to Merriam-Webster, *dude* was first used in print in 1876. Nonetheless, instinct tells me that WG would not have chosen to use the word without good reason to believe it was period specific, even if not generally recognised as such. Later he refers to the possibility of Bella becoming "a star" [performer]⁴⁷ which, rightly or wrongly, sounds a concept altogether too modern for 1818. But WG's dialogue is – *My Blessed Parliament! Ye great lootal! Ye've slocked my dattur!* – a consistent delight. Read or re-read, redux or anew, a world of pleasure awaits.

Trivia

As if all that wasn't enough, another highlight is the novels' cornucopia of random facts and lore, often slipped in and sometimes just hinted at so casually as to pass the inattentive reader by. The '70s trilogy in particular is replete with them. Here is a miscellany of examples:

We learn that in 1794 "the present Archbishop of Canterbury was the son of a grazier" (that would be John Moore (1730-1805), whose father was indeed a butcher and grazier).⁴⁸ The most recent hostile invasion of the British Isles, at Fishguard, Wales in February 1797 is recalled.⁴⁹ If you've ever used or perhaps just wondered about the expression "As quick as you can say Jack Robinson", *The Angry Tide* offers an explanation of its origin.⁵⁰ In the same book, Drake makes the surprising observation that "Opie lived round here" – he being John Opie RA (1761-1807) who was born between St Agnes and Perranporth and spent the first twenty years of his life in and around Truro before departing for London and painterly fame.⁵¹ We learn that *Pride and Prejudice* was published anonymously (in fact, as "by the author of *Sense and Sensibility*", who was identified only as "A Lady");⁵² that dahlias were first imported as a foodstuff (as a potato substitute) and only put to a secondary decorative use when the root's flavour failed to please⁵³ and that salt and wine were both, in times of war, contraband commodities.⁵⁴ We find that by 1810 the steeplechase "is become fashionable in Devon"⁵⁵; similarly, in 1812 come across "a new drink called ginger

beer".⁵⁶ In 1815, the ailing Andrew Blamey Snr is treated to good effect with "Dr Withering's new drug digitalis" (derived from foxgloves and still in use today).⁵⁷ Dr Anselm discloses that "the penny post comes at midnight".⁵⁸ We learn of duels fought between Canning and Lord Castle-reagh⁵⁹ and Sir Christopher Hawkins and Lord de Dunstanville⁶⁰; also that Russian war-wounded were billeted in Great Yarmouth⁶¹ (and were so hungry that they took to "drinking the oil out of the street lamps"). Stones were thrown and an airgun was fired at the King's coach as he travelled to the opening of Parliament, with the coach (then empty) later overturned and "near wrecked".⁶² Expat West Country MPs used to meet at "The Cornish Club" in Wood's Coffee House in Covent Garden.⁶³ I never knew until finding Drake about to undertake the task that working oxen were shod⁶⁴ or that Bristol is (or was) pronounced locally Bristow⁶⁵ or that Lord Byron, who was related by marriage to the Trevanion family, kept "a wolf, a bear, a monkey, a parrot and a tame crow".⁶⁶ WG compares an 1810 sun to "a six-shilling piece" – and such coins were indeed minted by the Bank of Ireland in 1804.⁶⁷ In the same year we attend a musical evening at which Nicholas Carveth plays "the clarinet, in its improved form just introduced by Iwan Muller."⁶⁸ In 1812, young Isabella-Rose bursts into a room "with the speed of a Congreve fire rocket" (a weapon of war developed in 1805, so another timely reference).⁶⁹ We hear that, two days after the fall of Paris in April 1814, Napoleon tried to poison himself.⁷⁰ Fitzmaurice advises the Poldarks, about to leave for France, to take knives and forks with them to offset a cross-Channel shortage.⁷¹ We learn that in 1820 London boasted five bridges over the Thames and, in Oxford Street, the longest city street in Europe.⁷² Ross makes casual reference to Jonathan Hornblower, inventor of the compound engine, whose "father had thirteen children and gave them all names beginning with J." He lists six, then dries up, though "used to know them all."⁷³ London-based historian Edward Gibbon (1723-1792) was six years an MP for Liskeard without once setting foot in the town.⁷⁴

* * * * *

So, an ambitiously imagined, scrupulously researched, vividly, insightfully written and magnificently realised achievement – for the author the pinnacle of a long lifetime's labour and for his readers a boon companion, broad and deep, adamant, peerless. For all that, the early books had not

been best-sellers – when WG revisited the series in 1971, he "cheerfully" told his accountant he was returning to "non-profit-making activities".⁷⁵ Nonetheless, when their publishing rights reverted to the author in 1959, The Bodley Head, a publishing house recently acquired by WG's friend Max Reinhardt, was happy to take them. Hardback republication of all four titles followed in 1960-1 with Fontana paperback editions (the first of very many) published in 1968-9.



Hermann Sudermann (1857-1928)

This keeping of his work before the public, WG suggests,⁷⁶ may help explain why the saga attracted cinema's interest – of course, the quality of the work might also have contributed, as might the author's track record of writing material (*Take My Life*, *Fortune is a Woman*, *Marnie*) known to translate well to the screen. In any event, after plans for a four-hour "sort of Cornish *Gone with the Wind*"⁷⁷ came to nothing, London Films eventually contracted with the BBC to produce a TV serialisation. Was WG's return to Poldark after an eighteen-year hiatus contingent on this decision? No, since by then (1974) *The Black Moon* was out and *The Four Swans* "half written".⁷⁸ Given that, any influence must have been the other way.

* * * * *

(ii) BBC / London Films, 1975-7

The four post-war volumes formed the basis of the first BBC TV series of sixteen 52 minute episodes (four per book) and the three novels written in the 1970s formed the basis of the second series of thirteen episodes (five devoted to *The Black Moon* followed by four each to *The Four Swans* and *The Angry Tide*.) The two series were broadcast in 1975-6 and 1977 respectively.⁷⁹

Four writers – Jack Pulman, Paul Wheeler, Peter Draper and Jack Russell – were engaged to write the first series, each tasked to dramatise one book, with continuity overseen by script editor Simon Masters. (Directing duties similarly were shared between Christopher Barry (episodes 1-4), Kenneth Ives (9-12) and Paul Annett (5-8 and 13-16).) Paul Wheeler disclosed in 2008 that the writers' brief was to write "a romp"⁸⁰ – something to engage, entertain but particularly to thrill their audience, in the manner of Wilkie Collins, whose mantra a hundred years earlier was "Make 'em cry, make 'em laugh, make 'em wait!"

But when WG saw Pulman's scripts of episodes 1-4, he was "outraged at the changes to Demelza's character."⁸¹ "White with anger"⁸², he tried without success to have the project cancelled. Strained relations between author and production team inevitably ensued, with the result that, beyond writing the source novels, Winston Graham had no direct input into the first series of *Poldark* – indeed, producer Morris Barry callously sent word

*that I would not be welcome on the set, and if I came to their location I would be treated as an ordinary member of the public.*⁸³

After Pulman's four "very bad"⁸⁴ opening episodes, WG acknowledged an improvement in Series One overall, although further "historically impossible" changes at its end dismayed him too:

*(The) burning of Trenwith would never have happened in England, nor did you ever see Cornish people turned out of their lands.*⁸⁵

Such was his ambivalence that he determined to set out a number of ground rules before consenting to the making of a second:

After the first BBC series in 1975 I said they couldn't do a second series unless they changed the scriptwriter, the director and the producer.⁸⁶



*Poldark, 1977: WG on location at St. Winnow, Lostwithiel
with BBC director Roger Jenkins*

With agreement reached, this time around his presence on set was warmly welcomed by cast and crew alike. He helped with advice and guidance re locations, scripts, narrative and period detail – in the final episode, he even made a brief appearance (see page 474) on screen.

WG was not alone in disliking the earliest *Poldark* episodes in particular. In a review headed "Historical codswallop" published the day after the first instalment aired, Alan Coren wrote:

I cannot recall, outside children's television, a major series production based on the clichés of historical romance. One wonders why the BBC should have chosen to do it when it is not only worthless as an exercise, but also impossible to screen

*seriously ... Last night, real three-dimensional people were forced to cry "He is not for you, Elizabeth!" and "You have a dark side that is unknown to me!" ... [No more than one expects] in this sort of rubbish.*⁸⁷

Clive James was more succinct but equally damning:

*The latest wall of corn from Cornwall turns out to be an anagram of 'Old Krap'. I rest my case.*⁸⁸

Another sceptic was Alistair Cooke. When *Poldark* aired in the USA on *Masterpiece Theatre* in 1977, he introduced the first episode with tongue firmly in cheek:

*Good evening. Tonight we begin a new series called Poldark, based on the four novels of Winston Graham ... and I can only say that now is the time for the party to settle in to a spate of loving, duelling, poaching, smuggling, wenching and marrying – not to mention banking and copper mining ...*⁸⁹

but later dismissed the production as

*God help me, nothing but contorted plot.*⁹⁰

Legions of fans on both sides of the Atlantic would surely disagree. In a 2007 survey, US viewers were asked to name their favourite series from more than 250 shown on *Masterpiece Theatre* over 35 years.⁹¹ Here, compiled from 30,000 responses, is their collective top ten:

(1) *Upstairs, Downstairs*, (2) *The Forsyte Saga*, (3) *I, Claudius*, (4) *Bleak House*, (5) *Prime Suspect*, (6) *The Jewel in the Crown*, (7) *Poldark*, (8) *House of Cards*, (9) *Reckless*, (10) *Moll Flanders*

Revealingly, a Channel 4 ranking of *50 Greatest TV Dramas* compiled by industry professionals in 2002 made no mention of *Poldark*, even though six earlier productions including *The Prisoner* (1967-68), *Z Cars* (1962-78) and *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1971-75) were placed.⁹² The last mentioned is worth noting, because the first twelve episodes of *Poldark* were required

to compete for an audience with that well-established ITV favourite, also screened on Sunday evenings. *Poldark* had the advantage of starting first (7.25 to the other's 7.55 p.m.) meaning that, provided viewers were engaged by what they saw, they might be reluctant to switch channels. In addition, *Upstairs, Downstairs* was by then in its fifth and last series, whereas *Poldark*, shaky start notwithstanding, was at least something new. In a 2003 obituary of WG, the *Times* wrote:

*The nation simply could not get enough of the handsome Cornish mine-owner, Ross Poldark, as created by Robin Ellis, and his lovely but skittish wife, Demelza, incarnated in the comely person of Angharad Rees. On Sunday after Sunday, as this handsome duo confronted the machinations of the ruthless banker and landowner Sir George Warleggan, while at the same time trying to cope with the ups and downs in their marriage, the public was drawn irresistibly to its television sets, putting the very future of religious worship in grave peril. In an era long before the tightly-breeched Darcy of Colin Firth had set female hearts a-flutter, the pair became, simply, the nation's sex symbols, and 18th-century Cornwall the period and the place everyone wanted to be informed about.*⁹³

Though the first episode of *Poldark* was watched by a disappointing 5.7 million viewers, by the end of Series One the number tuning in had more than doubled to 12.3 million, an audience won, a nation conquered, the serial's popularity beyond dispute. BBC Audience Research Report comments reflect this strongly positive response, with early reservations from a minority (Elizabeth: "dim", "wishy-washy", "too little emotion"; Ross: "not 'strange' enough", "where was his Cornish accent?") giving way by episode sixteen to near universal acceptance:

The acting was usually considered excellent. Angharad Rees's portrayal of Demelza had been, for many, one of the continuing delights of the serial ... but Robin Ellis was also much admired in the role of Ross ("a perfect Poldark"); viewers had special mention, too, for Jud and Prudie (as played by Paul Curran and Mary Wimbush) but all the parts were agreed to have been well taken. Camera-work, costumes and settings

were also approved, viewers commenting particularly on the "lovely Cornish scenery".

The first episode of Series Two attracted 10.2 million viewers. By mid-series the figure had climbed to 11.6 million, at which level it remained until series end. The episode one Audience Research Report noted:

Most viewers found a great deal to enjoy ... and applauded the idea of broadening the scope of the story to include the historical actuality of the French Revolution and the rise of Methodism. Tonight's story was considered very exciting as well as interesting. Those who had read Winston Graham's books praised the way the TV adaptation captured the spirit of the novels.



Mary Wimbush and Paul Curran

Though a handful of viewers "could not get used to a new actor playing ... Dwight Enys", feedback remained generally positive with the end-of-run response again overwhelmingly favourable: "excellent", "superb", "held my attention throughout", "immensely enjoyable", "a wonderful storyline and a wide variety of characters", "Cornish landscape beautifully photographed". Ellis, Rees and Bates "were singled out for particular praise".⁹⁴

The *Times* reference on page 418 to "the very future of religious worship" relates to the oft-made claim that church services were rescheduled to accommodate worshippers wanting not to miss *Poldark* – and, apocryphal as it may sound, a grain of truth pertains. In Series One, exterior scenes at Ross's home, Nampara, were shot on location at Botallack Manor Farm. When asked how the locals reacted to the film unit's visit, owner Joyce Cargeeg recalled:

*A lot of them were involved as extras, and others would line up along the garden hedge and watch. When the series was televised, everyone loved it, and the vicar had to change the time of the service because everyone was at home watching Poldark!*⁹⁵

Yes, me, too, and my memories of the programme's first run in the autumn of 1975 have always been fond. Though more than forty years ago now, I can still recall some of those cliffhanger endings the writers were under orders to contrive – a despairing Francis holding a pistol to his head; the foreman of the jury about to pronounce at Ross's trial – with the fretful week's wait to find out what happened next exactly their intention.

Manipulative? Maybe, but how we loved it, and how warm our collective memory of those more innocent, less sophisticated three-channel days, despite the yawning chasm of time. But that's the way of memory, to gild the past, more especially when unrevisited. And, for a long time, so it was, because no one had video recorders then and, as for repeats, odd as it may seem, given the drama's undoubted popular appeal, while the first series was re-screened twice in the UK (in 1977 then again in 1987-8), the second was not reprised at all. *Poldark's* eventual release on video then DVD has latterly made re-viewing possible – but try at your peril, for you may find to your dismay (especially if familiar with the books) that Cooke was right after all; that what memory holds dear has aged badly, proving on rewind a reductive, insensitive medium playing shamelessly and hammily to the gallery, presenting the bare bones of the novels with broad, banal strokes, the main thing in its favour an incidental propensity to steer some viewers towards the relatively wonderful experience of the printed page.⁹⁶ There, not spoon-fed, you have to think for yourself, the reward an interactive adventure (as the other is not), multi-faceted, textured, rich in observation,

conversation, fascination, nuance, replete with character and lore, life-affirming as the other is deadening, not an insubstantial snack to be gobbled, leaving one instantly hungry for more, but a bountiful, liberally spread banquet to be languorously savoured and digested at leisure.

I'm not alone in thinking that TV, whether "popular" or not, can't hold a candle to the books. In a review of *The Four Swans* Derek Parker wrote: "The thinness and debility of the recent television series did [the Poldark] books no justice."⁹⁷ In November 1976 Fontana released Poldarks I-V in a slip-cased paperback edition, "from which you may see," noted Philippa Toomey, "how an author's original creation outshines anything a TV serial can produce in the way of an "adaptation".⁹⁸ As for WG himself, no wonder he was discomfited, first and last. How could any writer not be? On *Desert Island Discs*, Roy Plomley asked him, concerning the first series of *Poldark*:

Isn't there a difficulty when long historical novels ... are adapted for television that the background and history are sacrificed for action so that, as a result, one is left possibly with melodrama – at any rate, with the basic human situations and not much to support them?

WG replied:

Well, this is what I was very much afraid of and I think it has happened to some extent because they could have been extended into a longer number of instalments than sixteen very easily. But, rather to my surprise, I find that a great many people have discovered some historical background still existing, even though it isn't as strong as it was in the books.⁹⁹

This hints at the author's legitimate concerns but leaves unaddressed the baffling question of the drama's extraordinarily potent allure. Robin Ellis (who played Ross) had this to say:

Thanks to Winston Graham, [Poldark] had great characters who live out good storylines, in a classic family saga in the magnificent Cornish countryside ... The BBC in those days was

*an experienced and talent-laden organization with fine in-house costume, set and make-up departments training their own recruits. The cast was in good hands and we were a happy, united company of actors.*¹⁰⁰

Maggie Thomas:

*The cast were a great bunch of people and made the long hours of work very enjoyable, as well as being in the glorious Cornish countryside in spring. The massive scale set-ups on a popular series like Poldark come as close to feature films as it is possible to get for television.*¹⁰¹

David Clarke:

*The Poldark books, particularly the first four, are unusual in being as much, if not more, concerned with the life and hard times of the lower, poorer orders of Cornish men and women, as with the flaunted high life of the ball-going aristocracy. The background of local and national politics and the differing way of life and expectations of varying levels of society are all accurately portrayed.*¹⁰²

Tony Lee Moral makes much the same point:

*Graham – coming from a lower class background [than Daphne du Maurier] – was able to write an authentic glimpse of what life must have been really like in the Cornwall of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In his first four Poldark novels, he writes evocatively of resilient tin miners, rough squires, and famished laborers, all struggling to survive in the harsh Cornish landscape.*¹⁰³

Allied to subject matter, the nature of its telling:

*Graham ... had a simple, compelling style, a strong sense of plot and an ability to make his characters credible.*¹⁰⁴

Now place – Nickianne Moody:

*The outdoor locations set the first series apart from other studio-based costume dramas. Scenes such as the dramatic rescue of Dr. Enys from a prisoner of war camp in Revolutionary France, the wrecking of the Warleggan ship, and action set against mines, seascapes and coastal paths created a spectacular backdrop for the vicissitudes of Poldark's marital and financial dilemmas. The contrast between the theatrical approach to studio production and the spontaneity engendered by location filming gave the historical drama a unique fresh quality.*¹⁰⁵

And Sarah Crompton:

*... the trick of Poldark was the way its actors made the unfamiliar period and costumes seem like second skins, and allowed fans to concentrate on the roiling emotions rather than the props surrounding them. In particular, Ellis managed to wear a leather coat and skin-tight trousers without ever losing sight of the damaged man inside them. As for the roguish Demelza, Angharad Rees stole hearts so decisively that a certain group of men campaigned up until her sadly early death two years ago for her to return to the part.*¹⁰⁶

In 2008, Richard Morant¹⁰⁷ waxed lyrical:

*[Poldark] is about love, it's about betrayal, the things that hurt us, the things that give us joy. It's about a place – it's strongly about a people and a place and in a way the main character in the books is Cornwall ... Like Eastenders, like The Archers, like any kind of soap where you've got people you know expressing their feelings and going through the emotions of love, life and death, then it evokes strong attachment, strong passion, and you love it ... It's a high point of TV drama.*¹⁰⁸

* * * * *

(iii) Meet the new Ross ~ HTV, 1996

The mid-nineties ought to have been an auspicious time to bring *Poldark* back to the small screen. A torch for Ross and Demelza still burned in many hearts, with interest piqued and the market primed for more by the 1993 video release of the two seventies series. Demand reportedly exceeded all expectations; only the BBC's acclaimed *Pride & Prejudice* (the 1995 Andrew Davies adaptation) sold better.¹⁰⁹ What's more, the seven books covered by the two original series had by now been supplemented by four more, pushing the story on to Waterloo in 1815 and introducing another generation of Poldark and supplementary characters to share the limelight with Ross, George and Demelza.

So when HTV announced early in 1995 that plans were afoot to dramatise the eighth Poldark novel, *The Stranger From the Sea*, you'd have thought them on a winner. The film was to be made during the year and shown as a 1995 Christmas special with, all being well, a third series of *Poldark* to follow. The original screen Ross and Demelza – Robin Ellis and Angharad Rees – were cast to reprise their parts, which made a promising beginning. But disagreements over scripts, production values and fees led first to delays and eventually recasting of the two lead roles and, once word of that leaked out, HTV offices in Bristol and London were picketed by protesting fans in period costume. Thus the production suffered a welter of adverse publicity not just before it was shown, but before it was made. After a 45-minute meeting with executive producer Geraint Morris, Val Adams on behalf of the fans told the *Independent's* Marianne Macdonald:

*It wouldn't have mattered if they'd cast Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. The point is no one else can play Ross and Demelza.*¹¹⁰

To his credit, Winston Graham, though pressured to do so, gamely refused to side with the naysayers. Like everyone else, he would have been pleased to see Ellis and Rees reprise their seventies roles. Back in 1991, when John Dunn asked whether there was a possibility of Poldarks VIII to XI being filmed for television, he replied:

Yes, there is. There has been a variety of people who're trying to do it. There's been an option taken out two years ago, but,

more recently, one of the companies bidding for the franchise, Channel Three Wales and The West, it's called, have bought an option again and announced that, if they are awarded the franchise, the last sixteen episodes or last four books of Poldark will be their first major drama series.

Dunn: Because Angharad Rees and Robin Ellis – obviously, if they were prepared to play the parts – would be about the right ages.

This is the extraordinarily lucky thing; yes, very, very, very lucky. Unfortunately, George Warleggan, Ralph Bates, died about three or four months ago – he was fifty-two [sic] – so if it were ever done again, we would have to get another George, but I hope we should get the same Ross and Demelza.¹¹¹

Fast-forward to 1995 and it wasn't to be – but should dashed hope scupper all? Or did the thought that any of his characters might only be portrayed by one actor in one way seem as petty and small-minded to WG then as it seems now? Indeed, the author was old enough to remember a similar furore when Grace Kelly first accepted then declined the role of Marnie, making it difficult for whoever came after. Yet, if that film were remade now, any actress up for the part would surely need to convince a doubting public of her fitness to "replace" Tippi Hedren. And while Angharad Rees's gamine charm surely had much to do with the success of *Poldark*, her portrayal of Demelza was not in complete accord with the character described in the novels, so how could her interpretation, winning as it was, be considered definitive? Did anyone berate Benedict Cumberbatch for stepping into Jeremy Brett's Sherlock shoes? Or Brett for presuming to reimagine the Holmes previously quickened by Peter Cushing? But wait, wasn't Basil Rathbone's the definitive screen Holmes? Why not sit back, relax and enjoy them all, for, in truth, the only definitive rendering, whether Holmes, Ross or Demelza, is the author's, in his books.

HTV's *Poldark*, eventually broadcast on the ITV network between 8 and 10 p.m. on 2 October 1996, was not well-received and plans by the company to serialise the remaining three novels (with *Bella* not yet written) were scrapped. The irony is that, flawed as may be, the resultant film is considerably better than its dismal press.¹¹² There are two major problems – first, that without a detailed knowledge of all the backstory (and minimal

exposition), much will pass the casual viewer by and, second, that the film's narrative, such as it is, plainly sets the scene for a series to follow that never came, and what might have worked well as a pilot or part one of a four part production inevitably falls flat when made to stand alone. While it's true that John Bowe as Ross doesn't set the screen alight, that's not because he's no Robin Ellis but because, with the tale's timeframe advanced ten years, his character has matured from firebrand local squire to worthy man of affairs, chafe in harness though he may.

*... He has moved from being a rebellious character to being a semi-conformist, but then he accepts his knighthood with a very disgruntled manner and he does it only because Liverpool convinces him that it's necessary for him to have a title to move in Paris.*¹¹³

In any case, the lead roles, as in the later books – as in life – have passed into younger hands. Robin Mukherjee's script (the project's second) is well wrought – listen out for the *double entendres* flying at the hunt – with only "whom" twice spoken by Demelza sounding awry. All the cast perform creditably and the production as a whole plays engagingly enough to be worth a hundred minutes of any aficionado's time. Yes, when the credits roll, much remains unresolved. The pity of it is, it could so easily have been quite different. Never mind – we still have the books.

(iv) Forty years on ~ BBC / Mammoth Screen, 2015

A dozen years on from WG's death and four decades after its screen debut, *Poldark* returned to the BBC courtesy of production company Mammoth Screen. Once again the first seven books were dramatised, this time in four series (to 2018) totalling 35 one-hour episodes. So another generation of viewers – and readers – is won. A fifth series, screened in 2019, departed from WG's novels, featuring instead storylines imagined by Debbie Horsfield set in the years immediately following *The Angry Tide* he chose not to write about. It seems likely that the problematic later books (IX to XII) will remain – for the time being at least – undramatised.

* * * * *



This page and next: Ross and Demelza as personated by Robin Ellis and Angharad Rees in 1975-7, John Bowe and Mel Martin in 1996 and Aidan Turner and Eleanor Tomlinson in 2015-19



(v) The UK book market

As previously noted, hardback editions of the first four Poldark novels were obtainable in the UK from Ward, Lock through to the late 1950s and from The Bodley Head in the 1960s and 1970s. Fontana (an imprint of William Collins) produced the first paperback editions in 1968/9. They re-appeared with new covers in 1972. In 1973, probably prompted by the concurrent publication of *The Black Moon*, the four were sold as a slip-cased quartet. Then, once the BBC serialisations began airing in October 1975, the printing presses went into overdrive. As successive instalments of the saga were published, the slip-cased editions grew to five, then six and eventually seven volume sets. Meanwhile, the titles were also individually available in a regularly revised range of coordinated covers, which, by the mid-eighties, would claim "Over 5 million Poldark novels sold in Fontana paperbacks." The prophecy that, in paperback, the books would be "a licence to print money" was, WG conceded, "proved to be true."¹¹⁴

Page 429: The 1960/1 Bodley Head editions of Poldarks I-IV all feature this same Charles Mozley front-and-back jacket design. Only the titles and font colours differ: red for *Ross Poldark*, orange for *Demelza*, green for *Jeremy Poldark* and blue for *Warleggan*.

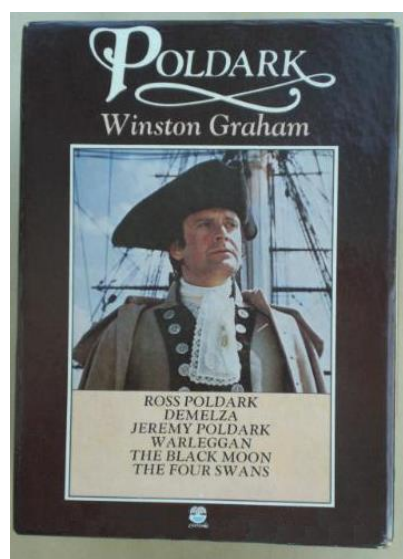
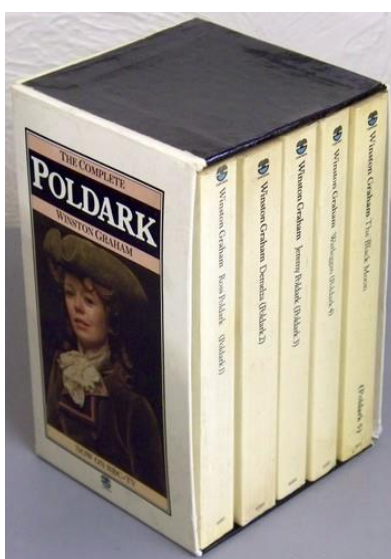
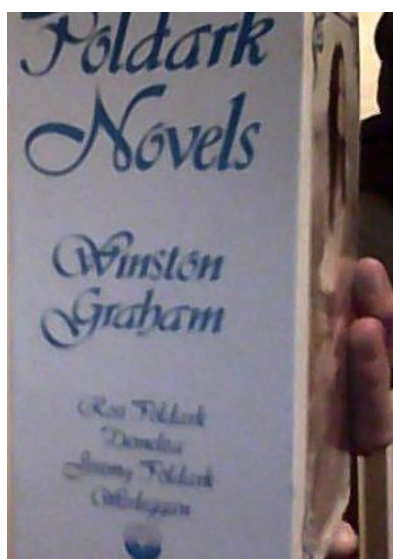
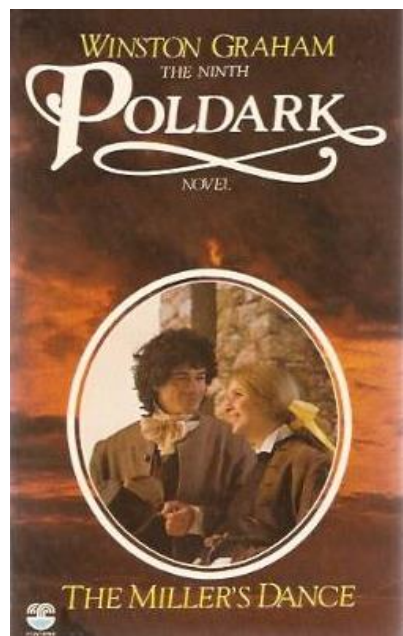
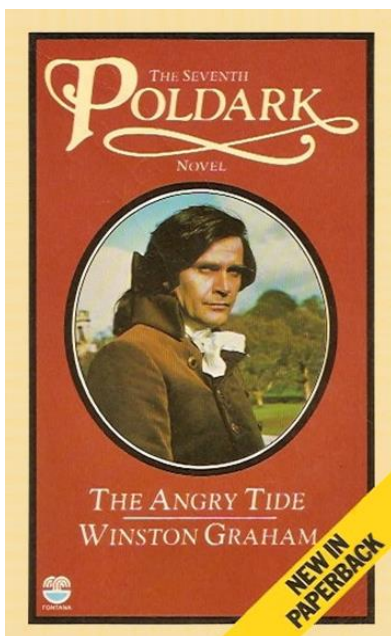
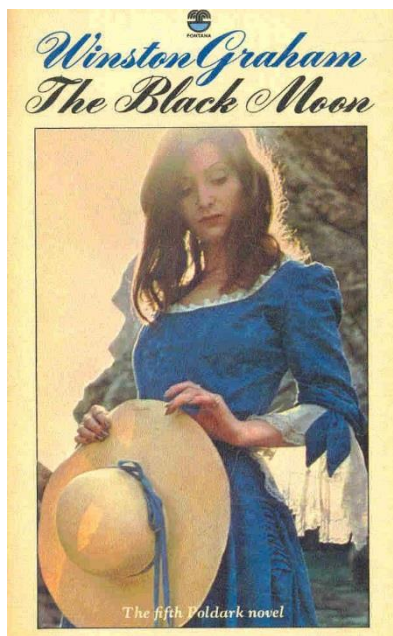
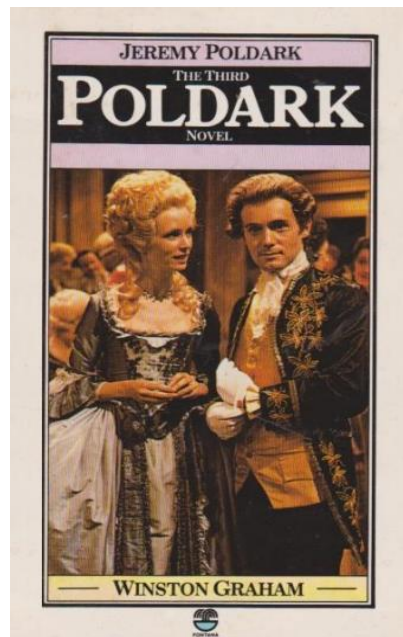
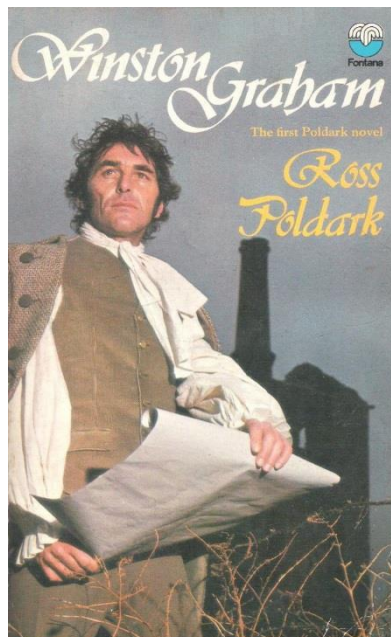
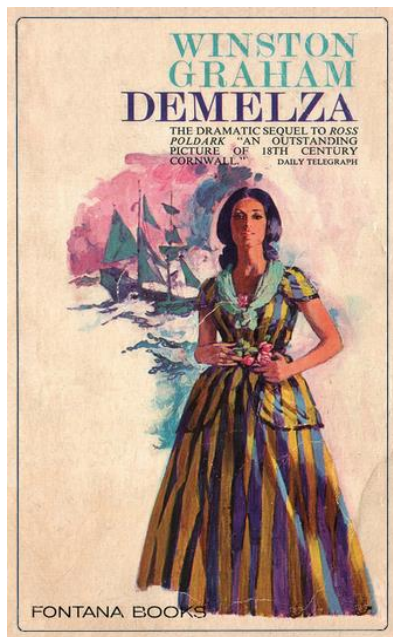


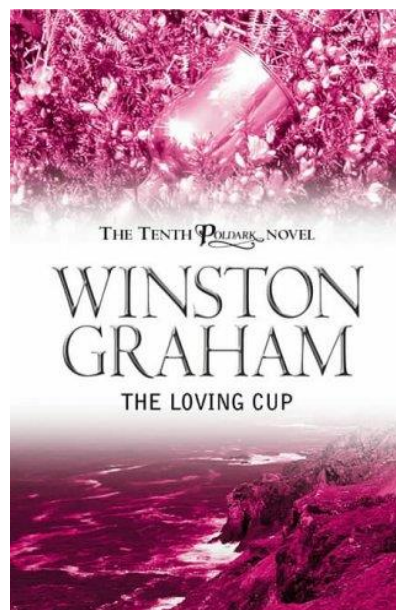
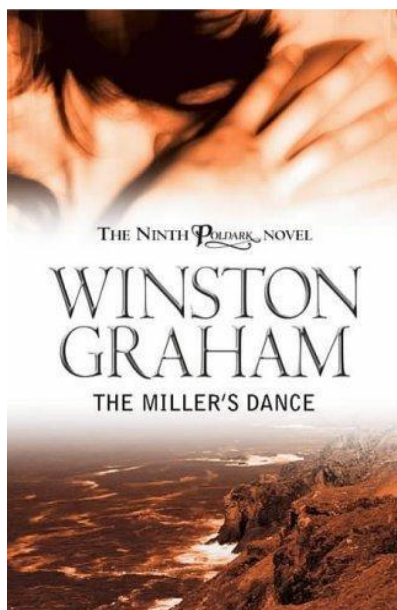
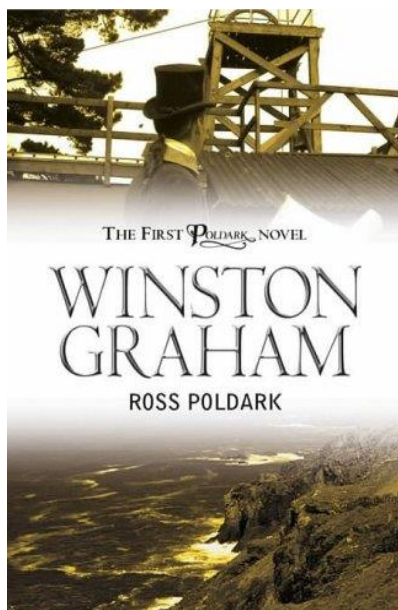
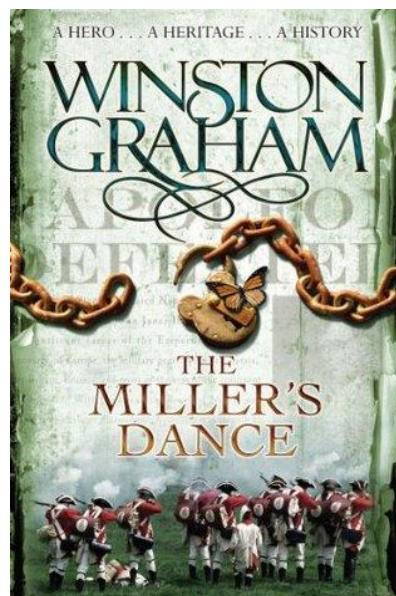
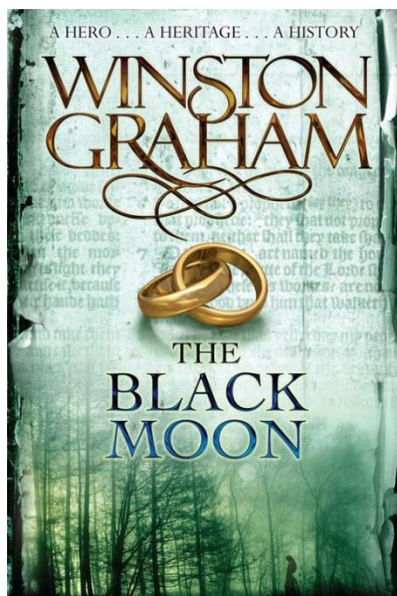
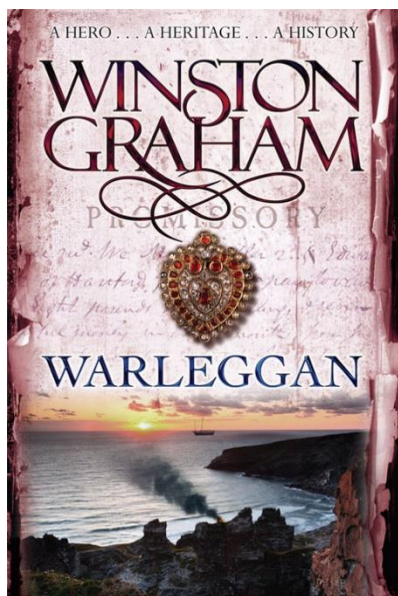
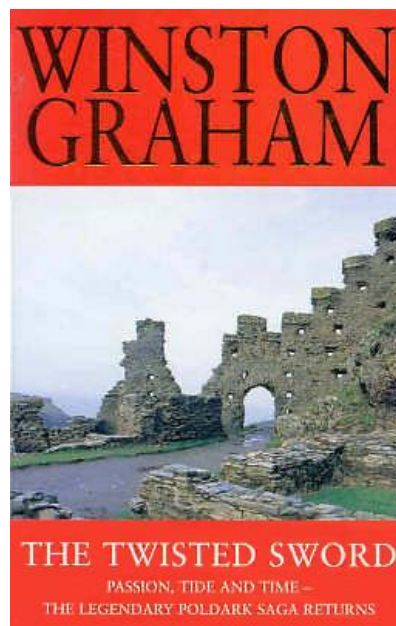
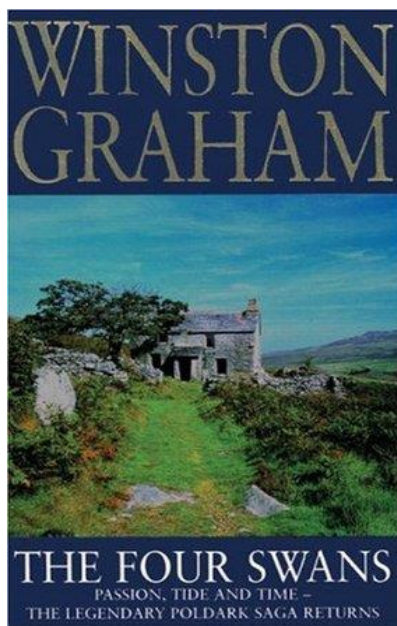
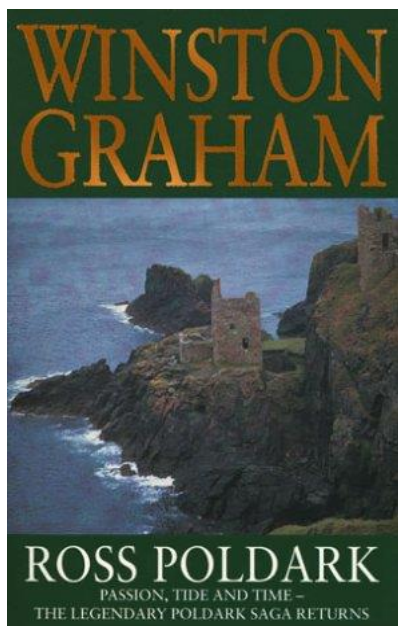
Page 430: Fontana editions from 1968, 1972, 1975, 1975, 1978 and 1984 / slip-cased sets from 1973, 1976 and 1977 containing volumes I-IV, I-V and I-VI respectively.

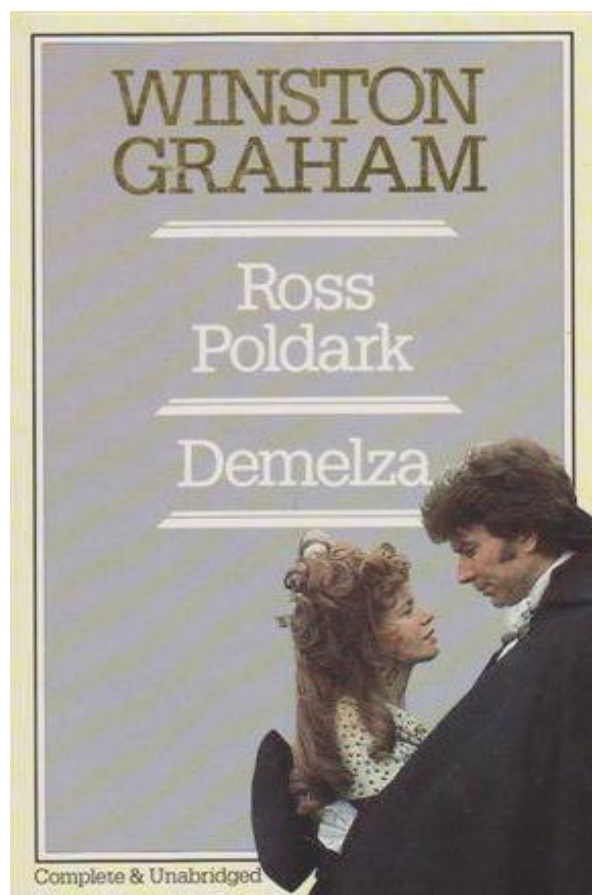
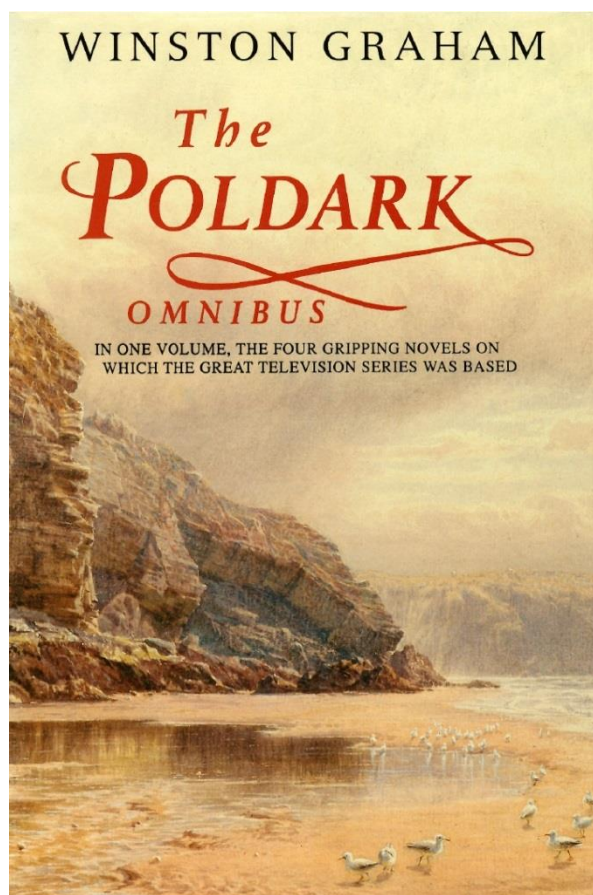
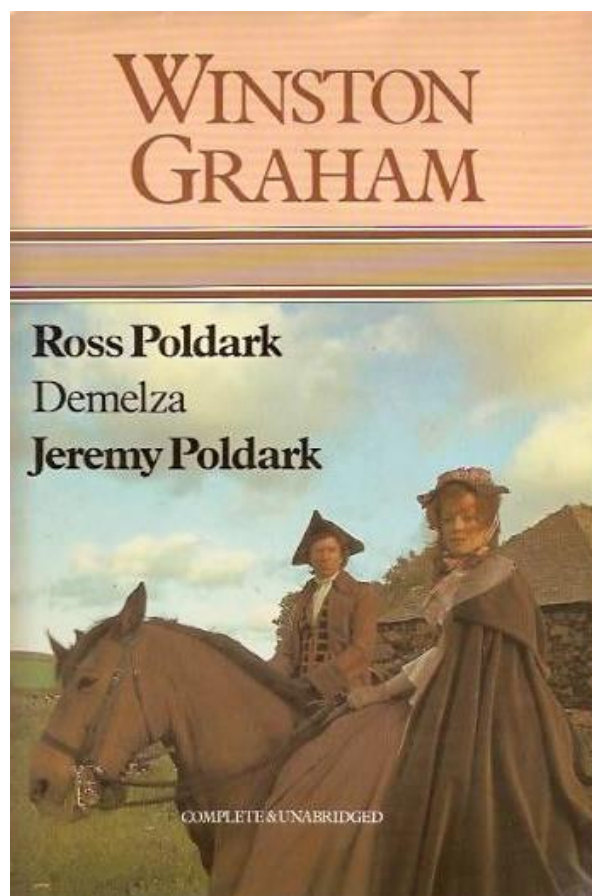
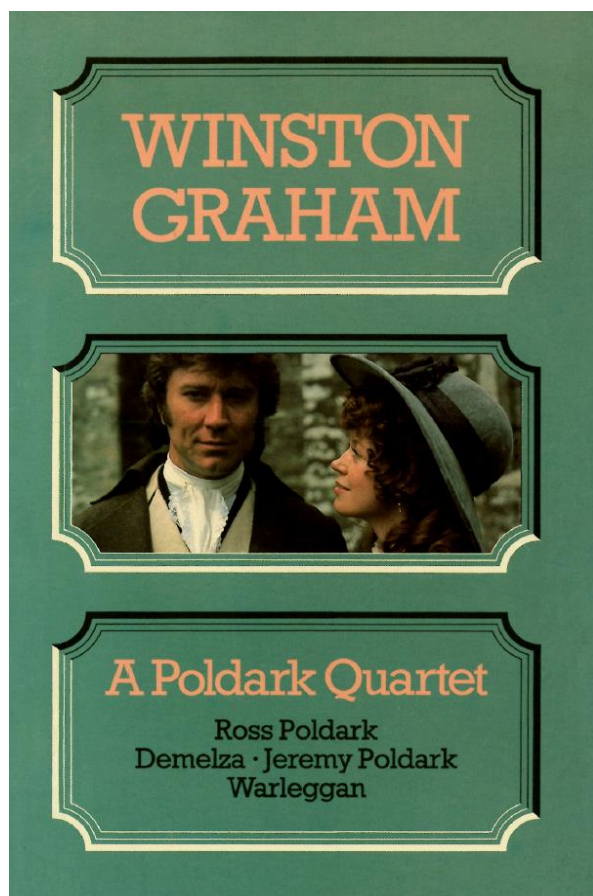
Page 431: Top: Pan 1996 (Poldarks I-XI, with *Bella* still to be written). Middle: Pan Macmillan centenary edition of all 12 novels, 2008. Bottom: in 2002, House of Stratus published the three titles shown plus *The Angry Tide* and *The Stranger from the Sea* (see pp. 188 and 196) only. (Note: this *Ross Poldark* is worth seeking out since it is the only non-WL edition to feature WG's original uncut manuscript.)

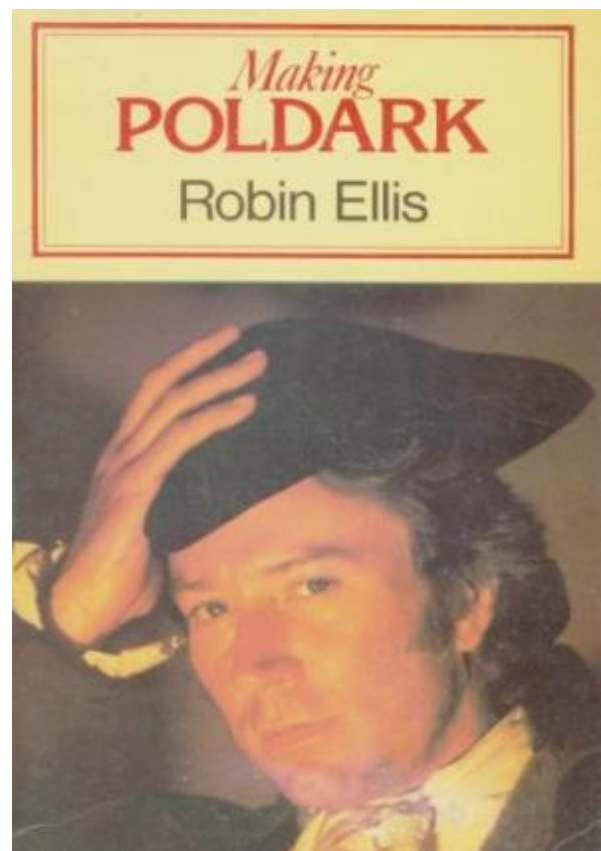
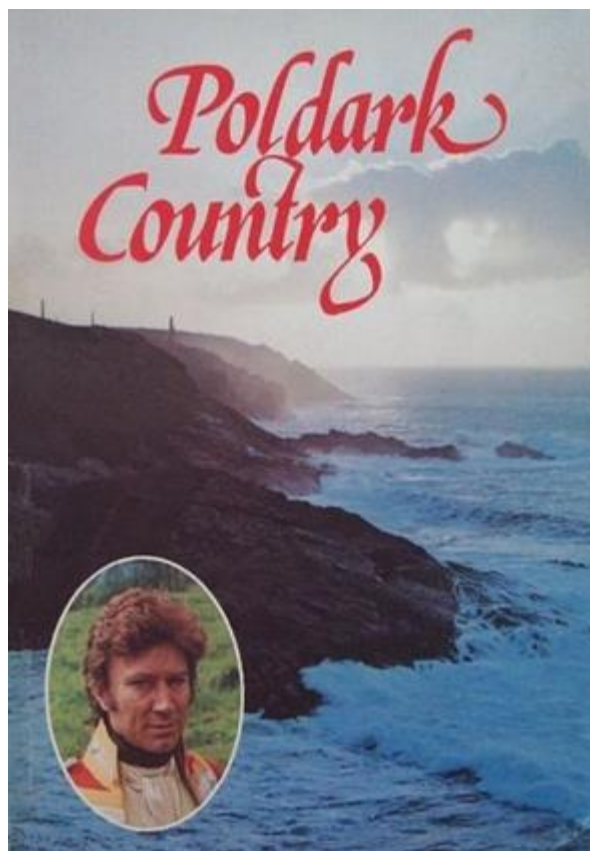
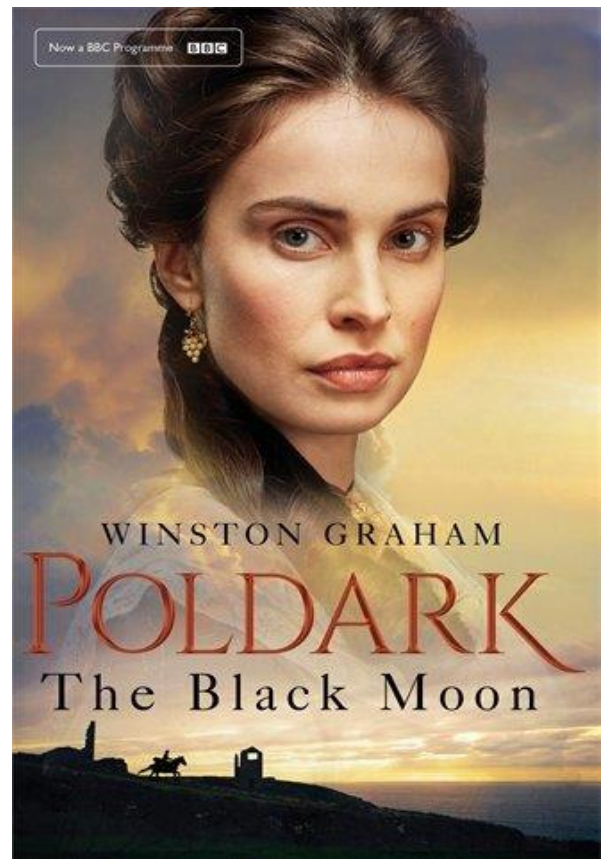
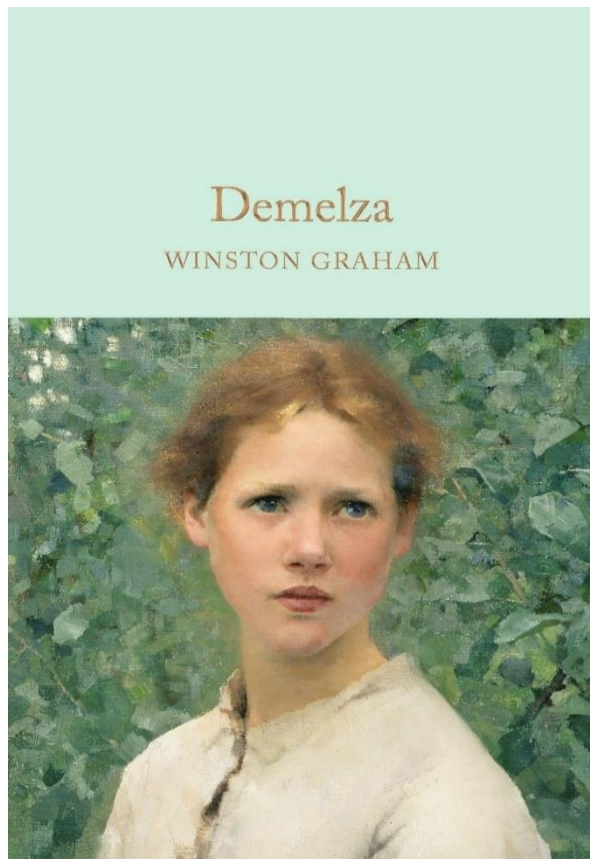
Page 432: Omnibus editions from Collins, 1981 / Peerage Books, 1984 / The Bodley Head, 1991 / Chancellor Press, 1984

Page 433: Macmillan Collector's Edition, 2016 / Pan, 2017 / seventies spin-offs: (i) *Poldark Country*, David Clarke, Bossiney Books, 1977 (ii) *Making Poldark*, Robin Ellis, Bossiney Books, 1978; (note: also circulates in revised editions from 1987 and 2012).







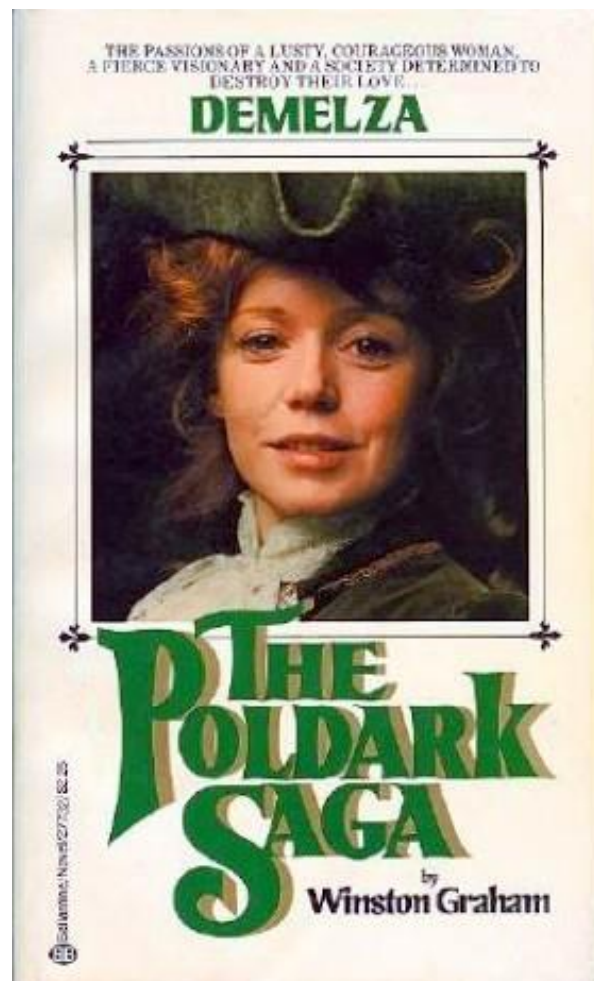
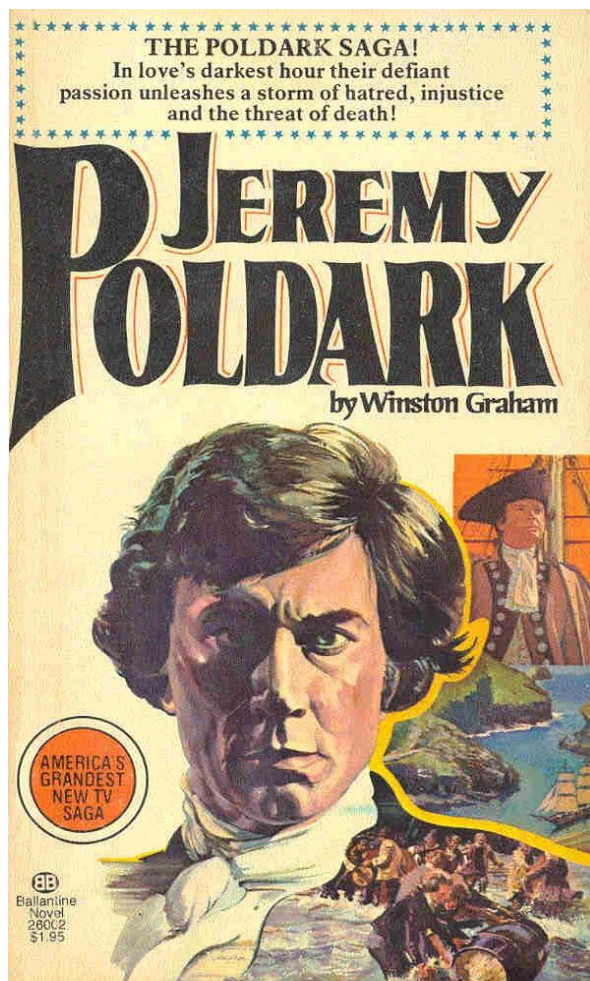


Page 434: TV's Georges: (i) Ralph Bates (1940-1991) (1975-7) (ii) Michael Attwell (1943-2006) (1996) (iii) Jack Farthing (2015-19)

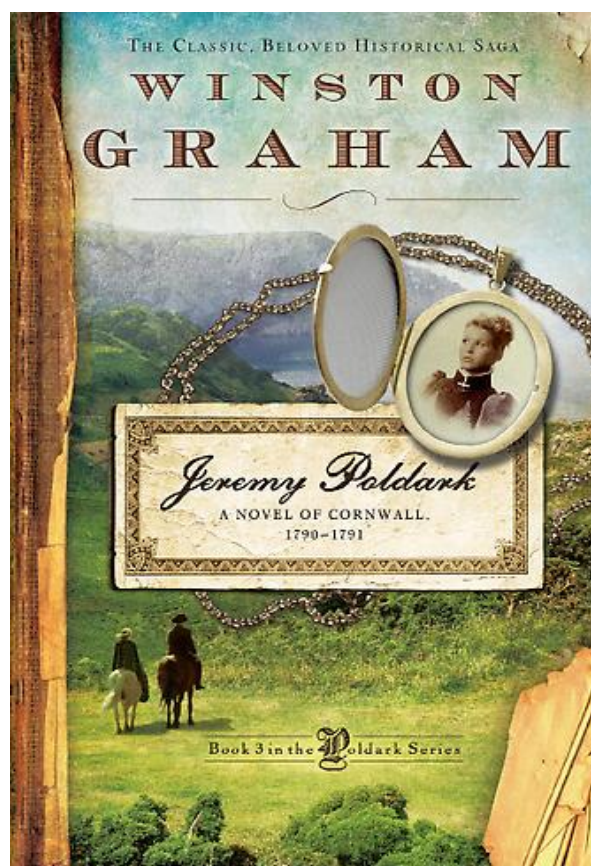
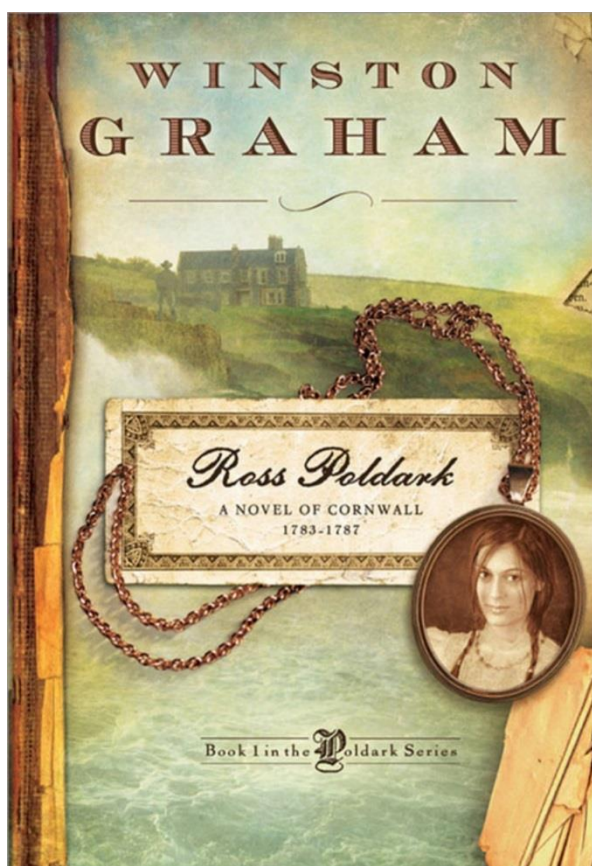
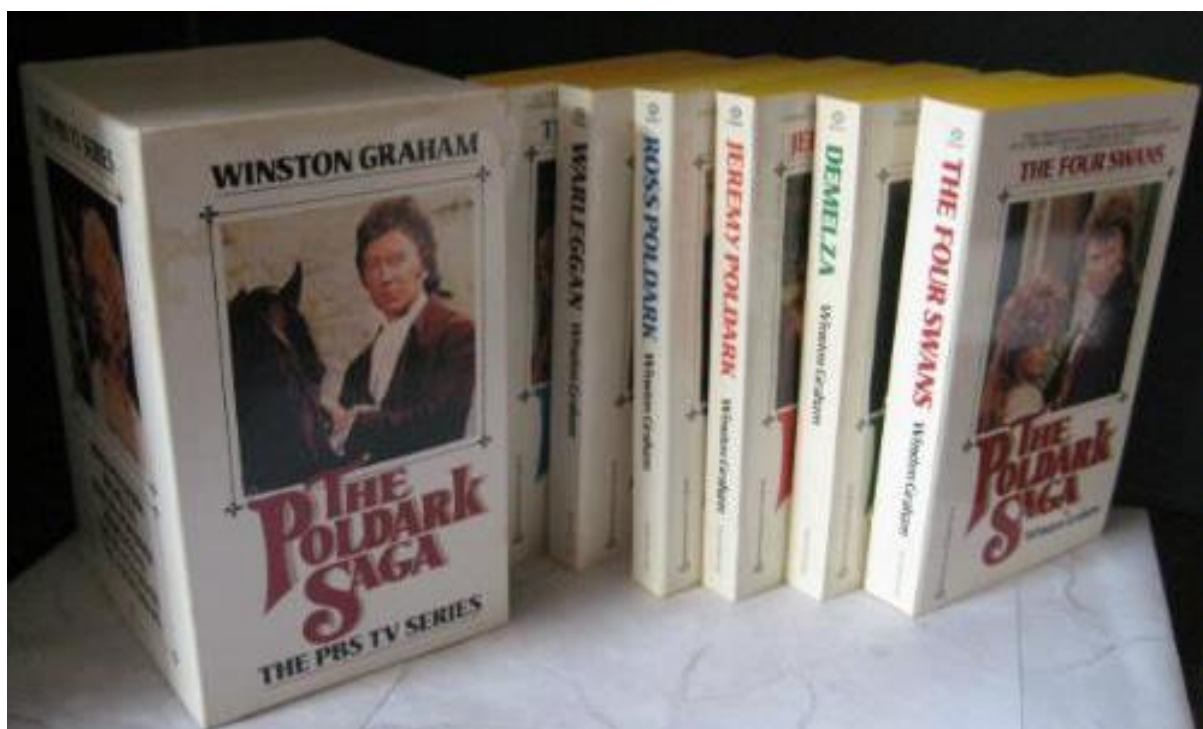


(vi) *Poldark* abroad

Following domestic success with their seventies adaptation, the BBC sold rights to show *Poldark* around the world, from Israel to Australia, from Sweden to El Salvador.¹¹⁵ As in the UK, the enthusiastic response of viewers was noted by publishers, which led to the source novels appearing far and wide in both abridged and entire form. A similar pattern with the twenty-first century version has led to yet more publishing in both traditional and digital media, in a wide range of languages, including some – Ukrainian, Estonian, Czech – in which WG's work had not previously appeared. Actors' faces (era-specific) feature prominently, as may be expected, though not to the absolute exclusion of any or everything else.

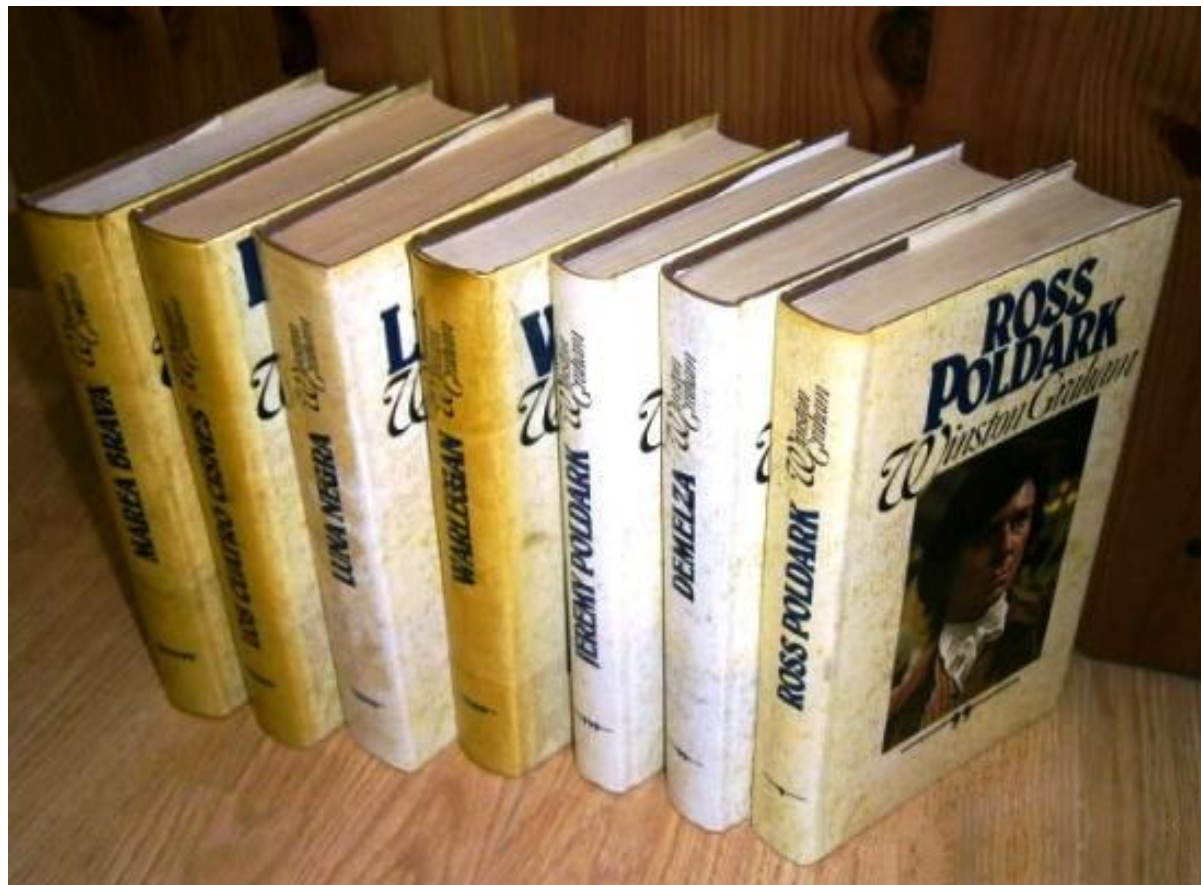
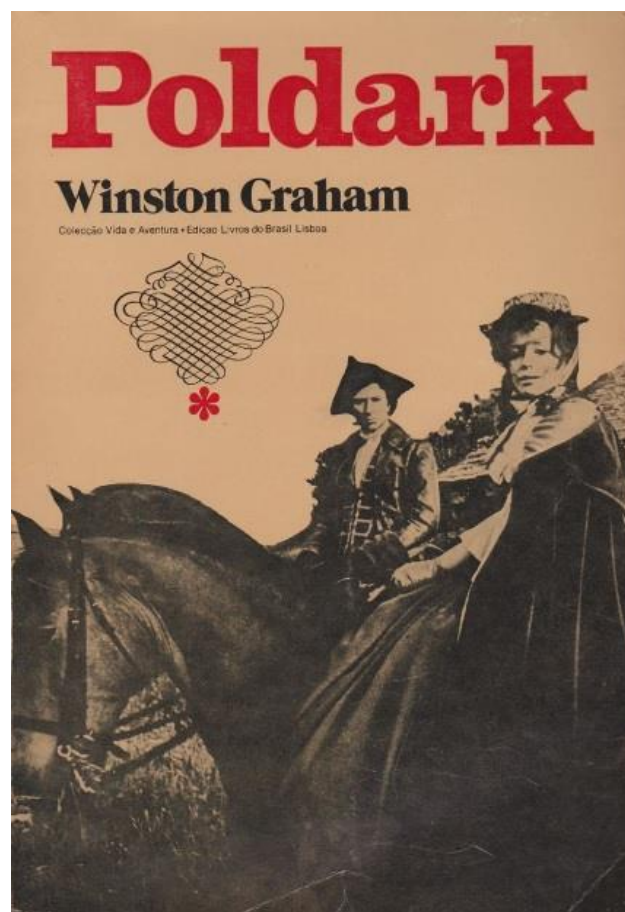
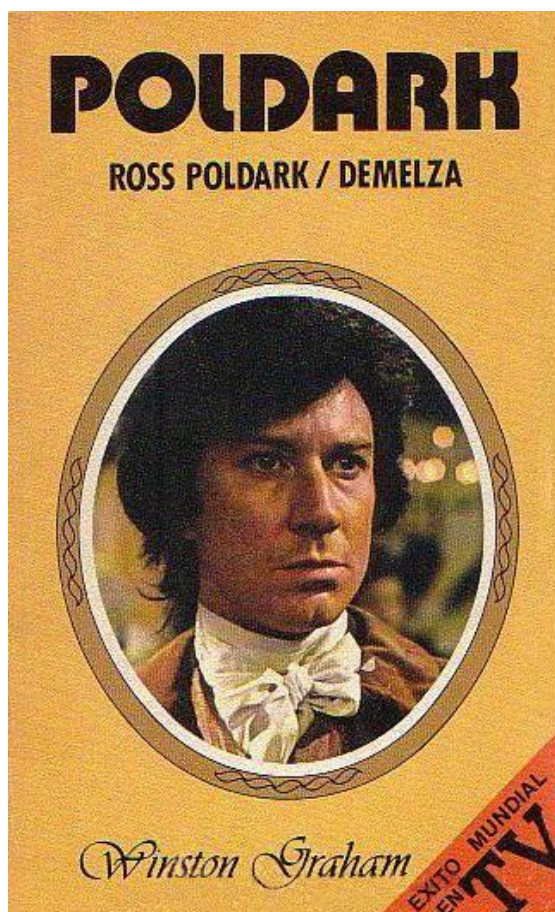


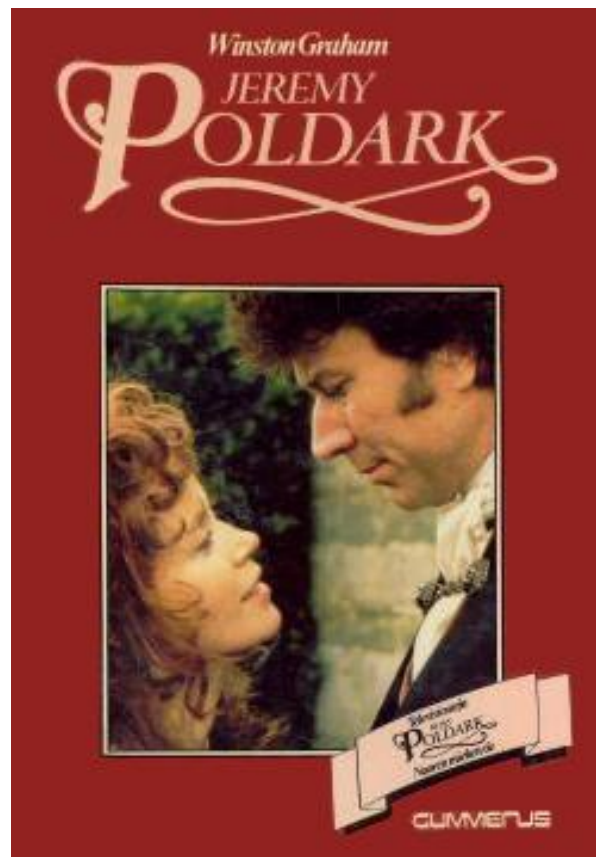
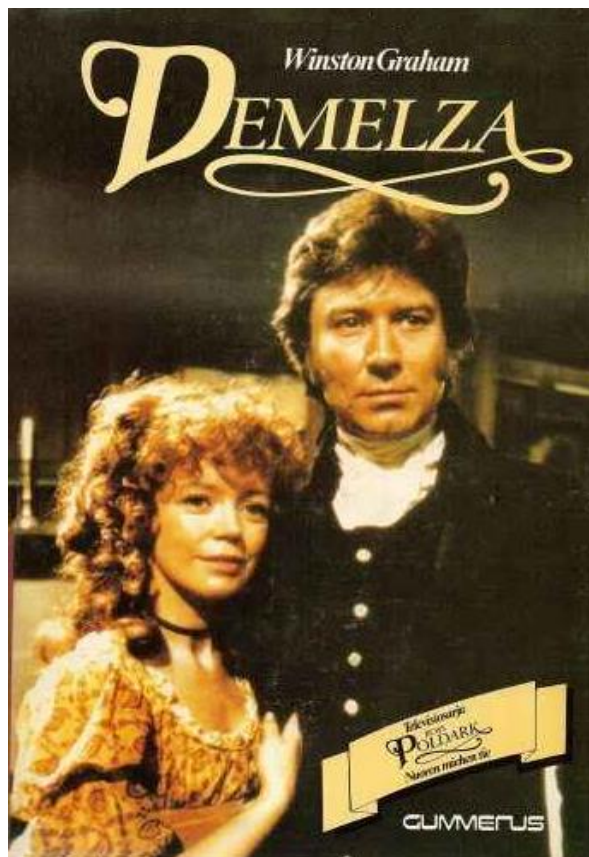
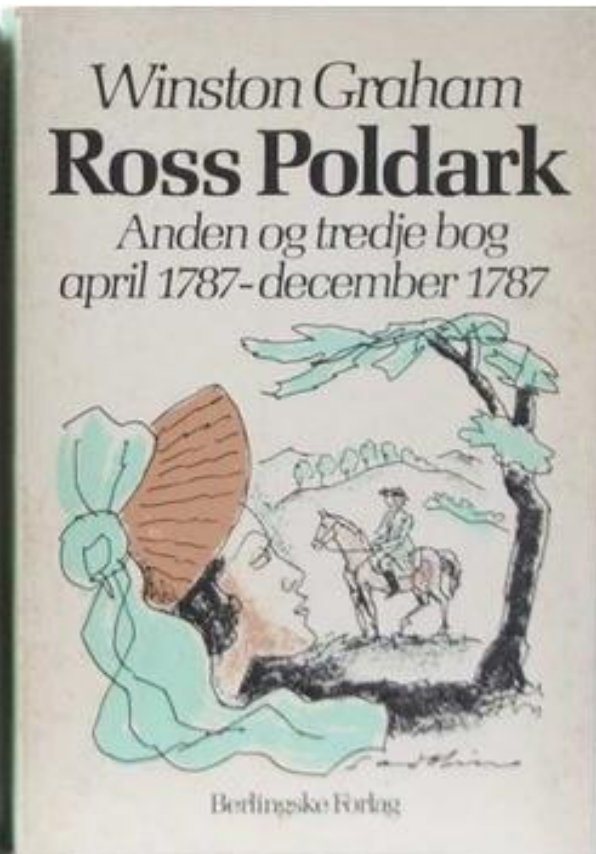
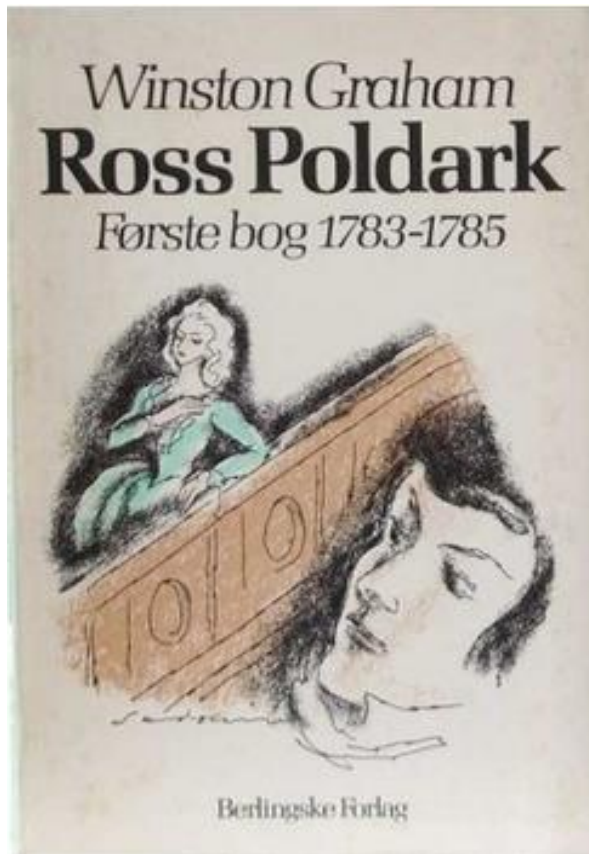
Above and next page (top): Ballantine fed the North American market as Fontana did the British



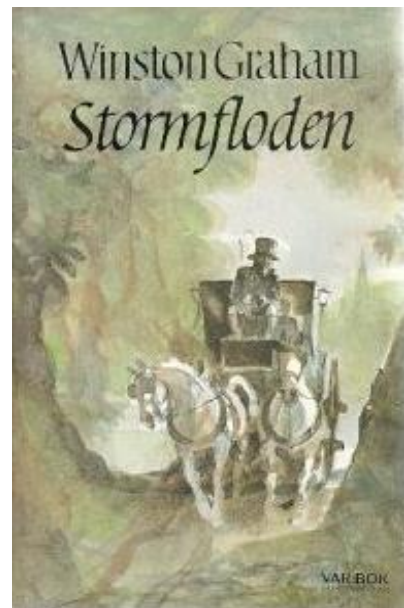
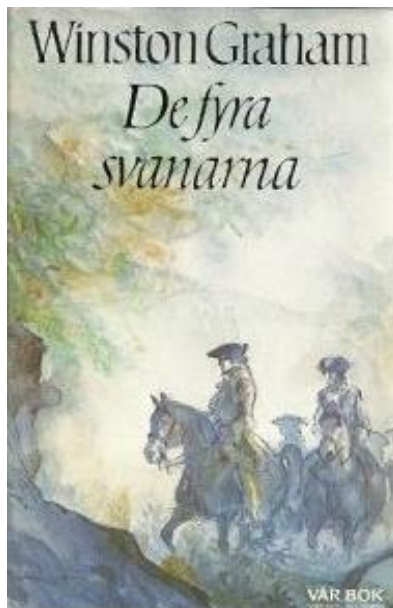
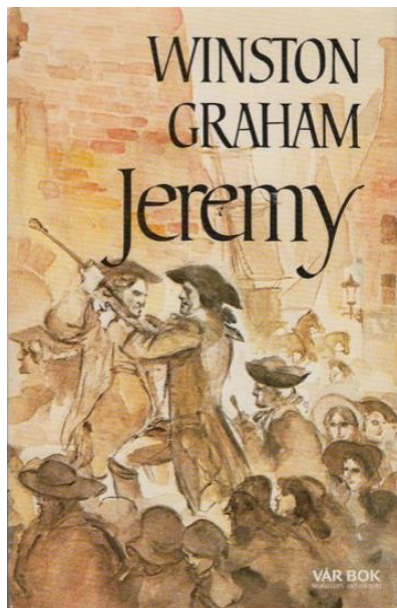
In 2010, Sourcebooks Landmark (USA) published Poldarks I-III only.

Page 437: (i) Spanish : Vergara, 1979, (ii) Portuguese : Livros do Brasil, 1979 (both imprints published Poldarks I-IV on the back of the TV series) (iii) Poldarks I-VII, unabridged, in Spanish (Circulo de Lectores, 1979-80)

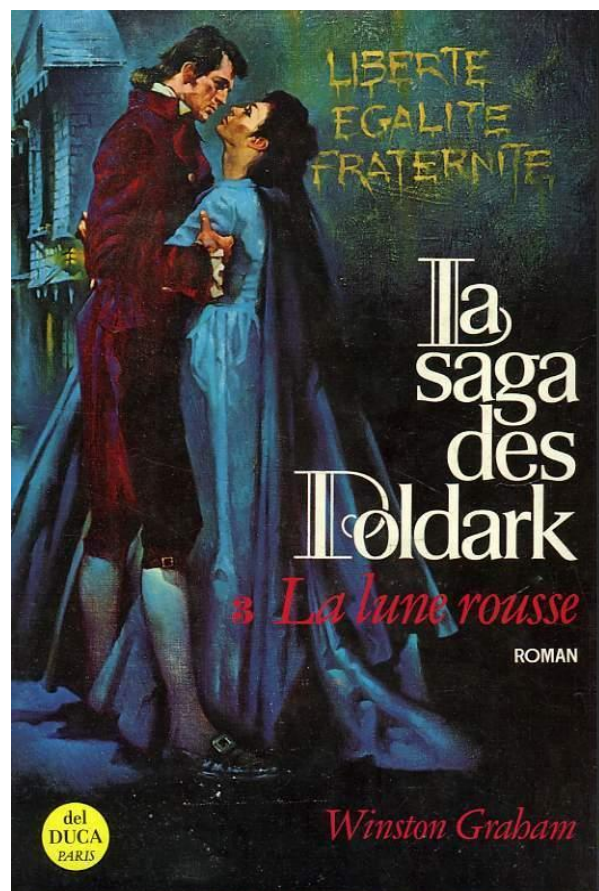
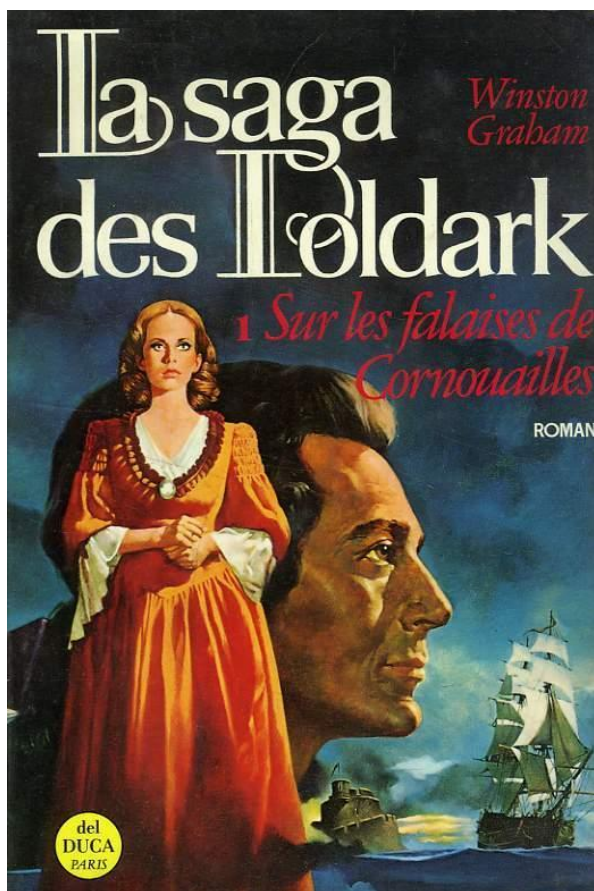
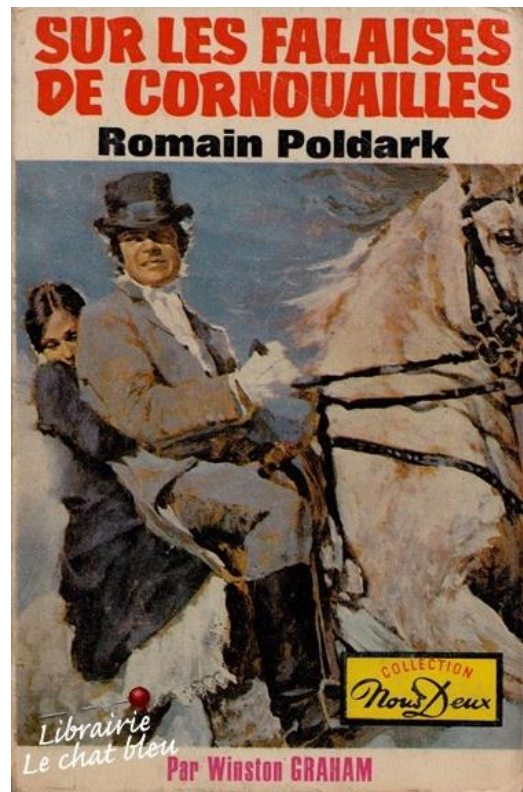
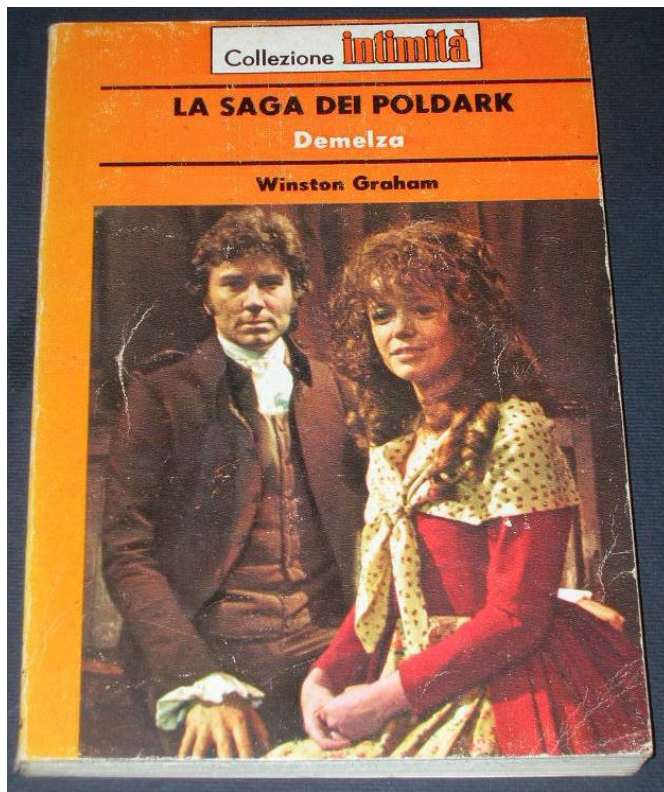




(i) A two-volume Danish *Ross Poldark*, Berlingske, 1980 (ii) Gummerus published *Poldarks* I-III in Finnish, 1977-81



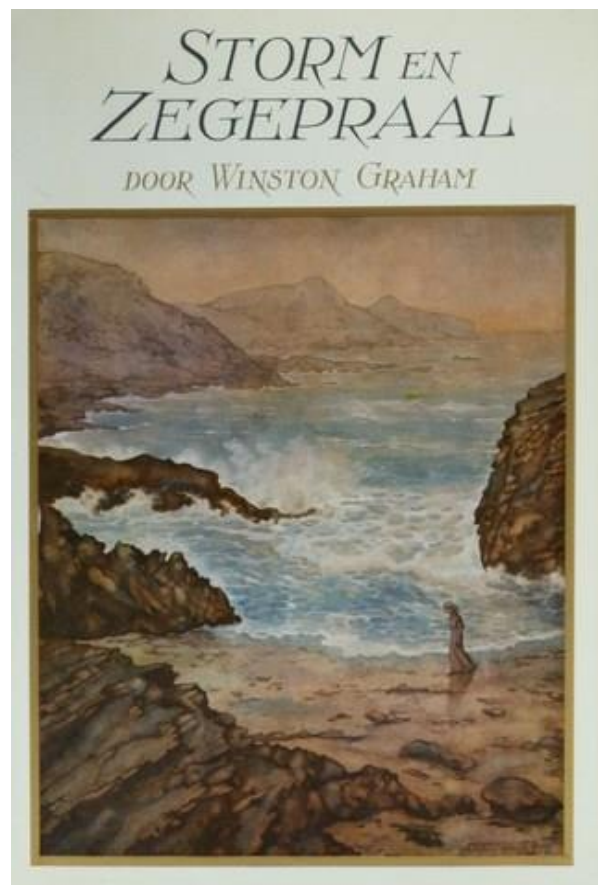
(i) Poldarks I-X were published in Swedish by Norstedts / Gebers between 1975 and 1985 – *Jeremy Poldark*, *The Four Swans* and *The Angry Tide* are shown (see also pp. 107 and 178), (ii) Croatian : this smart set of 16 supplements was published by Hrvatski in 1978 together with a protective binder to save them in.

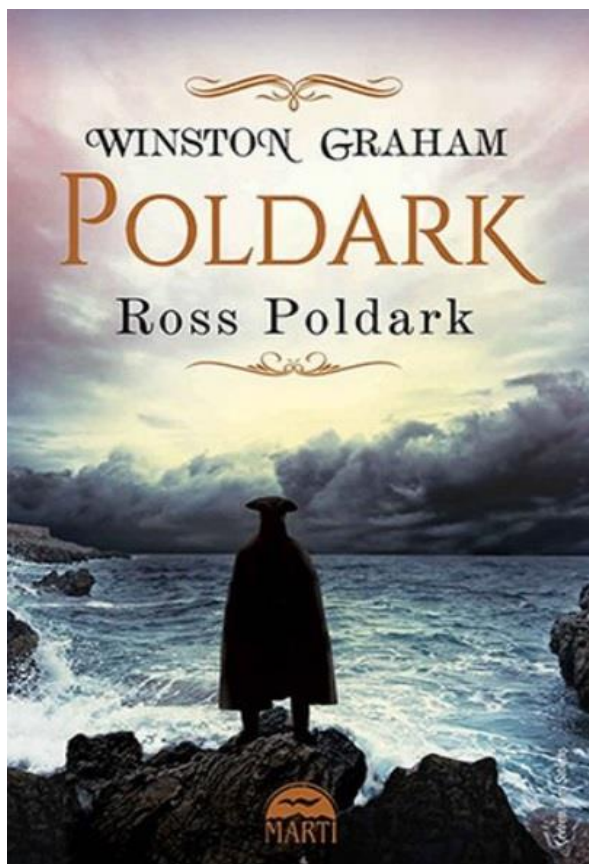
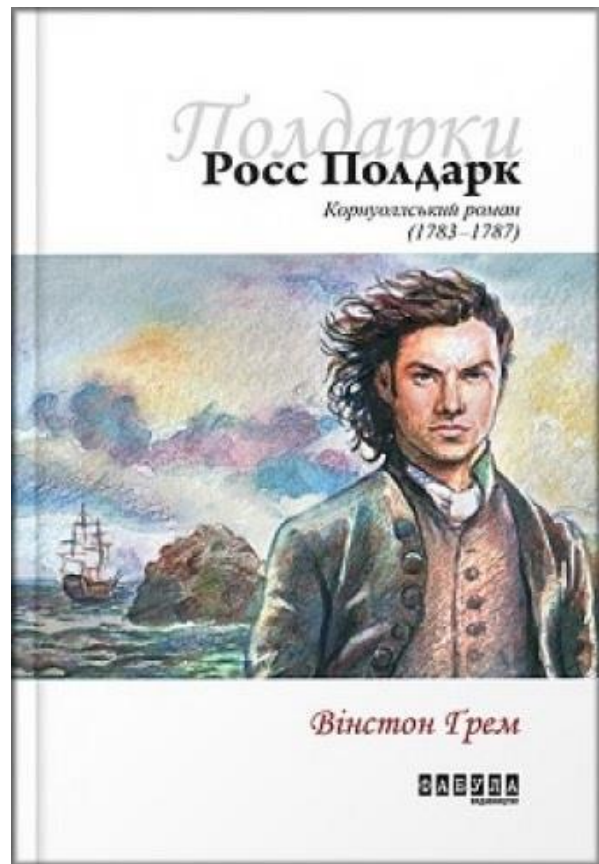
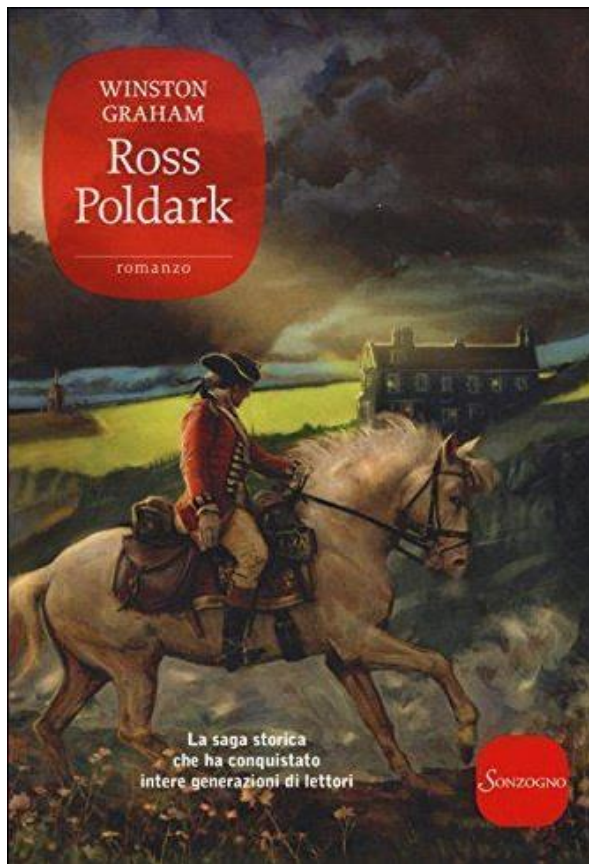


Above: (i) Italian : in 1979 Cino del Duca produced *La Saga Dei Poldark* in eight parts entitled (1) *Ross*, (2) *Demelza*, (3) *Verity*, (4) *Demelza's Triumph*,

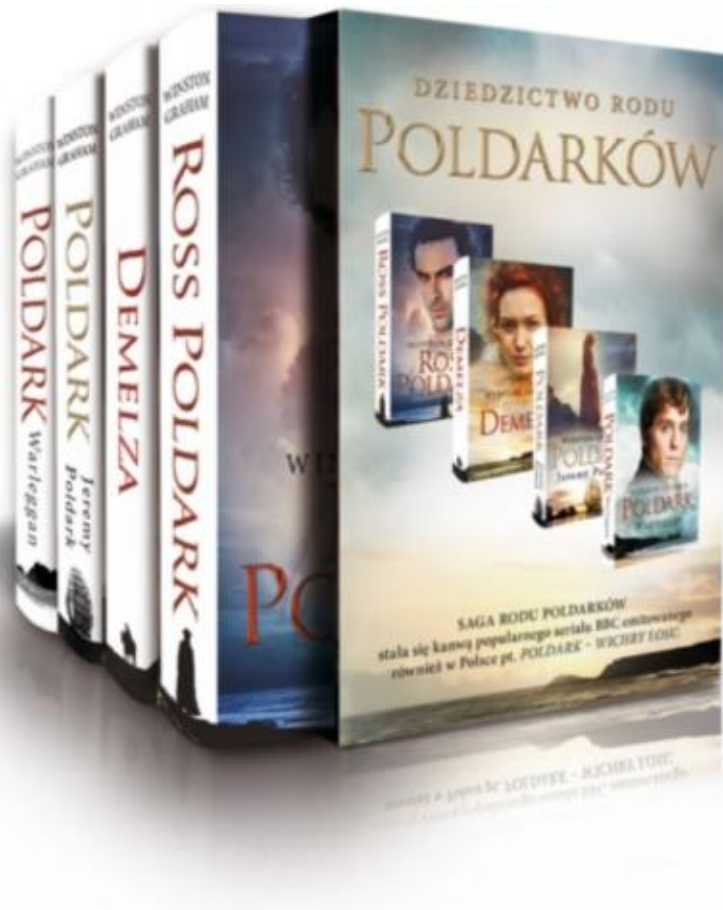
(5) *Elizabeth*, (6) *Caroline*, (7) *Demelza's Revenge* and (8) *A New Life for Elizabeth* – in sum, an abridged presentation of the first four novels, as per the first TV series. (ii) French : in 1972-74, Nous Deux published *Sur les Falaises de Cornouailles* (*On the Cliffs of Cornwall*) comprising the first five novels abridged into five parts entitled (1) *Romain Poldark*, (2) *Elsa Poldark*, (3) *Jerome Poldark*, (4) *Francis Poldark* and (5) *Elizabeth Poldark*. In 1976, del Duca republished the same texts, reconfigured into three hardback volumes, as *La saga des Poldark* comprising (1) *Sur les Falaises de Cornouailles*, (2) *Au-delà de la Tempête* (*Beyond the Storm*) and (3) *La Lune Rousse* (*The Red Moon*).

Below: (i) between 1980 and '82, German imprint Pabel-Moewig published abridged paperback editions of Poldarks I-VII as *Farewell to Yesterday*, *From the Dawn of Day*, *Shadows on the Road*, *Destiny in Another Hand*, *In the Dark Light of the Moon*, *Swan Song* and *Before the Tides Rises* (shown). (ii) Between 1963 and 1973, Den Haag imprint Z.H.U.M. published Dutch translations of I-IV as *A Man Finds his Way*, *Demelza my Wife*, *On Life and Death* and *Storm and Triumph* (i.e. *Warleggan*; shown).

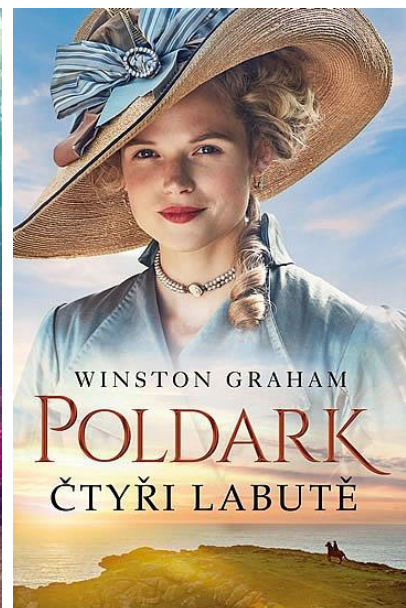
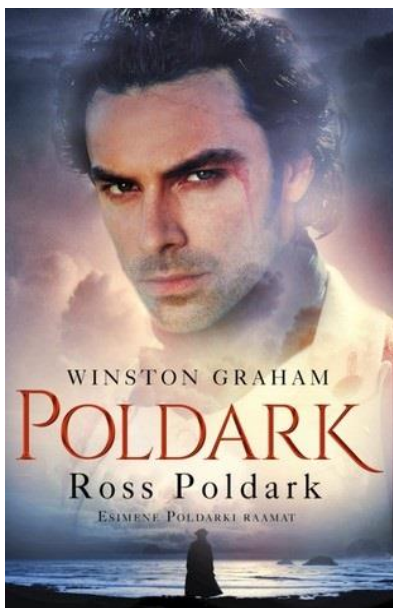




Italian : Sonzogno, 2016 / Ukrainian : Fabulo, 2018 / Turkish :
Marti, 2016 / Romanian : Azbuka, 2017



The slip-cased sets are back, too – this from Polish publisher Czarna Owca (= Black Sheep), Warsaw, who issued the four books individually in 2016 followed by the boxed set in 2017.



Estonian : Varrak, 2016 / Portuguese : *Ross Poldark as The Return of a Stranger*, Edições Asa, 2018 / Czech : *The Four Swans*, Baronet, 2018

Poldark is known around much of the world – thanks in part to the power of TV, of course, but in the first instance, too, to the extraordinarily resolute, beneficently gifted but ever-humble man who sat for days, weeks, months on end in museums, in libraries or in his study at home thinking, reading or busily scratching away with his ball-point pen to create the richly-peopled world we delight to roam in. Directors, screenwriters and actors may come and go; we may argue about who's best or most felicitous or who does a decent job, but even if the casting is poor (think the latest Jud Paynter) or a host of minor characters are written out to keep the shoot within manageable limits, or there aren't enough episodes to do the narrative full justice – never fear, for the books remain and, for as long as that continues to be so, *Poldark* will prevail.

* * * * *

Lastly, how does the saga end? Anyone who's read *Bella* will know that it ends with Ross, Demelza and their daughter crossing from Devon into Cornwall over the Tamar as they head back to Nampara to spend a family Christmas at home. Except it doesn't, for the RCM archive in Truro holds a 24-page, double-spaced typescript entitled CHRISTMAS AT NAMPARA, 1820 in which WG takes his characters' stories a little further. It may have been an alternative ending for *Bella* he decided not to use or perhaps he just wrote it because, first and last, he loved writing about the Poldarks. The story can be read on request, by appointment, at RCM's Courtney Library.

* * * * *

(9) profiles



“ those of us who knew him felt a bright light had gone out ... ”

Michael Williams, on WG's death¹

From the Sydney Morning Herald of 8 April 1962

Fame comes at last to the rich author

**Grace Kelly has forced the spotlight on a writer
who has quietly made a fortune**

From ANTHEA GODDARD in London

Since Princess Grace of Monaco chose his book "Marnie" for her comeback film, English author Winston Graham has been describing himself ruefully to his children as "the most successful unknown novelist in England." Since 1944, he has been earning his living by writing, but now he is wondering whether anyone has ever noticed his name until the announcement about the film. A neatly-built, balding, blue-eyed Lancashireman, he has written more than 20 books, of which four have already been filmed. Two have been chosen as Reader's Digest condensed novels and he has made up to £120,000 from one book. Yet when Princess Grace announced that she was emerging from her rocky principality to play his "Marnie," so many strangers ringing to inquire about it confessed they had never heard of him before that he began to question where his money had come from.

That it has come is irrefutable. He has just bought a great Victorian Gothic house on the fringes of the expensive stockbroker belt in Sussex, about 40 miles from London. He has gutted and rebuilt inside, and his floor-to-ceiling study windows look across the green lawns of his four-acres of orchard and wood, to the Sussex hills. He has a Jaguar in the garage, his son, aged 19, is at Oxford, having left one of England's leading Public schools, and his daughter, aged 16, is at boarding school. He and his wife travel widely, and they have covered most countries in Europe – many of them used as background in his books – and America. All this has been done on the output of one novel every eighteen months, although he is resigned to the fact that to most people he will be known in future as "the man who wrote that thing for Grace Kelly."

* * * * *

With Arthur Pottersman, from *Argosy*, December 1967

"I had a fairly disagreeable school life, always far more away than I ever was there. I think I was an unsatisfactory child ... I used to be in bed a great deal."

There was one compensating advantage: young Winston spent his days off school doing maths problems and reading – "what I liked, everlastingly, some good, some bad." But, most important, "it was without the benefit of teachers. And convalescence has its own special value ... bringing with it as it does a release from the worse tyrannies of illness and leaving a mind suddenly free, free for introspection and adventure. Illness in youth, if not too severe, is one of the most valuable forms of education."

"With each novel I have written, and as life has accumulated, I have drawn more and more on personal experience, and gained thereby. The great danger of beginning autobiographically is that one is liable to dry up."

"I approach my life with objectivity, if I can," he said ... "When the experience is sufficiently distant, but not too far, I can write about it with detachment. I must draw on bits of my own life when I write. I draw on bits of myself with every character. No man can write about a humourist unless he possesses a sense of humour himself, or about a miser unless he has walked bad-temperedly through the rain a few times to avoid a four-and-sixpenny taxi fare."

"The whole of life ... is a question of keeping a balance. In doing sufficient work but the avoidance of overwork. Often it happens that I get into a novel and come to a knotty problem I can't see my way round. I can make myself quite ill if I don't get over the hitch. But I also know that the last time such a thing happened I did nothing for ten days, then came back to the book, and the problem solved itself. The danger is, that's an awfully good excuse for not working at all."

"I try hard not to be fashionable; to attempt to be fashionable, to me, is the ultimate failure."

"I have had this feeling of melancholy all my life ... I am often perfectly happy with the passing hour but one is seldom long able to forget that it is passing. I have felt this since I was a boy."

Philippa Toomey, in the *Times* of 25 April 1975

"I always had the feeling that I would like to [write] another [Poldark novel] sometime, but as the years went on, it became less and less likely. One moves on in mood and technique, and it began to look like breaking the sound barrier. One day I remembered something I had read a great many years before that Galsworthy said – to the effect that 'I get up in the morning and go down and sit at my desk, and I don't think of anything in particular, and I pick up my pen and begin to write, and what I write comes from a remembered past and a not yet realized future'. So one day I went and sat down and began to write 'Elizabeth Warleggan was delivered of the first child of her new marriage at Trenwith House in the middle of February 1794' – and let it come from there. I have since written another Poldark novel, but I now feel it is time I went back to the modern scene."

* * * * *

Tim Heald, in the *Radio Times* of 4 October 1975

WINSTON GRAHAM first became a full-time professional novelist when he was 17 [sic]. It was a precocious beginning which has paid handsome dividends ... [but] ... for a writer of such sustained success Mr Graham remains strangely unknown. "Authors," he says firmly, "should be judged by their work and not by how many wives they've had or even the conditions in which they write." So strictly has he adhered to this that for the past seven years he has steadfastly refused all requests for interviews, only unbending now for the televising of the Poldarks and submitting to a positive glut of journalistic intruders – three at least. "I don't seek publicity," he says, a shade glumly. "I'd rather do without it if possible."

He never reads reviews, doesn't employ a cuttings agency, and when he was sent the results of two other recent interviews, both he agrees very pleasant, he skimmed through them virtually with his eyes shut. When I went to see him at his rambling Victorian home, he was immensely charming but worried about his earliest books ("I've carefully suppressed them all") which he always asks people not to write about. He says they always ignore him. However he happily talked about Cornwall, where the

Poldark saga is set and where he has spent much of his adult life, though for the past fifteen years he's lived in Sussex, which is his second favourite English county ...

Much of his intimate knowledge of [Cornwall] and its past has been culled from written sources. The detailed descriptions of tin mining, for instance, are drawn mainly from *Mineralogia Cornubiensis* written by a Redruth doctor, William Pryce, in 1778.

Even now his study has rows of Cornish books dominated by Lake's *Parochial History of Cornwall*, and he often relies on contemporary accounts by travellers like James Silk-Buckingham or draws inspiration from the short stories of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch ...

The *Sunday Times*, reviewing the latest in "the chronicle of family fortunes and mishaps in 18th-century tin-mining Cornwall," enthused over "the minutiae of the tin trade, the natural beauty of the Cornish coast ... above all the flair Mr Graham has always shown for making his people seem to think and behave in a convincingly period fashion."



Desert Island Discs, BBC Radio 4, 26 November 1977

On which, as well as being interviewed by host Roy Plomley, WG chooses eight records, a "luxury" and a book with which to be cast away on a fantasy desert island. These were his picks:

When I was a small boy my mother used to play every Sunday evening. It was a sort of ritual. She played at other times of the week, but this was a sort of hour every Sunday and I could whistle perhaps sixteen or seventeen of the pieces that she played, but I know only by name about half a dozen and the one I've chosen is the Impromptu in A flat by Schubert, which she played rather meditatively ...

(1) Franz Schubert: *Impromptu in A flat major, D935 no. 2*; soloist Alfred Brendel

Just around the outbreak of war, I met Benno Moiseiwitsch and some months after this, when he was bombed out, I – greatly daring – invited him to come and spend a few weeks with me in Cornwall. Greatly daring because, of course, I was young and newly married and waiting call-up. But he accepted my invitation and he came down and he played a great deal the Rachmaninoff Piano concertos Number 3 and Number 2 and it was a magical time to hear this wonderful music sounding through the house in that grim cold January month before he went away again ...

(2) Sergei Rachmaninoff: *Piano concerto no. 2 in C minor*; soloist Benno Moiseiwitsch

While Moiseiwitsch was at our house he learned the Beethoven Piano concerto Number 3 for the first time. He was going to play it in Liverpool the following month and this is particularly reminiscent to me of the time when he stayed with us ...

(3) Ludwig van Beethoven: *Piano concerto no. 3 in C minor*; soloist Artur Rubinstein

Living on a desert island, I feel I would really like to hear sometime the sound of human laughter, if only to remind me of my own humanity and what better way to hear it than to listen to one of our much regretted and great comics ...

[*\(4\) Speech at the Oxford Union by Gerard Hoffnung: The Bricklayer's Story*](#)

About 1950, I think, I met a man who'd got a small private recording outfit and he'd just recorded a group called Los Paraguayos. He gave me a copy of this and I very much enjoyed it and have never really lost my affection for it ...

[*\(5\) Recuerdos de Ypacarai by Los Paraguayos*](#)

I suppose fourteen or fifteen years ago I heard this song by Jimmie Rodgers ... It's a little sentimental, but it seems to me to sum up quite well a fairly decent philosophy of life. It's one that I wouldn't quarrel with.

[*\(6\) Kisses Sweeter than Wine by Jimmie Rodgers*](#)

If there were one record that I had to take to the island, this is the one ... I'm very devoted to it ...

[*\(7\) The opening of Winter from Antonio Vivaldi's Four Seasons; soloist Pinchas Zukerman*](#)

I have a rather comic memory of [The Four Seasons] ... we went to a concert [in Venice] and it was a large hall and the cellist was a man – a large man with a suit about two sizes too big for him so that his coattails swung and his trousers hung like elephants round his rather big feet. And I was in the front row, and during the middle of one of the movements both he and I saw an enormous black beetle walking across the stage. And there were two members of the orchestra, ladies in long frocks, so he cast an anxious glance around the audience – he wasn't playing at that moment – and gradually edged his way towards

the black beetle, not moving his cello, so that his cello began to take on an angle of about 45 degrees, until the black beetle came up against a large black boot. He then glanced anxiously around the audience again and, with a marvellous Chaplin-esque flick, flicked the black beetle into the wings and then slowly resumed an upright position just in time to pick up the music ...

... If I can't have a Girl Friday, I would like a lady's voice. Rita Streich has a superb voice and I would like to hear her sing [this]:

(8) Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: *The Nightingale and the Rose*, Op. 2/2; soloist Rita Streich

His "luxury": *a large number of exercise books and ... biros, because this would give me some sort of an outlet when I was in distress.*

His book: *Benham's Book of Quotations.*

* * * * *

With Ian Woodward, from *Woman's Weekly*, 30 July 1983

Winston Graham is at work on his tenth Poldark novel.

"This is the first interview I've given in five or six years. It's not something I customarily do. You're going to be responsible about it, aren't you?"

He leads the way into an elegantly furnished reception room, which has a winter's chill about it. He switches on one bar of a three-bar electric fire which, under the circumstances, makes very little difference to the room temperature. Condensation clings to the panes of the Georgian window like snow on a Dickensian Christmas card.

"Why," one asks the best-selling author well-known for his aversion to publicity, "why have you made it almost a life's vocation to shy away from the Press?"

"First of all," he answers, "because their observations are often quite wrong, which I don't mind so much, and because their memory is frequently haywire and they twist things round in their heads."

"Would your publisher like you to do more publicity?"

"Oh, yes. My first publisher often said, 'If you don't like publicity, you've chosen the wrong profession'."

"Graham Greene won't give interviews at all."

"No, he won't. I rather agree with that. Max Reinhardt, who publishes us both, says it's unnecessary for authors to be publicised in any way. This will certainly be my last interview for goodness knows how long." A faint curlicue of a smile. "You caught me off guard when you telephoned. I'm rarely caught off guard."

Winston Graham, tall, balding, straight-backed, resembles an affable but business-like bank manager on his day off. Wearing a brown checked sports jacket displaying a pinkish silk handkerchief from the breast pocket, an ochre silk tie set against a yellowish-brown shirt, and fawn trousers with knife-edge creases, the author of *Ross Poldark*, *Demelza* and *Warleggan* has indeed just returned from a round or two at his local golf club.

"Nothing could be better for a writer," he says. "Clears the head of intrusive clutter."

The seven-bedroomed mansion which he shares with his wife, Jean, comprises several once-adjoining houses and cottages which, through the centuries, have gradually been converted into one multi-faceted, multi-directional property. It is perched halfway up a gentle hill and commands a splendid view of the neighbouring countryside.

The room in which we are sitting, although adorned with several oil paintings, is most conspicuous for its many framed photographs of the Graham family – of daughter Rosamund and her three children, and son Andrew, a university don. Their faces beam down at you from every angle.

"I am at my happiest," he tells you, "with my family around me."

As Rosamund is married to an American and lives in California, his happiness would seem to be governed by the price of a return air ticket. Yet he seems to be ridiculously contented. His life is certainly well-ordered, with milk and honey blessed.

"Up until [the BBC screening of *Poldark*] three-quarters of my income came from America. Nearly all the films [of my books] were either American-financed or American-made, and the books themselves were disposed of in great numbers through book clubs and various other sources in the United States. Therefore, I was very happy in my life. Then *Poldark* was

shown on television, and the series completely made my reputation here. The result is that a great deal more of my income now comes from England. My name is known now in the British Isles. 'Poldark' is almost a household name. Everybody knows who Poldark is or was, and I find that very pleasant."

He peers into the middle distance. "It's very nice," he affirms, "to be known in one's own country. One now feels complete."

That completeness was vindicated a few months ago when, in the New Year's honours list, he was awarded the OBE.

"I was pleased and gratified," he says quietly. "I'd like a few more authors to get that sort of thing, though so few do. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that members of the government, or whoever decides these things, go to the theatre more often than they read books."

"I was tremendously ingrowing as a young man," he confesses. "I've only outgrown, if ever I have outgrown, since I grew up, got married and had children. I very much kept myself to myself. I was entirely bookish: I adored the works of Maugham, Galsworthy, Graham Greene, Arnold Bennett, Rosamond Lehmann, and Quiller-Couch. I misspent my youth playing tennis, too, because you had nobody to let down but yourself. I was always terrified, when I was young, of making a duck, missing a kick, and somebody else shouting 'What have you done that for?' If you play a bloomer at tennis, if you're playing singles, you only have yourself to blame. Nobody else can shout at you."

He ... constantly seeks Jean's advice about plots and chapters and other literary problems. He even says that he is a better writer for being married to her.

"I often talk over problems with her," says Winston, "and sometimes she's able to suggest a definite solution, and sometimes just talking to her helps me to find a solution. She's the only person I ever discuss my novels with. I never discuss them with my agent, my publisher, or anybody else. Ideally," he adds, "it would be better if nobody saw the novels at all. I'm always very reluctant to let them go. I hang on to them until the very last minute, because once they go I always feel they're out of my hands."

"I'm always embarrassed on the publication day – the fact that strangers are reading my innermost thoughts, whether they are thoughts

of love or ... murder. It's something that comes out of me and, in a way, I would prefer to keep those thoughts private."

His pleasures, he then divulges, are numerous – wine, a good television programme like *Yes, Minister*, a good play, a good film, a good book, a good ballet ... and the occasional opera ("because Jean is more musical than I am").

"I still do a lot of surfing," he says.

"*Surfing?*"

"Oh, yes; body surfing on a hot day in Cornwall is tremendous. It's a lovely feeling if you get a really heavy wave, and then another and another. No, I don't stand up like the surfers in Hawaii and eastern Australia!



What keeps me writing is the simple fact that I wouldn't be happy if I weren't writing ... I don't write for great lengths of time these days: it may only be two or three hours a day. I laze with the greatest of ease. If I get on the beach in Cornwall or the South of France, there's no sense of irritation because I'm doing nothing. But after a period, particularly if one is at home," says the very *alive* Winston Graham, "I feel I want to have something to show for having been alive that day." *Poldark 10* is in good hands.

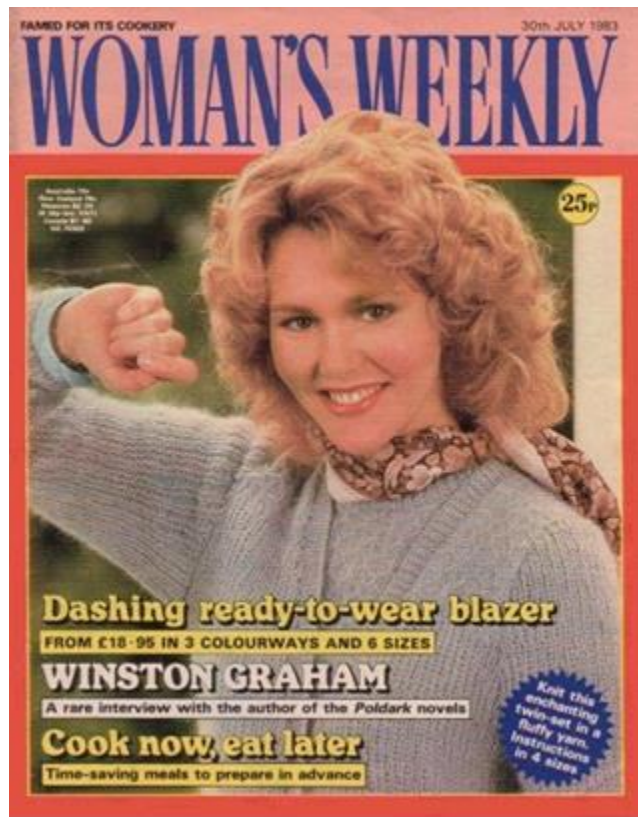
WG the gardener

Though young WG paid no more than "sulky attention" to the garden of his Victoria Park, Manchester home, when he moved with his parents to Perranporth, North Cornwall, all that changed. The rockery of their first home there was "crammed with strange new plants" which he found "really exciting" and his diaries from subsequent years reflect a preoccupation not with writing so much as with "sowing seeds, planting bulbs or herbaceous plants, picking or spraying or feeding roses or tomatoes, even cutting grass." So, if not a born gardening enthusiast WG certainly became one, as he candidly acknowledged in both 1965 (see page 284) and *Memoirs*, 2.11, which is where the above quotes come from.

But even without such biographical affirmation, his texts eloquently tell the tale, disclosing a depth of knowledge and intensity of passion plainly more than merely swotted up or feigned. Though he claims that his "interest in gardens" features in only *The Giant's Chair* (1938) and *Stephanie* (1992), in fact he wrote a number of green-fingered characters, major and minor, starting with Peter Penaluna in *The Dangerous Pawn* (1937) and including, in addition to *The Giant's Chair's* Agatha Syme and Christopher Carew and *Stephanie's* James Locke, Bill Raymond (*Keys of Chance*), Dr. and Mrs. Lynn (*The Merciless Ladies*), Demelza (the Poldark novels), Sarah Moreton (*Fortune is a Woman*) and occupiers past and present of THE CORNISH FARM. His last, in *The Ugly Sister* (1998), was the eponymous Emma Spry.

It is usually a characteristic of the "good" – indeed, in *Keys of Chance*, the contrast is pointedly made between Bill Raymond, the hero, who, helped by old Joseph, maintains a garden at Weatherways, his rural retreat, and Veerson, the villain, who, despite rolling in money, leaves the grounds of his St. John's Wood property rank and unkempt. However, only one of *The Giant's Chair's* two gardeners is staunch and short stories MYSTERY AT BROME (1938) and THE CIRCUS (1974) both feature felonious gardeners. (THE JAPANESE GIRL's narrator becomes one too.) The plot of BROME turns on specialised botanical knowledge possessed by the perpetrator and solver of that story's crime – also, of course, by its author.

* * * * *



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**From Brighton's *Evening Argus Weekend* magazine, 20-21 January 2001.
The interviewer is Angela Wintle**

Winston Graham is writing his 12th Poldark novel ... "Occasionally I get the feeling I have to get on with it, irrespective of discipline, and this is what I've felt with this book," he tells me when we finally meet at his Sussex home. Graham has a languid air and a nice line in dry humour. "Will I have to leave the country when this comes out?" he asks at the close of the interview.

Decidedly one of the old school, he fondly recalls a time when life was led at a more leisurely pace. "All the presenters on Classic FM keep telling me to relax," he says exasperatedly. "Why do I want to relax? Surely not everyone is biting their nails and waiting for the next Prozac?"

He lives in an elegant 18th century house set in extensive grounds in the heart of the Sussex countryside. The mellow stonework, the sundial, the rose beds and the sweeping lawn leading to a meadow create a classic, timeless air, rather like their master. Graham has a patrician bearing and looks every inch the country gentleman. His gold silk tie sets just the right

note against his mustard tweed jacket, and the picture of timeless elegance is finished off with a pair of grey trousers and a knitted waistcoat.

When the photo-shoot is over and the housekeeper has brought in the tea, he settles into a comfortable armchair and tells me why he has taken up the Poldark saga again. "Since my last novel I've had a persistent drip of letters from people wanting to know what happened to various characters and I thought it would be a pleasant little occupation for my old age. Now I'm up to my neck in it, although my characters are finally drawing to the end of the road I've designed for them."

In 1996, after a gap of 19 years, Poldark returned to the small screen in a feature-length episode made by HTV. It starred John Bowe as Ross Poldark and Mel Martin as Demelza, but enjoyed limited success. "Originally, Robin and Angharad were going to be in it but none of us liked the script and it was thrown out," recalls Graham. "Then a second script came along and I accepted it, but the cast refused, so the whole thing had to be re-cast. "No expense was spared, but the makers were totally ignorant of what Poldark meant and were at the dictat of their masters in America who said that the first episode had to be a two-hour blockbuster to see how it worked. "It cost them two and a half million pounds and they wanted a ten million audience. They got seven million so they didn't go ahead with the TV series."

He takes about 18 months to write each novel and has produced a staggering 1,000 words a day for his latest book. He writes in longhand because he thinks the rhythm between his pad, pen and brain is vital to the creative process.

He admits he lies repeatedly about his age but refuses to make any concessions to his years or to let standards drop. Deep into his latest novel, his enthusiasm for writing continues unabated but when I ask how many more Poldark novels he plans to write he looks askance.

"Oh, no more Poldarks," he says, resolutely.

But you said that three times before, I tease him gently.

"Yes, I suppose I have," he admits, sheepishly.

But thirteen is an unlucky number, I persist.

"Yes, it is, isn't it?" he says, contemplatively. "I think I'll settle for a baker's dozen."

(2) Valerie Grove, in the *Times* of 7 May 2002

Poldark's romantic climax

Winston Graham is a rarity among writers: he has never earned his living from anything but writing his thirty-odd novels – "never done an honest day's work in my life" – and is still writing every day.

Now aged [93], the high point of his fame was the televised dramatisation of his Poldark novels, set in 18th-century Cornwall, which had fourteen million viewers glued to their sets in the 1970s and 1980s. And he has returned to the Poldark family – about which he first wrote in [1945] – in his new novel *Bella Poldark*, to be launched this week at the defunct tin mine near Helston, once named [Wendron] but renamed Poldark in the author's honour.² ... His photograph on the dust jacket shows the rear view of a tall, lean figure striding uphill. It reflects the valedictory nature of this final Poldark novel, and Graham's lifelong preference for quiet anonymity – "the most successful unknown novelist in England".

He once said that any author who reaches 80 becomes revered and, at 90, gets an OBE. Graham got his OBE years ago, but he has a more unusual distinction: his son Andrew is Master of Balliol College, Oxford. "I can brag about that," Graham says, "because my heart specialist says that being Master of Balliol is next door to being God." He sent his son to Charterhouse, and was later horrified to read the late Simon Raven's account of life at "that depraved school".

Graham is not a public school man himself. He was destined for Manchester Grammar, but he had pneumonia and the doctor said he would not be long for this world, and should travel no farther than the local school. When he decided to become a writer, his mother supported him financially for several years. "It suited her to keep me at home after my father had died and my older brother had left. I should have been turned out into the world to sink or swim." It was "inestimable good fortune" never to have had to be a nine-to-five wage slave, or to worry that his first novels made no money.

The family had moved to Cornwall when a stroke crippled his father, a tea importer, at the age of 54. The move was lucky for Winston: "How could I have written stories about Southport?" His parents bought a plot of land and his brother opened a men's outfitters in Perranporth, though the family wholesale business, Mawdsley and Co, had been groceries.

Winston's great-uncle, James Mawdsley, stood for Oldham as a Conservative alongside the young Winston Churchill. Both lost to the Liberals, but then Churchill changed sides, and Mrs Graham, a passionate Liberal, insisted on naming her second son Winston.

It has been something of a burden: "For a long time when someone said 'Winston' people would expect to see a pet monkey or a fat man with a cigar."

He keeps curious working hours: after lunch he has a snooze and at five p.m. he starts writing – for three hours. "In the mornings I think about things, write cheques, talk to the gardener." His garden, with imaginative topiary and rhododendrons at their best, is his pride.

"But writing is in your head all the time." He still writes in a firm longhand – "yes, 'always scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr Gibbon'³ – and the result is a twisted little finger, the same as the one Baroness Thatcher had operated on. It is known as Dupuytren's nodes – General Dupuytren was one of Napoleon's surgeons. It is hereditary, but nobody in my family except me has lived long enough to develop it." That is the flavour of his conversation – anecdote, erudition, self-mocking wit.

He hesitated to return to the Poldarks, but the *dramatis personae* with their strange Cornish names and Cornish talk began to invade his mind.

Clowance is named after a Cornish village. So is Demelza: "I was looking for a name for a thin dark waif when I saw the signpost. Twenty years later I went on a pilgrimage there, and found one neglected farm, two brothers who said they had farmed there since 1705 and a tiny medieval chapel."

Poldark himself was originally Polgreen, a chap he knew. "But it sounded a bit too arboreal; so I changed green to dark." In his latest novel, *Bella Poldark*, the eponymous heroine, is an opera singer. There is a vivid scene in which Bella, playing Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, sings *Io sono docile*, a brilliant bravura performance culminating in a crescendo of applause.

Graham loves opera. When his wife Jean was alive they would go to Vienna for the opera every year. "But my knowledge is all surface. I have no bricks and mortar," he says.

So, while researching the book, he persuaded the English National Opera to allow him to watch the company rehearse the opera which he had chosen for the novel's narrative.

This is typical of him. He researches like a detective: he once took a convicted safebreaker out to lunch at a smart restaurant. He wanted to set his novel *Angell, Pearl and Little God* in the boxing world but he had never boxed, never even been to a fight. So he put on an old trilby and grubby raincoat and hung round the Thomas à Becket pub in the Old Kent Road with a fag in the corner of his mouth.

He met Henry Cooper and the boxing promoter Mike Barrett, who took him to a weigh-in. "I heard the managers discussing purses, and then I sat in the front row at an Albert Hall fight. It was so exciting I found myself shouting, and got blood spattered on my cuff." He gave Barrett, now a good friend, dinner at the Savile Club.

When first taken to the Savile to dine in [1945], as "an unsophisticated, gangling young man", Graham found H. G. Wells sitting opposite. He was not the clubbable type ("I was always rather a loner") but was impressed by the company: Compton Mackenzie, Eric Linklater, Gilbert Harding.

But only when J. Arthur Rank commissioned the film script for *Take My Life*, and gave him a flat, a secretary, £150 a week and a chauffeured Rolls-Royce did he feel he could join the club.

He was briefly tempted to be a tax exile. "I was making a lot of money, associated with the transience of success, so I thought I would live in France and be taxed in Switzerland. It didn't work. I did not last a year in Provence. The children loved it, but I decided I would rather be taxed to death than bored to death. Somerset Maugham managed to live in the sun and still work, but I couldn't.

Among his art collection there is a harem of a picture gallery in one room – photographs of the women who have starred in his films: Valerie Hobson,⁴ Samantha Eggar, Nadia Gray, Arlene Dahl, Angharad Rees, Tippi Hedren (who starred with Sean Connery in Hitchcock's Oscar-winning film of *Marnie*).⁵

He loves hosting gatherings at his long table, mixing local friends with actors. As we drove to lunch along lanes with bluebells, he told me that he still drives a Jaguar and never, in 74 years of motoring on four continents, has he had any kind of misdemeanour. Not even a parking fine.

When asked how he is, he replies: "To say that I am OK would be the wildest exaggeration. But I am mobile, conscious, breathing, and ready to eat and drink" and to go back to Cornwall, where the Poldark Appreciation Society will be out in force.

Maggie Pringle in the *Daily Express* of 15 July 2003

Obituary: Winston Graham (1908-2003)

... All his publishers had nothing but affection for him. Ian and Marjory Chapman ... said: "He was the perfect companion. He was like family."

His last publisher, David North of Macmillan, agrees: "He was the most charming man you'd ever meet. He knew I liked Dover sole and we would have that if we met in London and he'd have it prepared if I visited him in Sussex."

When Graham came up to London, he used to stop off at Claridges and have his hair done by Ken in Gentleman's Hairdressing there. Recently Ken travelled down to Sussex to do his hair and have lunch.

"I started doing Mr Graham's hair in 1975. When he'd been staying at the Savile, I took an hour off in the morning to go and play snooker with him," he recalled.



At Poldark Mine, Helston, in 2002

Graham wrote a final Poldark novel in 2002. When I reviewed it for the *Express*, I got a charming handwritten letter thanking me. He said he had embarked on it with trepidation because, "I was aware that time's winged chariot was hurrying near and I would have been very annoyed to leave the novel half finished."

(10) a life in pictures



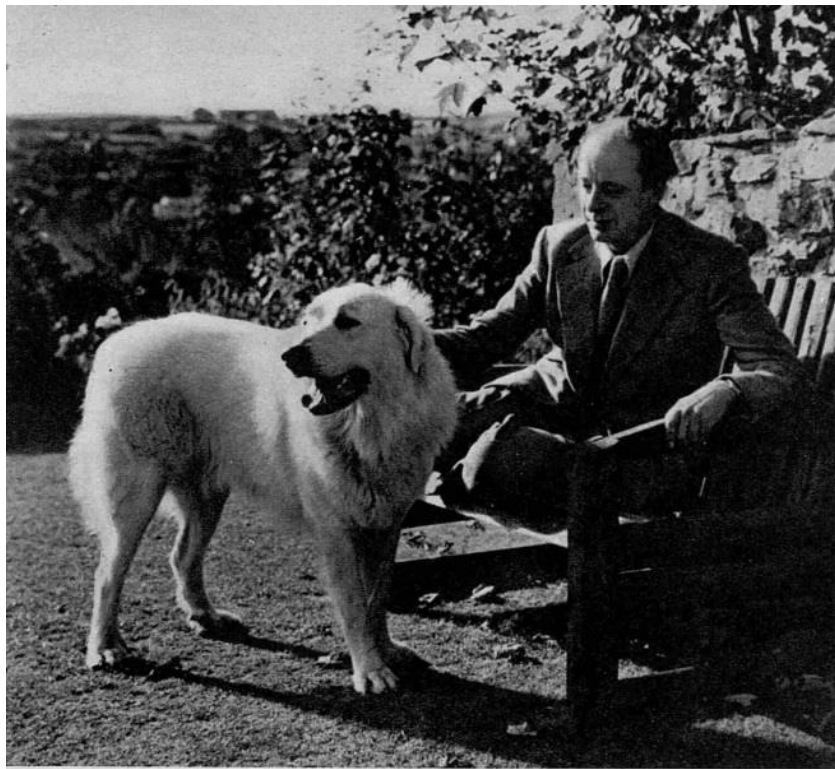
(1) Parents Albert and Annie, circa 1890 (2) Victoria Park, Manchester, where WG was born and raised. (Note: he is *not* pictured here)



(3) At Perranporth Tennis Club, 1927
(4) The young author circa 1934



(5) Wedding to Jean, 18 September 1939 (6) circa 1947



(7) and (8) Two from 1955



WG's homes: (9) Nampara Lodge (formerly Treberran) in the 1960s. The property was demolished due to structural defects circa 2008. (10) Abbotswood House, Buxted, seen here in 2017.



(11) Cooden Beach, East Sussex, 1961 (12) Date unknown



(13) circa 1963



(14) and (15): circa 1963



(16) At Trerice Manor, Newquay, 1974 (17) At Wendron Forge (later renamed Poldark Mine) with owner Peter Young in 1977



Poldark, 1977, with: (18) Christopher Biggins and (19) Ralph Bates



Pebble Mill Studios, 1977: (20) Winston and Jean (on sofa) with *Poldark* cast and crew (21) WG with "Demelza", "Jud" and "Ross" aka Angharad Rees, Paul Curran and Robin Ellis.



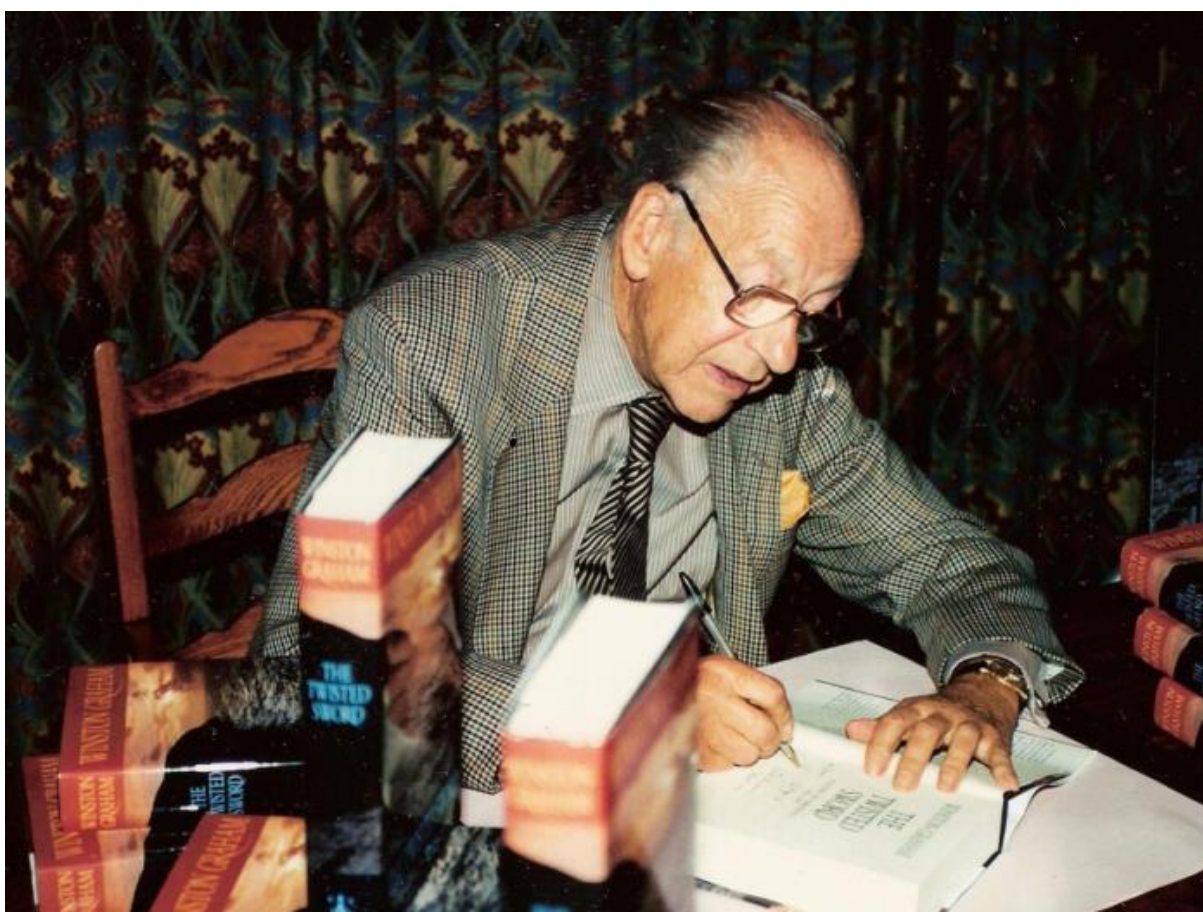
Both Grahams made brief non-speaking cameo appearances in the second (1977) series of *Poldark* – (22) Jean (on left) in episode nine and (23) Winston (with cane) in episode 13



(24) 1983



(25) 1984 (26) Date unknown



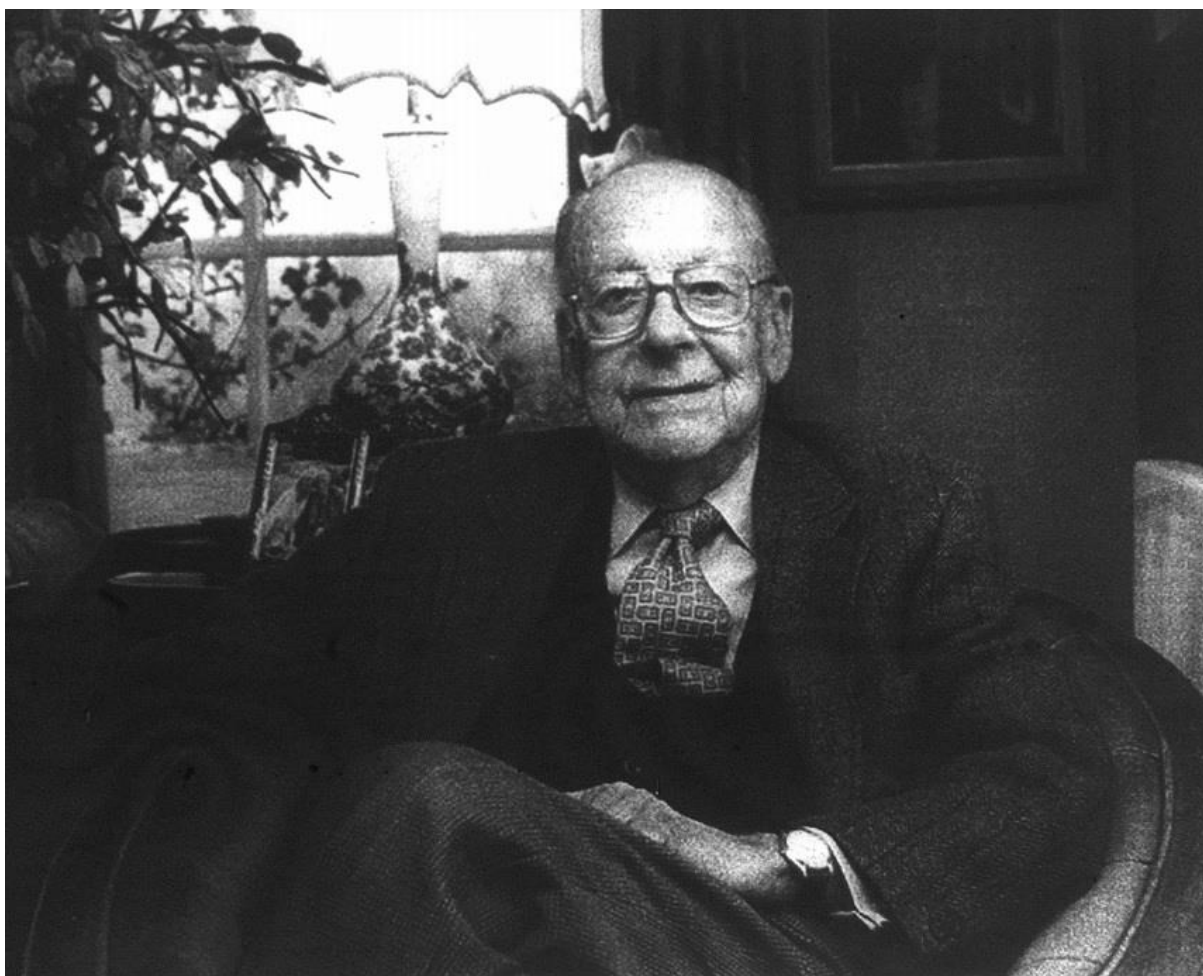
(27) Wogan, 1988 (28) 1990



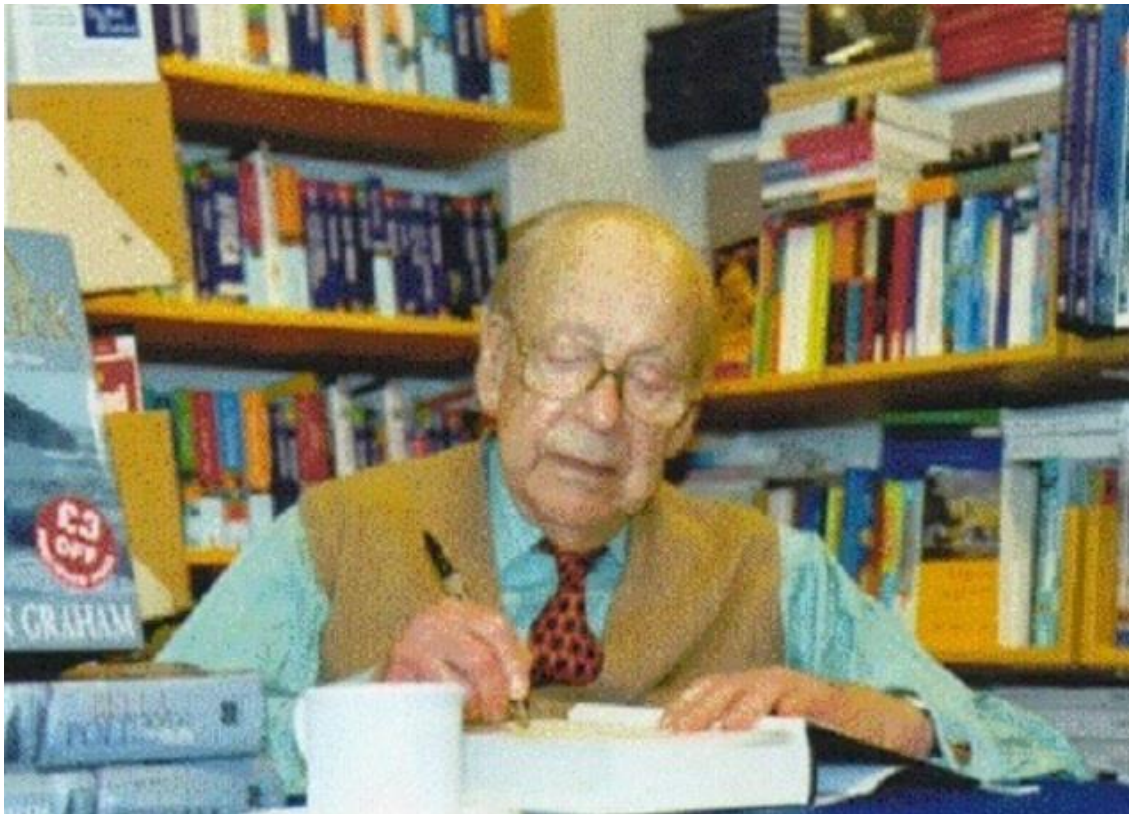
With Robin Ellis: (29) at his 1990 wedding in London (30) c1990



(31) 1995 (32) Date unknown



(33) At home, 2000 (34) With Janette Eathorne, 2002



(35) 2002

(36) Date unknown



(37) Late era, date unknown (38) Together again: St. Margaret the Queen churchyard, Buxted, East Sussex, 2015

afterword

I never met Winston Graham. I wrote to him three times in the latter stages of his life and he answered three times, kindly and patiently, as was his wont, the last time just four months before he died. I can't say for certain what kind of man he was, but I can say that I've never come across anyone who has a bad word to say about him. Whilst completing his *Memoirs* in 2002 he fretted that they wouldn't prove popular because he hadn't done enough "sinning". He considered himself "very dull" and advised anyone wanting to know more about him to look to his works:

I have by now written a great many novels, and must through them have surely revealed a fair amount of my own nature and personal feelings. Let that suffice

and it's true that, whilst he was other things – husband, father, sportsman, clubman, traveller, keen motorist and gardener – first and foremost he was a writer. Writing wasn't just his job or career or passion, it was the essence of what he was; it was his life. How else fathom one who picked up his pen in 1929 and didn't set it down again till death stilled his hand some 74 years later? So, yes, read his books, both better to find him and to pay richly deserved homage to a life so admirably lived.



Of course his Poldark novels are a fine achievement and lasting monument to his diligence, application and exceptional storytelling ability – but it's a shame nonetheless that, due to the all-pervading ubiquity of television his name has become closely associated with that 25% of his output to the virtual exclusion of the greater remainder. In the 1950s he published six non-Poldark novels, all very well worth reading. One (by no means the best) won a prestigious prize; three others were filmed. The 1960s gave us *Marnie*, *After the Act* and *The Walking Stick*, all mature, impressive, highly accomplished works. After 1970's *Angell*, *Pearl* & *Little God*, he applied himself principally to building on the solid rock foundation of his masterly post-war Poldark quartet with notable success. But, whilst he published eight more of those novels in his last thirty years, he published nine other titles also, among which both *The Green Flash* (1986) and *The Ugly Sister* (1998) merit the serious attention of any bibliophile.



His remains lie in the churchyard of St. Margaret the Queen, Buxted, beside those of his beloved Jean. After giving so much for so long, and bringing pleasure to so many – whether living, departed or yet to be born – may he rest in peace.

* * * * *

notes and sources

(2) SHORT FICTION

¹ In *Windsor Magazine*, October 1935

² *John Bull*, 31 May 1947

³ *Memoirs*, 1.2

⁴ In the February 1991 issue of *Book and Magazine Collector*, for example

⁵ *Stories of the Macabre*, ed. Denys Val Baker, Kimber, 1976; *Realms of Darkness*, ed. Mary Danby, Octopus, 1985; *The Best of Winter's Crimes, Vol. 1*, Macmillan, 1986, *The Giant Book of Crime Stories*, Magpie, 1991 and *The Anthology of Crime Stories*, Tiger Books, 1994, all ed. George Hardinge, etc. The story may also be read online via the National Library of Australia's *Trove* website

⁶ *Western Morning News*, 9 October 2015

(3) OTHER BOOKS

¹ Gloria Newton, *Australian Women's Weekly*, 14 March 1973

² In a letter to this author dated 16 November 2002

³ J. Osman Streater (1942-2013) was Savile Club Chairman from 1990-6

⁴ At Balliol College, Oxford, on the occasion of WG's 90th birthday

(4) OTHER PUBLISHED ORIGINAL WRITING

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). WG quotes the same poet in 1942's *My Turn Next*.

² POLLY POSTES by Sabine Baring-Gould, anthologised in *One and All* (see p. 257)

^{3, 5} From *Aurora Leigh* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 -1861)

⁴ *Memoirs*, 1.6

⁶ A Trustee is "an elder statesman of the Club who is in effect a Guardian. They usually serve for five years. They are responsible for finding a new Chairman when the time comes and keeping an eye on the Committee."

⁷ The Club did not employ a full-time, salaried secretary until 1910. He (W. A. Evans) was "the first of a long line, some ... good, some bad, some brilliant and some disastrous ..." Peter Aldersley was clearly a success.

⁸ "*Hang Your Halo in the Hall!*" *A History of the Savile Club* by Garret Anderson (The Savile Club, 1993).

⁹ WG and Alwyn first met in 1946 during the production of *Take My Life*, for which Alwyn composed the music.

(5) CINEMA AND TELEVISION

^{1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13} *Memoirs*, 1.6

² Though £80 a week is quoted in *Memoirs*, in the *Times* of 7 May 2002 he told Valerie Grove it was "£150 a week". But he also told her he dined with H G Wells "in 1950", four years after his fellow author had died! By then almost 94, such minor lapses are very easily forgiven.

³ *Memoirs*, 1.9

^{5, 9, 15, 17} *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*, Tony Lee Moral, The Scarecrow Press, 2013

⁶ *Australian Women's Weekly*, 14 March 1973

¹⁰ www.britmovie.co.uk

¹¹ www.dvdbeaver.com

¹⁴ *Birmingham Post*, 31 March 1967

¹⁶ A two-page comparison of *Marnie*, book and film, may be found in *Firsts* magazine, Volume 2, Number 2, cover date February 1992

¹⁸ *Daily Express*, 18 November 1995

¹⁹ *Daily Express*, 30 March 1967

²⁰ *Memoirs*, 1.10

²¹ www.allmovie.com

²² *Memoirs*, 2.1

²³ *Beautiful Shadow : a Life of Patricia Highsmith*, Andrew Wilson, Bloomsbury, 2003

²⁴ See NOVELS, note 51

²⁵ www.krimiserien.heimat.eu

²⁶ *Woman's Weekly*, 30 July 1983

²⁷ It can be done: the BBC's *Martin Chuzzlewit* (David Lodge, 1994), *Pride and Prejudice* (Andrew Davies, 1995) and *Bleak House* (Andrew Davies, 2005) are three examples of fine adaptations – but screened over more than five hours in the case of the first two and eight hours in the third – and, of course, resourced accordingly.

(6) THE PLAYS OF WG

¹ Arguably, although it depends on how you interpret "published": a copy of *Circumstantial Evidence* (call number MPS 792) is held in the Western Manuscripts Collection of the British Library and German theatrical agent and publisher VVB in Norderstedt and reference libraries in Hamburg, Kiel, Frankfurt, Darmstadt and Erlangen all hold copies of the WG / Nybo collaboration *Indizienbeweis* (VVB, undated, c1980). Personal copies of *Seven Suspected* + *Circumstantial Evidence* retained by WG are now held by RCM (see note ⁷ below).

² *Memoirs of a Private Man*, Macmillan, 2003

³ *The Cornish Post and Mining News*, 3 June 1933

⁴ *The Cornishman*, 2 April 1936; other quotes from *Memoirs*

⁵ *The Cornish Guardian*, 7 April 1938

⁶ *The Cornish Guardian*, 14 April 1938

⁷ *The Uxbridge and West Drayton Gazette*, 18 November 1938

⁸ At the 1935 W. I. festival, Perranporth presented *Mystery Cottage* by Bernard Merivale, in 1937 they offered *The Wandering Scholar* by Hans Sachs and *When the Whirlwind Blows* by Dane Essex and in 1939 *Hunger* by Muriel Smith and *Lights Out* by Walter Hudd (as reported in *The West Briton* of 8 April 1935, 15 March 1937 and 27 April 1939 respectively). No WG-penned script was produced by Perranporth W. I. in any of those years. The 1934 festival was held on 14 April but only cursorily reported [Was WG's *Eight O'Clock Precisely*, staged at Redruth just four days later, also performed here??] and I could find no 1938 report at all, perhaps because no competition was held in that year. In brief, though *Memoirs* refers to "one-act plays" (in the plural), *Values* is the only one (to date) known to have been both staged and reported in the press.

⁹ The Graham Archive is held by the Courtney Library of the Royal Cornwall Museum, the Royal Institution of Cornwall, River Street, Truro, TR1 2SJ

¹⁰ *The Western Morning News* of 1 July 1936 reports that, late in June, some two months after the Truro festival, Perranporth W. I. gave "a delightful entertainment" of music and three short plays; it is instructive to note that, whilst *All Night Service* was reprised, WG's *Values* was not – rather, two other, non-WG works, *Wise and Likewise* and *Mistaken Identity* were presented instead. After having taken the trouble to learn and rehearse the play, to abandon it so soon is surprising. Perhaps they didn't think it so "excellent" after all.

¹¹ RCM archive, author's notebook

¹² *Strangers Meeting*, Ward Lock, 1939, Book Two, Chapter XIV

¹³ And beyond, for his epitaph, though terse and apparently guileless, is problematic. After hitting his writing stride towards the end of WWII, WG penned just one now forgotten play in his remaining sixty years, so "PLAYWRIGHT", while not wrong, is a stretch. Even if you count *Indizienbeweis*, he published more poems in his lifetime than plays, so why not "POET" too? He wrote more screenplays (produced and unproduced) than stage plays, so why not "SCREENWRITER"? Even "NOVELIST" – and he was surely that – allows *The Japanese Girl*, *The Spanish Armadas*, *Poldark's Cornwall* and *Memoirs* (because not novels) to fall through the cracks. Simple, unpretentious AUTHOR says it best.

(7) DEAR SWINNY ...

¹ Brighton's *Evening Argus Weekend magazine*, 20-21 January 2001

² Craig Campbell, *Sunday Post*, 21 September 2016

³ *Times*, 4 July 1968

⁴ *Times*, 21 March 1969

⁵ The two episodes were broadcast on 19 June 1943 (leaving Swinnerton's name 29th on a guest-list that now stretches beyond three thousand) and 21 September 1974 – the latter some three years before WG's one and only appearance on 26 November 1977. Both men included Beethoven among their musical choices, though in their "luxury item" – exercise books and pens for WG, gin and vermouth for Swinnerton – revealed some difference in mindset too. Through the course of the programme's 75-year run, around 250 guests (including Roy Plomley himself) have been cast away at least twice, with comedian Arthur Askey (1900-1982) and Sir David Attenborough both invited four times.

⁶ Swinnerton novels from 1939, 1942, 1937 and 1932 respectively.

^{7, 29} This first letter from WG to FS is clearly dated "17th January 1942"; furthermore, towards its end WG gives his age as "thirty-three", which on 17 January 1942 he was. But Swinnerton quit the *Observer* in early January 1943; additionally, the novel *Thankless Child* referred to in the letter was not published until the second half of 1942 and in January of that year was not even completed (Swinnerton finished it on 19 April). The letter's date must therefore have been a New Year-related slip of the pen and its correct date **17 January 1943**. As for his age: well, WG was ever notoriously close about that, even, apparently, in personal letters. The copy seen is one taken by Irene Campbell from the original loaned to her by WG in 1985.

^{8, 62, 63, 71} Letter, FS to WG, 23 January 1943; copied as 7 above

^{9, 13, 14, 23, 72} Letter, WG to Irene Campbell, 20 August 1985

¹⁰ When WG shortened the book before its American publication (as *The Renegade*) in 1951, the "Reuben" scenes were among those most severely cut.

¹¹ Letter, FS to WG, 21 May 1946; copied as 7

¹² Letter, FS to WG, 15 June 1946; copied as 7

^{15, 16} Letter, FS to WG, 26 July 1947; copied as 7

¹⁷ Letter, FS to WG, 22 December 1947; copied as 7

¹⁸ Letter, WG to FS, 25 December 1959, held by the Special Collections Library of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, AR, USA

¹⁹ Letter, WG to FS, 18 December 1960; as 18

²⁰ Letter, WG to FS, 14 December 1961; as 18

^{21, 61, 65, 85, 90} Letter, WG to FS, 16 December 1963; as 18

²² FRANK SWINNERTON: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF A BOOKMAN by Irene Campbell, The University of Warwick, 1992, which describes both "a respected literary figure whose strength was his perception and understanding of the progress of the British literary world through the centuries" but also a hardworking and well

respected but self-deprecating author-cum-gardener; a lover of cricket (Sussex in particular), music and the theatre; a clubman, tennis player and family man, "light-hearted and open", self-made (his meagre early education disrupted by illness), given to writing longhand scripts in "an orderly, workmanlike studio", dedicated to the craft of literature in all its aspects and with an "ability to understand and sympathise with other people's beliefs and failings" – little wonder, then, despite their disparity in age, that WG and Swinnerton were kindred spirits. The help of Irene Campbell in drafting this chapter is appreciated.

²⁴ *Femina* and *La Vie Heureuse* were two French magazines published by Messrs Hachette, who sponsored a prize worth 1000 francs (circa £40) awarded in France from 1904 and, from 1919, in England also. The intention of the latter was "to reward a strong and original piece of work, excellent in matter and in style, promising for the future, and calculated to reveal to French readers the true spirit and character of England" and its aim to encourage writers who were felt to be insufficiently known or appreciated. Previous winners included E M Forster's *A Passage to India* in 1925, *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf in 1928 and *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons in 1934

²⁵ Novelist Howard Spring declared the book "the loveliest autobiography written in our time."

²⁶ Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire; a more prestigious honour than the OBE conferred on WG in 1983

²⁷ Page 148 of FRANK SWINNERTON: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF A BOOKMAN by Irene Campbell, The University of Warwick, 1992

²⁸ The letter, from Swinnerton to Morchard Bishop, is held by the University Library Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cambridge, UK

³⁰ *Country Life*, 2 August 1956

³¹ *Evening Standard*, date unknown

^{32, 35, 38-40, 42-45} Letter among the Richard Church Papers held by the University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Center, TX, USA

^{33, 47-50} Letter among the Richard Church Papers held by the University of Manchester's John Rylands Library, Greater Manchester, UK

³⁴ *Country Life*, 14 March 1963

³⁶ Letter dated 19 September 1963 from The Book Society's Diana Kingdom to Richard Church; as 32

³⁷ Full draft review held as 32. A possibly somewhat revised or edited version was published in *Country Life* on 2 January 1964 and possibly also in *The Book Society News*.

⁴¹ *Country Life*, 29 July 1965

⁴⁶ *Country Life*, 1 June 1967

⁵¹ *Country Life*, 5 February 1970

- ⁵² Letter dated 6 February 1970; as 33
- ⁵³ See pp. 381 re Church and 111 re WG
- ⁵⁴ *Max Reinhardt : a Life in Publishing* by Judith Adamson, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009
- ^{55, 91} *Memoirs*, 2.11
- ⁵⁶ *Writers in Cornwall*, Michael Williams, Tor Mark, 2010
- ⁵⁷ Issue 18, Summer 1971, includes substantial pieces both by and about WG, the first, under the title DINNER AT TRENWITH, proves to be nothing more than a chapter lifted from *Ross Poldark* and the second, WINSTON GRAHAM'S CORNWALL by E. W. Martin, a pedestrian recounting of the plots of *The Grove of Eagles* and the four Poldark novels written to that point.
- ^{58, 59} Personal communication dated 23 March 2018
- ⁶⁰ Joan Acocella, *New Yorker*, 9 April 2013
- ⁶⁴ Letter to Richard Church, 18 December 1967; as 33
- ⁶⁶ Letter to J. C. Trewin, 5 May 1980, held by the Special Collections Centre at the University of Reading, Reading, Berks, UK
- ⁶⁷ Letter to Richard Church, 11 April 1965; as 32
- ⁶⁸ Letter to this author, 2 August 1999
- ^{69, 84} Letter to Richard Church, undated, late 1963; as 32
- ⁷⁰ Letter to Victor Gollancz, 8 August 1958, held by the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick Library, Coventry, UK
- ⁷³ Letter from WG to Hitchcock, dated 4 April 1961, quoted in *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013, by Tony Lee Moral
- ⁷⁴ See page 326
- ⁷⁵ Letter to the *Times*, 21 December 1987
- ⁷⁶ Letter to the *Times*, 13 November, 1991
- ⁷⁷ Letter to the *Times*, 23 July 1994
- ⁷⁸ Letter to the *Times*, 16 October 1998
- ⁷⁹ Letter to the *Times*, 24 April 2000
- ⁸⁰ Letter to the *Times*, 31 July 1954
- ⁸¹ Letter to the *Guardian*, 23 January 1970
- ⁸² Letter to the *Guardian*, 11 August 1975
- ⁸³ Letter to R. P. Watt, 16 January 1938, held by the Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, USA
- ⁸⁶ Letter to Commander Tredinnick, 13 October 1965
- ⁸⁷ Letter from WG dated 4 August 1937, recipient not stated
- ⁸⁸ Letter to Brenda Francis, 29 November 1987
- ⁸⁹ Letter to Tom Attlee, dated 22 May 1949 and enclosed with a presentation copy of *Cordelia*; book and letter held by the Attlee family.
- ⁹² *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde, 1890

(8) THE POLDARK PHENOMENON

^{1, 10, 19} *Woman* magazine, 10 December 1977

² worldcat.org

³ With thanks to excellent detective work by RP at poldark.activeboard.com who first identified the story with the help of Berlin's Sudermann Society and then acquired a translation.

⁴ *My Poldark Characters* by Winston Graham, published in Redruth County Grammar School Souvenir Magazine 1907-1976. Note that, although WG named one of his Poldark characters Morwenna Chynoweth, in this article he uses the variant spelling Morwena.

^{5, 8, 75-77} *Memoirs*, 2.4

⁶ On Radio 4's *Open Book* on 14 September 2008 Andrew Graham said about his father's choice of names,: "George Warleggan is based on a smelter who made his money in smelting and banking in Cornwall whose actual name was William Lemon, but Lemon is soft and watery where George Warleggan is really vicious."

⁷ Joan Geoghegan, *Nashau Telegraph*, 24 June 1978. Concerning Warleggan, did WG possibly have Ralph Bates in mind? For here's what he told Susan Hill (*Bookshelf*, 26 February 1987) about the extent to which the television character influenced the one on the page:

I think I was slightly affected by the people who played the parts. George Warleggan, for instance, who was played by Ralph Bates, who wasn't my idea of Warleggan at all – he's far too gentlemanly a character – but as I watched him and as I wrote about him, the two characters came slightly more together and I think in the later books, George Warleggan's become rather more of a gentlemanly character than he would have done without Ralph Bates's influence.

⁹ *Memoirs*, 1.5

¹¹ Though Raleigh is the more usual 21st century spelling, WG uses Raleigh. And which is correct? In 1891, Raleigh biographer William Stebbing wrote:

For Raleigh's name, his contemporaries never had a fixed rule ... Lord Burleigh wrote Rawly. Robert Cecil wrote to him as Rawley, Raleigh, and Raleigh. A secretary of Cecil wrote Raweley and Rawleggh. King James, for whom in Scotland he had been Raulie, wrote once ... and Carew Raleigh [wrote] commonly Raleigh. Carew's son Philip spelt his name both Raleigh and Raleigh. Lady Raleigh signed one letter Raleigh, but all others which have been preserved, Raleigh. The only known signature of young Walter is Raleigh.

So, take your pick.

^{12, 13} *Poldark's Cornwall*, The Poldark World

¹⁴ *On Forsyte 'Change*, John Galsworthy, Heinemann, 1930

¹⁵ The series wasn't planned: rather, it happened. In 1987 WG told Susan Hill that *Warleggan* had been "the end of it. I finished completely, for ever, I thought." When asked by Ted Harrison in 1977 if there would be any more Poldarks beyond the seven then published, he replied: "I doubt it. It's difficult to say at this moment. Certainly I finished the last feeling that this was the end of all I had to say." See also the quotes on pages 212 and 232.

One of WG's strongest suits as a writer was his implacable patience, his ability to refrain from forcing the work in favour of awaiting the moment, letting inspiration come in its own time, though it may take years. *Ross Poldark* simmered in his subconscious through much of the war. The cast of *Night Without Stars* was assembled over a similar period. Wilfred Angell, Pearl Friedel and Little Godfrey Brown sprang from Oliver Parker, Pearl Cabot and Godfrey Vesper via a prolonged but ultimately fruitful incubation, transplanted from Westhampton (Bristol) to London along the way. Thus are standards maintained. Having said all of that, in 1991 WG acknowledged to John Dunn that, by the time of 1981's *The Stranger from the Sea*, Poldark had become to him an "addiction".

^{16, 18, 43} *The Craft of the Historical Novelist* in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, New Series, Volume VII, Part 4, 1977. In 2002 WG told Valerie Grove (*Times*, 7 May) that the move to Cornwall was lucky for him because "how could I have written stories about Southport?"

¹⁷ *Western Morning News*, 16 March 1948

²⁰ The first sentence of WG's Foreword in his wife's *The Poldark Cookery Book*, Triad / Granada, 1981

²¹ In contrast, for instance, to George Eliot's *Romola*, which, according to Henry James, "smells of the lamp"

²² *Jeremy Poldark*, 1.11

²³ *Warleggan*, 2.4

²⁴ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 2.4

²⁵ *Warleggan*, 3.3

²⁶ *Warleggan*, 1.4

²⁷ *The Stranger from the Sea* et al.

²⁸ *The Loving Cup*, 1.1

²⁹ *The Black Moon*

³⁰ When Sam and Drake first show up looking for work (*BM* 1.2), Sam reels off a list of mines around Illuggan that have recently failed. From Dolcoath to Unity, all names and fates are factual.

³¹ But Hardy wrote in the present or near-past and WG more than 150 years in the past, which is perhaps enough to account for this difference.

³² *The Four Swans*, 1.4

³³ *The Four Swans*, 1.2

³⁴ *The Angry Tide*, 3.12

³⁵ *The Loving Cup*, 3.10

³⁶ *The Black Moon*, 2.3

^{37, 40} Stephen Hart / Martin Rowley: *British Weather from 1700 to 1849*

³⁸ *The Four Swans*, 3.8

³⁹ *The Loving Cup*, 2.1

⁴¹ *Malthus and his Time*, Michael Turner, Springer, 1986

⁴² *The Four Swans*, author's note

^{44, 82, 83} *Memoirs*, 2.5

⁴⁵ WG cites this example in *Memoirs*, 2.5, although it doesn't sound particularly anachronistic. Indeed, in *The Loving Cup*, 3.7, after Ross encourages Jeremy, who is anguishing about Cuby, to "go over and take her," his son replies: "Are you – joking?" and in *Bella Poldark*, 1.2, Clowance, chatting with Paul Kellow about Daisy developing a slight cough, says: "You are joking."

⁴⁶ *The Miller's Dance*, 3.3

⁴⁷ *Bella Poldark*, 1.3

⁴⁸ *The Black Moon*, 3.11

⁴⁹ *The Four Swans*, 2.7

⁵⁰ *The Angry Tide*, 1.9

⁵¹ *The Angry Tide*, 2.3

⁵² *The Miller's Dance*, 1.13

⁵³ *The Angry Tide*, 3.4

⁵⁴ *The Loving Cup*, 1.7

⁵⁵ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 1.4

⁵⁶ *The Miller's Dance*, 1.5

⁵⁷ *The Twisted Sword*, 3.4

⁵⁸ *The Angry Tide*, 3.9

⁵⁹ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 1.7

⁶⁰ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 2.5

⁶¹ *The Angry Tide*, 3.7

⁶² *The Four Swans*, 1.4

⁶³ *The Angry Tide*, 1.3

⁶⁴ *The Angry Tide*, 3.10

⁶⁵ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 2.3

⁶⁶ *Bella Poldark*, 5.6

⁶⁷ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 1.6

⁶⁸ *The Stranger from the Sea*, 2.8

⁶⁹ *The Miller's Dance*, 1.4

⁷⁰ *The Loving Cup*, 2.4

⁷¹ *The Twisted Sword*, 1.4

⁷² *Bella Poldark*, 2.12

⁷³ *The Twisted Sword*, 4.4

⁷⁴ *The Miller's Dance*, 3.8

⁷⁸ In a prefatory note to *The Four Swans*, WG writes:

Just for the record, and to reassure the cynics, perhaps I should mention that this novel was half written when the television production of the first four Poldark novels was mooted.

⁷⁹ *Poldark* Series One was broadcast on BBC1 on Sundays (7.25 to 8.15 p.m.) in sixteen weekly episodes from 5 October 1975 to 18 January 1976 and repeated on Mondays (7.15 to 8.10 p.m.) from 10 January to 25 April 1977.

Series Two was broadcast on BBC1 on Sundays (7.15 to 8.10 p.m.) in thirteen weekly episodes from 11 September to 4 December 1977.

BBC2 aired Series One for a third time on Mondays (4.35 to 5.30 p.m.) in two halves, showing episodes 1-8 from 26 October to 14 December 1987 and episodes 9-16 from 11 January to 29 February 1988.

Episode 1 of Series One was shown as a standalone item on BBC Four on 17 February 2008. Series Two was never repeated.

^{80, 81, 108} *The Cult of Poldark*, BBC Four, 17 February 2008

⁸⁴ *Poldark's Cornwall*, Television Poldark

⁸⁵ As 7. In response to viewer vitriol – "Couldn't scriptwriter Jack Pulman drown himself in his own ink?" (Marie Hayward) / "Winston Graham's Demelza was a ... brave, tough and likeable urchin; the BBC's Demelza is a nasty little delinquent." (S. Jones) – Pulman put his side of the case:

If Mrs Hayward disapproves of Episode 2, doubtless she will have been horrified by 4, since none of the events of that part exist in the novel. But may I invite her to examine Book 3 of Ross Poldark which would normally provide the dramatic material for Episode 4. Ross marries Demelza after sleeping with her only because 'such a course was the obvious way out.' Obvious way out of what? Since he doesn't love her and has the pick of the girls in the county, how are we to explain this unlikely action to our viewers? A few pages later, after a moonlight row in a boat, he falls in love with her, leaving us dramatically nowhere to go. Thus the two strongest story elements – why Ross married Demelza and how he came finally to love her –

are in terms of screen drama thrown away. The rest of Book 3 consists of a shopping expedition to Truro; Verity becoming friends with Demelza; and Demelza making a hit with the other Poldarks by revealing that she has a pretty voice – not enough drama or conflict to carry an hour's TV viewing.

As for the scene at the fair, Demelza, when we discover her in the novel, is so obviously on the side of the angels that she leaves nothing for Ross to improve upon except her personal hygiene. Our Demelza is wilder, certainly, but she is a child, one of the many neglected children of 18th century England, and as such to be forgiven rather than abused. She is surely more worth redeeming, in dramatic terms, than a little angel with a smudge on her face. This is, after all, 1975: the original novel was written 30 years ago in which time attitudes generally speaking have changed.

(Source: *Radio Times*, 8 November 1975)

⁸⁶ *Observer*, 22 September 1996. The Series Two scriptwriters were Alexander Baron (episodes 1-5 from *The Black Moon*), John Wiles (6-9 from *The Four Swans*) and Martin Worth (10-13 from *The Angry Tide*).

⁸⁷ *Times*, 6 October 1975

⁸⁸ *Observer*, 12 October 1975

^{89, 91} www.pbs.org

⁹⁰ As quoted by John J. O'Connor, *New York Times*, 29 November 1992

⁹² The list, topped by *The Sopranos*, is accessible via a number of web pages, Channel 4's not among them.

^{93, 104} WG obituary, *Times*, 12 July 2003

⁹⁴ Viewer comments from BBC Audience Research Reports VR75/574 (24 October 1975), VR/76/31 (13 February 1976), VR/77/512 (1 November 1977), VR/77/583 (25 November 1977) and VR/77/666 (17 January 1978) from BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham Park, Reading.

⁹⁵ *The Passion of Poldark*, Val Adams, SMADA Publishing, 2013

⁹⁶ The Playback DVDs I watched are edited "for contractual reasons", which doesn't help. Around five minutes per Series One episode are gone in order to allow the use of two discs rather than three. The shorter second series (also on two discs) is entire. The BBC Series One videos were similarly cut, though unedited DVD versions can be found.

⁹⁷ *Times*, 20 May 1976

⁹⁸ *Times*, 26 November 1976

⁹⁹ *Desert Island Discs*, BBC Radio 4, 26 November 1977

¹⁰⁰ *Making Poldark*, Robin Ellis, Palo Alto Publishing, 2012

¹⁰¹ *Dishing the Dirt* by make-up artist Maggie Thomas, Authors OnLine Ltd, 2009

¹⁰² *Poldark Country*, David Clarke, Bossiney Books, 1977

¹⁰³ Hitchcock and the Making of *Marnie*, Tony Lee Moral, The Scarecrow Press, 2013, Chapter Nine

¹⁰⁵ From *Poldark* by Nickianne Moody, posted by The Museum of Broadcast Communications, 360 North State Street, Chicago, IL 60654, USA.

On 14 September 2008, Moody was a guest on BBC Radio 4's *Open Book*. Host Mariella Frostrup prompted: "You describe [Poldark] as popular fiction and it's fair to say, I suppose, that while not a great prose writer, [Graham] did have a very good emotional grasp of his characters, didn't he, both men and women?" Moody responded:

... There are some fantastic female characters, right across the spectrum and if you talk to readers they will come up with lots of different characters, some of them like Verity, who is the woman who makes a marriage of love and is a sort of a spinster; Morwenna, who comes out of a very difficult marriage and manages to find happiness; Demelza; of course, Elizabeth, and even Prudie the servant—they're really fascinating characters because they're developing and growing and that's what Graham's very good at.

¹⁰⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 28 February 2014

¹⁰⁷ The part of Dwight Enys was played by Richard Morant in the first series but by Michael Cadman in the second. After being rescued from a French prison and reunited with his betrothed, Cadman's first line to her, courtesy of a scriptwriter with a keen sense of humour, was "I'm not the same man who went away!"

¹⁰⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 11 June 2003

¹¹⁰ *Independent*, 30 September 1995

^{111, 113} *The John Dunn Show*, BBC Radio 2, 27 June 1991; Bates died at 51

¹¹² *... although there is a lot going on, the two hours can drag. Crisper treatment, and more charismatic casting, would have helped.* (Peter Waymark, *Times*, 2 October 1996) *... Poldark last night was awful. Not only was it slow and dull, but it had no proper story ... John Bowe? Oh God, what a wet weekend he was.* (Lynne Truss, *Times*, 3 October 1996) ... and so on.

¹¹⁴ As 5. The prophesy was made by Collins editor George Hardinge (*aka* Lord Hardinge of Penshurst) (1921-1997)

¹¹⁵ The precise number of countries is hard to determine. Various secondary sources quote "more than 20" and "over 40", with the truth probably somewhere in between.

(9) PROFILES

¹ *Writers in Cornwall*, Michael Williams, Tor Mark, 2010

² Wendron Mine was renamed Poldark Mine in 1977

³ Quote attributed to Prince William Henry, Duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh (1743-1805), upon receiving from Edward Gibbon in 1781 the then latest volume of the author's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

⁴ This reference is presumably to Greta Gynt

⁵ Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964) not only failed to win any Oscar but was not even nominated in any category.

* * * * *

photo credits

Pages 264, 280, 309 (top, with Greta Gynt, circa 1946 + bottom, in costume on location during the filming of *Poldark*, 1977), 319 (top), 320, 463 (top), 465 (top), 468 (top), 479 (i) and (ii) and 498: *Memoirs of a Private Man*, Macmillan, 2003

Page 300: Mark Gerson

Page 307: Savile Club secretary Julian Malone-Lee, with thanks

Page 319 (ii): online resource "Three Hundred Years of Gilliat Family History"

Page 333: *TV Times*, 1-7 July 1967

Page 343: *Poldark's Cornwall*

Page 416: Michael Williams

Pages 445 + 476 (i): *Cornish Life*, January 1985

Page 449: Peter Letts

Pages 455 + 475: *Woman's Weekly*, 30 July 1983

Page 464 (i): Perranzabuloe Museum

Page 465 (ii): publicity shot used on *Cordelia*, Doubleday, 1950 *et al.*

Pages 466 (i) and 482: Walter Bird

Page 466 (ii): *Tatler and Bystander*, 16 November 1955

Page 467 (i): with thanks to Colin Brewer

Page 467 (ii): from JPW, with thanks

Pages 469 + 470: probably all Alex Gotfryd

Page 471 (i): at Trerice, Newquay, March 1974, from a videotape held by SWFTA, Plymouth

Page 472 (ii): *Making Poldark*, Robin Ellis, Palo Alto Publishing, 2012

Page 476 (ii): from Martin Val Baker, with thanks

Page 477 (i): *Wogan*, BBC One, 1 February 1988

Page 480 (i): *Brighton Evening Argus Weekend* magazine, 20/21 January 2001



Others via Google Images, source specified in text, source unknown or taken by this author.

Jim Dring, 2 May 2022

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