PRESS (2) : More ads, reviews and comments on assorted titles

The House with the Stained Glass Windows (1934)

An Original "Thriller"

"I'm afraid this double tragedy has broken up my house party," said Mr. Pedlaw sadly, after one of his guests had been found with his throat cut and another poisoned – and, of course, that sort of thing does militate against complete enjoyment.

Not that this was an ordinary party. Most of the people present were either criminals or detectives in disguise, and murder, attempted murder, and other unpleasantnesses abounded.

Here is a good old-fashioned thriller, with secret passages, Wicked Uncle and all: and in the midst of the confusion Mr. Graham thoroughly enjoys himself.

Robert Lynd, *News Chronicle*, 2 November 1934

* * *

This is a "first" novel, and it is very clear that a formidable competitor has entered the "thriller" field. Young Mr. Graham not only writes twice as well as most of the "old gang," but he is more fertile in ideas. We have, of course, run before against the man given six weeks to live, but in this instance the hackneyed theme is given a fresh and surprising orientation. Dick Egerton, the condemned man, chivalrously puts himself at the disposal of a young girl whose life and reason are menaced by a choice company of crooks and, in so doing, experiences a surfeit of adventure. "The House with the Stained Glass Windows" is a frank story of sensation equipped with a generous mixture of "old properties" running generally true to "form," and yet how curiously convincing it all is! Partly, no doubt, because of the coherent construction and the neat character-drawing, but principally, I think, because of the writer's imaginative power. Dick and

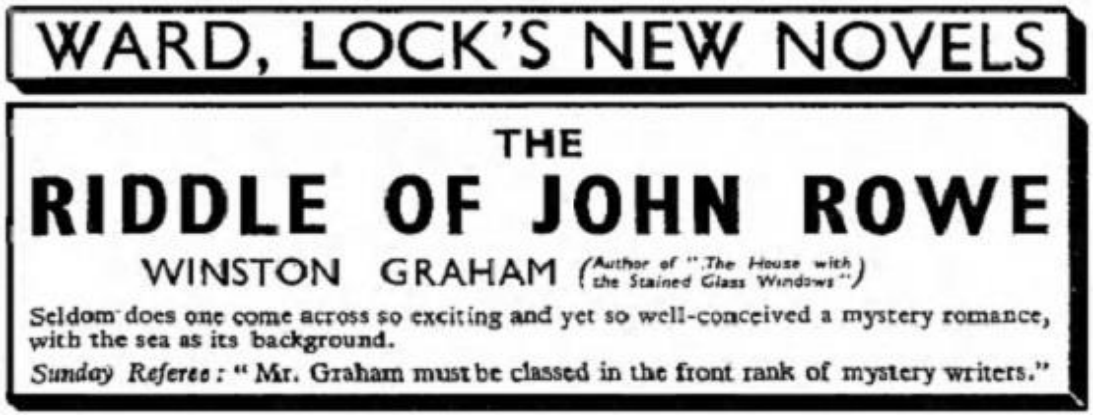
Lucille move through an atmosphere of mystery and terror, the tug on the nerves is well-contrived: but if we go on to ask why we are so excited, it is because these hard-set young people have the quality of life. Keep an eye, then, on Mr. Graham, for he has come to stay.

Buxton Advertiser, 24 November 1934

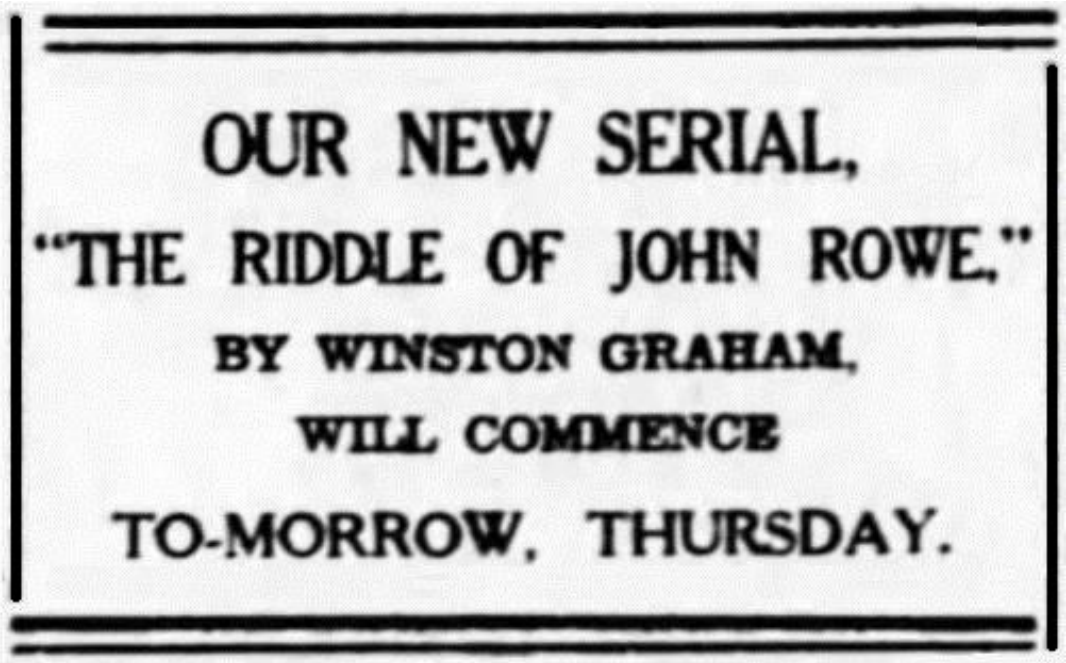
Into the Fog (1935)

Observer (i) 17 March and (ii) 7 August 1935

The Riddle of John Rowe (1935)

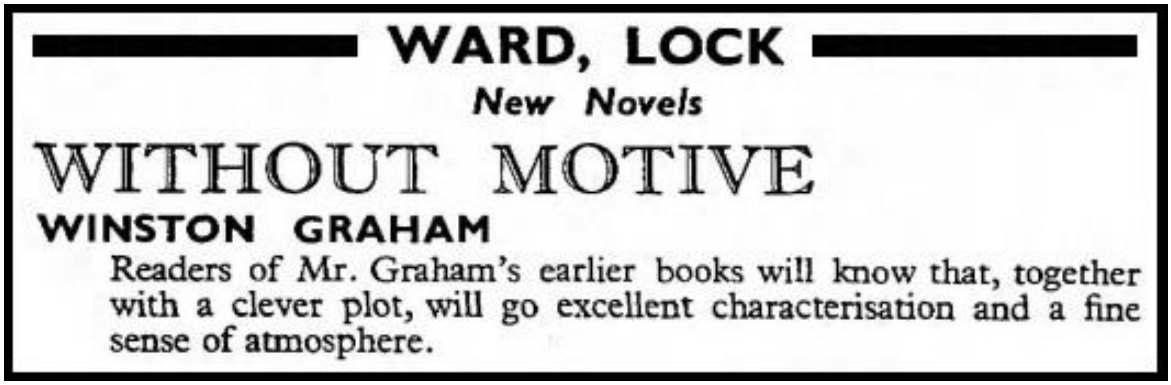


Observer, 13 October 1935



Sydney Morning Herald, 16 October 1935

Without Motive (1936)



Observer (i) 26 April and (ii) 24 May 1936

Sydney Daily Telegraph, 30 May 1936

Old Uniform For A New Policeman

COMMENDED to the attention of the student, "Without Motive" introduces some boldly original notes in mystery story technique.

As the author, Winston Graham, has emphasised, these unorthodoxies by adhesion to a very orthodox background, his crime style becomes a new policeman in an old uniform.

On the radical side, he presents the first confession of murder by a public school headmaster in detective fiction, dismisses the murdered man as the least significant figure in the story, and subordinates the importance of discovering the murderer to the importance of discovering the motive.

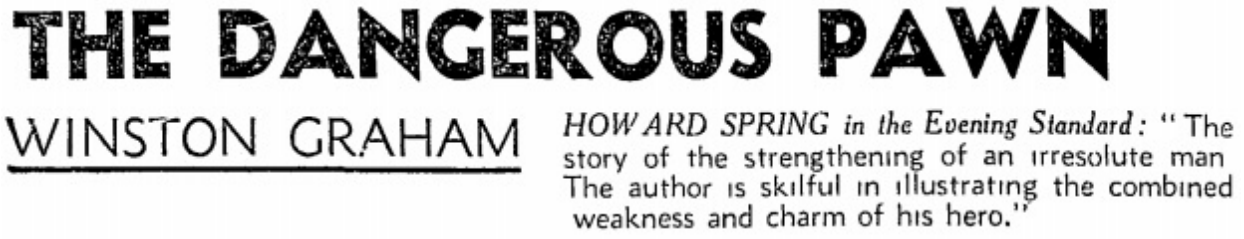
On the traditional side he has a haunted house, music in the dark, a dagger in the back at midnight, full-dress reconstruction of the dinner party at which the murder was committed, and a stolid police sergeant.

His characterisation is good, his style deft, and the book very satisfying.

Melbourne Weekly Times, 18 July 1936 (excerpt)

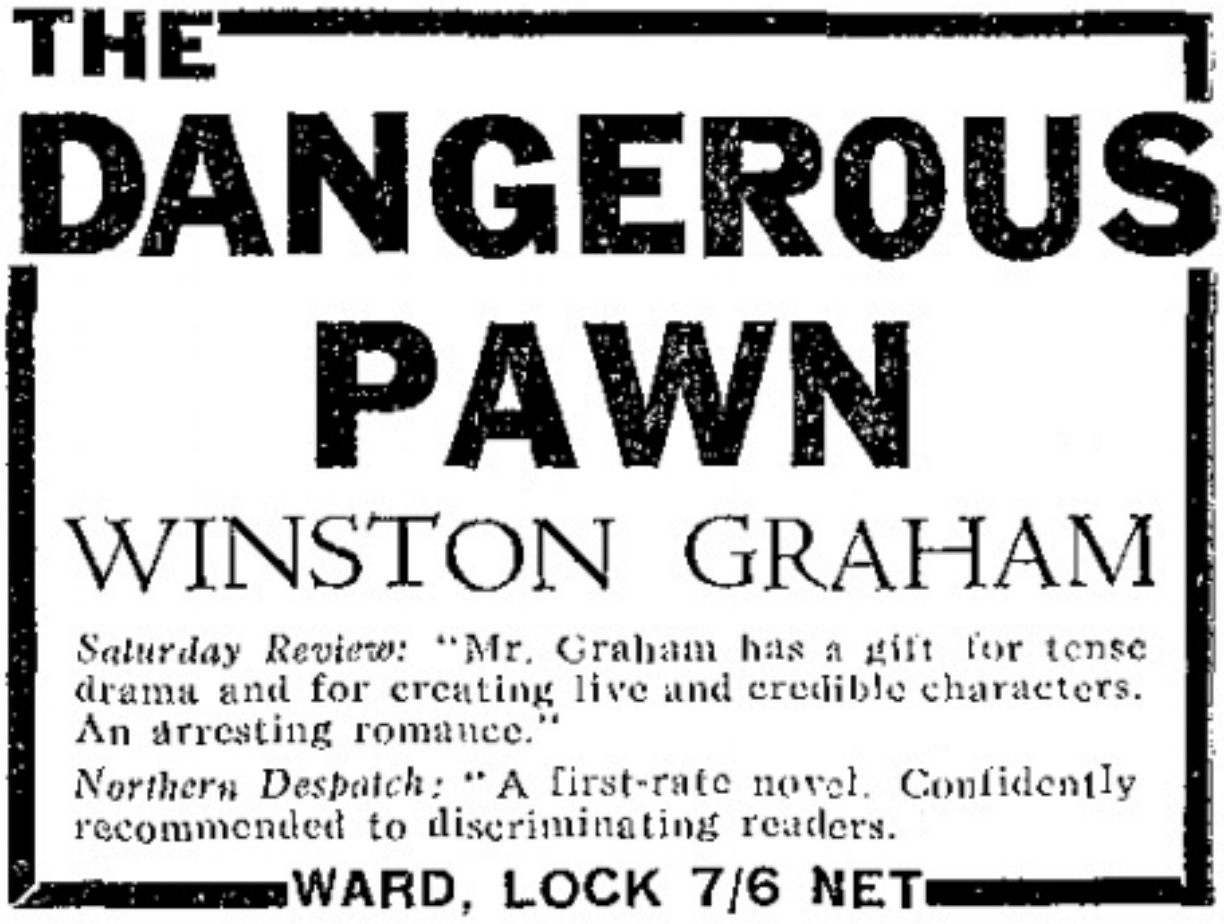
This mystery story is written with the accuracy of a craftsman. The author has a fine sense of atmosphere and hides the solution neatly behind a veil of intrigue. The book is particularly notable for the conception of its plot and the manner in which it is arranged.

The Dangerous Pawn (1937)



Yorkshire Post, 17 March 1937

A book … chiefly notable for two for two really finely contrasted pictures of the Scilly Islands, Winter and Summer … There is perhaps a touch of weakness about the end of the tale … (Torquemada, *Observer*, 11 April 1937)



Daily Mirror, 8 April 1937

As he showed in a previous book, "The Riddle of John Rowe," Mr. Winston Graham has a gift for tense drama and for creating live and credible characters. His new novel, "The Dangerous Pawn" (Ward Lock), is not, as the title might suggest, a crime story, but an arresting romance, with the eternal triangle interest. The three main characters are exceedingly well drawn, and the tension develops naturally out of the situations of the story.

Saturday Review, 20 March 1937

The Giant's Chair (1938)

When the heroine of "The Giant's Chair" (by Winston Graham, Ward Lock) journeyed to Wales to take up the post of secretary to a woman she had previously met abroad, she little knew what weird and terrifying experiences were in store for her. However, she was also to have the compensation of being brought into contact with a very attractive young man who was always at hand to help her and share her troubles. Mr. Graham mixes his romance and thrills with excellent judgment in a tale that is both easy and enjoyable to read.

Saturday Review, 29 January 1938

Admirably told … The atmosphere grows steadily in uneasiness until the climax is reached. A good mystery. (*North China Herald*, 2 March 1938)

* * * * *

Keys of Chance (1939)

KEYS OF CHANCE, by Winston Graham *(Ward, Lock, 7s. 6d.)*. When a medium claims to be in touch with one of the victims of an aeroplane wreck which had been on an important financial mission, Mary Seymour is drawn rapidly into some mysterious events. There is adventure and romance for her and a grand thrill at the finish. Winston Graham has drawn his characters well.

Manchester Evening News, 7 January 1939

Keys of Chance is a straightforward tale of crooked dealing. A spiritualist *séance* comes into it, at which messages "from the other side" drop hints about the possibility of sabotage in an aeroplane disaster. A charming girl, whose father lost his life in the accident, comes into it. So does a lame man obviously far too like a hero to be the parasitic society gambler that he professes himself. So do a chocolate-munching financier and his sinister French secretary. With these likely materials Mr. Winston Graham spins a yarn which is more than a cut above the ruck of thrillers.

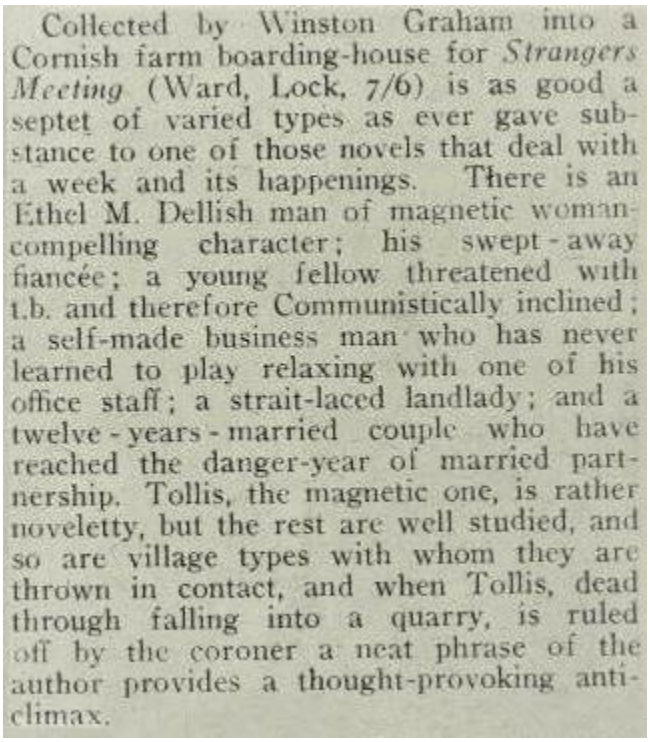
Church Times, 13 January 1939

Keys of Chance

SWIFT-MOVING, this story has all the qualifications of the thriller judiciously mixed wtih the merits of the straight novel. The plot combines the excitement of a crashing plane with the mystery of an informative medium and the romance of a sensitively treated love affair. An aeroplane, carrying a most important financial mission from England, is wrecked on the French coast. Two years later a medium, claiming to be in touch with the spirit of one of the victims, asserts that the tragedy was the outcome of sabotage. From this point the narrative rapidly gathers momentum, and, like most of Winston Graham's books, is full of unexpected twists and fillips to the imagination.

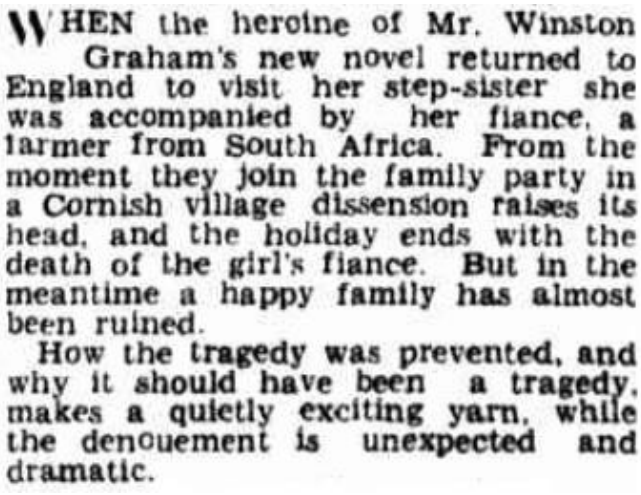
Perth Sunday Times, 19 February 1939

Strangers Meeting (1939)



Collected by Winston Graham into a Cornish farm boarding-house for *Strangers Meeting* (Ward, Lock, 7/6) is as good a septet of varied types as ever gave substance to one of those novels that deal with a week and its happenings. There is an Ethel M. Dellish man of magnetic woman-compelling character; his swept-away fiancée; a young fellow threatened with t.b. and therefore Communistically inclined; a self-made business man who has never learned to play relaxing with one of his office staff; a strait-laced landlady; and a twelve-years-married couple who have reached the danger-year of married partnership. Tollis, the magnetic one, is rather noveletty, but the rest are well studied, and so are village types with whom they are thrown in contact, and when Tollis, dead through falling into a quarry, is ruled off by the coroner a neat phrase of the author provides a thought-provoking anti-climax.

(i) *The Australian Woman's Mirror*, 2 January 1940 (ii) *The Brisbane Courier-Mail*, 23 March 1940 (iii) Dilettante in *The Perth Sunday Times*, 14 April 1940

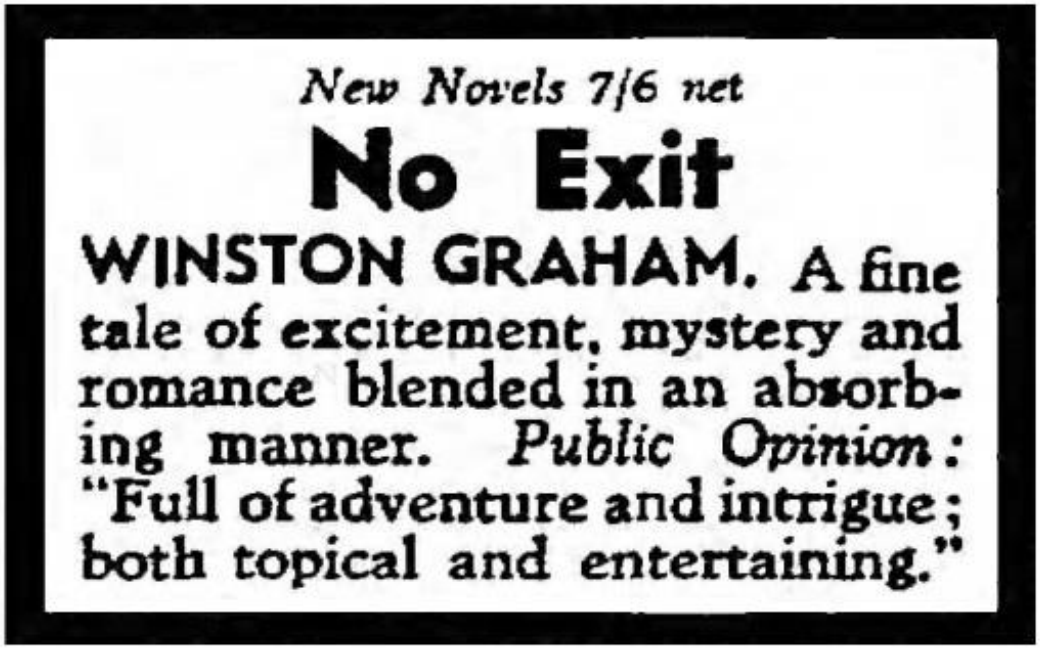


WHEN the heroine of Mr. Winston Graham's new novel returned to England to visit her step-sister she was accompanied by her fiance, a farmer from South Africa. From the moment they join the family party in a Cornish village dissension raises its head, and the holiday ends with the death of the girl's fiance. But in the meantime a happy family has almost been ruined.

How the tragedy was prevented, and why it should have been a tragedy, makes a quietly exciting yarn, while the denouement is unexpected and dramatic.

Strangers Meeting … is a novel of unusual interest, and probably the best work yet by this author … Although … not in the category of problem novels, it is a book that calls for profound thinking by the reader. [Synopsis omitted.] These vastly differing people make excellent ingredients for Mr. Graham's novel, and out of the casual contacts he makes surprising results spring, the while keeping what one could rightly call a magic touch with his readers … *Strangers Meeting* may justly be termed one of the best novels of the year.

No Exit (1940)



New Novels 7/6 net

No Exit

WINSTON GRAHAM. A fine tale of excitement, mystery and romance blended in an absorbing manner. *Public Opinion*: "Full of adventure and intrigue; both topical and entertaining."

Guardian, 12 July 1940

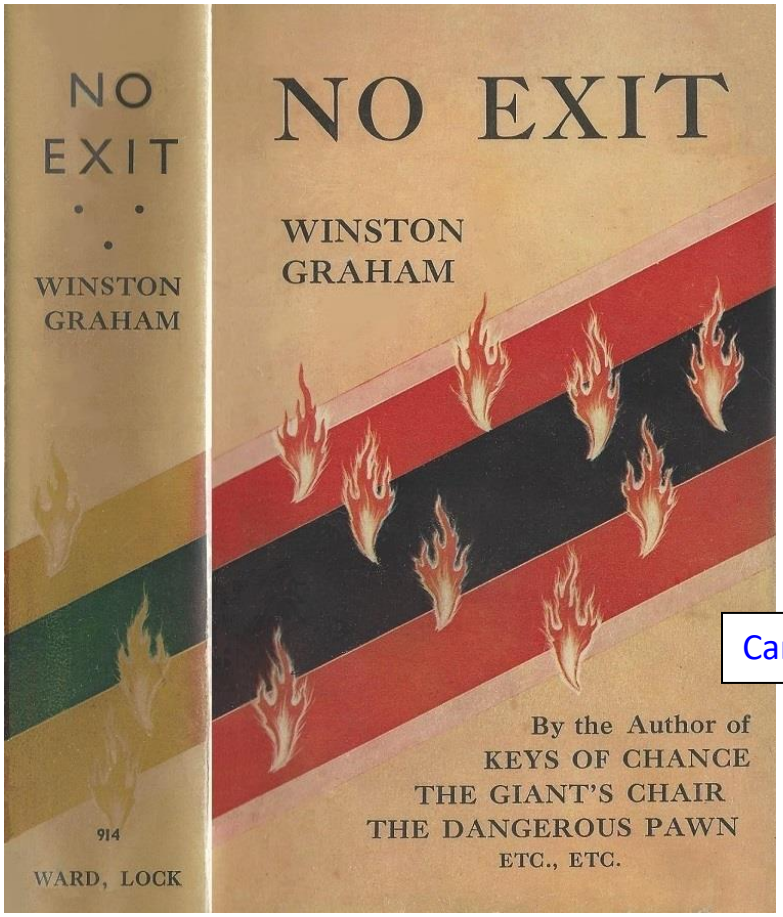
… the best war novel yet published …

"EUROPE has the D.T.'s. For two years it has been seeing green snakes. Now they're beginning to wriggle." Taking advantage of the wriggling, Winston Graham has written the best war novel yet published in "**No Exit**" (Ward Lock). The plot is intricate, the characters very much alive, the tension extreme, and no more skilful thriller could be desired.

Sydney Sun, 27 October 1940

Here is a pleasantly gripping story of international intrigue and skulduggery of the most dramatic kind. Hair-breadth escapes, violence, wild chases involving armored cars and threatening militia and mystery by the paragraph and chapter. Mr. Graham has a reputation as a vivid and brisk writer, and these pages sustain that reputation. But besides his ability to produce drama, he has skill in creating reasonable backgrounds and knowledgeable people. In this novel his European scenes have the sound ring of credibility and his characters are something out of daily experience. John Carr, English engineer, is pleasant to know; his experiences fit in with what his make-up would accept and his reaction to them is psychologically accurate. Thus when he becomes the unwitting agency for the transportation of highly dangerous tidings, and plunges into an amazing progression of accidents and adventures, the reader accompanies him happily.

Winnipeg Free Press, 27 July 1940



Canadian jacket

The Forgotten Story (UK: 1945; USA, retitled: 1958)

THE period detective novel is rarely attempted and still more rarely brought off successfully: all that come to my mind at the moment are Agatha Christie's "Death Comes as the End" (a tale of ancient Egypt), Jeffrey Farnol's agreeable tales of the Bow Street Runners and the superb tours de force of John Dickson Carr. It's a pleasure, therefore, to welcome the new Crime Club Historical Mysteries; but I feel some doubt as to whether Winston Graham's **THE WRECK OF THE GREY CAT (Doubleday, $3.75)** is the ideal book to launch the series.

This is an enjoyable story of the growing-up of an 11-year-old boy in the Cornish port of Falmouth in 1898—his exposure to the attractions of shipping, to the problems of running a waterfront restaurant, and to the incomprehensible tensions and emotions of adults. At the very end one learns that some detection has been going on and that one of the characters is a murderer of a certain classic type (and very nicely done, too); but the body of the book has not a hint of crime or suspense. This is good readable entertainment (indeed one expects no less from Mr. Graham); but its status as a Historical Mystery is at best arguable.

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 20 July 1958

Ross Poldark (1945)

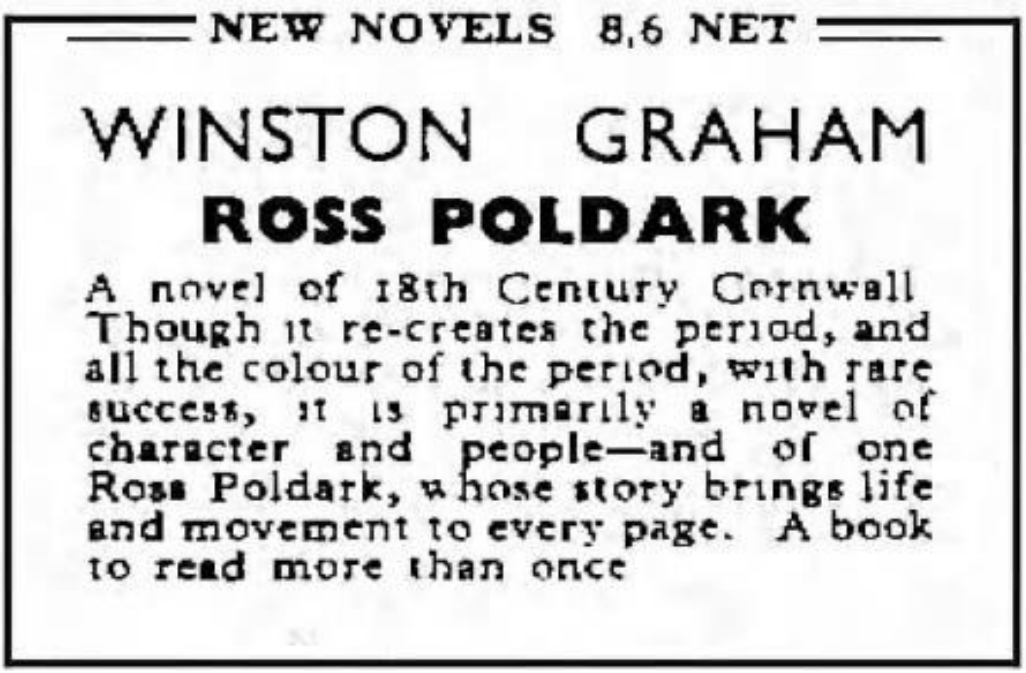
Graham novel studies human nature, history

Make no mistake about it, Winston Graham's new novel, THE RENEGADE, is among the best of this year. Readers of his "Cordelia" and "Night Without Stars" need not be told that he is a rare storyteller.

But this yarn about Ross Poldark is not only a lively story which sweeps the reader along, all agog about the action, it is a book in which real and likable characters are met, recognised and followed to inevitable ends.

Cornwall, in the 18th century; the aftermath of the American Revolution, bitterness of disillusion and a rebuilding through an odd romance, are minor features of a novel written by a master of craft and a student of human nature and history.

Los Angeles Times, 11 November 1951


NEW NOVELS 8/6 NET

WINSTON GRAHAM

ROSS POLDARK

A novel of 18th Century Cornwall
Though it re-creates the period, and all the colour of the period, with rare success, it is primarily a novel of character and people—and of one Ross Poldark, whose story brings life and movement to every page. A book to read more than once

Observer, 16 December 1945

A story which brings with it a breath of the Cornish sea and a many-sided picture of life in the homes of the miners, farmers and gentry. Ross Poldark, a passionate, impetuous, complex character, seems part and parcel of that alien, fascinating country, and we leave him at the age of 27, feeling that we want to know more of his story.

George W. Bishop, *Daily Telegraph*

A novel of eighteenth-century Cornwall in which the interest never flags for an instant. It is excellent story-telling by a writer who really knows how to do this sort of thing in style.

Pamela Hansford Johnson, *John o'London's Weekly*

Here is a full-scale novel of eigthteenth-century Cornwall. Against this background Mr. Winston Graham gives us a drama which brings him at one big stride into the class of serious artists. The hero is a fine conception, a character that grips the reader and lights up the tale.

Reading Standard

The work of an experienced novelist, this story reflects careful study and writing, and unfolds delightful panoramas of old-world Cornwall. All interested in the life of the Cornish countryside will thoroughly enjoy this book.

Western Morning News

Historical romances are nowhere done better … What a solid achievement this series is!

The Times on the Poldark novels

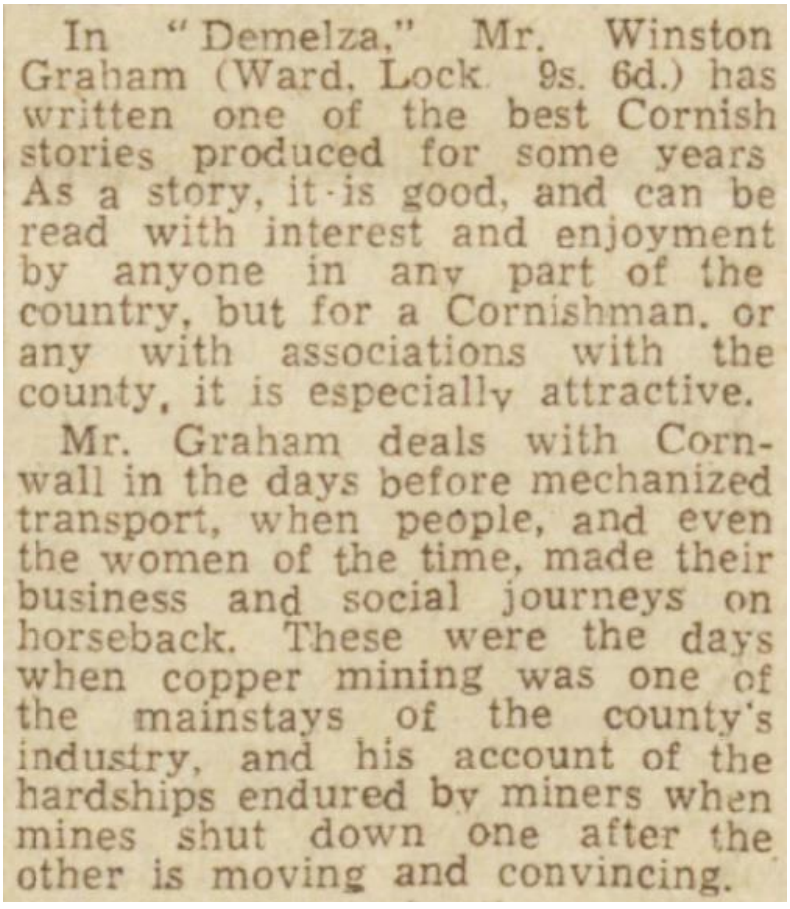
Demelza (1946)

It is written in the style of the days when novels WERE novels. It engrosses so that leaving it gives one a wrench of time and place. It so teems with life and character that it seems to be crowded with incident.

Brisbane Telegraph, undated

The earlier novels in the series are remarkable for their perceptive characterisation and unflinching grasp of late 18th and early 19th century realities, not to mention their evocation of the rough Cornish landscape and way of life. They combine the popular and literary strands of historical fiction in a way which may not seem unusual now but was exceptional when the first books were published in the 1940s.

Kirkus, on the Poldark series



In "Demelza," Mr. Winston Graham (Ward, Lock. 9s. 6d.) has written one of the best Cornish stories produced for some years As a story, it is good, and can be read with interest and enjoyment by anyone in any part of the country, but for a Cornishman, or any with associations with the county, it is especially attractive.

Mr. Graham deals with Cornwall in the days before mechanized transport, when people, and even the women of the time, made their business and social journeys on horseback. These were the days when copper mining was one of the mainstays of the county's industry, and his account of the hardships endured by miners when mines shut down one after the other is moving and convincing.

Descriptions of the poverty-stricken mining villages and the Lord-Lieutenant's ball at Truro are in excellent contrast, while his story of the shipwrecks is well written. Throughout, there is a strong vein of human interest. His characters are well drawn, and one believes in them. They move and speak realistically in well-constructed situations. It is a book that a Cornishman would like to keep and recommend to his friends.

Western Morning News, 29 March 1947

* * *

Those who are familiar with the writings of this British author will immediately recognize the lady of this present title as the heroine of his earlier novel, *The Renegade*. In her literary debut she was introduced as Demelza Carne, the maidservant daughter of a Cornish miner, who was courted by and married, despite the protestations of his aristocratic family, to Ross Poldark, son of landed gentry. This sequel supposedly continues the story of their extraordinary marriage from the birth of the couple's first child, Julia, to her sudden death two years later in 1790. Since the youngster really plays no important role in the unfolding of the story, her appearance and departure must be considered only as an artistic device for setting the time limits to a series of unrelated events.

The substance of the book is the recounting of a number of wholly separate incidents (each of which might be considered a story in itself), threaded together by the relationship their central characters bear to Demelza or Ross. Reading it, one is inclined to think of it in remote terms as a diary in which is recorded the couple's active participation, joint or individual, in the lives of other members of their community. Their relationship to each other seems to remain a somewhat nebulous and impersonal affair, built on a tenuous foundation.

One situation reveals Demelza as affecting the reconciliation and marriage of her friend, Verity, to Captain Andrew Blamey. This affair had previously been broken off by the girl's family, who had condemned the seafarer as a worthless drunkard and accused him of having murdered his first wife.

Ross, on the other hand, is generally involved in less romantic and noble roles with a tendency toward defying authority. When one of his neighbors, whom he had befriended, chokes his unfaithful wife to death and threatens to kill her lover, the village doctor, Ross helps the murderer to escape the law and flee the country. Meanwhile he is involved in a business transaction involving copper mines, a deal which threatens to impoverish him. Finally, indicative of the economic and social unrest of the period, with blood being shed on the other side of the channel, Ross arouses the townsfolk to pillage two ships which are wrecked off the coast. This incident, by the way, seems entirely anticlimatic, and the novel could very readily have been concluded with Julia's death, just as it opens with her birth.

There is a very deceptive quality about Demelza. It must be recognized that the author is intimately familiar with the Cornish coast, its people and its history. Furthermore, he is acquainted thoroughly with the speech, habits and modes of life in the locale. Yet nothing ever seems to become real. Perhaps he has tried too diligently to crowd too many people and too many details in the brief span of two years. Consequently the reader's mind becomes confused, and it is not until the book has been placed aside and considered in cold perspective that the author's purpose gradually begins to reveal itself and is understood. It is quite true, as the publishers claim, that it is a novel of "stormy devotion." And one wonders how many more sequels and how many more incidents will have to follow before that emotional storm does break. Demelza, it would appear, is gradually growing to understand her position in her community's social life, while Ross apparently puts a bigger chip on his shoulder. Murder, adultery, and defiance of law and order do not add much to the book's moral stature.

Best Sellers, University of Scranton, I March 1953

Take My Life (1947)

> *Graham seems almost forgotten now, but there was a time from about the mid-'60s onwards when he was (deservedly) regarded as almost the major practitioner of the psychological thriller. Among those the best remembered is undoubtedly* Marnie, *famously filmed (so-soishly) by Hitchcock, but my own favourite (of those I read) was* The Walking Stick, *which carried the true Winston Graham hallmark of keeping me up all night to finish it. But Graham served his apprenticeship writing more straightforward detections and* Take My Life *is one of these. The husband of newly married opera singer Philippa Shelley is almost inadvertently framed for a murder he didn't commit, and – Scotland Yard not being much interested in looking beyond the obvious suspect – it's up to her to prove him innocent before the death penalty ends all discussion of the matter. Change the setting a bit and you'd have the story at the heart of various classic* noir *movies.*
>
> *Not classic Graham, but good satisfying stuff anyway.*

John Grant, 11 August 2013

Cordelia (1949)

Told with a neat, authoritative style, good humor and good sense, this is a tale of mid-Victorian England. Graham, incidentally, is an Englishman, author of several novels, but **Cordelia** is the first of his books to be published in America. The tale is laid in Manchester in the 1860's. The heroine, Cordelia, marries into a wealthy family. As a new twist, the domestic problem is not the currently deplored momism but what might be called paterism.

Her young husband, the timid, ineffective Brook Ferguson, is completely under the domination of his stern, successful father, Frederick Ferguson. The couple live in his house; Brooke is entirely submissive to his father but the level-headed Cordelia manages to hold her own with her father-in-law. Cordelia's gentle but firm attempts to help Brook bolster his weak nature even win for her the grudging respect of Frederick. The characters are ably developed and their interplay upon one another is sketched in adroitly. Several minor members of the cast are well drawn.

Cordelia gets involved in an adulterous affair and it is only after Brook's death and an attempted flight from her father-in-law that she realizses its futility. Graham does not treat the matter as a moral problem but his reasoning, though not deep, does show some appreciation of right and wrong. A novel that makes brightly interesting reading.

(*The Catholic World*, April 1950)

Readers of the Poldark series of novels will know that Winston Graham was a really talented author, and this book, Cordelia, *is another delight. Set in Victorian Manchester, it is the story of a young woman, Cordelia, who marries into a slightly dysfunctional, faintly claustrophobic, eccentric family whose patriarch, Frederick, is at once a freethinking liberal businessman and an oppressive control freak. Cordelia soon discovers that his son's first wife, Margaret, died in mysterious circumstances, and fears that she may go the same way. But the beauty of the novel is the way all of the characters – Cordelia herself, her weak husband, her oppressive father-in-law, his eccentric and weirdly talented brother, and Cordelia's lover, are all described and developed, none being simply evil or good, all having legitimate desires and difficulties, none fully understanding the others, all making difficult choices and mistakes. The historical background, as one would expect from Graham, is*

intimately evoked, and the tale has many satisfying twists and turns. It's a joy – a subtle, delightful page-turner, which makes you think, as well. What more could you ask from a novel?

Tim Vicary, 26 April 2015

For his latest novel, Winston Graham, who lives at Perranporth, presents a story of Manchester in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Those who have enjoyed Mr. Graham's recent stories of Cornish historical romances (Ross Poldark, Demelza, The Forgotten Story), *will perhaps regret his temporary desertion to another locality ... However, it would be as dangerous for a lively writer like Mr. Graham to confine himself to writing only about Cornwall as it would be regrettable if he were to cease to do so altogether. In* Cordelia *he has chosen a setting – "the middle-class Manchester of hansom cabs and horse buses and concerts at the Free Trade Hall" – which offers ample opportunities for the detailed portrait of atmosphere and behaviour at which he excels …*

Although Cordelia is the central figure of interest, she is almost challenged for that place by the character of her father-in-law. As the book develops it is difficult to believe that the curiously complicated Mr. Ferguson is so very much the villain of the piece; and it is not altogether a surprise when he emerges with his stature unimpaired, and perhaps even (for the author does not make it quite clear) increased …

There are several rather contrived situations in the book which in any case is rather conventional in its material. But behind it all there is enlightenment and shrewdness, and an adult attitude to life which it is pleasing to encounter. And in Cordelia, as in his earlier heroine Demelza [after whom Baker named his first daughter], *Mr. Graham creates the warm, passionate and independent sort of woman who would surely be most men's ideal.*

Denys Val Baker, *Cornish Review*, No. 2, Summer 1949

IF "BARCHESTER TOWERS" and "Framley Parsonage" seem to be fluttering around in your mind when you are reading this fine, solid English novel, don't be surprised, for English reviewers are fond of comparing Winston Graham to that prose-master of the early 19th Century, Trollope. In this, his first novel to be published in this country, Mr. Graham presents in easy, smooth-flowing, narrative style the story of a family dominated by an arrogant father. He happens to be the father-in-law of C o r d e l i a, whose ideas are anything but Victorian, though she lives in Manhester in the middle 60s. She is a match for the old tyrant, and even manages to get away with a thoroughly up-to-date affair with a theatrical impressario.

There's some sly humor in the book, supplied principally by Uncle Pridey, who loves mice and music, and getting a h e a d of his domineering brother. It is a nice, comfortable English novel, and the reader who is tired of being torn to shreds by the psychological style generally in vogue today, will be thankful there isn't a neurotic in it.

(Dorothy Stafford, *Toledo Blade*, 5 March 1950)

MR. WINSTON GRAHAM'S NEW NOVEL

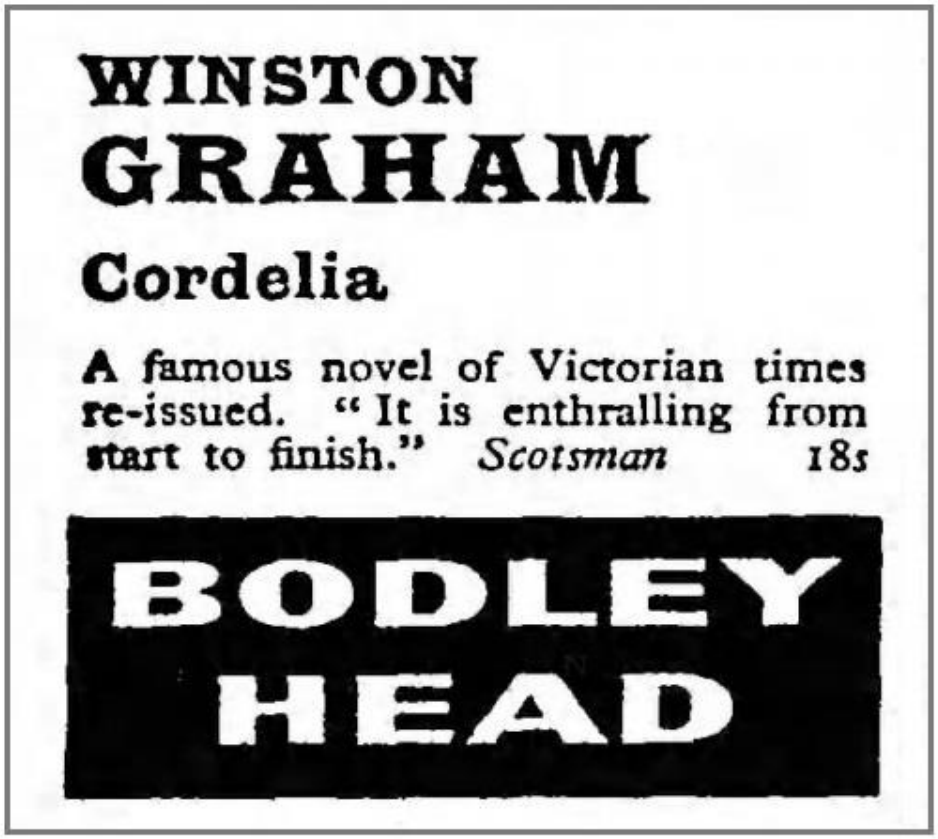
Two or three months ago Mr. Winston Graham, of Perranporth, whose Cornish novels—especially "Ross Poldark" and "Demelza" have delighted readers—came to see me in Bodmin so that I could show him what I could of the 18th century lay-out of the town. This careful regard for detail accurately presented is typical of his craftsmanship as a novelist. Time and again in reading his newest novel, "Cordelia" (Ward, Lock and Co., 9s. 6d.) I have noted this precision.

"Cordelia" is a study of the Victorian Manchester of Mr. Graham's own forebears in Lancashire. An engaging, handsome young woman of character and strength of mind, Cordelia at nineteen is the second wife of Brook Ferguson, weak and sensitive where his father is a strong, self-righteous bully, arbiter of his family and firm. Her relations with the Fergusons, including the lovable eccentric "Pridey," and her unsatisfying love affair with Stephen Crossley, theatre owner and gay dog, are excellently told in a book which authentically smacks of its period. Cordelia and all the characters about her—her own small tradesman's family no less than the rest—live superbly, and Mr. Graham makes us as it were feel the social and intellectual climate of Manchester in the late sixties and early seventies.

(H.J.W., *Cornish Guardian*, 7 July 1949)

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.*

Richard Church, *Country Life*, 14 March 1963



Observer, 24 March 1963

Platinum Cord

CORDELIA By Winston Graham 320 pp. New York: Doubleday & Co. $3.

THIS English novel is built around a relatively neglected character in fiction, the over-possessive father who holds a son by—would it be called—the platinum cord?

Conflict in the book starts when a daughter-in-law enters the lists against the tyrannical paterfamilias. Cordelia, Mr. Graham's atypical Victorian heroine, is a level-headed young woman who finds her hard-driving father-in-law not wholly unsympathetic. She wins a limited victory over him by applying the "if you can't beat them, join them" rule.

Mr. Graham has something of Robert Molloy's appreciation of the timidity and fatal common sense which more often than tragedy diminish the lives of ordinary people. The sad little story of Brook Ferguson's wasted life is set forth with an awareness of the difficulty of pinning the blame for it squarely on anyone. Cordelia's effort to help her husband win his independence from his father results in the growth of a firm relationship, half watchful, half admiring, between the two stronger characters. Cordelia never condones the elder Ferguson's ruthlessness but she comes to understand why the ambitious old man is as he is.

There is also an incidental romance for Cordelia and a very winning portrait of an uncle named Pridey, who loves music, wisdom and mice. Pridey's enjoyment of unexpected fame in his old age marvelously discomfits his brother, Mr. Ferguson, who had thought that he had a monopoly of success in his family. The background of Manchester in the Eighteen Sixties is blocked in with authority, and the style is easy and lit with humor. This is Mr. Graham's first novel to be published in America, and it's a good one.

MARY SUTPHEN HURST

NY Times, 22 January 1950

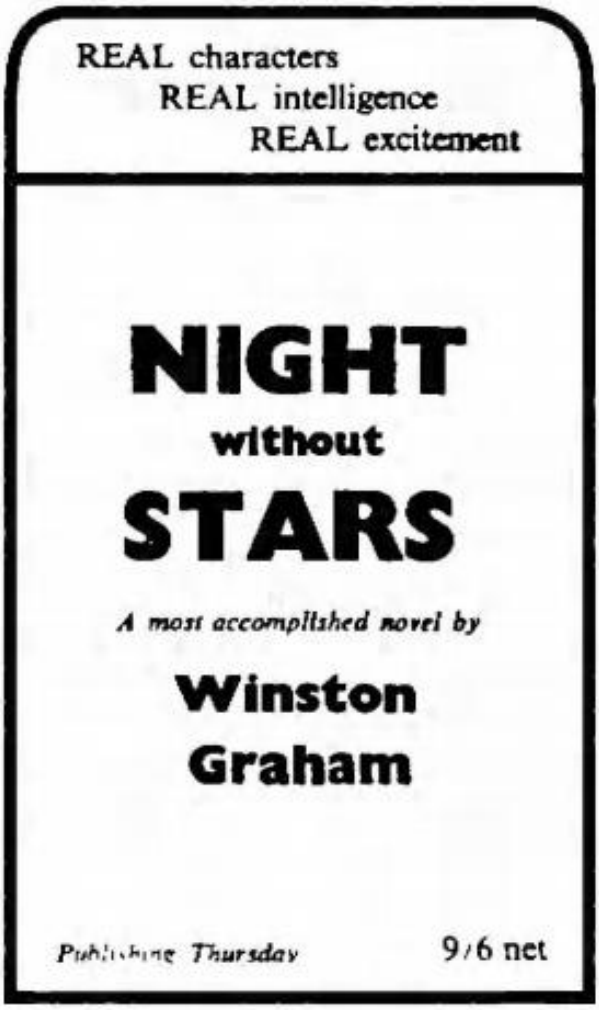
Excellent ... Winston Graham tells the story of the daughter of a clockmaker who marries the son of a self-made magnate and falls in love with Stephen, who runs a music hall. The background is established – the family prayers, the flare of the gas, the solemn, elaborate meals ... this is a real world. Mr. Graham believes in it and can tell a very good story.

(*Times Literary Supplement*)

The greatest possession of any writer is the art of story-telling, not just the art of using words. Winston Graham can tell a fine story, and in "Cordelia" he relates the heart-warming story of how Cordelia, a young Victorian, marries into a strange household, not for love but security. A fine weekend read.

George Thaw, *Daily Mirror*, 24 July 1969

Night Without Stars (1950)



Ad: *Observer*, 22 January 1950

Review:

NIGHT WITHOUT STARS by Winston Graham.

Superior English thriller, written in naturally, carefully cultivated Balchinesque style, about black marketeering in Nice. The high spot is the stiff upper-lipped hero's account of an operation on his eye, which is an impressive piece of writing. His love affair with the arch-gangster's sister is nearly as titillating as it is meant to be. Story doesn't quite knit together with that essential grip, but a good read can be guaranteed. (Maurice Richardson, *Observer*, 12 February 1950)

There was something odd about the Cafe Cambetta. Its people were so incalculable—one day effusively friendly, the next, pretending they didn't even know you . . . . .

And where did the beautiful Alix fit into the picture? And the lean, young lawyer whose manner was just a little *too* off-hand . . . . .

To war-blinded Giles the situation was a tantalizing mystery. Yet, despite every discouragement, he had to find out what it all meant.

And you, too, will have to find out . . . . . Once you have begun "Night Without Stars," by Winston Graham (he wrote the film "Take My Life") you will await each Thursday's JOHN BULL as the finest treat of the week and so will your whole family.

Exotic as passion-flowers, tense and thrilling, yet written with the unexaggerated restraint of a true master, "Night Without Stars" is something new in thrillers. It's brilliantly illustrated in full colour, and it begins—*before publication as a book*—in

JOHN BULL

Out Thursday-Aug.11-3d.

URGENT! The only way to make sure of Thursday's JOHN BULL is to order it today! At the same time give your newsagent a standing order to supply JOHN BULL regularly every week!

Daily Herald, 8 August 1949

Intrigue and Derring-Do

NIGHT WITHOUT STARS By Winston Graham. Doubleday & Co.

By JAMES KELLY

ADMIRERS of "Cordelia," Mr. Graham's novel about the tangled personal relationships of a father, son, and daughter-in-law (Book Review, Jan. 22), will expect a great deal from this new novel with the poetic title. They will not be disappointed. In his second publication on this side of the Atlantic, the British author gives us a story of romantic intrigue and derring-do in London and Nice following World War II.

Deceptively casual, written in low key, "Night Without Stars" is that rare occurrence — a well-furnished "suspense novel" which is credibly motivated and compelling as to character and place. No clichés. No dashing journalists. No curiosa-minded private investigators (fat, thin, or spinsterish). Mr. Graham understands quite a lot about the conflicting forces at work in our melodramatic, disillusioned post-war period, and he has memorable things to say about black markets, suspended morals, savage, war-created impulses.

Giles Gordon, the narrator, is a mild-mannered London lawyer who faces total blindness as a result of war injuries. He gives up his post with the family law firm, shrugs off a broken engagement, and leaves for a prolonged visit in the south of France. When his sight is almost completely gone, he falls in love with Alix Delaisse, a French girl whose breeding and intelligence do not jibe very well with her job in a Nice shoe store. Gordon cannot understand how Alix, the widow of a Resistance hero, can allow herself to be engaged to Pierre Grognard, a fat profiteer. His speculation stops short when he discovers a murder that the newspapers do not report and his friends dismiss as a blind man's mistake in identity.

Discouraged, Gordon returns to London, where a dramatic eye operation puts him back into the visual world. He returns to Nice, this time with a determination to get to the bottom of several riddles. Pretending blindness, he stumbles into a flourishing back market ring and finds Alix living in suspicious circumstances. From here, the action moves sinuously forward. The unreported murder, the reasons for Alix's behavior, and converging threats to Gordon's own life fall into place at a rousing dénouement.

ENTERTAINMENT is the primary aim of "Night Without Stars," but beneath the surface it comes to grips with men and women who, like Gordon, cannot see what lies in the road before them. The weakness, if it is a weakness, rests in the fact that the plot takes second place to mood, atmosphere, ideas. Even the romance between Gordon and Alix, supposed to be a motivating force, is a bodyless affair that contributes little to general titillation.

Suspenseful urgency comes chiefly in satisfying individual scenes: the eye operation which determines whether Gordon will be blind; his job interview when he parries the business men to conceal his blindness; the fashionable dinner party attended by a grab bag of criminals and police; an eight-page scene where Gordon climbs a towering cliff — not "just because it's there" but to save his life.

(*NY Times*, 3 September 1950)

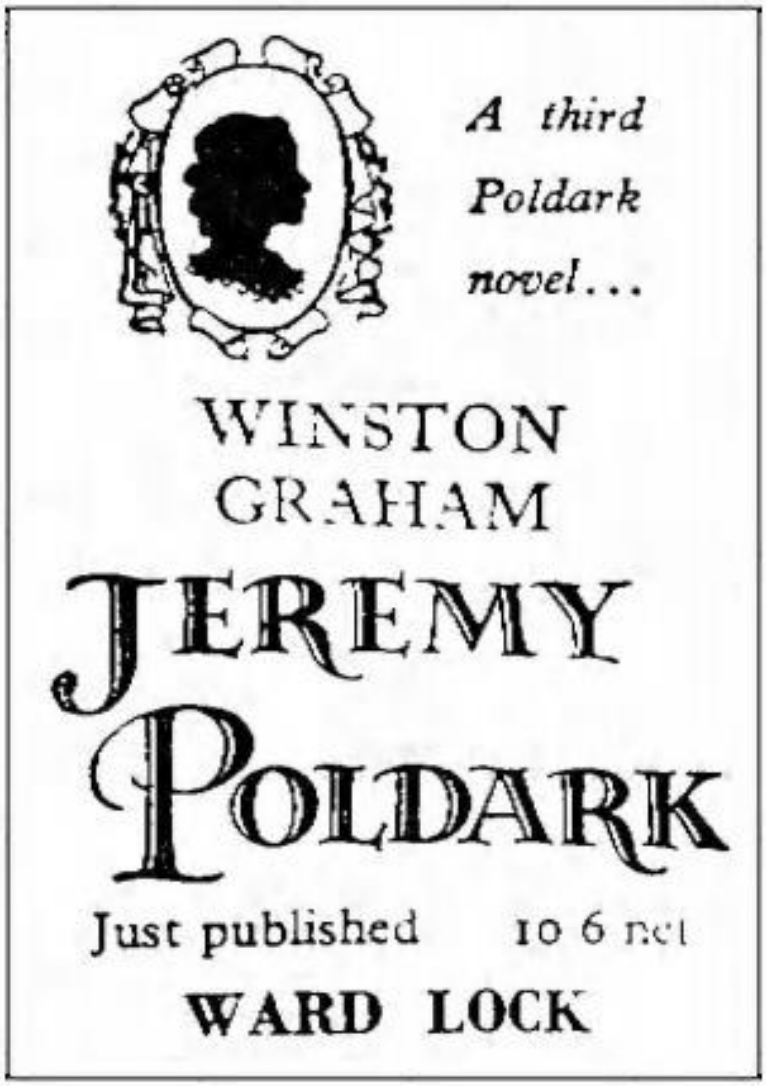
Excitement is crammed into this thrilling story of a French ex-resistance group turned black marketeers. (*Manchester Evening News*)

Mr Winston Graham really knows his business and here tells a story which would not have gone unnoticed even in the great days of nearly fifty years ago. (Edward Shanks, *Daily Sketch*)

A novel of excitement and suspense, exceedingly well told. (*Good Housekeeping*)

* * * * *

Jeremy Poldark (1950)

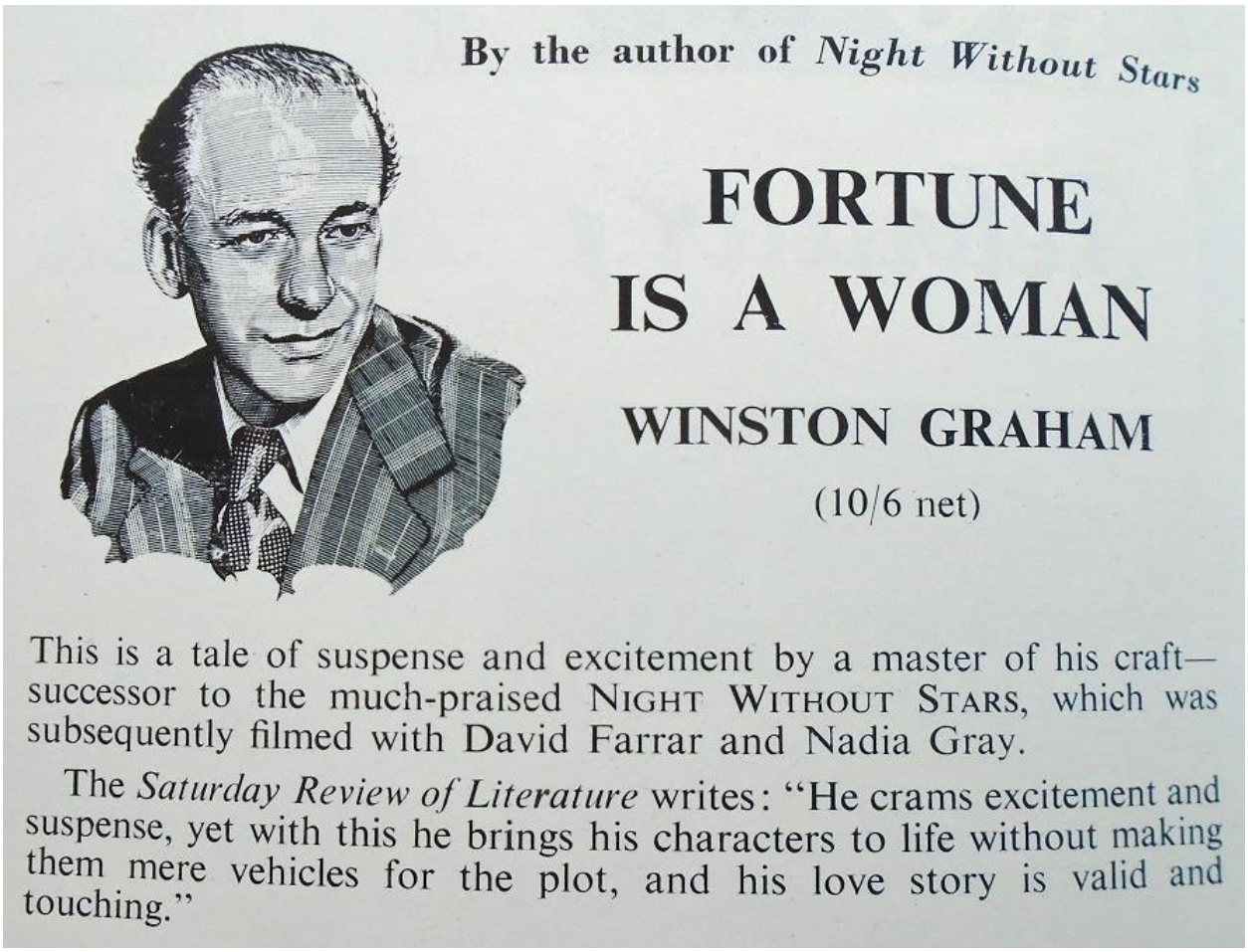


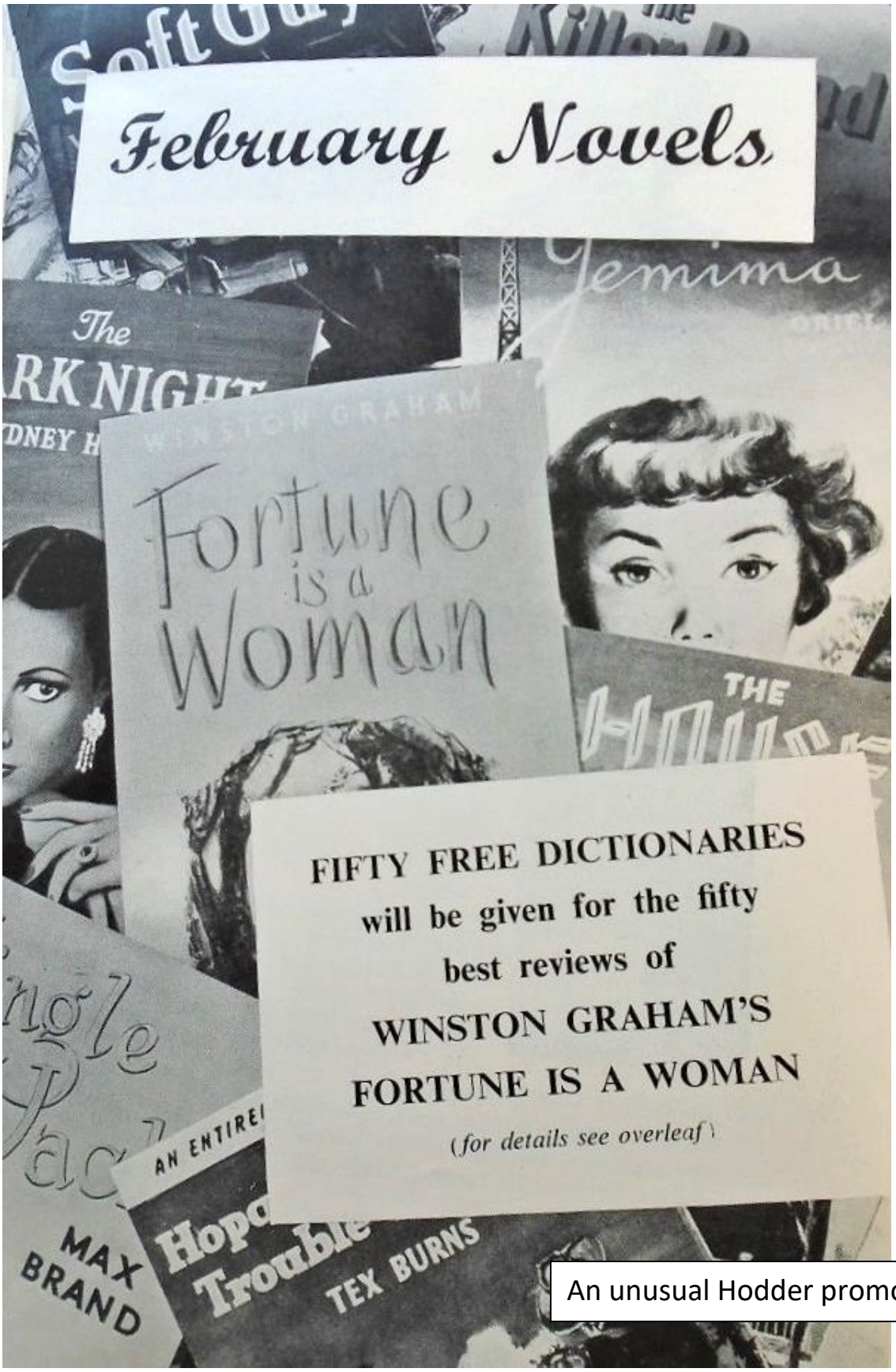
Observer, 29 October 1950

Fortune is a Woman (1952)

This same issue of JOHN BULL starts a thrilling new serial—"Fortune is a Woman". . . . Its author—WINSTON GRAHAM, famous for a previous JOHN BULL success. . . . His new story, published in JOHN BULL before coming out in book form, strikes a new note in romantic thrillers—brilliant writing from a consummate master of tension and authentic detail. . . .

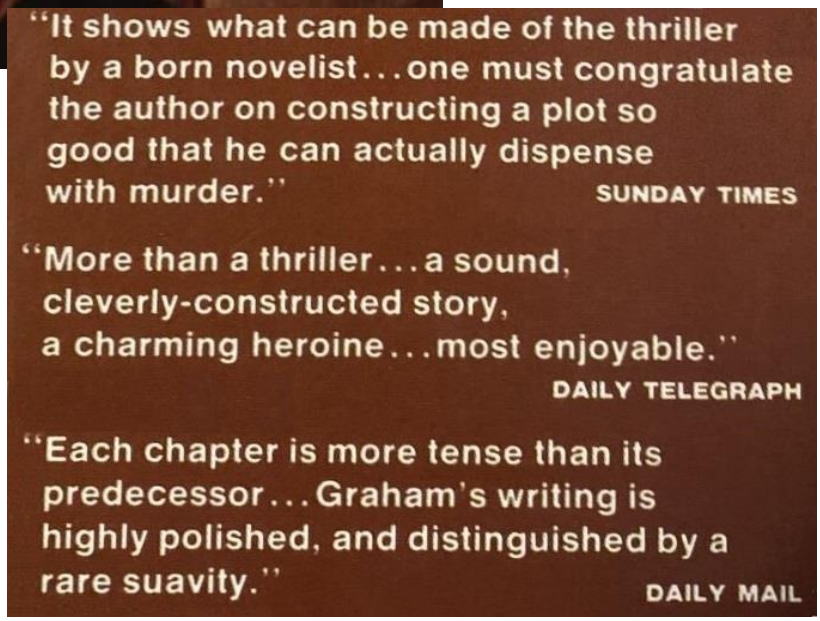
From a *John Bull* ad in *The Daily Express* of 27 January 1953





An unusual Hodder promo ploy

The 1957 film seems to have been screened in Portugal as *Perverse Seduction*. For more alt tiltes, see FILM ART



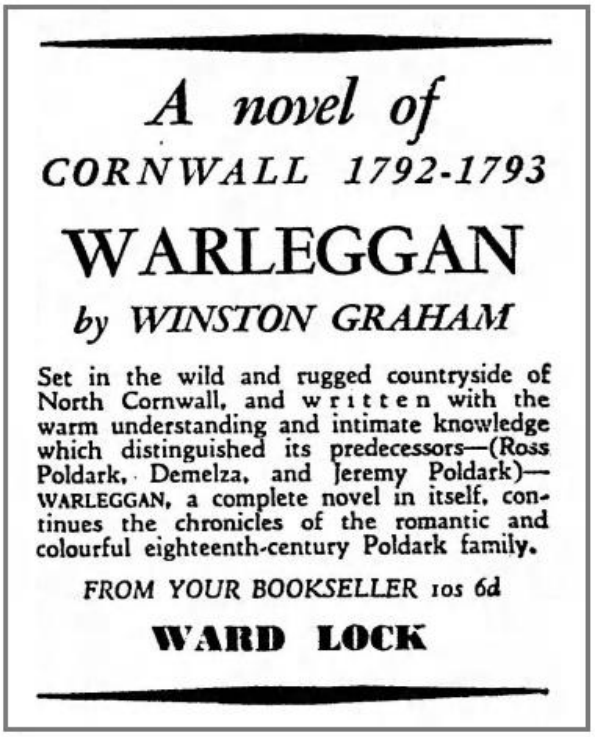
Fontana, 1967: back cover excerpt

Lost on the 'Bus

This week's good thriller is *Fortune is a Woman*, by Winston Graham (Hodder and Stoughton, 10s. 6d.). I have often wondered how many respectable people, whom I know to-day, have had a very seamy bit of life in earlier years. The very likable hero of this book enters it as a hobo—forced on the roads by ill luck after the war. His hesitations and his lack of confidence are the very natural outcome when, in time, he is appointed an insurance adjuster, and, in more time, becomes involved in a very unpleasant murder. This book is miles out of the ordinary. I lost one copy on a 'bus, and could not be content until I had acquired another, in order to read the *dénouement*.

Church Times, 20 March 1953

Warleggan (1953)



Observer, 22 November 1953

Smuggler's Paradise

Cornwall, in the last decade of the eighteenth century – a time of badly fought wars and bubbling ferment in Europe – was a wild and violent land for all its rugged beauty, given to uncompromising vendettas and fierce night skirmishes between local participants in "the Trade," or smuggling, and the law's canny representatives. In his fourth novel, laid in a corner of Cornwall and peopled with smugglers, miners, lawyers, doctors, gentlefolk, pretty ladies and a villain and rogue or two, Winston Graham continues the story of the Poldarks, Ross and Demelza, that he began in The Renegade *and carried on in* Demelza *and* Venture Once More.

At its outset, The Last Gamble *places calm, righteous and heroic Ross and patient, resourceful Demelza, a little insecure in her marriage, in unpleasant straits. A promissory note of Ross's has fallen into the hands of an enemy; the perverse mine he is co-owner of, with his cousin Francis, will not produce; and Francis dies in a tragic accident, burdening Ross with numerous additional financial obligations. To discover where the metal-bearing lode is, Ross, in a kind of quiet desperation, takes a journey on a smuggling ship to an island southwest of Cornwall to question the broken man who had found the lode. He learns nothing.*

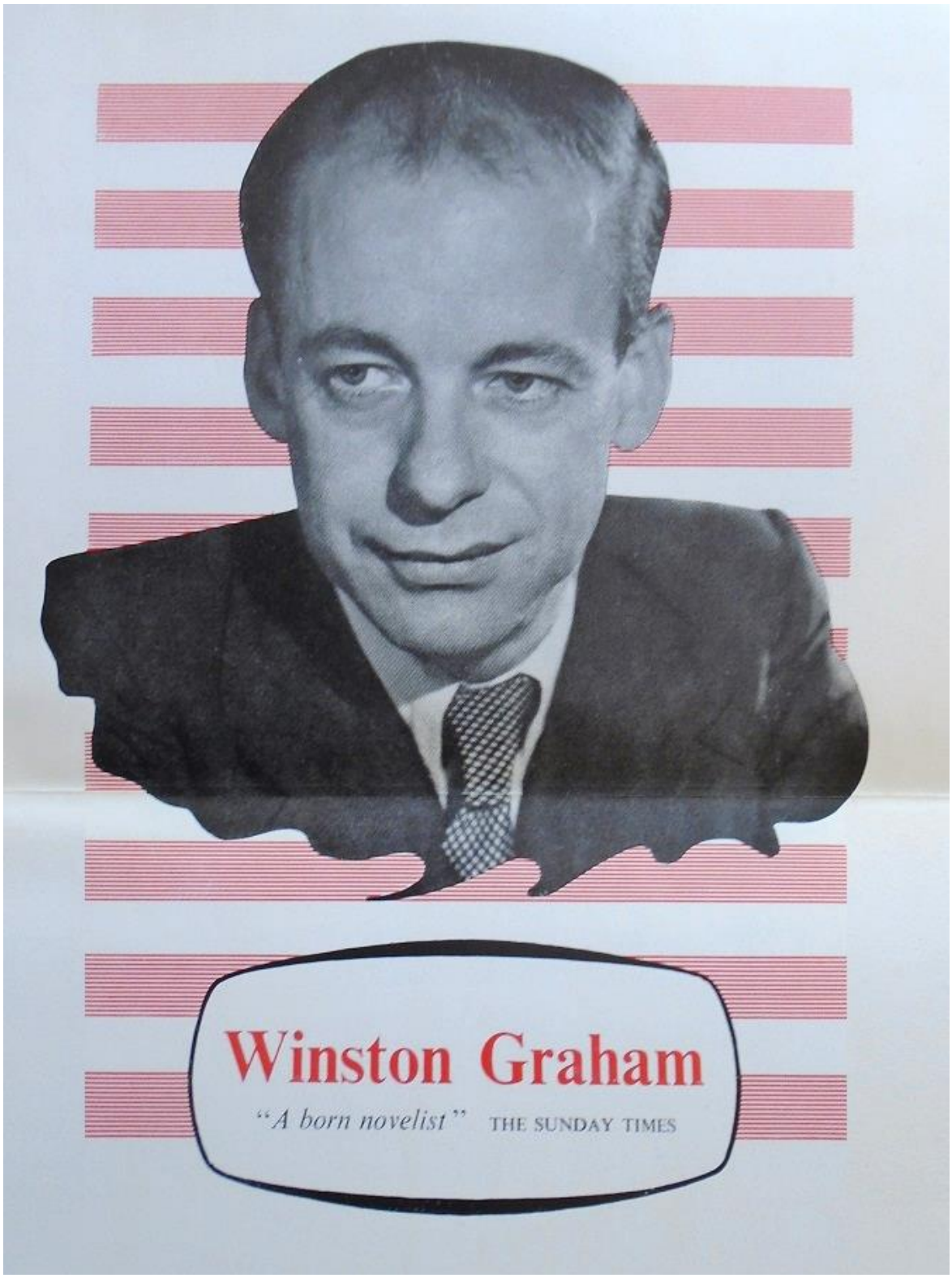
On landing near the Cornish cliffs he is beset, with the active smugglers, by the troops of Captain McNeil, of the Scots Greys. Wounded, he escapes and is succesfully hidden by his wife, but other tragedies pursue. His cousin's wife, who has expressed her love for Ross, has become engaged to his worst enemy. Ross, adopting a peculiarly blunt way of discouraging the marriage, finds himself estranged from Demelza. The mine, beginning to show some return, collapses, trapping and killing several miners. And Demelza, hurt by Ross's relationship with his cousin's wife, forces herself to philander with McNeil.

Mr. Graham paints a bold picture of the times – and he has the knack of making the reader urgently root for the success and happiness of the characters he steeps in adversity.

The Last Gamble *is a highly rewarding adventure novel.*

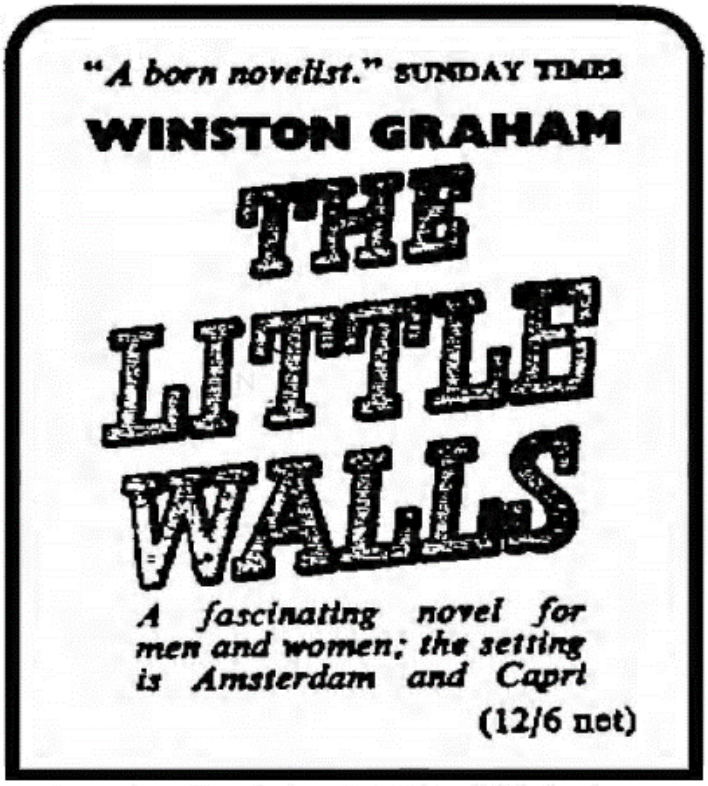
Rex Lardner, *New York Times*, 6 February 1955

The Little Walls (1955)



Hodder & Stoughton *Little Walls* promo leaflet (front)

"Winston Graham can be relied upon to tell an impressively thrilling story. His writing is highly polished and distinguished by a rare suavity." DAILY MAIL



Observer, 19 June 1955

Winston Graham, who has alternated some superior suspense stories with his Cornwall tetralogy, is again at his best in this form of entertainment – a drama which is sybilline and svelte. The suicide of Grevil Turner in Holland is bitter – and unbelievable to his younger brother Philip and his attempt to learn the truth behind Grevil's death. The known identity but not the whereabouts of a dubious character – Buckingham – who had been digging with Grevil in Java, is the main lead which takes Philip from London to Holland and finally to Italy. There he finds Leonie who had known Grevil and Buckingham too. Leonie's involvement with the man he wrongly suspects to be Buckingham at first blinds him to the real identity of the man he seeks; the knowledge that Buckingham had duped Grevil, and smuggled opium through him, aggravates the desire for revenge – and there is an ugly fight, first at sea, then in a church;

but finally he can reconcile the motivation behind his brother's death and straighten out his own future with Leonie. Along with the romance here, the conflict, in which Philip tussles with certain fixed moralities, gives this a certain substance and it is, at all times, a most attractive distraction.

Kirkus, 25 August 1955

* * *

> *When my brother committed suicide I was in California so I wasn't at either the inquest or the funeral. It was nearly two weeks before I could get away, and then I flew back and made straight for Dorking, where the telegram had come from. But when I got there the house was closed and a neighbour said Grace was staying with my eldest brother Arnold in Wolverhampton. So I spent a night in London and drove up by car the following day.*

So, flatly, begins the story of Philip Turner, who has travelled home after his older brother's body is fished out of a canal in the Little Walls, Amsterdam's red-light district.

Philip simply cannot believe his big brother killed himself. Grevil was a brilliant mind, a nuclear physicist who for ethical reasons gave up a stellar career working on the atomic bomb to become an archeologist. Suicide just doesn't make sense, even when he finds out Grevil had what seems to be a Dear John letter from a woman named Leonie in his pocket.

> *'Everything points to your brother having killed himself as a result of this unfortunate love affair which had gone awry.'*
> *I came back from the window. 'Everything points to it, except Grevil's character.'*

Philip resolves to investigate the death for himself. There are two leads to follow up in Amsterdam: The mysterious Leonie, and Grevil's travelling companion, a man named Buckingham. Both have disappeared.

Enlisting the help of Martin Coxon, a roguish adventurer who the police think may be able to trace Buckingham, Philip travels over to Holland to meet with the local police and interview the prostitute who witnessed the suicide. Tholen, the Amsterdam detective, is a bit of a star:

> *Tholen, who looked like a working farmer, ate at a great rate and smoked between mouthfuls. After he had drawn in the smoke seemed to come out of everywhere, nose, mouth, ears, even, you imagined, his pockets.*

Philip leans heavily on Coxon in Amsterdam, especially when interviewing the prostitute-witness leads to an unpleasant encounter with a local gangster:

> *I reflected that he was the type that perhaps only the English breed truly – the man who will fight a modern guerilla campaign on the principles of Hannibal or lead a last-ditch boarding party with a volume of Livy in his pocket.*

And in fact it is one of Coxon's underworld contacts who provides information on Leonie Winter, an English woman staying in Capri. The action moves south to Italy, where Philip trades on his skills as an artist to infiltrate the slightly bohemian group which includes Leonie.

The plot thickens at this point, as Philip falls in love with Leonie almost immediately – shaking his belief that his brother didn't commit suicide. Philip can just about picture killing himself over Leonie, so maybe Grevil actually did (Philip's determination to prove Grevil didn't commit suicide turns out more about proving Philip couldn't). And meanwhile, is Buckingham one of Leonie's circle of friends and acquaintances?

The Capri segment of *The Little Walls* becomes a Mary Stewart-style romantic suspense story, with a similar English-in-the-Med setting and the same brooding feeling that nobody can be trusted, least of all the person you fancy. There is a lot of soul-searching, even in the midst of the eventual violent conclusion. Overall, a solid and fairly realistic thriller with what you might call a happy ending. It's complicated …

Capri's Blue Grotto, where Philip catches up with Leonie

Rich Westwood, *Past Offences*, 26 February 2015

MORE romantic in setting but still realistic in its treatment of character is Winston Graham's **THE LITTLE WALLS** (**Doubleday, $3.50**), which roams from Amsterdam to Capri as a jet engineer tries to probe the truth behind his brother's apparent suicide. Good backgrounds and dialogue, nicely arranged pursuit and love, a villain who attains a certain grandeur, and subtle ambivalence in personal interplay mark this as a superior suspense item.

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 18 September 1955

This is an English entertainment, reminiscent of *The Third Man,* but far below it in skill and suspense. It has the usual blunt, brave hero, Arnold Turner, gradually tracing out the anatomy of a past crime in a continental milieu. The "Little Walls" is the name of the red light district in Amsterdam, where his brother, Grevil, met death by drowning in one of the street canals. The police reported it as suicide, but Arnold is incredulous. After devious deductions he comes on the real criminal, a wild oats son of a Scottish family, named Martin Coxon, who had accompanied Turner to Holland to help him solve the crime. Coxon concealed opium, among the brother's scientific specimens, being shipped from the East. Rather than face a certain conviction and scandal, the brother committed suicide. The ending is curiously twisted. In his investigations Arnold falls in love with a lovely English girl, who turns out to be Coxon's wife, unhappy to be linked with such a man. He persuades her to leave him and marry himself. We are made to feel that this is all very moral, but of course it isn't.

Therefore we must condemn the book on the grounds that divorce and remarriage are held out as honorable under certain circumstances. But there are ample other reasons for rejecting it. Imitative in theme, it falls far below its model, Graham Greene. There is much banal dialogue and long, slack stretches in the story. Nevertheless, the final quarter has good suspense and action of a melodramatic sort. In his handling of intellectual discussion, the author is pretentious and shallow. At other times, his style is flat and commonplace, actually including a few elementary errors in grammar. In general, it is a product of a second rate talent that might give some excitement to the undiscriminating.

(*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, 15 Sept 1955 – written by another second rate talent, careless enough to muddle Philip, the book's "hero", with his barely-mentioned brother Arnold)

The Sleeping Partner (1956)

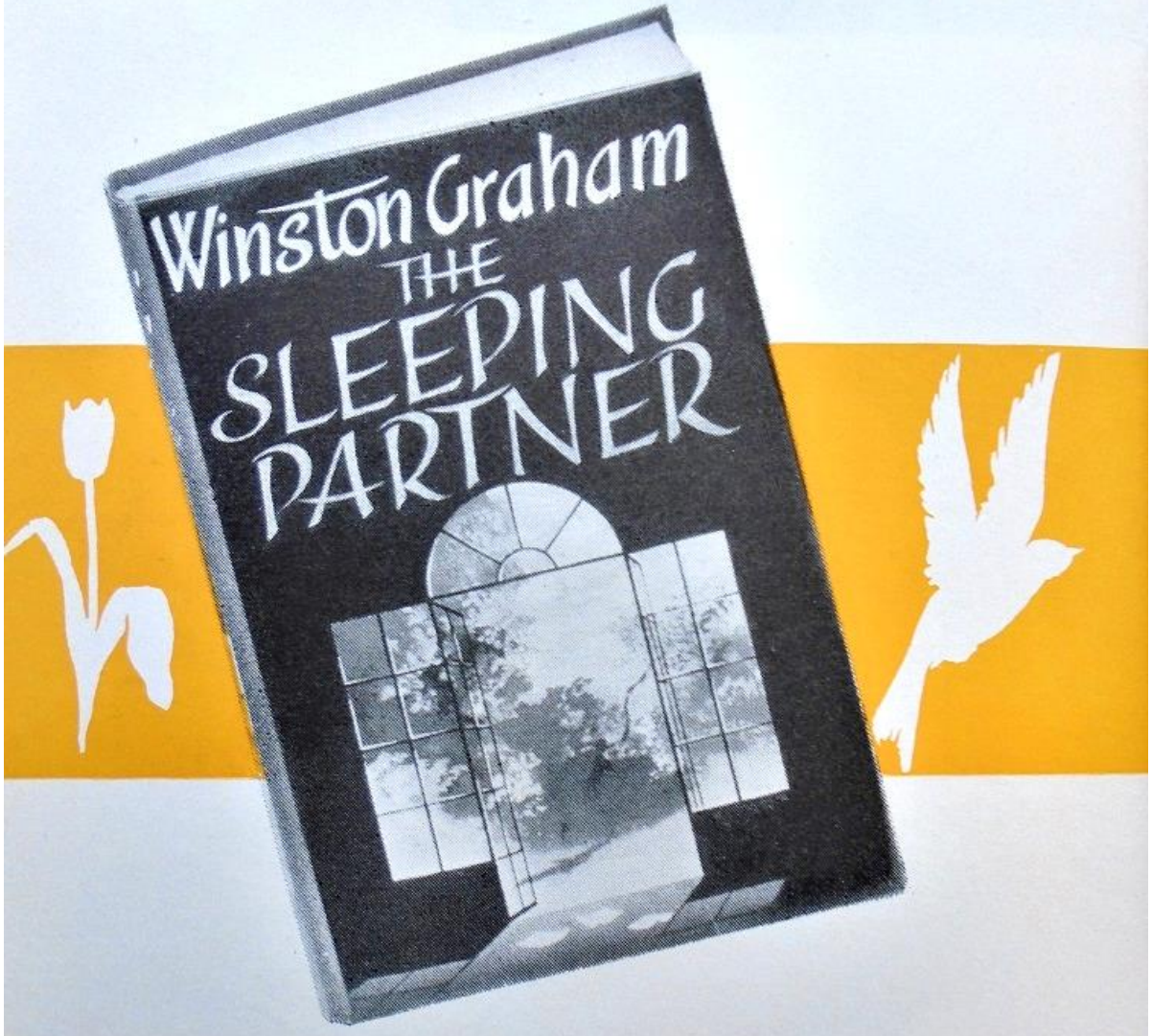
> *Mr. Graham is no less skilled* [than Eric Ambler] *in realistic narrative. But he goes more closely to the personal exploration of motive and character. His tale is also told in the first person [synopsis of plot]. What happens after that I found quite terrifying. I shared the desperate peril in which 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.*

Richard Church, *Country Life*, 2 August 1956

LAST year, Winston Graham's "The Little Walls" was a perfect blend of straight novel and detective story. Now his **THE SLEEPING PARTNER (Doubleday, $3.75)**, abruptly turns into a whodunit after 40,000 words of straight fiction, and never quite succeeds in either medium. The non-criminous parts are the best, offering an understanding portrait of a man so obsessed by electronic research that he drives his wife away from him, then finds himself unwillingly in love with a married woman and at the same time drawn into a strange intimacy with her invalid husband. One wishes that Graham had explored this situation further, rather than veering off on a not too closely related murder-puzzle.

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 14 October 1956

Winston Graham



THE SLEEPING PARTNER

For Michael Granville, a radar expert who became too absorbed in his work, life began to take on a nightmare quality when his wife disappeared, for this was only the first of a series of shocks – such as a divorce petition out of the blue, and an appalling discovery in the cellar of his home. Winston Graham is unsurpassed in this kind of writing; his new book is just as good as *The Little Walls*, which was awarded the Crime Writers' Association Trophy for the Best Crime Story of 1955, and was "an absorbing story, a brilliant study in psychology" (*Daily Mail*), "a book which it would be hard to praise too highly". (*The Sunday Times*) 12*s* 6*d net*

Hodder & Stoughton promo leaflet

The Sleeping Partner,
Fontana, 1967 (rear)

ense suspense thriller
with strong and death-
wishful undertones."
OBSERVER

"Has Lynn been driven away by her husband's preoccupation with his experiment, or by his friendship with the pretty laboratory assistant who has a dying husband? If so, why do the police become interested in her disappearance? Here is an absorbing mystery and an impressive psychological study with a moving love story." DAILY TELEGRAPH

"Deeply moving... admirably written... never strikes a false note." DAILY MAIL

"A romantic thriller for sophisticates . . . full of psychological insight and shrewd observation." MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS

As is so often the case, it was only after Lynn had left him that Mike Granville realized how he had been neglecting his wife while being absorbed in his business of developing and manufacturing an airborne uranium detector. Blaming himself for her disappearance, he searched among their London associates without finding any trace of her. Then it came—notice that Lynn was suing for divorce on the grounds of his misconduct with Stella Curtis. Stella was his secretary and was married to a prominent scientist who was suffering from an incurable disease. But this clandestine affair had only begun since Lynn left their home. And the petition specified earlier dates. Obviously, only Lynn had the answer. But a decomposing corpse buried under the coal pile in your home does not give answers.

Thanks to John Curtis, Lynn's murderer is discovered—one of the many men with whom she had been carrying on her own extra-marital affairs. Contrary to what might be expected, Stella's husband does not remove himself from the picture. In fact, Mike even helps to save him when he is at the point of death. How the eternal triangle is resolved is not revealed, since we must leave Mike as he is calling his love to inform her of his impending business trip to Africa.

Action packed and brisk, this novel of suspense laid in London and the neighboring countryside, follows in the best tradition of the typical British spellbinder. Unfortunately its characterization is weak. And its glorification of adultery and other moral lapses are factors which confine it to a limited readership category.

(*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, 1 November 1956)

THE SLEEPING PARTNER by Winston Graham – *Tense, rather Balchinesque suspense-thriller with strong erotic and death-wishful undertones. Up-and-coming electronics tycoon has an affair with his p.a. (married to doomed, saintly, radiation-victim); finds corpse of his own unfaithful wife in coal-heap; is saved by the saint. Nine out of ten for synthetic readability, only seven for conviction*.

Maurice Richardson, *Observer*, 1 July 1956

Observer, 9 September 1956

Greek Fire (1957)

There is no formula for a great or even a good novel, but there is for a readable one. A clearly told tale of intrigue, turning round an intelligently pointed and credible issue (political, international or even literary), enacted by resourceful and smooth-talking charmers; contemporary cultural flavouring on the level of our old friend, the fruity don up-for-a-party; sex and violence of a refined nature in small but concentrated dosage; worldly knowledge that conspicuously includes food, drink and clothes and comprehends both familiarity with and mild contempt for the Ritz hotels in all capital cities. Commander Ian Fleming, inventor of this formula, can now step forward to receive applause and a very large cheque ... And now, just behind Commander Fleming comes Mr Winston Graham. Less applause and a smaller cheque, but neither, I hope, is negligible, for Mr Graham is fully entitled to share this occasion

with the maître. Less intelligent than Ian Fleming and altogether more naïve, Winston Graham is nevertheless a true artist in the Fleming genre. *Greek Fire* starts in the rather stale atmosphere of Communist backstairs plotting. But these backstairs lead to the flat of a well-known and apparently anti-Communist political leader, and inside the flat he is giving a dinner at which his mistress (whom he 'adopted' when she was fifteen) is acting as hostess, and which is just concluding with discussion of the Athenian city state and woodland strawberries especially flown from Corfu. Now read on.

Spectator, 10 January 1958

Observer, 2 February 1958

A beautifully written thriller. Political intrigue, sudden death and an exciting manhunt. *(*Alan Fairclough, *Daily Mirror*, 10 January 1958)

A superior thriller and a first-class novel of character. (*News Chronicle*)

You can't imagine all the complications an American reporter can get into if he should happen to visit Greece on the eve of an important national election. You may begin to get an idea, though, if you follow Gene Vanbrugh into "The Little Jockey," a Grecian nightery, and see him meet Anya Stonaris, the mistress of one of the leading political candidates, George Lascou. Things move decisively and quickly for Gene; for, before several days are out, he becomes actively engaged in investigating an accident which really is a murder by motor-car, and is challenging Lascou for the interest of the beautiful Anya.

Blackmail, revenge and corrupt political power provide three interweaving plots of this deliberately paced thriller. Some of the threads of the story get a little sticky when they are woven too fine, but Vanbrugh manages to keep within the bounds of the plausible. His resourcefulness is tested to the full when he has just left the room of the murdered Lascou, but is forced by circumstances to join a party visiting the press-room of the *Aegis* on the 50th Anniversary of its foundation. The party inspects the presses from the beginning to end, and admire the steady flow of completed papers from the machinery. What puts Gene on his mettle is to find the banner headline *Lascou Assassinated*, and another, *Wanted*, with a quarter page photograph of himself. After getting free from this situation you might think the apartment of Mlle. Stonaris the least likely place in Greece where Gene could find a breathing space. Despite a visit to her apartment from the police, the maid, and the plumber, he manages to avoid detection, with not too much damage to our sense of the possible.

Winston Graham has written a novel of suspense much after the pattern of several of his earlier books, not in plot or characterization, but in the leisurely developed sense of tension which his book creates. It makes for interesting reading, with an appeal chiefly to more adult readers.

(*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, 1 February 1958)

I shan't say that ***Greek Fire*** is written with 'professionalism' or 'competence', as this would suggest that I put a premium on amateurishness and incompetence. (Some reviewers might do well to give some thought to antonyms.) This is an unexacting, workmanlike, blood-heat-and-no-more thriller about an American involved in Greek politics, and a bad, beautiful woman with a heart of plutonium. I should not respect it more if it were exacting and unworkmanlike. Mr. Graham knows precisely what he means to do, which is, to produce rather thrilling well-composed stories for xenophiles who would resent sloppy writing. Happier than some novelists, he is able to carry out his intention exactly. Unlike most writers of his kind, he is somewhat casual with his backcloths, assuming too much in the reader's eye. He could really do with a little more of what is called 'atmosphere', a drop more retina, if you like.

[In ***Greek Fire,***] Mr. Graham's interests lie in the spheres of political action and high-powered corruption, his characters, in spite of their private ambition and sophisticated veneer, being continually absorbed in public events. Money and sex, which play a large part in their lives, remain nevertheless marginal interests compared to the overriding fascinations of power in its many forms. . . .

[***Greek Fire***] delves deeply into local Greek politics, sometimes brilliantly illuminating issues, sometimes merely obscuring. The plot involves the murder of a visiting Spanish cabaret artist by a smooth and cultivated politician wishing to remove evidence of Communist affiliations that are in the Spaniard's possession. An American of Greek descent interests himself in the consequences, gets caught up in the political implications of the murder, and falls in love with the politician's beautiful mistress. Mr. Graham takes his characters through much of Greece, and by means of dinner party conversation enters into spirited and rewarding dissections of its classical ideals, literary, political and aesthetic. . . . Mr. Graham lets philosophic abstractions and political details loom too large in the foreground, with the result that the emotions of his characters tend to appear unreal and over-simplified when they are eventually suggested.

THE novelist Winston Graham writes much the same kind of book as Victor Canning, Mark Derby or Martha Albrand: the suspense thriller that passes as a "straight" novel, not because (as with the works of Ambler or Greene or Household) it probes more deeply than most, but merely because it is longer, more smoothly polished and with more emphasis on emotion than on plot. Unlike most practitioners of this in-between genre, he is an honest writer, refusing to oversimplify or falsify events and characters. The result is normally such a highly satisfactory entertainment as **GREEK FIRE** (Doubleday, $3.95). An American amateur agent tries to prevent a coup by a Greek crypto-Communist, only to find himself in love with the politico's mistress and wanted by the police for his murder. High suspense, vivid Athenian background, and unusually believable love story.

Previous page: (1) Pamela Hansford Johnson in the *New Statesman*, 11 January 1958; (2) **Preoccupations in Greece** in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 January 1958

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 26 January 1958

The Tumbled House (1959)

Winston Graham has written a powerful novel of intelligent, articulate, civilised human beings blindly intent upon destruction – of themselves along with their adversaries. That it is strongly plotted and vigorously told echoes the discipline of such superior suspense novels as his Greek Fire, Night Without Stars *and* The Last Gamble.

The great length (over 150,000 words) may seem intimidating to the author's well-earned whodunit public. This reader (who is among that company) can only state that his interest in the characters and the flow of narrative never slackened.

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 31 January 1960

Observer, 11 October 1959

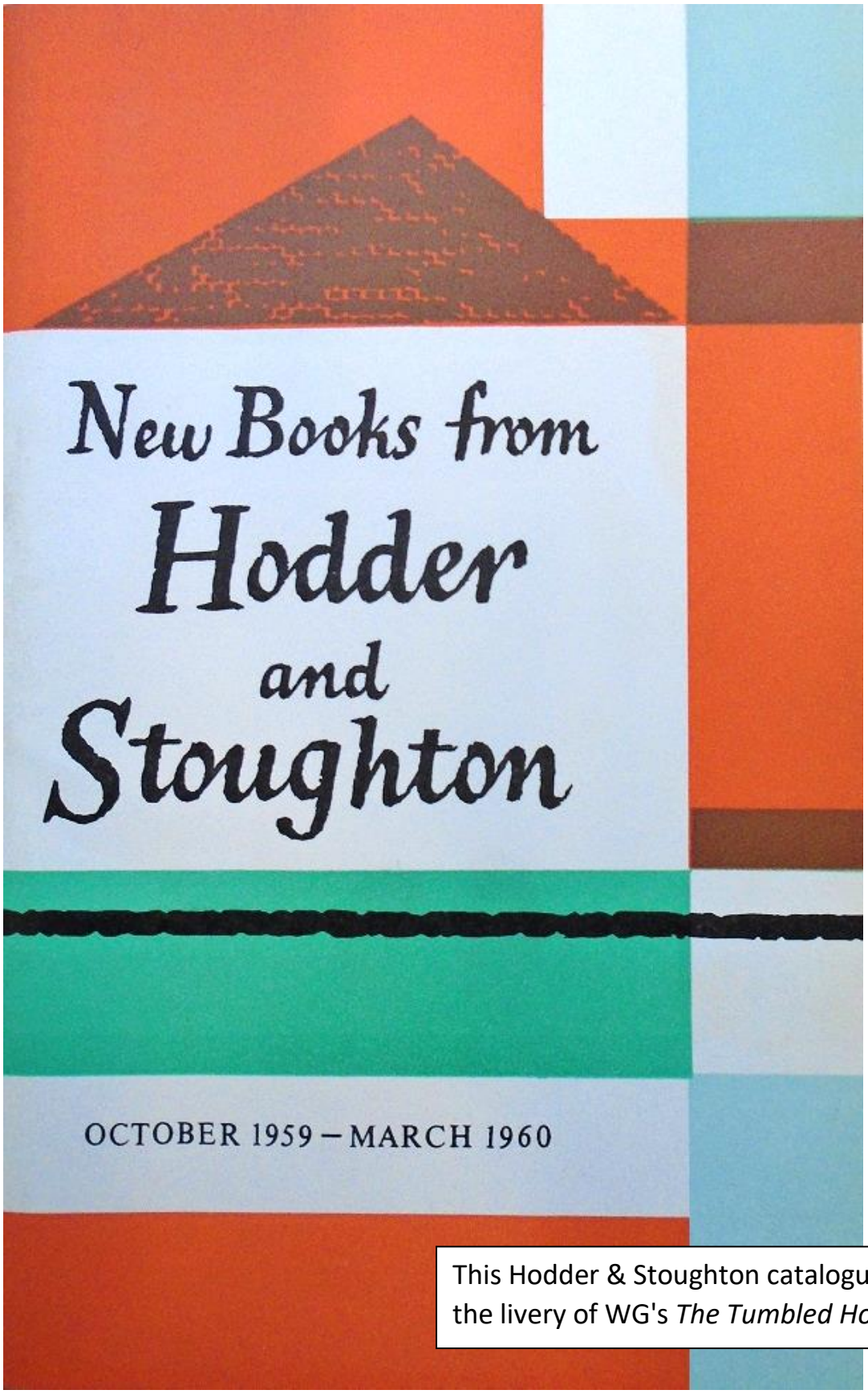
Winston Graham's *Tumbled House* is an exciting novel of a sort the British do much better than their American counterparts. When Roger Shorn, eminent London man of letters and gossip columnist writing under the nom de plume of Moonraker, libels the memory of John Marlowe, distinguished British barrister and author, he must face the wrath of Marlowe's son and daughter. Then ensue a lawsuit and a sensational trial in the London courts. By trial's end it is quite apparent that Roger Shorn is not exactly the journalistic and literary paragon everyone had assumed. The novel propels the reader into the strange world of the Borstal and teddy boys as well as into the perfumed purlieus of contemporary London cafe society. It would be unfair to reveal the engrossing details of various episodes just as it would be decidedly unfair to reveal the outcome of Roger Shorn's trial. Before Hollywood films this tale, buy it or borrow it for a lazy summer afternoon and evening. You'll stay with it to the end.

(*The Christian Century*, 31 August 1960)

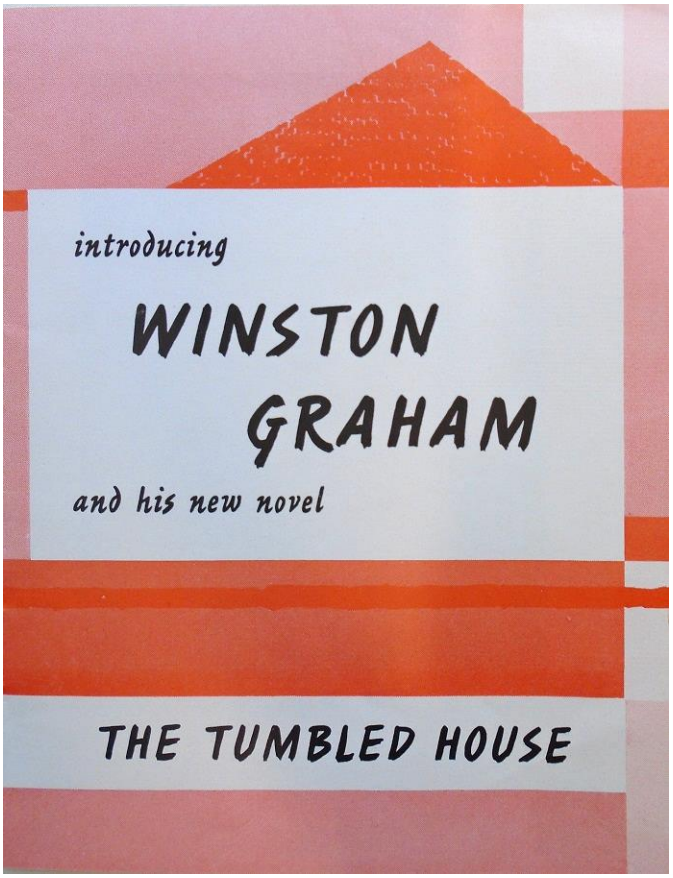
THE TUMBLED HOUSE. Winston Graham. *Hodder & Stoughton*, 16s. 1959. 19·5 cm. 352 pages.

Set against a background of the kind of libel action familiar in our day, this is a topical tale of conflicting loyalties. A rising young conductor, Don Marlowe, precipitately forces into court his erstwhile friend, Richard Shorn, in order to vindicate his dead father's name blackened by a scurrilous article. His obstinate resolution to fight the action involves others—including his wife Joanna, a television actress who has been Roger Shorn's mistress, and his air-hostess sister Bennie, in love with Shorn's son Michael. Their various predicaments are realistically depicted in a story which has its finger firmly on the pulse of contemporary life.

(*British Book News, Volume 233*, January 1960)



This Hodder & Stoughton catalogue bears the livery of WG's *The Tumbled House*



Another of Hodder's initiatives to promote *The Tumbled House* was this sixteen-page booklet (pages one and two below) which reproduces the interview given by WG to William G. Smith, editor of *Books and Bookmen*, which appeared in that magazine's October 1959 issue. Interestingly, this version includes one extra paragraph – to read it, see B&B Oct 59.

Winston Graham

by the Editor of

BOOKS AND BOOKMEN

"I'VE ALWAYS HAD THE WISH TO WRITE," says Winston Graham, "but where that came from and how early it came I've no idea."

There was no strong literary tradition in his family: "My father and mother read quite good books but they didn't seem to go out of their way to urge me to read them. If I had I probably shouldn't have liked them. My early favourites were Buchan, Mason, Wodehouse, Stevenson (highest brow of the lot, I think) and every conceivable type of ephemeral writer who's now gone and forgotten."

But he reacts strongly if you suggest he is a born story-teller: "There's no such thing as a born novelist any more than there's such a thing as a born doctor or a born engineer. People look at me and

DEC Winston Graham's

THE

TUMBLED HOUSE

Magnificently adult story telling of a man's fight against a gossip-columnist to clear his father's name, a fight complicated by his wife's affaires.

Originally 16/-

Club Edition 5/3

Daily Mirror, 25 October 1960

WINSTON GRAHAM

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." RICHARD CHURCH, *Evening Standard.*

2nd imp. *16s. net*

Hodder & Stoughton

Observer, 3 January 1960

The Tumbled House. By Winston Graham. (Hodder and Stoughton, 16s.) Son vindicates father's memory by libelling his libeller, in the same way that the younger Gladstones dealt with Captain Peter Wright of the Bath Club. Excellent court scenes and a fascinating sub-plot involving fashionable young men in high-class burglary—all neatly interwoven in highly organised long novel, written with great professional skill and style and a real feeling for upper-middle-class London life as reflected in the law reports and the gossip columns. Inflated idea of how easy and lucrative it is, though, to sell stolen *objets d'art* to professional fences.

Spectator, 6 November 1959

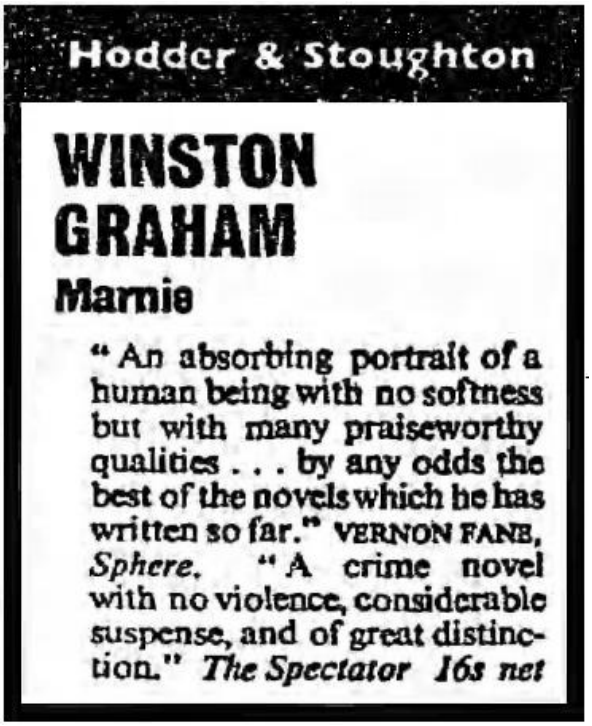
The theme of course is the poetically just destruction of him who attempts to destroy a good name. The subplot, of Michael and Bennie, having little real connection with the principal, proves that crime does not pay. The marriage of Don and Joanna is almost wrecked by the disclosure of her infidelity but, because both are good people, it bids fair at the close to be even firmer than before. The characters are distinctly, although not dramatically drawn; the style is at times pedestrian, but never annoyingly so. The whole is a run-of-the-mill novel that may pass the time of adult readers. (*Best Sellers,* University of Scranton, 15 February 1960)

[The above reviewer skimmed the book so cursorily he recorded Roger and Michael's surname – Shorn – as "Storm"]

Marnie (1961)

Marnie. By Winston Graham. (Hodder and Stoughton, 16s.) Long, immensely readable character study of young woman thief, a-moral as to her employers' pay-rolls, but highly puritanical as to her favours. It may be that both the light fingers and the sexual primness have their origins in her psyche, and Winston Graham explores it thoroughly (as though in the girl's own words) in a crime novel with no violence, considerable suspense, and of great distinction

Top: Spectator, 19 May 1961
Left: *Guardian*, 14 April 1961



Observer, 16 April / 21 May 1961

In spite of a simplicity of theme distorted by an overengineered ending, the novel I admired most in this set was **Marnie**, by Winston Graham (Hodder and Stoughton, 16s), the first-person narrative of a girl who steals money from a succession of employers. The story is made up of a series of escapes not merely from these victims but also from the identities which Marnie has to assume like masks. She has to deceive herself before she can successfully deceive the world, and the climax of the book is where she retains one of her masks a little too long, so that it begins to assume the organic quality of skin and nerves. She gets involved with other people's lives, and then the wheels of retribution start grinding. The writing is unobtrusively but quite exceptionally good.

Norman Shrapnel
The Guardian, 28 Apr 1961

Meet *Marnie* the perfect Hitchcock heroine

Marnie's story — suspenseful, compelling, characterized by thievery, blackmail and sex — is brilliantly told in the new novel by Winston Graham. Now you can meet one of the most unusual heroines Alfred Hitchcock ever encountered — in

Marnie

A novel by WINSTON GRAHAM

A forthcoming Alfred Hitchcock production

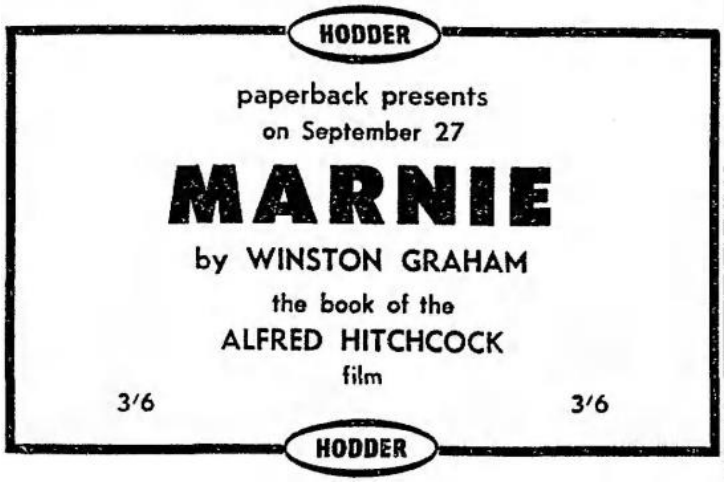
$3.95 DOUBLEDAY

USA, 1961, source unknown

BOOKS by Winston Graham normally fall into the category of straight novels with the discipline of suspense—long, meaty, serious and shrewdly calculated, with strong emphasis on story telling and surprise. Few men handle this have-it-both-ways form more skillfully; and Graham himself has never done it better than in **MARNIE (Doubleday, $3.95).**

This is the first-person life story of one of the most unusual of recent heroines: a young girl who is a cold-blooded professional embezzler, the pretty little office girl who defrauds one company after another in a series of successive identities as carefully worked out as those of a polygamist. It is a tale of crime and pursuit and retribution, but by no means a simple one. With what seems (at least to a male reviewer) a phenomenally successful use of a woman's viewpoint, and with a rare and happy balance of psychoanalytic and novelistic method, Graham makes you know Marnie, even to the ultimate secret (unknown to her own conscious mind) which turned her to crime and away from sex. It's a novel as rewarding as it is suspensefully readable.

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 8 January 1961



Guardian, 16 June 1962

The Grove of Eagles (1963)

In the Major Tradition

It is worth remarking that today tradition in the arts is surfacing again. Experiments in form, and emphasis on self-expression, have dominated since the beginning of the century. The art of the novel has not escaped this fashionable influence, and those professional writers who practise it, principally to tell a good story, have been either ignored or sneered at. How would Alexander Dumas have fared during this phase?

Winston Graham might answer that query with some chagrin, for not until his latest two books have critics in this country given him his due as a masterly and professional story-teller. Whatever his theme, or the period chosen for his tales, he presents them through a narrative that moves through a progressive rhythm, the pace varying with the tension of scene, conflict, and suspense, while on this flood the characters pass in procession, their gestures in keeping with their individuality, their actions convincingly expressive of their principles or emotions.

Mr. Graham's new novel is set in the years just after the defeat of the Spanish Armada of 1588. England is alert for another attempt by Philip of Spain to conquer this Protestant people, relying on a fifth column of devotees of the Old Faith, and their preparations within the country against the coming of a

still larger Spanish fleet. It came in 1597, but again the weather was on the side of Queen Elizabeth and her fabulous band of semi-pirates whose names are still household words; Drake, Ralegh, Howard, Essex and the rest. All these figures are evoked in Mr. Graham's tale. We meet also Francis Bacon, and even have a fleeting glance at Cervantes during one of the scenes at the Spanish Court.

It is an opulent picture, with all the gold and glitter of the Renaissance world. But we are also shown the squalor, the cruelty, the superstition, and the dreadful uncertainties that combined to set the tone of melancholy and even of despair in the poetry of the period, especially that of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Spenser. Mr. Graham's book is also of that mood. Uncertainty of personal fate, wild hopes and violent reactions, mark the goings-on of these Elizabethan characters, in an age when as one of the Queen's courtiers says, "Brother is against brother, friend against friend. It is little for the son of a slain man to become the ardent supporter of the murderer, for husbands and wives to bear witness that will see the other to the block. There are only two motives which reign undisputed, advancement and survival."

This man's rustic brother lives down in Cornwall, a drunken and dissolute squire in charge of a coastal defence castle on his estate. One of his illegitimate sons is the hero of the tale, and its narrator. This boy has good qualities and a resolute character. He is steadied by a romantic love for a young girl whose parents are farmers, turned out of their home by his father for being late with the rent. The girl is a realist, but she returns the boy's devotion, though in the meantime she has to accept marriage with an elderly clergyman.

The seeming hopelessness of this love sends the youth out to wild adventures. He spends two periods of imprisonment in Spain, and is forced to pretend to work for the enemy toward the success of the second Armada. His father, as he finds out during captivity, is also involved through blackmail. But the story is highly woven, thread upon thread adding to the tapestry its element of gold, or sable tinge. The hero takes part in the expedition by which Essex sacked Cadiz. The account of this is detailed and masterly.

But the book is more than picturesque. It is rich in moral force and sane historical judgment. The portraits are individualised, and I found it interesting to compare that of Ralegh with the picture drawn by Margaret Irwin in *That Great Lucifer* three years ago. The inner meaning and purpose of the book may be found in a passage toward the end. "It is when human beings are above human logic that they perhaps show their affinity with God". The whole movement of this long and elaborate story is conditioned by that belief. For pure story-telling, *The Grove of Eagles* may be classed with *The Count of Monte Cristo*; for romantic warmth, with *Lorna Doone*. In addition, it has, along with all of Mr. Graham's tales, a balance of shrewd assessment of human nature, its subterfuges, its pleas, and its gradual discovery of virtue in the most unexpected of characters.

Richard Church, 1963

WINSTON GRAHAM'S *The Grove of Eagles* is a long (more than 570 pages) and ambitious historical novel set in the closing years of the first Elizabeth's reign, with Cornwall very largely as its background.

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

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

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

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

Previous page: *Church Times*, 6 December 1963. Below: *Observer*, 8 December 1963

A Cornish Boy and the Second Armada

By ORVILLE PRESCOTT

THE GROVE OF EAGLES. By Winston Graham. 498 pages. Doubleday. $5.95.

IN October of 1597 the great armada set sail from El Ferol in northwestern Spain. Sixty galleons and 84 other warships with 60 lesser supporting vessels made a fine show. They carried 5,000 sailors, artillery, mules, horses, oxen and 10,000 soldiers. Another fleet had orders to join them and more reinforcements would be picked up in Brittany. This time the conquest of heretical England would be certain. Few modern readers have even heard of this Second Armada, which was just as great a threat to England as the First Armada, which had been destroyed by the English fleet and the weather nine years before. The reason for its comparative obscurity is that no celebrated heroes fought it, no picturesque fire ships helped defeat it, the Queen made no stirring address to the troops as it approached. How the Second Armada almost achieved an overwhelming surprise and how it was destroyed by a great tempest are only two of the exciting episodes in "The Grove of Eagles," an excellent historical novel by Winston Graham.

Winston Graham

Winston Graham is a popular and confidently professional English novelist. "The Grove of Eagles" is his most ambitious work. It is an absorbing book, a rare combination of masterly storytelling and of sound literary craftsmanship. Mr. Graham has written his swaggering adventure story with sure skill, with a nice feeling for character and with a vast knowledge of life in the last decade of the 16th century.

His account of a great aristocratic family, the Killigrews, in wildest Cornwall is thick with richly poured local atmosphere. In the West Country of those days any respectable royal official might be a pirate in his spare moments; any decent squire might be a Roman Catholic in treasonous contact with disguised priests and Spanish secret agents. Witchcraft, violence, swarms of children and monstrous debts added to the uncertainties of the times.

All this is vividly described by young Maugan Killigrew, base-born son of weak, foolish, lecherous John Killigrew. Recalling his tempestuous youth in his old age, Maugan vividly brings to life all the storms and passions of a tough, courageous, reckless young man who learned about love and women, war and death while still in his teens. Maugan, while undoubtedly a broth of a boy with a sword or a knife, is not just the athletic hero of a romance. He is a real and sorely troubled human being, frightened with good cause, worried, disillusioned. His education was strenuous indeed.

Some of it took place in the household of Sir Walter Ralegh, a man who could set any boy's imagination and sense of hero worship aflame. Some took place during the great English raid on Cadiz. Some especially painful lessons were mastered in the horrors of Spanish prisons under the threat of the Inquisition.

Although "The Grove of Eagles" lacks the stature and distinction of the finest modern historical novels, it is a grand tale. Lovers of historical melodrama should delight in it. But more demanding readers should find it mature and deft and continuously enjoyable. I feel safe in predicting that "The Grove of Eagles" will be one of the most deservedly popular novels of 1964.

New York Times, 3 January 1964

The Grove of Eagles is a superb historical novel of the Elizabethan years, 1592-1598. Not only has it won the commendation of A. L. Rowse, noted scholar of the period, but it has the fascination of an invasion of England by sea by a more powerful Armada than the one of 1588, aided by lack of preparation on the part of the English, abetted by traitors, and inspired by a religious zeal that bordered on the fanatical. This novel also contains an account of the English raid on Cadiz, the horror of Spanish prisons, the power of the Inquisition, and one of its prominent characters is Sir Walter Ralegh, scholar, admiral and confidant of the Queen; but best of all, its protagonist, Maugan Killigrew, is one of the most human characters to grace the pages of fiction in many a year. Although the story covers only six years, from Maugan's 14th until his 20th year, the boy has so many adventures and so much growing up to do that the time seems longer, yet withal real; for the decisions that Maugan had to make are the most serious a man can make:—death or the acceptance of a religion he did not believe in; to save his father or to be implicated in treason; to marry a woman who certainly loves him but has equally certainly deceived him. Maugan's decisions may not please all readers; but the intense agony felt by Maugan, both before and after to make up his mind, is a plea for understanding of this very human character.

Maugan was the oldest, but base-born, son of John Killigrew, governor of Pendennis Castle which commanded the most vital position on the Cornish coast. The father was heavily in debt and not above a little piracy to improve his financial position. He was willing to deal even with English sea captains in the pay of Spain; and it was one of these men who helped to capture Maugan in a raid, took him to Spain where despite some danger from the Inquisition, he was treated well enough and sent back to England with an offer to his father. Finding the girl he had expected to marry already wed, Maugan takes service as secretary with Ralegh and accompanies Sir Walter in the raid on Cadiz. Sent home as a companion to one of Ralegh's men who had been seriously wounded, Maugan again becomes a captive when their ship is captured and is imprisoned first in Portugal, then in Spain, where, to save his life, he accepts Catholicism. Although the Spaniards are still suspicious of him, Maugan is sent to El Ferol, in northwestern Spain, where a second and greater Armada is being prepared to invade and conquer England.

After many delays, the great fleet sails and is practically in sight of its goal in Cornwall when a great storm strikes, dispersing the ships and destroying many of them. Maugan's ship is sunk; but he is rescued and returned to Cornwall. There he finds his father under suspicion and called to answer charges of treason before the Queen's Council. Maugan goes with his father to London and gives testimony as a result of which John Killigrew is found guilty only of negligence and of being in debt to the Crown. For the latter crime he is put in prison; for the former, a new governor is appointed. Having done the best he could for his father, Maugan would have liked to rejoin the Ralegh household; but his fomer sweetheart, now a widow, insists that he take service with the Howards. And so, he does.

The story is exceptionally well told, communicating the zest for living which characterized the Elizabethans and filling in the picture of the times with many delightful details which can only be hinted at in a review. Here is an historical novel to be highly **recommended.**

Best Sellers, University of Scranton, 1 February 1964

* * * * *

After the Act (1965)

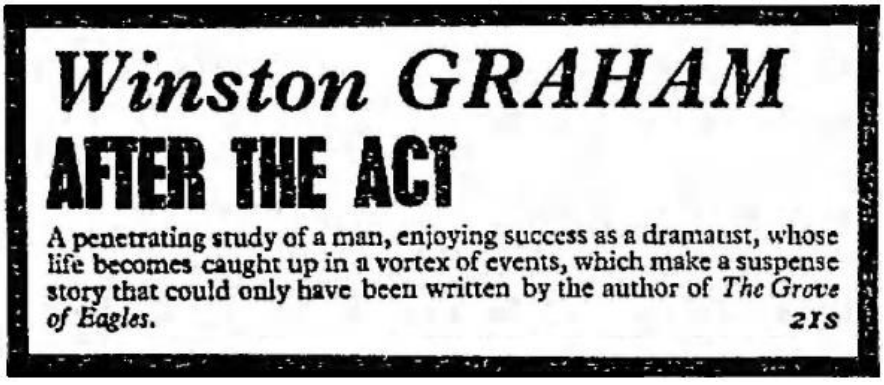
It is good to see at last that Winston Graham is receiving his due as a literary artist … The author has a faculty for incisive, sparse presentation of character in conflict with temptation, and he does it in recognisable dialogue and circumstances that make the reader think: "There, but for the grace 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.

Richard Church, *Country Life*, 29 July 1965

Morris Scott, married and a successful playwright, falls in love with a beautiful young girl in "After the Act" by Winston Graham, (Doubleday. 302 p., $4.95; IIb, 66-11739). It is the usual triangle. His wife has been the driving power behind his success; now he wants to divorce her. Accidentally (?) he kills her and the rest of the story deals with his attempt to reason out or justify his deed, using Christian and Buddhist principles. The novel is too wordy, too weakly introspective and is definitely not a novel of "psychological suspense" as the publisher states. (*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, 15 May 1966)

CREDIBILITY, efficiency, meticulous phasing are qualities one has learned to expect from Winston Graham. One finds these in **After the Act**, which I began by finding good but a trifle flat-footed, a professional's novel *par excellence*, and ended by admiring. Morris Scott, a dramatist, has been organised to belated success by his stringy intellectual wife Harriet—perhaps "over-organised," he begins to think resentfully as he begins to burgeon. He promises his young French mistress—the work-stale passion of the writer, at first irritatingly prosaic and cost-counting, merges finally into the pattern of the man—to break with Harriet, lacks the ruthlessness, or the resolution, and suddenly, shockingly, shoves her off the window to her death in a gust of rage. The subsequent inquest he conducts into his motives, the need for expiation, fear of discovery, the slow dredging-up of truth, the spectre of solitude ahead, worked out with tension and valid anguish, make this a sincere, impressive study.

Christopher Wordsworth
The Guardian, 9 Jul 1965



Guardian, 9 July 1965

Double Meaning

By Marian Waldman

THE title has a double meaning: It refers to a theme of the story, and also to the fact that the central figure is a playwright.

The playwright has recently risen to fame; he owes his success to an ailing woman ten years older than he, who happens to be his wife. In Paris to arrange for a French production of his hit play, the dramatist falls in love with a girl ten years younger. He wants to marry the girl, but finds it difficult to ask his wife for a divorce.

Not very new or stimulating material; but Winston Graham is a good story-teller. His people are flesh and his places are physical. If we do not quite believe in his passion, we are almost always interested in it nevertheless. . .and we are excited and shocked at the end of Book One, when the hero finds an astonishing way to freedom.

But then we encounter Book Two, in which we must struggle with the hero over how to dispose of his soul, on earth and possibly in heaven. One gets the feeling that Mr. Graham is an admirer of Morris West (the successful writer, in After The Act, is named Morris Scott). Like Mr. West, Mr. Graham writes novels of adventure and suspense; and both writers seem to share the belief that a simple good story does not weigh heavy enough to pull the bell of immortality.

And so, "after the act", the author leads us on pilgrimages to Christian vicars and Buddhist priests. The encounters are unsatisfying — Mr. Graham seems to dash in to these meetings and dash out again without ever hanging up his philosophical hat, so to speak. He creates the impression of being uncertain of his own intellectual powers; and, in fact, on the third last page of the book he expresses this feeling of inadequacy in so many words: "Intellect did not at all go with creative imagination; it went with the people who discussed the creators."

The statement is highly arguable, but Mr. Graham evidently accepts it and, also evidently, he is unhappy about it. Which is a pity, for he is an intelligent if rather reticent writer; he needs to strike out the apologia and get on with the story.

Winnipeg Free Press, 4 September 1965

Winston Graham, author of a string of successful novels—the last one was The Grove of Eagles*—needs little introduction. I was jogging along with his present one,* After the Act, *thinking*

how pleasant it was to surrender to the spell of a well-told tale, when the story took a sudden swerve in a totally unexpected direction. Immediately it became twice as interesting, even if rather less comfortable reading.

Morris Scott, its hero, is a successful playwright aged thirty-two, married to an intelligent woman older than himself who has helped him to make his fortune. He falls in love with a pretty, young Scots girl in Paris and seems almost to be coming to terms with a dual role. I will not divulge the twist, but at this point it transforms a suave exercise in entertainment into a much deeper thing, an analysis of the private conscience. When this is backed up, as it is, with viable characterisation and a shrewd touch for contemporary reportage, it makes for a satisfying read.

Eve Burgess, *Punch*, 1 Sept 1965

Winston Graham attempts his most ambitious novel in After the Act*, an examination of a successful murderer which scraps all accepted clichés about remorse and retribution and tries to analyze, completely anew, what his reactions must be. Much though I admire the intent, I am forced to report that this is a moderately tedious book, despite exciting glints of insight. It takes forever to reach its starting point, and then continues to move, at the pace of a snail who has given up all hope of the Olympics, through a fuzzy thicket of imprecise words.*

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 15 May 1966

AFTER THE ACT (paperback edition, 1971): *Slick but enjoyable story about a successful London playwright, married to an older woman, who falls for a young girl. Social setting well observed and comes up freshly; some successful thriller aspects and the three central characters are all rather endearing – which makes a change.*

Helen Dawson, *Observer*, 23 May 1971

Night Journey (1966)

In Night Journey *by Winston Graham, British Intelligence conscripts a young Austrian scientist, an alien, and despatches him as an agent to Italy to secure information about a new kind of poison gas developed by an Italian scientist. When the Italian scientist is killed in an air raid and the formula for the gas is stolen by a Nazi official, the reluctant spy is enmeshed in a plot to assassinate the official. There is action and there is suspense; but there is one serious flaw – the young scientist turned agent never really faces up to the moral crisis of involvement in assassination; he by-passes it.*

Best Sellers (University of Scranton, 15 February 1968)

Winston Graham has polished an early (1941) and forgotten novel in **NIGHT JOURNEY** (Doubleday, $4.95), and I'm glad he did. Fair warning: this isn't the subtle and complex novel of character that Graham is capable of in the 1960's, but simply a straightforward spy story of World War II, quietly understated and effective. Graham has rarely touched on espionage, but he has the gifts for it; this occasionally, especially in the titular journey on the Milan-Basle express, suggests early Hitchcock or Reed.

Anthony Boucher, *New York Times*, 28 January 1968

The Walking Stick (1967)

Going up – the wages of sin

Beautiful kleptomaniac women have figured rather prominently and profitably in the life of novelist Winston Graham – fictionally speaking, of course. His novel "Marnie," about a girl whose early life had turned her into a compulsive thief and an emotional block of ice, became a highly successful Hitchcock film with Tippi Hedren as Marnie. Now Lancashire-born Mr. Graham has done it again with THE WALKING STICK. Out on Monday, it's the story of a doctor's daughter called Deborah, who works for a big firm of art dealers and finds herself involved in a major art theft.

Film rights have been sold to the American producer Elliott Kastner, who says he has paid over £80,000. "It's considerably more than I got for 'Marnie.' The wages of sin appear to be going up," says Mr. Graham, who lives in a Georgian house in Sussex with five acres and a heated swimming pool.

Deborah, who uses a walking stick, imagines she is desperately unattractive to men. So when a plausible young crook called Leigh shows her great attention, she falls heavily and becomes his accomplice.

Peter Grosvenor, *Daily Express*, 30 March 1967

* * *

The Walking Stick begins as a study of a girl who once had polio, and winds up as a tense psychological thriller. Deborah Dainton is twenty-six when the book opens, and her crippled leg convinces her that marriage is not for her; in fact, she is defensively aggressive to any possible suitors who come her way. But finally she does fall for a young man and becomes besotted by him, only to discover that she has merely been used by him as a pawn in a carefully planned robbery. This is an example of the popular novel at its very best. Winston Graham also hits hard and effectively at some of yesterday's avant-garde ideas – for instance, that of calling parents by their Christian names because it helps to abolish the gap between the generations. 'Nothing can ever abolish a gap of twenty to thirty years.'

Spectator, 21 April 1967

With [The Walking Stick] *Mr. Graham continues his sometimes exasparating twin-careers. On the one hand is the skilled and polished author of ingenious psychological thrillers (of which* Marnie *was a famous example), on the other hand the Cornwall-loving creator of the* Ross Poldark *sagas* and a number of other historical romances,* The Grove of Eagles *being one of the most recent.* The Walking Stick *belongs to the first genre, a type of book which one sometimes feels Mr. Graham can almost write standing on his head. This, of course, is a gross oversimplification, for one of the delights of reading Mr. Graham is the meticulous care with which he creates character, suspense, background and so on. Nevertheless, for this particular reviewer, any of the thriller books always leave a faint sense of ennui – no matter how well done, how meticulously built up, they leave a certain sense of emptimess – whereas the* Ross Poldark *books and others in that sphere are a living testimony to their author's deep love for Cornwall and his understanding of the fading way of life of past centuries.*

Having made this point it only remains to say that, like its predecessors, The Walking Stick *is very much more than an ordinary crime story, being the study of the relationship of a cripple girl with the man she loves – who, unfortunately for her, happens to be involved in a criminal project the success of which depends on obtaining the girl's assistance. The end is predictable but, once begun, the book cannot be put down.*

Henry Trevor, *Cornish Review*, No. 5, 1967

[* It is worth recalling that when this review was written the Poldark saga comprised four old novels that had not been televised and were seemingly forgotten by their author – a thing of the past in more ways than one – yet plainly it left its mark on Mr. Trevor all the same.]

SOME novelists go along on an even plane of excellence. Some improve steadily with each book. Some vary so unpredictably you never know whether the newest book is going to be a fiasco or a triumph. In the last class is Winston Graham, who has written such outstanding blends of mainstream and suspense novel as the Crime Writers Association award-winning "The Little Walls" (1955), the vividly remembered "Marnie" (1961), and such foolishness as this year's earlier "Take My Life." Now, with a far-reaching swing of the pendulum, he produces his finest novel to date in **THE WALKING STICK** (Doubleday, $4.95).

This is a suspense novel—and, indeed, a superbly plotted variant on one of the great classic forms. But it starts out, and continues so long, in such a different manner that you must be left to discover its criminal element for yourself. What you begin with is a delicate and persuasive study of the sexual awakening of a highly intelligent girl, hitherto trapped into introversion by a withered leg. Almost a satisfactory novella in itself, this situation expands into a moving tragedy that represents one of those rare instances—like the best work of Margaret Millar, Julian Symons and Hans Hellmut Kirst—in which formal suspense technique and serious psychological novel reinforce each other.

Anthony Boucher, NYT, 16 July 1967

THE WALKING STICK. Winston Graham. (Doubleday. $4.95.) One of the most successful fusions to date of the plotting technique of suspense with the serious novel of people; one of my two nominations for Novel of the Year.

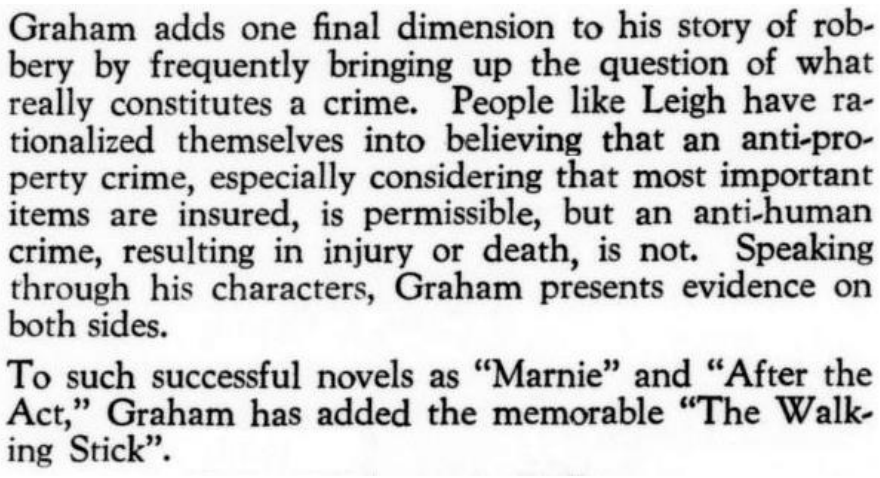
Anthony Boucher, NYT, 3 Dec 1967

The Dainton parents were justifiably proud of themselves and their family. Of the five members, only Deborah was not in the medical field, but that was excusable. After all, she had been struck by polio when she was ten. Now, at 26, she was lucky that her pretty face, pleasant disposition, and proficiency at her job at Whittington's, one of London's most elegant art auction houses, were more important to her minute circle of friends than was her slight limp that was made just a little more noticeable by the walking stick she used.

At a party given by her sister Sarah, Deborah met Leigh Hartley, an artist who tactlessly referred to her lame leg and who too often made statements which seemed to be forward to the inexperienced Deborah. After the party, Leigh kept pestering her until she went out with him. Before long she had put aside her walking stick, gone skating and dancing, and moved in with Leigh.

The rest of the plot is best understood in its entire subtlety, but essentially it hinges upon whether Leigh's interest in Deborah was a charade he used to entice her into becoming an accomplice in the robbery of Whittington's. The robbery is described in detail, with enough tension tossed in at appropriate spots to keep the armchair detective turning the pages. In light of the character the author builds his heroine, Deborah's actions at the end of this suspenseful book are believable.

Readers looking for three or four hours of exciting reading will enjoy "The Walking Stick," but for this reviewer there was an even greater joy in reading the carefully structured passages which Winston Graham wrote on almost every page. Graham skillfully interlaced Deborah's past experiences into the weave of her related present experiences. Also, he made his style interesting by a number of devices such as choosing an incongruous item such as a beetle to frame and mirror Deborah's situation. The narrative and action flow smoothly. It is to a male author's credit that he can recreate a woman's mannerisms and thoughts with so much credibility. About the only fault readers will find with this book is the author's occasional tendency to let his words obscure his meaning, e.g., "But because of the amalgam breadth and depth were added in some chemical synthesis of which perhaps even Douglas would have approved."



Graham adds one final dimension to his story of robbery by frequently bringing up the question of what really constitutes a crime. People like Leigh have rationalized themselves into believing that an anti-property crime, especially considering that most important items are insured, is permissible, but an anti-human crime, resulting in injury or death, is not. Speaking through his characters, Graham presents evidence on both sides.

To such successful novels as "Marnie" and "After the Act," Graham has added the memorable "The Walking Stick".

(*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, 15 July 1967)

A rough method for judging the quality of a novelist is to ask oneself if he is capable of putting the reader into close contact with what has the appearance of pure fact; actualities, both of character and event. The 'stream of consciousness' school has interfered with that criterion, but it survives all superior criticism, and today is regaining its ascendency. The Count of Monte Cristo *returns to favour, if indeed it has ever been superseded by the wholly different works of Flaubert and Proust. Winston Graham is a novelist to benefit by this recurrence of an interest in pure story-telling, a function, and a duty, for some time out of fashion. He is a master of it, in the same class as R. C. Hutchinson and Graham Greene. He goes from one theme to another, book by book, and explores it with a relentless closeness of touch, realistic in every aspect of that exploration, creating facts without the interference of commentary, or longueurs of generalisation or philosophy.*

He is not ashamed to approximate, in his plots, to the thriller, and always there is a kind of nervous apprehension in his literary make-up which drives his to scenes of violence, of extravagant emotional enterprise, which the reader discovers, after reviving from his own sense of terror, to be fully justified by events and by the nature of the characters involved. The themes are always original because of the choice of the central figure or narrator. In … The Walking Stick *… all is handled with superb skill, and this tale adds to Mr. Graham's reputation.*

Richard Church, *Country Life*, 1 June 1967

A tense thriller and a tender character study. (Peter Grosvenor, *Daily Express*, 7 May 1970)

Criminal records

kept by FRANCIS ILES

JOHN BOLAND seems to improve with every book. **The Shakespeare Curse** (Cassell, 25s) is an ambitious, original, and wholly successful work. An emaciated girl is discovered in a newly dug grave; she claims to be resurrected from the seventeenth century and to have known Shakespeare. She is supported by a tough commercial traveller, and a cult is formed called the Resurrectionists. But the police are sceptical, and their investigations run parallel with the growing mass hysteria of the Resurrectionists. There are murders galore, and I guarantee you will not doze off in the middle.

I thought there was some diminution of his usual drive and urgency about William Haggard's **The Doubtful Disciple** (Cassell, 21s). The trouble is that this rather scrappy book about the international struggle for the secret of the Selective Pigmentation Disease lacks a focal point; Laver, the successor to the excellent Charles Russell, is too vague and ineffective a figure, and von Frei, the villain, too amiable. Nevertheless, Mr Haggard retains his position as top of the political thriller class, but only just. Messrs Cassell are also issuing a Haggard omnibus, **Haggard For Your Holiday**, containing three full-length novels, very good value at 35s.

And in this connection do not overlook the reprints by the Bodley Head, at 25s each, of three novels by the incomparable Winston Graham, who has everything that anyone else has and then a whole lot more: they are **The Sleeping Partner, Marnie,** and **Fortune is a Woman.**

Good stories of police work are always fascinating; and here are two very good ones, written with obviously some knowledge of the subject. **Corpse on London Bridge,** by Louis Southworth (Hale, 18s) veers between the police and the underworld, and gives a convincing picture of what really happens when the police discover a murder. **Gideon's Power** (Hodder, 25s) is another of J. J. Marric's excellent Gideon stories, with the usual hatful of assorted major crimes all happening at once to harass the commander; but as fiction I always think that the brutal murder of a child is hitting the reader below the belt.

Jennie Melville's **The Hunter in the Shadows** (Hodder, 21s) is quite a little *tour de force*, a queer book, full of mysterious happenings, persons, and violence, which nothing explained till the one major clue in the very last page or two, which makes all clear.

A Plate of Red Herrings by Francis Richards (Long, 20s), is a readable little murder story set (no doubt sycophantically) in the offices of an American magazine called "The Guardian." Addicts, applying the good old rule, may be able to identify the villain, but the getting there is good.

This review from *The Guardian* of 11 September 1969 is the source of one of WG's most widely-quoted accolades

Angell, Pearl and Little God (1970)

Exceptionally good novel by an accomplished writer, unfolding the inextricable involvement of a portly, sagacious London solicitor, an unassuming suburban shopgirl and a brutal little featherweight boxer. The plot and character portrayal are handled with assured technique and it all comes menacingly to life, far more so than in novels which have pretensions above mere 'entertainment' value.

Observer, 1 February 1970

Solicitor vs. Shopgirl vs. Boxer

This is the kind of novel a reviewer wants to start writing about the very second he's finished reading the last word – in order to fix the immediacy of his response of apathy. As Winston Graham's 18th published book (the title "Marnie" will be familiar to Hitchcock buffs), "Angell, Pearl and Little God" is a ponderous amalgam of cut-rate psychology, caricature, and professional slickness. You can't help respecting the desperate simplicity of the title, since it points directly to the three main characters, whose tangled and unsavory lives are the subject of nearly 500 pages of plodding prose. In order, then: Wilfred Angell, 46, a respected London solicitor, bully, glutton, overweight collector of paintings and furniture, marries 20-year-old Pearl Friedel, long-legged shopgirl. ("I'm a perfumery adviser.")

Angell's cheese-paring frugality is stressed to a point that would make Dickens blush, but it occasionally works efficiently, as in his economy of marriage, in which Pearl is viewed as "another acquisition. Over her whole life with him she could hardly be as expensive as a Rouault. If moderately extravagant she might cost him as much as a Guarli. With luck she might not amount to more than a couple of Louis XV armchairs. In return he would get gratitude from her for raising her out of the common ruck, some companionship when he needed it, and possibly even a little affection."

Though Pearl's tastes gradually become refined enough to enable her to recognize a George III snuffbox, her original cultural range extended only as far as a fondness for the clarinet, so that when Angell invites her to a performance of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, she's flattered: "She had never heard the Mozart Quintet, and the thought of five clarinets playing together was dreamy." And thus a rather messy kettle starts simmering.

For the third title character is Godfrey ("God for short") Brown Vosper, a feral, drivingly ambitious featherweight boxer, hungry for both Pearl and the British championship. Pearl he gets: "Little God, great God, conquesting, searching, probing, finding."

The book also offers a boringly complicated land-option legal connivance and a lot of inside stuff about the world of British boxing, but what it all boils down to is the confusion and anguish the members of this dreary trio get into as a result of what James Thurber and E. B. White once diagnosed (in "Is Sex Necessary?") as the inability to tell love from passion. And those two magnificent men were much closer to the truth when they discussed the problem of writing a letter to your lady: "If you think you can write the letter without cigarettes, it is not love, it is passion ... If you don't care what punctuation marks you put after 'darling,' the chances are you are in love – although you may just be uneducated, who knows?"

To continue quoting from Thurber and White is tempting, but since there's still Winston Graham to deal with you might be pleased to know that his boxing scenes are hard and fast. Breslin he's not, but he'll do. And the business with Tokio Kio, Japanese featherweight champ, is so viciously right that you keep hoping Kio will get a slice of the action later, but he doesn't. And there's Lady Flora Vosper, who is sexy and funny and races sports cars like a demented Joan Greenwood – but Flora dies on page 312.

Very little remains, then, to redeem the thick, marrowless style as in the following tidbits: "It was as if her mind recognised but

could not identify events that were portending, events deriving from a situation and moving towards a crisis that none of them could avoid ... 'Godfrey, I don't think we can go on meeting like this' ... Coming home to him had become a return to the gilded cage ... 'We're no good for each other.'" What to do? A return to Thurber and White might be salutary.

Checking back, I find that the narrative time covers only a little more than a year – but, trust me, by the time you've reached the last predictable pages, you feel very old. Very old.

James R. Frakes, *New York Times*, 15 February 1970

* * *

After the laudatory reviews of *The Walking Stick*, Winston Graham's new work looks like a disappointment. The "suspense" novel would probably receive more acclaim as another two-hour Alfred Hitchcock number. Far too many pages are forced on a simple plot – and the narrative is almost totally lacking in imagination – that the fleeting episodes of character run-ins and struggles become tedious and trying.

The story takes place in London at the present time and the plot revolves around one main incident – the purchase by Land Increments Ltd. of a country house owned by Viscount Vosper and divorced Lady Vosper. In this setting the lives of the three main characters become hopelessly tangled in greedy pursuit to fulfil their passions. The characters are hardly realistic (notice the clever use of names), yet they fall short of being caricatures. Each is an evil, detestable, rather one-dimensional representation of exactly the opposite of what the name implies. Wilfred Angell represents the exaggerated avaricious businessman whose life resides in his furniture, paintings and wines. Pearl Friedel embodies just about every conceivable quality of a selfish, irresponsible air-head. Little God (Godfrey Brown), animal-like almost to the point of being crude and vile, exercises his "undersized dominance" but comes out destroyed.

Angell, legal adviser to Land Increments, aims to secure the country house by any possible means. The wealthy, middle-aged solicitor's marriage to young and beautiful Pearl remains a mystery to all outsiders but is nevertheless a good device for keping the action moving … … Although the novel is obviously one of murder and suspense, it might be read as a satire on marriage based on personal profit.

Deliberately or not, the author does a fairly good job of subtly poking fun of the marriage of Angell and Pearl. It never becomes clear exactly why the union occurs in the first place. Angell – obese, weak and money-loving – decides in his forties that he should marry to improve his social position and dissolve the homosexual suspicions his friends have about him, so he chooses a young, flighty salesgirl who reminds him of a former sweetheart. Pearl marries him to be rich and " free from the unpleasanter obligations of love." While Angell regrets what he has done, Pearl openly sleeps with her handsome, virile boxer. Little God intervenes in the marriage until Angell can do nothing but shoot him. The story seems resolved until the end, where Pearl is on the verge of being picked up by a handsome Frenchman – and one can only breathe a sigh of relief that the author stopped there.

Best Sellers, University of Scranton, 1 February 1970

* * *

> *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 & 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.

Richard Church, *Country Life,* 5 February 1970

* * *

Whatever visions of things our avant-garde novelists shed upon existence, it is hardly that which Arnold recommended – "to see life steadily and to see it whole." How refreshing then to turn from their illumination of the kitchen sink by flashlight or their fumblings in the unlit cellar to the calm traditional noontide of the normal novel – for such, I suppose, is how we might describe Winston Graham's Angell, Pearl and Little God*.*

Author of more than a dozen straight fictions (six of which have been filmed) Mr. Graham has been placed by Richard Church "in the same class as R. C. Hutchinson and Graham Greene." I should have thought this was a class with two distinct divisions. Nobody, anyway, in professional story-telling is going to feel other than congratulated at being equated with the author of Testament *and* Elephant and Castle*.*

I do not know whether Mr. Graham manages to see life whole, but he certainly sees it steadily. Gifted with keen curiosity and a sharply observant eye, he knows how to fill in a scene or accumulate background without putting the reader into a doze. Each touch he adds to a character or scene increases the sense of authenticity or significance. Because he does no deep pile-driving into what may be called the Dostoevskian sub-stratum of our nature, the critic – to distinguish himself from that consenting creature 'the common reader' – writes Mr. Graham off as a 'popular novelist.' And the critic, of course, is righter than he knows: Mr. Graham is *popular, like a lot of worthy men of merit before him.*

Angell, Pearl and Little God *is a drama of high tempo made the more vivid by the clarity and energetic contrasts afforded by the characterisation.* [Plot synopsis] [The book] *has the ingredients of a Hitchcock film.*

Derek Stanford, submitted to *The Scotsman* on 26 January 1970

ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD is a novel in which three very different but equally compelling characters are played off, one against the other. The circumstances under which their lives come together are curious and unusual, but as always with Winston Graham—author of *Marnie* and *The Walking Stick*—the strange pieces fit neatly together by the end of an engrossing fictional journey.

At forty-six, Wilfred Angell is a successful London attorney and a shrewd collector of art and antiques. Angell overeats and undertips. In most other matters also he is both greedy and stingy. He is too fat, and his life evolves completely around his law firm (of which he is the senior partner), his eating and collecting, his club and the new enterprise that could make him a fortune.

Wilfred Angell has never married, and indeed sees no reason to do so at forty-six. To him, women can only complicate one's life. He doesn't need them; he doesn't trust them; he is happy to continue the way he is. Sex is of no interest to him. He will remain a confirmed bachelor . . . or so he thinks.

Wilfred's new "enterprise" is Land Increments, Ltd., a firm which has one purpose—the somewhat unethical purchase of a house and its surrounding land. That land stands right in the middle of a future suburban development and if Land Increments can get it before the word gets out, their profit could be immense.

The only problem is that the land belongs to Lady Flora Vosper, also forty-six and she has no intention of selling. But she is in serious condition from an incurable kidney disease. Three times married, a former race car driver on the Grand Prix circuit, and now an obstreperous, profanity-shouting drunk, Flora Vosper also has no intention of giving up her life without a fight. It is only a matter of time, but time is the one thing that Wilfred and his partners do not have. When Flora dies, the land will go to her son, Claude, now living in Switzerland. If Land Increments could get Claude to sign an ironclad option to sell the land before he actually owns it, then their scheme just might work. Wilfred decides to go to Geneva to talk with Claude.

Too cheap to take a regular flight, Wilfred leaves in the middle of the night for Geneva. Weather affects what should have been a routine flight, and in his nervousness, Wilfred makes small talk with his seat-mate, Pearl Friedel, twenty, a pretty young perfume counter salesgirl off on a skiing holiday. Pearl reminds Wilfred of a girl he had been half in love with twenty-five years before. But that girl, Anna, had died, leaving Wilfred with his present views on marriage and women.

In Geneva, Wilfred finds Claude interested but a bit reluctant to go through with the deal for Merrick House. It will clearly take work to get him to sign without giving away why they so desperately want the property.

Restless at home with a loving, over-protective father, an indifferent stepmother and three younger half-brothers and sisters, Pearl Friedel has few friends. No men interest her. At a dance, Pearl had met Godfrey Brown, a

featherweight boxer who has not yet made it, and who must have another job to keep going. The job he has is as chauffeur, companion and lover to Flora Vosper. Godfrey, who boxes under the name of Godfrey Vosper, and refers to himself as Little God, is twenty-two. He is uneducated, cocky and ambitious. He is also fiery, violent and a very good fighter. Nothing is too good for Little God, and he makes a play for Pearl. Impressed with the big car he drives (Flora Vosper's), but frightened by his violence, Pearl runs away when she thinks he is trying to rape her. He pursues her on several occasions, and she is in partial flight from him when she goes off to Switzerland on the holiday for which she has scrimped all year.

After his return from Switzerland, Wilfred accidentally goes into the shop where Pearl sells perfume, remembers her and invites her first to a concert, and then to dinner. After a sedate, almost Victorian courtship, he proposes a companionate marriage and she agrees. At her father's insistence, Wilfred reluctantly sets up a five-thousand-pound bank account for Pearl. It is to be security for her, but often, because of Wilfred's stinginess, she is forced to spend her own money. But now she is a lady of leisure, and she enjoys the life which Wilfred has given her. While their relationship remains almost formal—and unconsummated—Pearl and Wilfred have similar interests, and Pearl has an increasing effect on the staid ways of Wilfred's life. He gets less stuffy; he even goes on a diet. And slowly, his instincts awaken and although his first attempts are failures, the marriage is eventually consummated.

Into this oddly developing, but potentially happy marriage comes Little God. Pearl still fears him, but Wilfred, eager to get a line on Lady Flora's developing illness, encourages his occasional appearance. Little God's boxing career is at a standstill and he needs a new manager desperately. Knowing Wilfred has influence and money, he tells Pearl that he will stop bothering her if she will get Wilfred to have Manager Jude Davis, one of the leading boxing managers, get him out of his present contract and take him on. That is easily arranged, but Little God does everything but leave Pearl alone.

Trapping Pearl at Flora's, he forces his will on her, but the extent of his force is unnecessary. In some strange way, Pearl is drawn to this violent little man with the uncouth manners and the billowing ego. And in another way, she wants him regardless of his flaws. Her marriage to Angell is a totally complacent one; Little God arouses in her some inner sense of wildness, and frees her from the sterility and boredom of the life she has come to accept.

As Winston Graham moves his characters to their ultimate confrontations, ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD emerges as his most engrossing novel to date. As intense and as suspenseful as his earlier *Marnie* which became an international best seller, ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD is a spellbinding psychological drama in which three people from three very different walks of life find themselves inescapably drawn together. Their strange love-hate triangle is involved, complicated and destructive. But nevertheless, each wants, indeed each must have, something from the other.

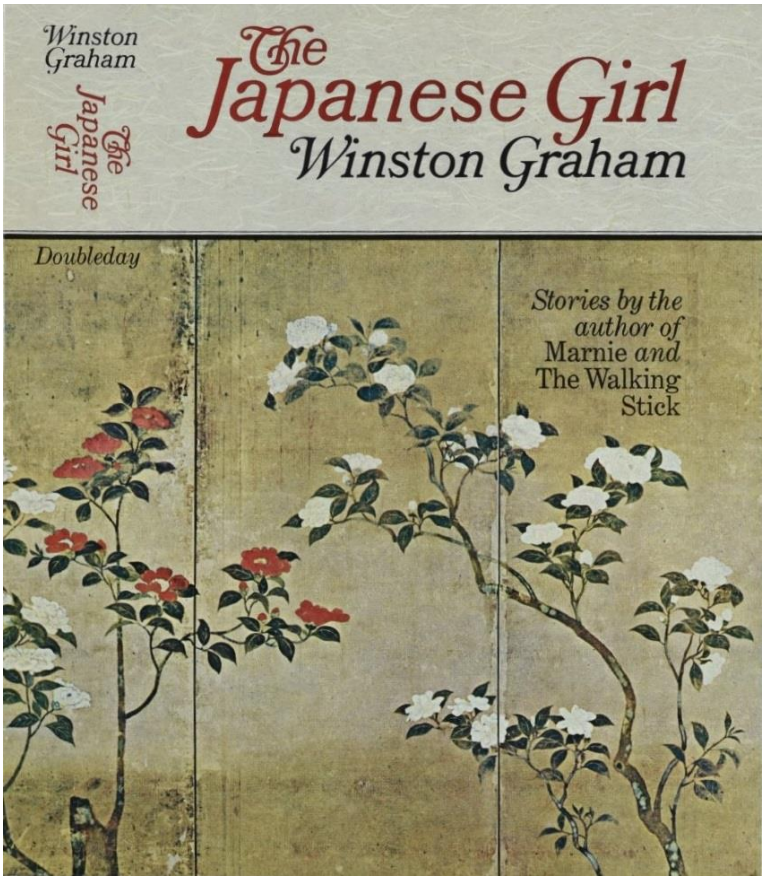
Individually, the scenes of ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD are excellent. Here are Little God's fights, drawn with the encompassing vision of a camera following each motion. Here is Angell, setting Little God up for a fight that he cannot possibly win, and could damage him for life. Here is Lady

Vosper, a true original, ill but fearless as she tests a new racing car with Little God terrified beside her. Here is the romance of Pearl and Little God, of Pearl and Wilfred, of Little God and Flora, all building to their inevitable explosions. And here is Angell, knowing that his wife is unfaithful, but overcome by his need for what she has added to his existence. As these scenes interlock and become part of Winston Graham's masterful novel, it becomes not only an excellent, old-fashionably readable thriller, but also an important novel of motivation and action.

From *The Literary Guild Magazine*, January 1970

* * * * *

The Japanese Girl (1971)



Audience was an American literary magazine, published in Boston, which ran for 13 issues from January 1971 to January 1973 only. On 6 August 1971 their editorial staff received from WG's American agent a proof copy of *The Japanese Girl*, in hope that they might buy one of its stories for publication (excepting THE MEDICI EAR-RING, already sold elsewhere). Three readers

looked at the book. The first concluded: "Competent, quite British short stories of no outstanding excellence … Decline." The second noted: "I glanced at a couple of these – seem ordinary; Geoff – take a look." Geoff decreed: "NO – they seem ordinary and besides the galleys *smell* horrible." On 18 August the proof was returned to sender with no sale made.

[From a single-page document in Box 12, Folder 13 of the *Audience* archive of the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of New York Public Library]

* * *

> *Winston Graham, a popular and prolific writer with eighteen novels to his credit, is now represented on local bookstands, and on the best-seller list, by a book of short stories which takes its title from the first, and much the longest, story in the collection* – The Japanese Girl. *The publishers say that two of the stories have not previously appeared in magazine or book form before but do not identify them nor do they say where the others have appeared. The copyright information shows that they span the years 1947 to 1971.*
>
> *There are fourteen stories in the collection and they are very much worth reading, full of interest and very varied in character. They deal with crime (even taking the reader into prison), with Graham's own Cornwall, with history (11th century and first century), with contemporary customs, the supernatural and even boxing. All are first-class examples of the storyteller's art. Many, almost all, in fact, have a neat surprise at the end, but the surprise is by no means the main point of the story, it merely provides an additional and very pleasing frosting to an already delightful cake.*
>
> *Winston Graham is able to convey atmosphere extremely well, whether it is the sentimental dreaming of a spinster of long ago or the careful planning of a crime. These stories are not the sort which you will read and immediately forget. They stay with the reader whatever is the theme. The collection deserves its recent popularity.*
>
> C.L., *Kingston Gleaner*, 14 January 1973

The Spanish Armadas (1972)

Winston Graham. *The Spanish Armadas*. 288 pp. (Collins.) £4·25.

'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.

(*Blackwoods Magazine*, October 1972)

The four Armadas

by Sir Charles Petrie

The Spanish Armadas
by Winston Graham
Collins, £4.25

This admirable study should serve to correct several fallacies regarding the events with which it deals: indeed it will probably come as a surprise to many readers to be told that there was more than one Armada at all. An earlier generation was wedded to the belief that the defeat of the Spaniards in 1588 was primarily due to God and the weather; it was convinced that the Spanish seamanship was faulty in the extreme; and that there was never another attempt at invasion. Mr Graham will have none of these assumptions, and he gives chapter and verse for a very different point of view. His approach is objective and his book is a real contribution to the history of the period.

The English victory was primarily due to mistaken Spanish strategy. Had Medina Sidonia, on his first appearance off the English coast, seized a seaside town as a bridgehead, he would have attracted to it such of Elizabeth's troops as were available, and then when Parma landed they would have been crushed between the two superior Spanish armies. As it was the English were given at Gravelines the opportunity to create confusion by the adroit use of fire-ships, and once the excellent Spanish discipline broke down it was the end. The fault, however, was not, on the evidence, that of Medina Sidonia, of whom the author has a high opinion, but of Philip himself, who would not leave enough scope to the men on the spot.

The background of the naval operations is admirably painted in, but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Mr Graham is a little inclined to over-estimate the religious influence on Philip's policy – economics and American affairs also played their part. After all, Sixtus V was not far from the truth when he said, "The King of Spain, as a temporal sovereign, is anxious above all to safeguard and to increase his dominions," adding "the preservation of the Catholic religion which is the principal aim of the Pope, is only a pretext for his Majesty, whose principal aim is the security and aggrandizement of his dominions." At the same time the author has clearly a good deal of sympathy with Philip for he sees Calvinism as the Third International of the sixteenth century.

In effect the whole subject of the four Armadas is most adequately

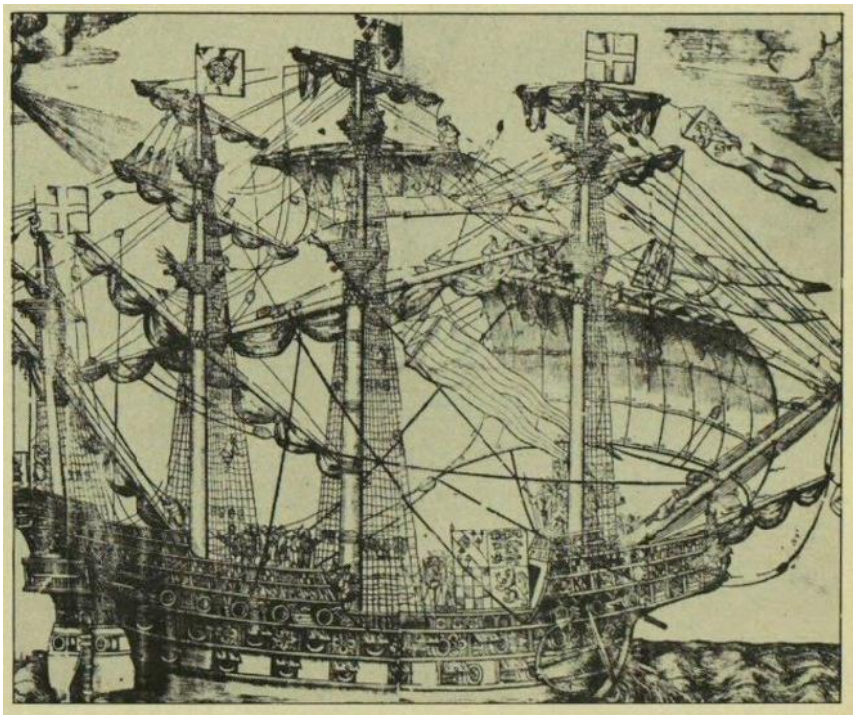
dealt with, and many a misconception is removed – none more thoroughly than the legend that of their own accord the Irish massacred the shipwrecked Spanish sailors on their way home. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no evidence in contemporary records, either English or Spanish, to show that the ordinary Irish people had any hostility to the Spaniards, or molested them in any way except when forced by their English masters to do so. Yet in considering the slaughter of the Spanish soldiers and sailors it has got to be remembered that Philip had sent an expedition for the conquest of England, and that in consequence the English were fully justified in killing in fair fight any Spaniard who came their way. What they were not justified in doing was in butchering men who had surrended upon terms, and there is only too much evidence to show that this was their normal procedure.

Of course in considering the whole clash between England and Spain during the latter half of the sixteenth century the good fortune of the former for nearly 30 years must be taken into account. In spite of the fact that Spain was the first power in the world, while England was, by comparison, of no great account, Philip was in no position to force a settlement with her such as his interests dictated, quite apart from the fact that his commitments were always so extensive, and his financial resources so restricted, that he was rarely able to concentrate sufficient force upon any one object at any one time. Until her execution in 1587 the alternative to Elizabeth was Mary, Queen of Scots, and in view of her French connexions her accession to the English throne would merely have meant that London would pass under the control of Paris; so for years Philip had to put up with the exceedingly dubious neutrality of England.

Elizabeth was thoroughly aware of the advantages to be derived from this situation, and she made the fullest use of them. She was under no illusions as to the weakness of the country she ruled, and she realized that a period of peace was essential if the national strength was to revive. Fortunately for her, Philip's difficulties provided her with just the opportunity she needed, so she gave underhand aid to his enemies, and let her seamen interrupt his commerce, but she was careful not to goad him too far. Thus the English obtained a much needed respite, and when Philip could at last strike, both they and their Queen were ready.

In fine, Mr Graham proves conclusively that the Armada of 1588 was not the disaster for Spain that has been depicted. The war itself lasted for another 16 years, and it ended in a peace of exhaustion which was neither

creditable nor honourable to England, nor of any great consequence to Spain. It did not add an acre to Spanish territory nor subtract an acre from English. It did not change the dynasties of England or Spain, nor did it modify the policies of the contending parties or influence their respective religions. It was not decisive in the sense that Poltava or Waterloo was decisive, and it must rather be compared with the battle of Britain in 1940, which saved England from the threat of invasion. It did not even secure for the English the command of the sea, for their subsequent raids upon the Spanish coast were as ineffective as that on Dieppe in 1942. The author has put an important period of history in its proper perspective.



From *The London Illustrated News*, 1 November 1972

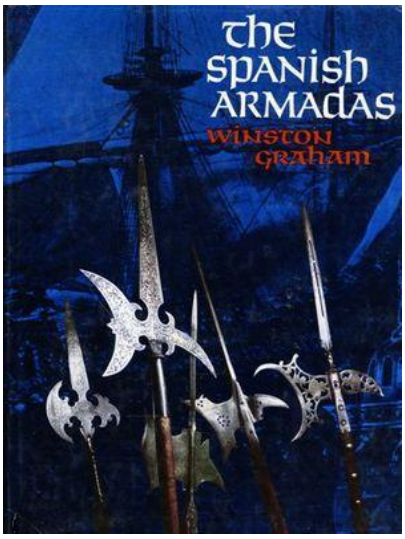
THE next two titles are both concerned with Spain. In ***The Spanish Armadas*** (Collins, £4.25) an experienced and successful novelist, Winston Graham, deals brilliantly with one of the great topics of English history. What distinguishes his treatment of this sixteenth-century epic is his impartiality in recording events, down to the last thrilling detail, through Spanish just as much as through English eyes. And his record is based on carefully researched enquiries into every scrap of available contemporary material in both Spanish and English archives. This lends to his work (beautifully illustrated and produced) the authenticity which is meat and drink to the serious historian and the vividness which, for the general reader, transforms past history into the most vivid present reality.

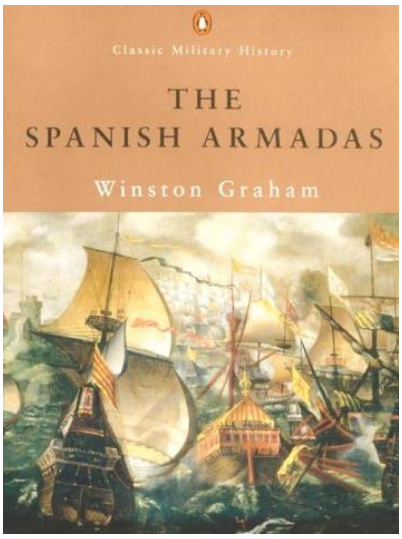
The plural word in the title is no accident. Though the Great Armada of 1588 has pride of place in this immensely detailed and exciting narrative, it is set in the much wider context of the relations between Spain and England during the reigns of Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I.

The story opens with the peaceful armada from Spain (none the less deeply suspect to the English people for being peaceful) which brought the young Philip to Winchester to marry England's Queen. It ends with "the last of the Armadas" when in February, 1598, Martin de Bertendona most successful of all the Spanish admirals in the long wars against England, sailed up the Channel with twenty-eight ships and four thousand troops. They were destined for Calais, which they reached in due course, but the English feared another invasion. The fear faded, but Calais was lost to England for ever.

Mr. Graham has done a brilliant job in this extended re-creation of battles and intrigues of long ago. He makes the past come alive with a vividness (as with the sufferings of the shipwrecked Spaniards in 1588) which is sometimes almost unbearable. His whole book makes enthralling reading.

Church Times, 24 November 1972





Spain Torpedoed

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 book's catchpenny title is misleading, since its real subject 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*, since (inevitably) Grenville's fight with a* flota *is included, as are the Lisbon and Cadiz raids.*

Five true armadas *are distinguished, the Enterprise of England taking up half of the book. In his account of the events of 1588 Mr Graham makes an illuminating comparison between the evolution of the race-built galleon and that of the twentieth century Spitfire. He makes good use of Evelyn Hardy's recent book on the events in Ireland to give an exciting account of Cuellar's escape, but he accepts too easily the crescent formation of the Spanish fleet without explaining how the eagle's wings pattern made it so formidable. Also, he does not say anything about the recent discoveries of marine archaeologists among the wrecks … Mr Graham avoids technicalities in the interests of a fluent narrative and this gives a well balanced if rather over-simplified record of events.*

Times Literary Supplement, 29 September 1972

Graham is mostly known as a popular novelist. It shows. This … history of England's conflicts with Spain and of Spain's many attempts to bring the isle into its … orbit is very well told and accompanied by some beautiful illustrations.

Erik Graf, 13 March 2010

The Black Moon (1973)

The setting for this historical novel of Cornwall during the late eighteenth century is near Truro and Falmouth. The span of years is not great, but the events and people crowd a fine tapestry. On the whole the novel is well-organized and well-researched—a bit of European history brought to life by a skilled craftsman, abounding in imaginative reality.

The necessity for the family trees of the Poldark and Chyneweth families, who are the landed gentry of the county, and the upstart families, the Warleggans and the Carnes, indicates from the start that it may be difficult to sort out all the characters. It is; however, the main thread is the uneasy enmity of the Warleggans and Poldarks. One is not absolutely certain, but the argument apparently started with Elizabeth Cheneweth's marriage to George Warleggan. George and Ross Poldark are the epitomes of the nouveau riche and the traditional county family, respectively; actually the strife comes and is evidenced by George's uncertainties and Ross's calm self-confidence.

Adventure abounds because of England's involvement with the revolutionary forces of France. The successful attempt by Ross to rescue Dr. Enys from a large prison camp is exciting. He does this deed of chivalry for a dear cousin whose fiance is the imprisoned British naval doctor.

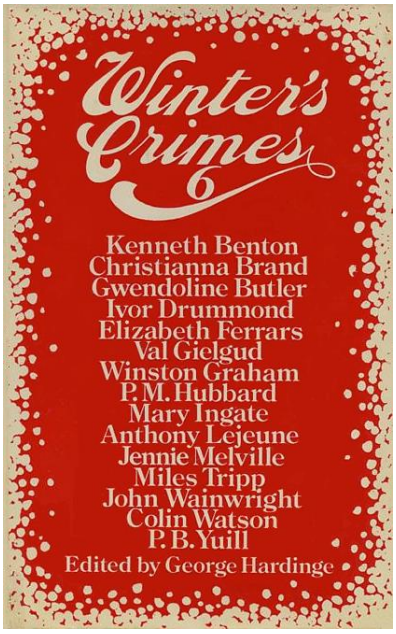
There is a romance between a man of low birth and a governess-cousin of Mrs. Warleggan in which the surreptitious meetings bring out the beautiful rugged Cornwall coast, the closed fields, poaching, justice, and many social customs of the times. Tin mining, almost a lost industry in Cornwall, is responsible for the employment and unemployment of many. The attitudes of the privileged wealthy reflect the times.

A contrast between the Anglican church and Methodism leaves the former the worse for the comparison.

This brief backward glance into a particular time and place is well-worth the time. Recommended.

(*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, 1 August 1974)

Winter's Crimes 6 (1974)

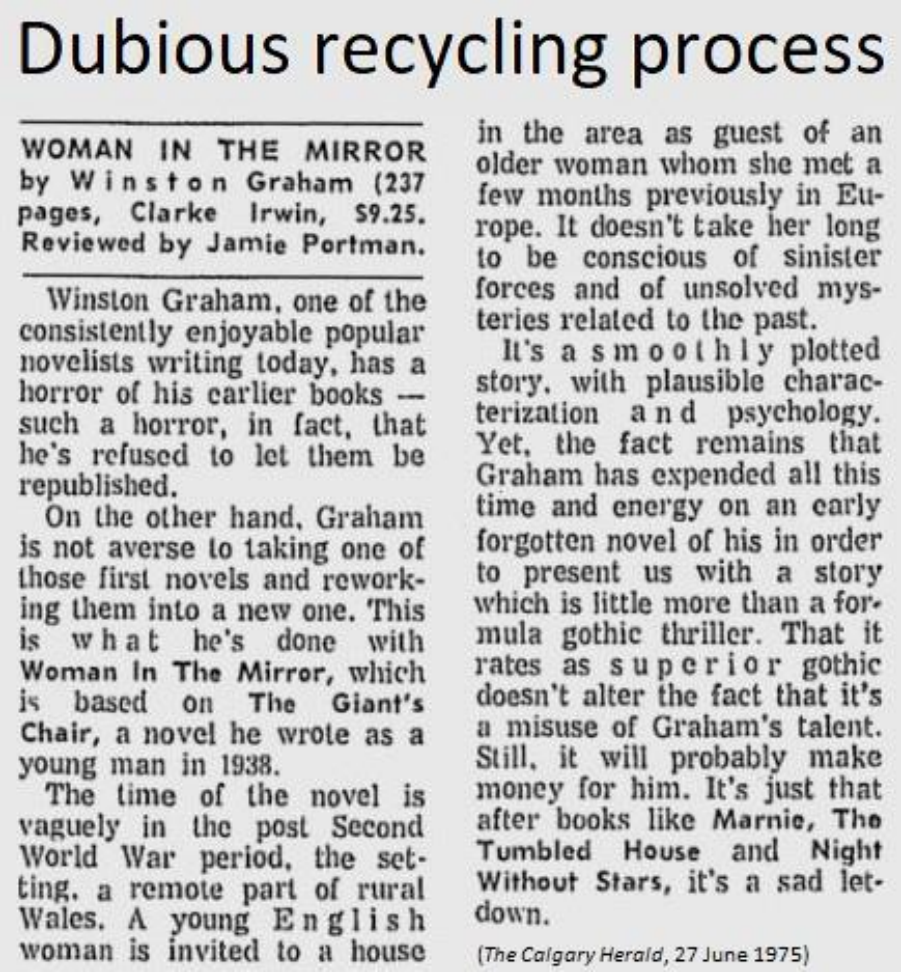


It is Christmas-wrapped goodies time in the crime world. The short-story collections are upon us. Stories are somewhat like the little parcels hanging on the tree: unwrapped, most of them prove to be swallow-at-a-bite frivolities, a handful turn out to be real presents, one or two to be cherished for ever.

This last rare sort is found in Winter's Crimes 6, a collection of 12 stories specially written for the occasion, which benefit from the considerable length allowed the contributors. With room to manoeuvre, writers of the calibre of Winston Graham, P. M. Hubbard, Miles Tripp and P. B. Yuill can give us real specimens of their craft, true and satisfying. And in the same length Christianna Brand has produced one of those stories to remember, "No More A-Maying", a statement of the human condition at once universal and intensely local in its dark Welsh setting. Add stories that allow their authors a lighter-than-usual approach, such as those by Elizabeth Ferrars, John Wainwright and Colin Watson and a wholly delightful tour-de-force of sharp observation in a clubland setting by Ivor Drummond and you have a book of real value.

H. R. F. Keating, *Times*, 19 December 1974

Woman in the Mirror (1975)



Dubious recycling process

WOMAN IN THE MIRROR by Winston Graham (237 pages, Clarke Irwin, $9.25. Reviewed by Jamie Portman.

Winston Graham, one of the consistently enjoyable popular novelists writing today, has a horror of his earlier books — such a horror, in fact, that he's refused to let them be republished.

On the other hand, Graham is not averse to taking one of those first novels and reworking them into a new one. This is what he's done with **Woman In The Mirror**, which is based on **The Giant's Chair**, a novel he wrote as a young man in 1938.

The time of the novel is vaguely in the post Second World War period, the setting, a remote part of rural Wales. A young English woman is invited to a house in the area as guest of an older woman whom she met a few months previously in Europe. It doesn't take her long to be conscious of sinister forces and of unsolved mysteries related to the past.

It's a smoothly plotted story, with plausible characterization and psychology. Yet, the fact remains that Graham has expended all this time and energy on an early forgotten novel of his in order to present us with a story which is little more than a formula gothic thriller. That it rates as superior gothic doesn't alter the fact that it's a misuse of Graham's talent. Still, it will probably make money for him. It's just that after books like **Marnie**, **The Tumbled House** and **Night Without Stars**, it's a sad letdown.

(*The Calgary Herald*, 27 June 1975)

Good – but only in part

Another book by the prolific Winston Graham is now on sale locally. Its title is **Woman in the Mirror** and it is set in a remote part of Britain with the participants living almost entirely to themselves and having no part in the life of the countryside. The household is one of considerable wealth and the importance of money plays a great part in the story.

Norah, the heroine, is invited to stay there and finds herself, through a chance resemblance to someone else, involved in a mystery, and possible rehabilitation of a man. Tappings at night and a rocking horse which rocks with no one in the room lend a creepy atmosphere to the

tale. Fairly ingenious in the plotting, the end suggests that evil does not always get its come-uppance. The love interest is lightly touched on, just sufficient to add point to the development of the plot.

Good light reading.

(*Kingston Gleaner*, 16 November 1975)

The Angry Tide (1977)

Graham Finds Success With Poldark

THE ANGRY TIDE, a Poldark novel, by Winston Graham. Doubleday. 476 pages. $10.

The saga of the Poldark family in late 18th century Cornwall has brought author Winston Graham astounding success.

The six novels prior to "The Angry Tide" plus two television series have attracted Poldark aficionados not only in Britain but in the United States as well, much to the astonishment of the quiet and reserved Graham.

Captain Ross Poldark is not the swashbuckler that critics have made him out. Rather, he is a man created by the circumstances of his times, hard times in a somewhat barren locale in the southwestern reaches of England.

"The Angry Tide" finds Poldark returning from his first session of Parliament, and if one isn't familiar with all the characters involved in these novels, one might find this book hard to get into.

Nevertheless, the individuals soon come into focus as Poldark once again goes at it with his enemy, George Warleggan, a fight that this time climaxes with a duel between Poldark and another member of Parliament in London.

Graham, however, has that ingenuous way of weaving in sub-plots that make his novels more attractive. Demelza Poldark's brothers, both rejected by loves, are trying to make lives for themselves. But Drake, who is about to be married, suddenly finds that Morwenna, his old love, once again is free and the result involves both the Poldarks and the Warleggans.

The author's work might be classified as somewhat on the romantic side, yet without long descriptive discourses which can bore the reader.

And, his characters have depth.

Asks Demelza, "Do we sin by looking for happiness—by seeking happiness for others? This has happened—the way it has happened—it's as if fate has been working against us! Do human beings, can human beings deserve even less than they are given?"

Later she says to Ross, "We look onwards, surely."

"Onwards and down," he says. "D'you realise there will come a time, there will *have* to come a time, when I shall never hear your voice again, or mine? It may be sentimental to say to, but this—this fact is something I find intolerable, unthinkable, beyond bearing . . ."

(Earle Copp, *The Free Lance-Star*, 24 June 1978)

The latest in the continuing saga of the Poldark family, The Angry Tide, *is good, solid, historical fiction. Here Ross Poldark, now 38, is an established and prosperous citizen of Cornwall. He is a husband and father of two, a mine owner and newly elected memebr of Parliament. He is a brooding, restless man. With the perspective of middle age (middle for the late 1790s, at least), Ross sees his life as a series of repetitive patterns. Old problems reappear to threaten his new-found stability. Jealousy, revenge and unpredictable misfortunes plague him. His prosperity is threatened by a mine disaster and a vengeful cousin who engineers a bank failure, further to deplete Ross's fortune. Relations with his wife, Demelza, are strained when Ross cannot forget her one indiscretion. His mistrust leads him to an early morning duel with her suspected lover.*

Underlying Ross's more obvious problems is a conflict he can't resolve alone, that of class distinctions. As a prosperous mine owner and member of Parliament, he belongs to Cornwall's privileged class, but his sympathies lie with the common people, particularly those peasants struggling for liberty and equality in the French Revolution. He bristles that life is "an imposition of unreal standards upon flawed and defective human beings by other human beings no less flawed and defective." Add to Ross's problems the misadventures and murder of a philandering minister and the unrequited love of Demelza's loyal brother Drake and you have a story that will hold your interest from beginning to end.

A satisfying book to read, The Angry Tide *has cohesiveness and strength. There are no annoying loose ends, no banal conversations, no situations or characters that are totally unbelievable. Graham is a master of his craft.*

(*Best Sellers*, University of Scranton, July 1978)

* * * * *

Stranger from the Sea (1981)

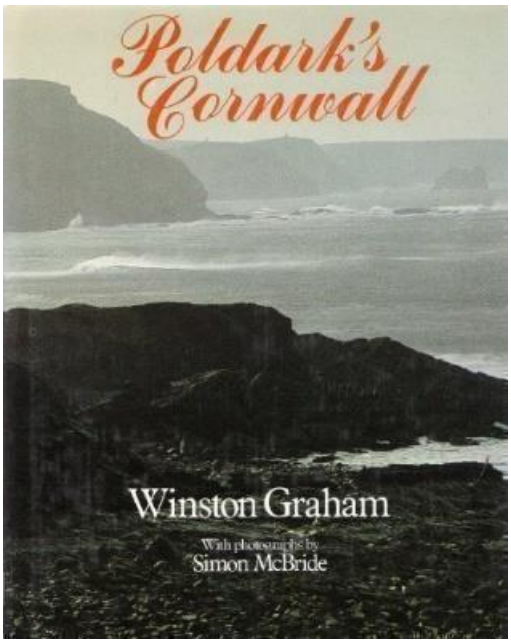
I recently met some old friends again after a long absence. Well, after seven books and two TV serials, the Poldark family *seem* like old friends, and this very welcome eighth "novel of Cornwall" is as full of news, gossip, drama and surprises as any letter from absent friends.

The previous book, *The Angry Tide*, closed with the dawn of a new century. *The Stranger from the Sea* catches up with the family in the autumn of 1810. Ross Poldark M.P. is in Portugal, observing the conflict between Wellington's men and the forces of Napoleon, and about to meet a relative. At home, the king is sinking into madness, the Tories fear that the Prince of Wales might become Regent and Sir George Warleggan is considering taking another wife. At Nampara, Demelza is baking cakes in anticipation of her husband's return, while Jeremy and Clowance, now aged nineteen and sixteen respectively, are about to receive a surprise in Nampara Cove! More than that I will not reveal. The same postal delivery that brought me a copy of this book also brought me a letter from its author, Winston Graham, asking me to be careful not to reveal any secrets or surprises of the plot (and there are plenty). After all, as he pointed out, that is why people buy books. I think I could add, however, that Mr. Graham's powers of story-telling are as fresh as ever and that, as well as being largely concerned with the lives of the new generation of Poldarks, the story also concerns the first hissing, steam-powered creaks of the Industrial Revolution and a new optimism in Cornish industry in particular.

Any book of this nature has to be very soundly researched, and it soon becomes apparent that Mr. Graham's decision to continue the story into the nineteenth century was as much due to his fascination with the period historically as with his love for the characters. The details of social and political life in Cornwall and London – the buildings, clothes, food, transport, literature, manners and personalities – are, as usual, sensitively and accurately portrayed, giving the reader a greater "feel" for the times than could be found in a dozen dry social histories. The life of the fictional Poldarks is so closely interwoven with "real" Cornish families – the Falmouths, the Trevanions and Bassets, etc – that it becomes almost impossible to "see the join". Altogether, a totally enthralling addition to a series that by now must rate a bookshelf to itself in every Cornish household.

Ray Tennyson, *Cornish Life*, November 1981

Poldark's Cornwall (1983)



Never having read the Poldark novels nor seen any of the television series might seem to be a disadvantage in reviewing this book. On the contrary, the subject, both in prose and illustration, comes all the more freshly alive through one's having no preconceived ideas. Winston Graham's leisured prose, a personal excursion, is rather akin to basking in the sun on one of his beloved beaches while Simon McBride's handsome photographs vividly evoke the whole nostalgic atmosphere of Cornwall. Knowing only too well 'the gimcrack bungalows and chalets, the unsightly and badly sited caravan parks, the exploitation of many of the lovely beaches and coves', it might be thought that this book was a romantic vision of a lost world. Not so, for in spite of all the vulgarisation, much of that world survives and is conjured up equally by word and picture – which brings one to a salient feature of this attractive book: the fact that author and photographer have worked closely together, instead of the illustrations being garnered from half a hundred sources lacking an intimate connection with the text.

As for the core of the book, the text itself, although its backcloth is necessarily Cornwall, it is of course also about the writing of the Poldark novels and the making of the television series. And in this, Winston, at least for another author, is at his most interesting and perceptive, describing the provenance of his incidents, the moulding of his character – and he causes a wry smile in touching on the occasional vicissitudes the writer, the primary producer, has to put up with.

Alan C. Jenkins, *Exmoor Review*, 1984

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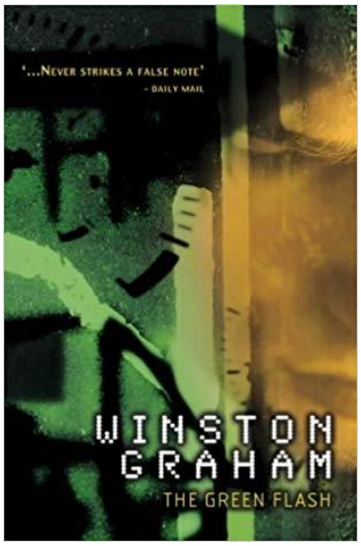
The Green Flash (1986)

As of February 2019, WG's son Andrew Graham has only written one review on Amazon. This [typo-corrected] is it:



★★★★★

Highly readable and a good story. This is one of his very best.

27 May 2016

Format: Kindle Edition. Verified Purchase

I should declare an interest – I am the son of the author. However, I [am] also an academic and so I am trained to be objective. I have read all of my father's book[s]. Every single one is well written, highly readable and a good story. This is one of his very best. The characters are unusual and grip you from very early on and the plot development is convincing and subtle. Although the book was written 30 years ago and so the setting is hardly contemporary, the language and the people do not feel too much as if they are from a different generation (unlike, for example, The Tumbled House, which now feels very dated).

If you want a good story and a semi-psychological thriller, this would be an excellent buy.

Drugs, Sex, Violence, and Other Cliches

A GREEN FLASH. By Winston Graham. Random House. 383 pages. $18.95.

By RICHARD PATON

PERHAPS it is all a question of comparisons. They are not always valid, and they are certainly not always fair, but they are almost always made.

In the case of this new opus by the author of the "Poldark" novels, it is hard to escape them. The book is, after all, peopled by a selection of stereotypes, involves an upscale, presumably intriguing industry, has a little violence, alludes to sex, and provides the central character with a deep and dark secret.

Sound like prime time material? Yes indeed. Roll on the rakish, dashing, darkly brooding hero. Wheel out the aging but still alluring heroine. Throw in for good measure the necessary "character."

It's all here. The trouble is that by the time Graham gets up steam, the Hollywood production would have had the protagonists at least half way through a practical demonstration of the Kama Sutra, staged several violent confrontations and a couple of car chases, seen consumed a cookie jar full of cocaine, and generally created mayhem across the land.

Of course, this book is set in England. Yes, that explains a lot. Things are taken a little slower. Somnambulant springs to mind in describing the pace.

That the plot is so insubstantial as to be hard to find doesn't help, either. But that wouldn't matter so much if there was panache in the writing, or flair in the character sketches. There is neither, and so the entire undertaking collapses under the burden of its own mediocrity.

OUR hero, or perhaps anti-hero, is David Abden. A bit of a lad is our David, having once spent some time in jail, and generally not being averse to a little action that bends the law.

He's a bit moody, though. Probably because of the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of his father. Nasty business, that, but it had to be introduced to try to give at least an inkling of motivation.

Anyway, Dave — you feel you want to be pals with him — hooks up with a woman who runs a perfume business. She has the smell of success about her, and David is known for his nose in picking out scents.

What a team. Shona, as the woman is known, and David are a success. Business is booming. But lurking as a bit of drama are assorted villains and the possibility of counterfeit perfumes being marketed.

This is all jolly exciting. And things sharpen up when David marries a fencer. He is, by the way, Sir David now. Adds class to the story, don't you think? Especially since he inherits an old country house in Scotland and this permits him to motor up in his sports car and indulge in introversion — as far as he can — in suitably gothic surroundings.

It also permits him to make hay in the heather with another woman whom he must love and leave. Life's tough all over.

Anyway. The plot meanders along through the affairs, a death, a couple of fights, until finally reaching a conclusion that only an author could care about.

Many readers will by this time have thought the aroma of the book too pungent and given up. The use, or more properly abuse, of language will have reminded several more of entries in "worst opening paragraph" contests.

Try these gems: "You can't suddenly lose both a top job and a top mistress without feeling the jolt"; "So for pretty well going on the next three years my relations with Shona were at a new high". "It was as if I was losing the taste — or this particular taste. No doubt it would come back, because she was an attractive girl," or even, "We got expert at talking to each other . . . Innuendoes flew over the infant's head like arrows in a Robin Hood film."

Whoever said writing had to be creative?

Toledo Blade,
11 October 1987

MAKING UP AND OUT

by Sidney Offit, *New York Times*, 25 October 1987

DAVID ABDEN, the protagonist of Winston Graham's absorbing novel, describes breaking the law with the enthusiasm of a connoisseur. ''Going straight is a strain – not just on the finances, but on something inside yourself that isn't satisfied. Sometimes the need to break out is like lust: without it the world is mono-chrome; you don't get your lungs open deeply enough.'' The descendant of a Scottish aristocrat's marriage to a Jew, Abden has had his share of troubles to motivate such an amoral relationship to society. His father, rejected by his relatives for the errant marriage, turns to drink and bouts of domestic violence. At the age of eleven, abused and cornered, David kills him. Although his mother fabricates a story to protect her son from prosecution, she withdraws emotional support and leaves him scarred and alone.

As he matures, Abden's choices of friends and lovers, like his business associations, are opportunistic. He attaches himself to Shona, a handsome and sophisticated Russian emigre two decades his senior. Working as her protege, Abden applies his good nose for perfume and sound business sense to help build a cosmetic empire. When he inherits a title in Scotland and desires an heir, the willing pragmatist responds to Shona's self-sacrificing suggestion that he marry Erica, a wealthy playgirl who is more likely to bear a child.

With his scoundrel baronet as protagonist and sleuth, the author develops an intricately plotted tale of cosmetic industry entrepreneurs competing for world markets and the protection of their products from counterfeiters. Along the way there are glimpses of the British underworld and Mafia agents. An author of more than thirty novels, Mr. Graham is a master of the suspense narrative. An earlier novel, ''Marnie,'' was adapted for a movie by Alfred Hitchcock and his Poldark stories inspired a public television series.

''A Green Flash,'' however, achieves greater literary satisfactions than most popular fiction entertainments. Because the story is told by David Abden, the observations of character, geography and values contribute to a portrait that increases in depth and complexity as the events unfold. We meet Abden as

narrator at age twenty-four. Recently released from prison where he served a term for ''deliberate and callous fraud upon an old friend,'' he contemplates the choices offered by his society from the center ring of a London cocktail party. ''Was this the life I really wanted to lead: all this inhaling of other people's breath – bangles, jangles, cigarette smoke, high voices, high heels, fractured conversations …''

Mr. Graham endows Abden with an eye for specific details and nuances of feeling – as when he describes a holiday with Shona in Barbados, where, though he tries to resist it, the atmosphere becomes infused with their growing companionability. ''We swam and walked along the sand and lay in the half-shade of the casuarina and the mahogany trees; and swam again, and dozed and drank daiquiris and lunched in the big open dining room and took an extra sleep in the afternoon, and went out for another swim to the rafts and took tea on the terrace and watched the sun sink into the sea.''

Later, when he visits the 16th-century house and estate in Scotland where he is the new laird, he denies his attachment to it. But the terms in which he delineates the landscape reveal an awakening bond. ''There was no real height behind the house – but once you climbed it you seemed on top of the world. It was primeval land; most of the moor probably hadn't been turned over since the wild Duncan courted his dotty wife.''

BEYOND Mr. Graham's talent for characterization, narrative and description, his depiction of complex characters suggests the more universal paradoxes of human nature. The lack of self-pity with which Abden considers the traumas of his life mellow the reader's perception of him. The court rules his contribution to his wife's death a ''misadventure,'' but Abden is less sure. ''I don't know,'' he confesses to Shona, the only person with whom he shares intimacies. ''There was a moment of sheer bloody rage when I wouldn't give in.'' Shona's psychiatric speculations on the guilt which motivates Abden's self-destructive impulses are no more conclusive as explanations for the violence of his character than the legacy of similar behavior from his genetic strain. Mr. Graham subtly demonstrates that mysteries of character, unlike riddles of plot, are never entirely resolved. It is a theme that reaches beyond the conventional range of the suspense genre and enriches a novel that achieves style, wit and remarkable craft.

You aren't going to like David Abden very much — unless, of course, you are an unconscionable rogue like he is.

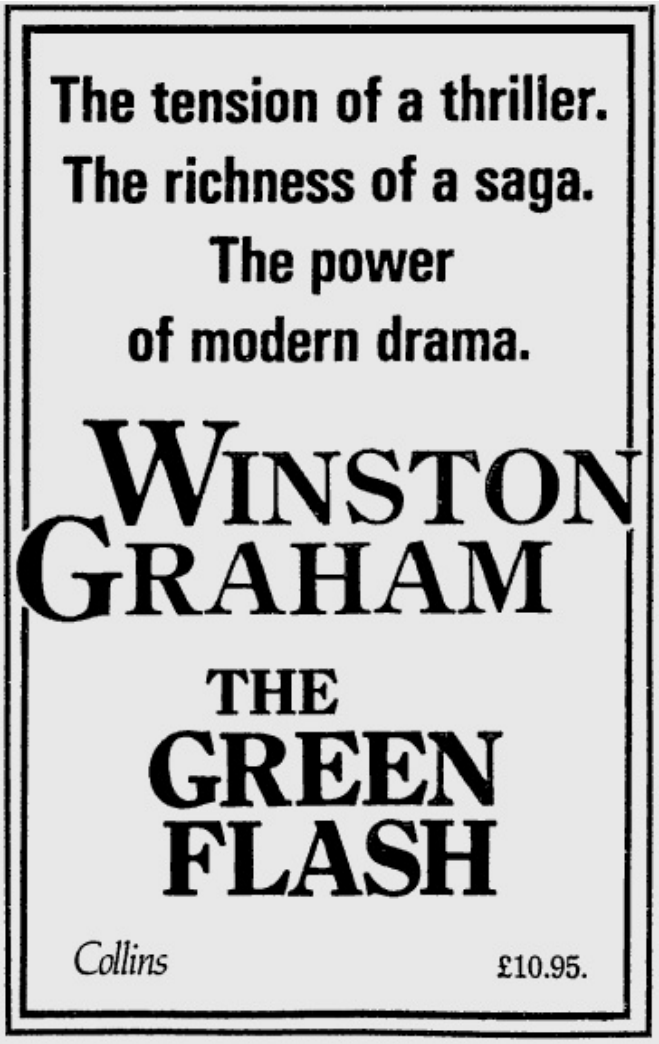
But a Winston Graham fan will enjoy "A Green Flash" and, perhaps, in the end see some redeeming graces in central character Abden.

The tale is about the perfume industry, its intrigues, trickery, outlandish pricing structure and a batch of unscrupulous people engaged in making dollars and scents. The conclusion is that the business stinks.

But Graham's storytelling is refreshing.

A popular English author, Graham became known in America through his "Poldark" novels, basis for a PBS television series. He also wrote the suspenseful "Marnie," which Alfred Hitchcock turned into a film.

The pace of "Flash" is not quite as fast as the cars David Abden drives. Steamy sex scenes you will not find. But a touch of Mafia cruelty, a bit of corporate burglary and a fascinating perfume magnate, Shona, add up to satisfying drama. Nothing is intended to tax your mental resources.



Top: John Patterson, *The Pittsburgh Press*, 24 October 1987

Left: *Glasgow Herald*, 15 November 1986

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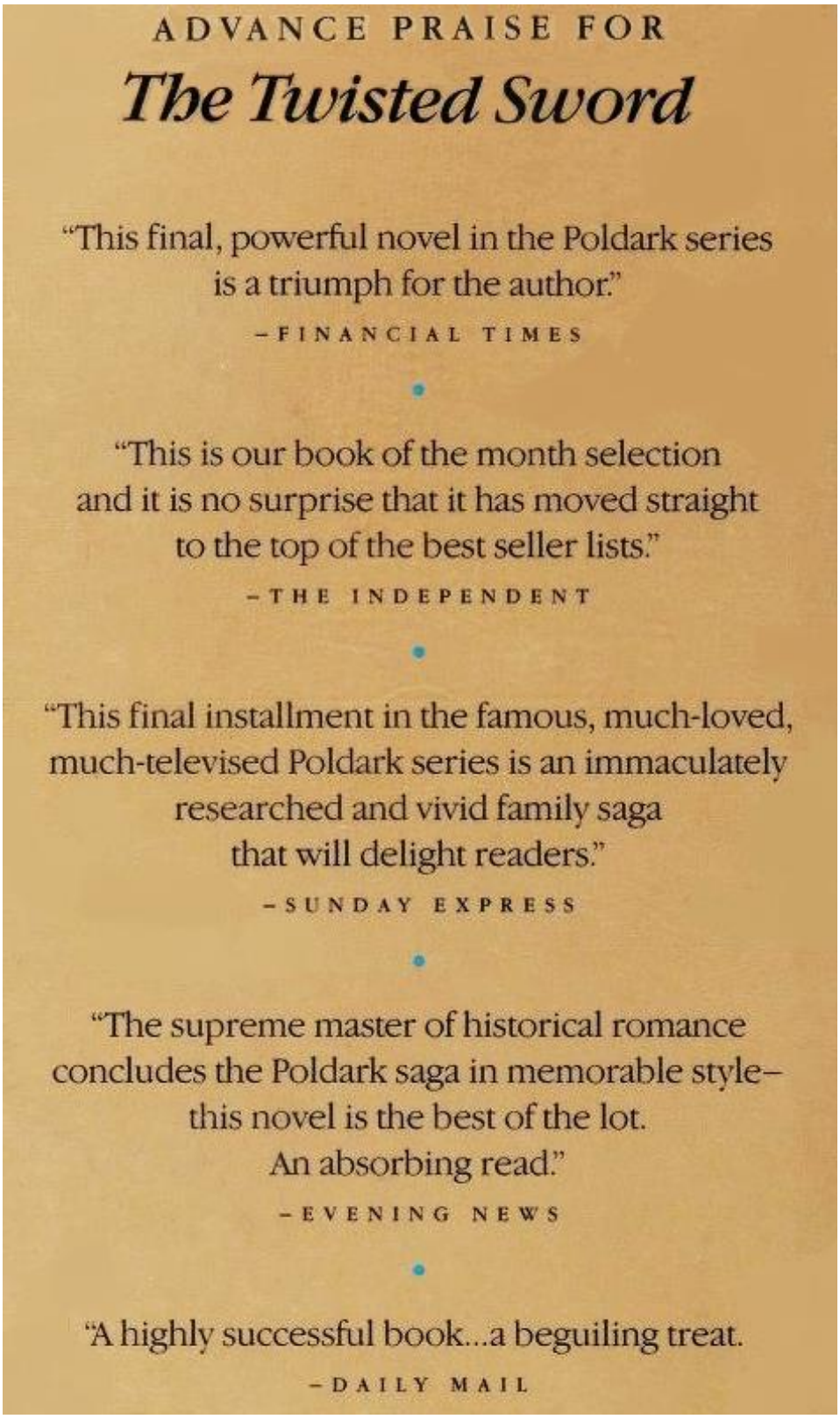
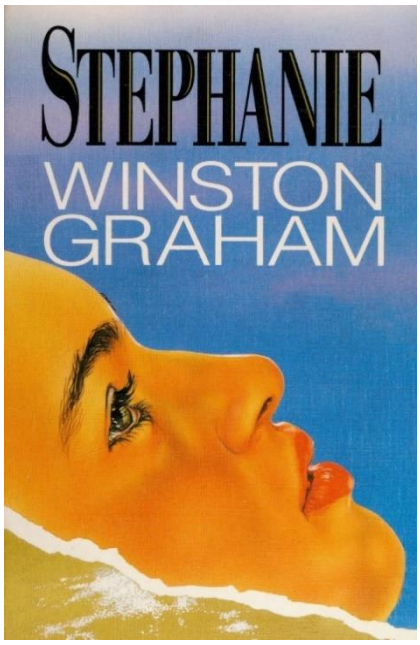
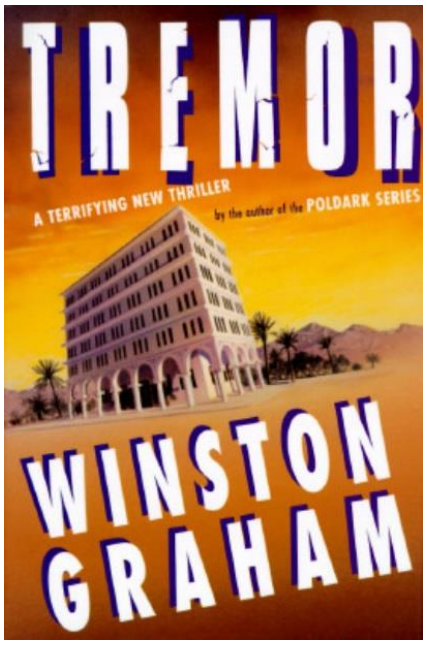
The Twisted Sword (1990)



Stephanie (1992)

Graham's page-turner combines characters with rich dimensions and spiraling plot twists, and the penultimate scene in Cardiff's Llandaff Cathedral is mortifyingly trenchant. (*Publishers Weekly*, 29 March 1993)





Tremor (1995)

Though the publisher touts this latest from Graham, author of the Poldark series, as a disaster thriller "in the tradition of *Grand Hotel*, *The Poseidon Adventure* and *The Towering Inferno*", it offers more subtle pleasures than those potboilers. In recreating the real-life destruction, in February 1960, of the Moroccan seaside resort of Agadir by an earthquake that took 12,000 lives, Graham has produced a compelling drama of sacrifice, loss and redemption. Agadir's majestic Hotel Saada is ground zero for this story and its collection of intriguingly oddball characters. These include a trio of boisterous French prostitutes celebrating a windfall; a young English writer fleeing his embittered wife; a pompous French banker fumbling to hide an indelicate secret; a beautiful French actress disillusioned by her career; an American lawyer recovering from his greatest personal trial, and an English bank robber hiding from the police and his own gang. The mingling of their lives and secrets begins casually enough as relationships develop, some with fresh promise, others with brittle coolness. Then the earthquake strikes. Out of the rubble emerge

several new lives full of change, hope and love. Emotionally resonant narration, snappy dialogue and clever plotting make this a captivating tale not only of natural havoc and human tragedy, but of the uncertainty and misdirection of life. (*Publishers Weekly*, 26 January 1996)

Bella Poldark (2002)

Poldark: The final chapter

BELLA POLDARK ★★★
Winston Graham
(Macmillan) £16.99

IN THE Seventies, the Poldark series had television viewers glued to their screens each week as the passionate Cornish saga held them spellbound. Winston Graham's books were instant bestsellers.

Now, at the age of 93, Graham has written the conclusion to the series and what he says is his last novel. Astonishingly, the first, Ross Poldark, was published in 1945.

Set in the years after Waterloo, Sir Ross Poldark has stepped down as a Member of Parliament and spends most of his time at Nampara, the family home. He is still very much in love with his wife Demelza, but the years have not been easy. His heir, Jeremy, was killed at Waterloo; one daughter died young while another, Clowance, was widowed by a riding accident. His youngest boy Harry is now heir to the baronetcy. The action centres on their beautiful, ambitious, headstrong child Bella, who has a lovely voice. Her path doesn't run smoothly; not least because she can't decide between two men who love her.

Old passions run deep. Sir George Warleggan, the enemy and rival who married Ross's first love Elizabeth, still holds him in deep dislike while Sir George's son, Valentine, is there to make trouble for everyone. His very existence means Sir George's dislike of Ross remains an open wound because local gossip suggests that Valentine is Ross's son.

Valentine, meantime – married to a beautiful widow, Selina – is a feckless womaniser and drinker whose exploits lead to her leaving with their young son.

Then a series of assaults – some fatal – on young women, including some with whom Valentine has dallied, start to occur in the neighbourhood. Even Demelza is lucky to escape an attack.

The action moves between Cornwall, London and France as Bella travels to pursue her potentially glittering career. The busy life of the metropolis is contrasted with the varying fortunes of the local tin mines, once a source of great wealth.

THIS is a book full of incident, betrayal, passion and intrigue, with good period detail. There's a helpful introduction by the author, listing the main characters and their relationships – without which a new reader would be baffled.

Even fans may welcome a little help, as more than 30 years have passed since the last book was published.

The writing is so vivid that it's hard to believe this is the work of a man in his 90s. There are wonderful descriptions – especially of local feasts staged to welcome visitors – that give Ross the chance to flirt with Sir George's wife.

A must for Poldark devotees.

MAGGIE PRINGLE

Sunday Express, 2 June 2002

Memoirs of a Private Man (2003)

A must for Poldark fans

WHEN Winston Graham died in July, his obituaries stressed his delightful personality and his essential niceness shines through in this endearingly self-effacing autobiography. In it he laments that he did not commit any fashionable sins but, as he mixed with the film world, I feel it was not for lack of opportunity.

Born in Manchester before the First World War, he was a sickly child. He always wanted to be a writer and his mother later encouraged him to remain at home, financing his early writing years. Although his Poldark books made him famous, earlier works had already made him rich. Rank

Memoirs Of A Private Man
By Winston Graham
★★★★
(Macmillan, £18.99)

bought the film rights to Take My Life in 1946, paid him £80 a week to work on the script and provided him with a flat, a secretary and a chauffeur-driven Rolls.

Six of Graham's novels were filmed, the most famous being Marnie, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. When it was rumoured that Princess Grace of Monaco was to play the lead, all hell broke loose and Winston was besieged by the press. Tippi Hedren played the girl thief but turned down Hitchcock's advances and they did not speak during filming.

The book's pictures show the inherent contradiction in Graham's life. He had a supremely happy marriage and yet the photos portray the Grahams as slightly bemused and a little homely as they mix with the stars of Hollywood.

Poldark fans will enjoy reading about the development of its characters – a chance meeting on a train with an injured RAF officer was the basis of Ross – and the early difficulties in the series. Only after five episodes did Graham like the adaptation and the audiences grew from five to 10 million.

In 1967 his wife Jean had a stroke but they travelled frequently together until her death in 1992, visiting India, Bangkok, Nepal, Europe and America with an exemplary joie de vivre.

MAGGIE PRINGLE

Daily Express, 1 November 2003

* * *

King of Poldark Country

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 three months after his death at the age of 93 [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."

Winston Graham's numerous suspense novels were popular and profitable. Many were made into films, including *The Green Flash*, [no] *The Little Walls* [no] and *Marnie*, which featured a blackmailing anti-hero, played by Sean Connery, and a kleptomaniac heroine. Graham's involvement with the film world was an exciting, enjoyable part of his career, and he tells many anecdotes about glittering events and famous friends.

But he is most likely to be remembered for the Poldark novels, all immensely popular ever since being televised in the 1970s, when the series was so unmissable that churches (in Cornwall, at least) altered the times of their services to avoid clashing.

Since then "Poldark country", so called, has become firmly established on Cornwall's tourist trail. It is a place of its author's imagination – even the name Poldark is invented – but Winston Graham had acquired an intimate knowledge of Cornish history, claimed an affinity with the Celts and believed he had a special appreciation of their environment.

In Cornwall he saw a wildness and threat which his books reflect without over-romanticising. Unlike the many novelists who attribute spurious mystery and magic to the county, Graham vividly evoked its poverty and its grim industrial past. He earned the right to condemn outsiders who, he said, "spend a few months in Cornwall and then write an epic set in the county".

The Grahams moved to Cornwall from Manchester when Winston was in his teens. He stayed on, first as a companion to his widowed mother and later as a devoted husband to a disabled wife. The latter's indomitable courage was equalled only by his determination to enjoy life. They travelled all over the world together, making more than 100 trips in 25 years. Later they moved to Sussex but constantly returned to Cornwall, where Winston Graham would be a guest in houses still lived in by descendants of the families which he had described in his books.

Graham says that "a good novelist is never altogether a free man and never quite a whole one". His 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*, 12 October 2003

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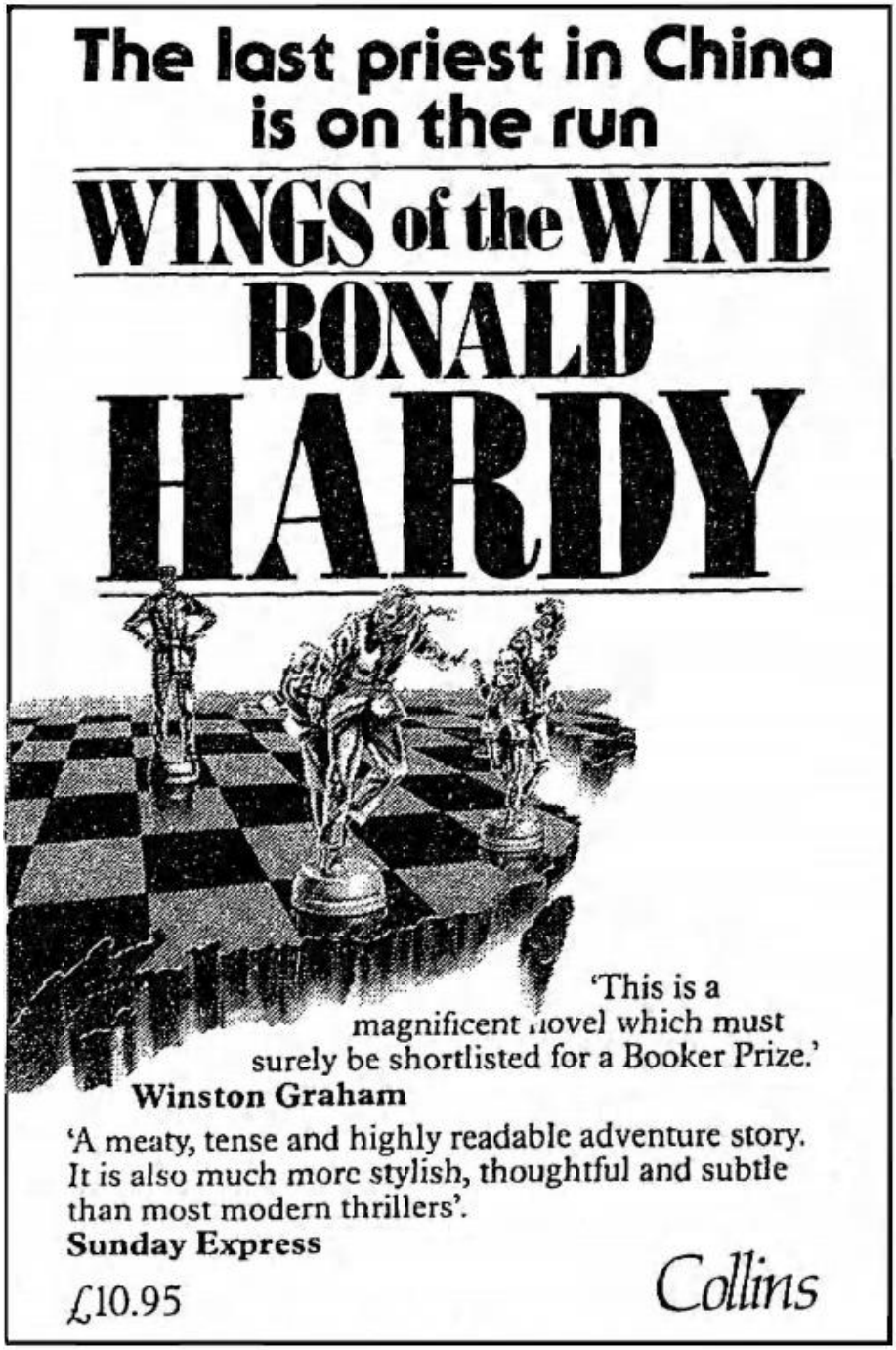
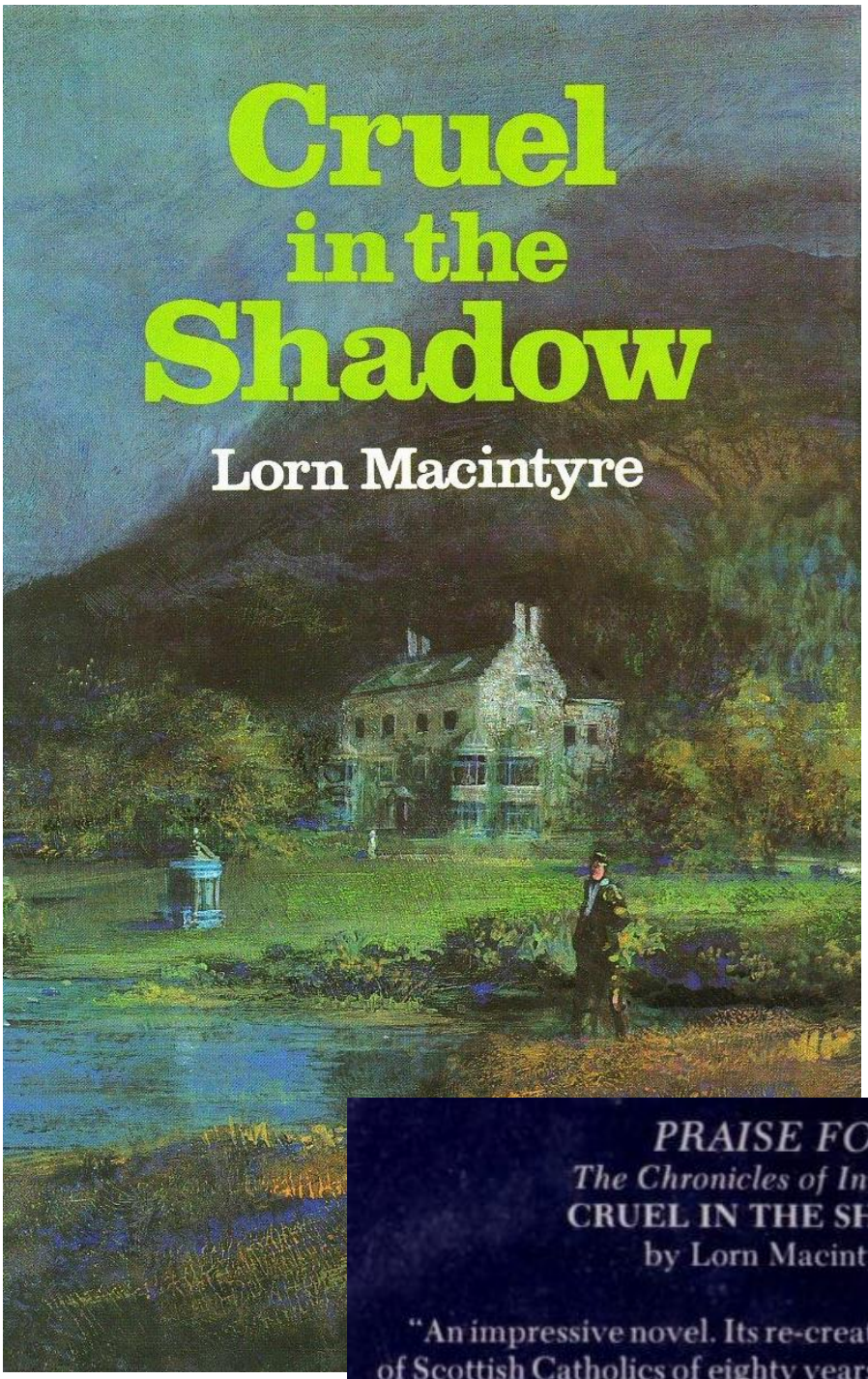


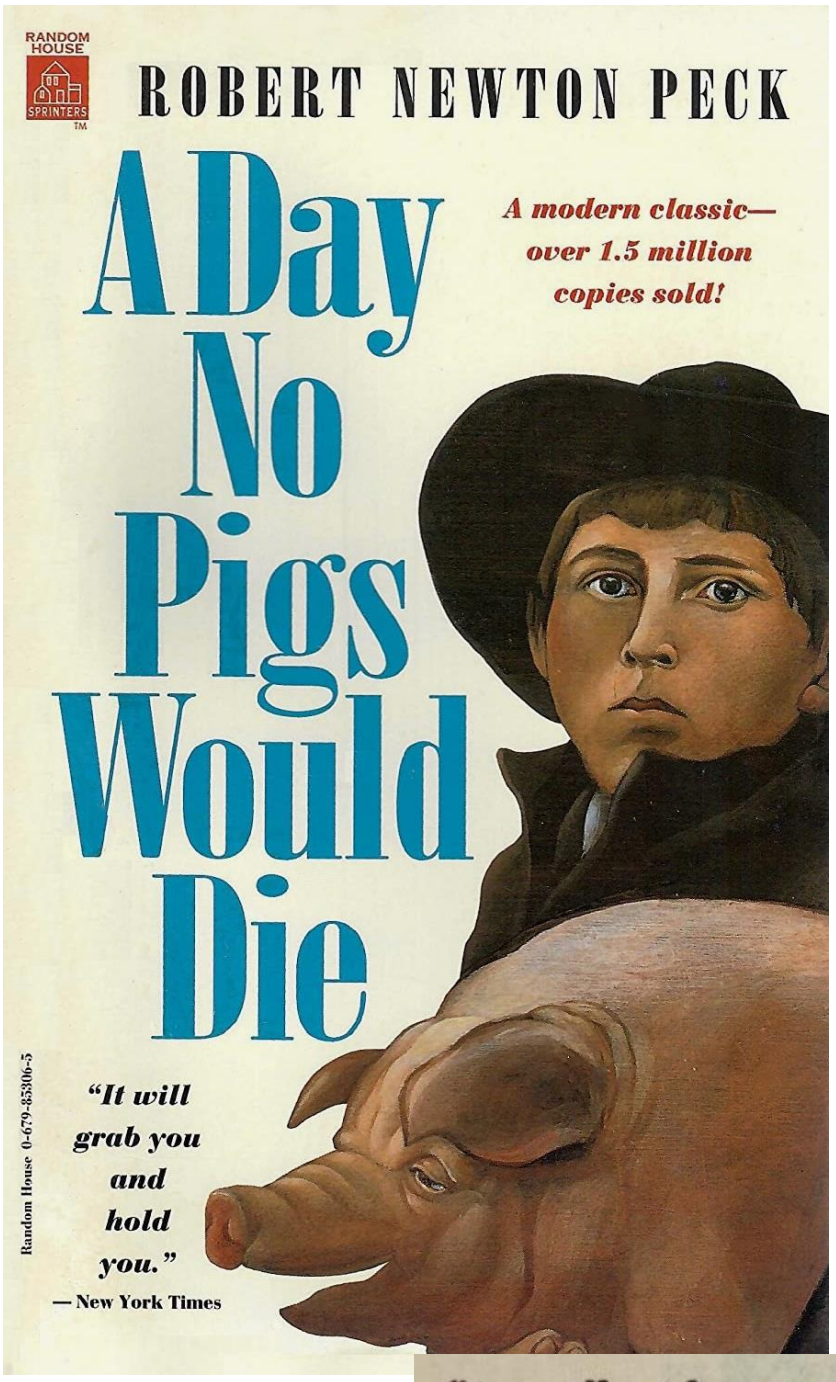
Courtesy of this ad from *The Observer* of 7 June 1987, we see that WG not only gratefully received puffs, but occasionally gave them too. On the following pages are five more: *Cruel in the Shadow* was published, like *Wings of the Wind* (above) by Collins (WG's own publisher) in 1979, so why he might choose to recommend it is not hard to guess. However, his praise for the award-winning semi-autobiographical children's classic *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, set in rural Vermont and first published by Knopf in 1972, is more of a surprise.



PRAISE FOR
The Chronicles of Invernevis
CRUEL IN THE SHADOW
by Lorn Macintyre

"An impressive novel. Its re-creation of a landed family of Scottish Catholics of eighty years ago is admirable: one comes to understand fully, and to be moved by, their ingrown prejudices and strengths and archetypal weaknesses. He has a poet's eye for creating a scene and he uses language in such a way that, without pretentiousness, it etches itself brilliantly on the mind. I shall look forward to his next novel with great interest."

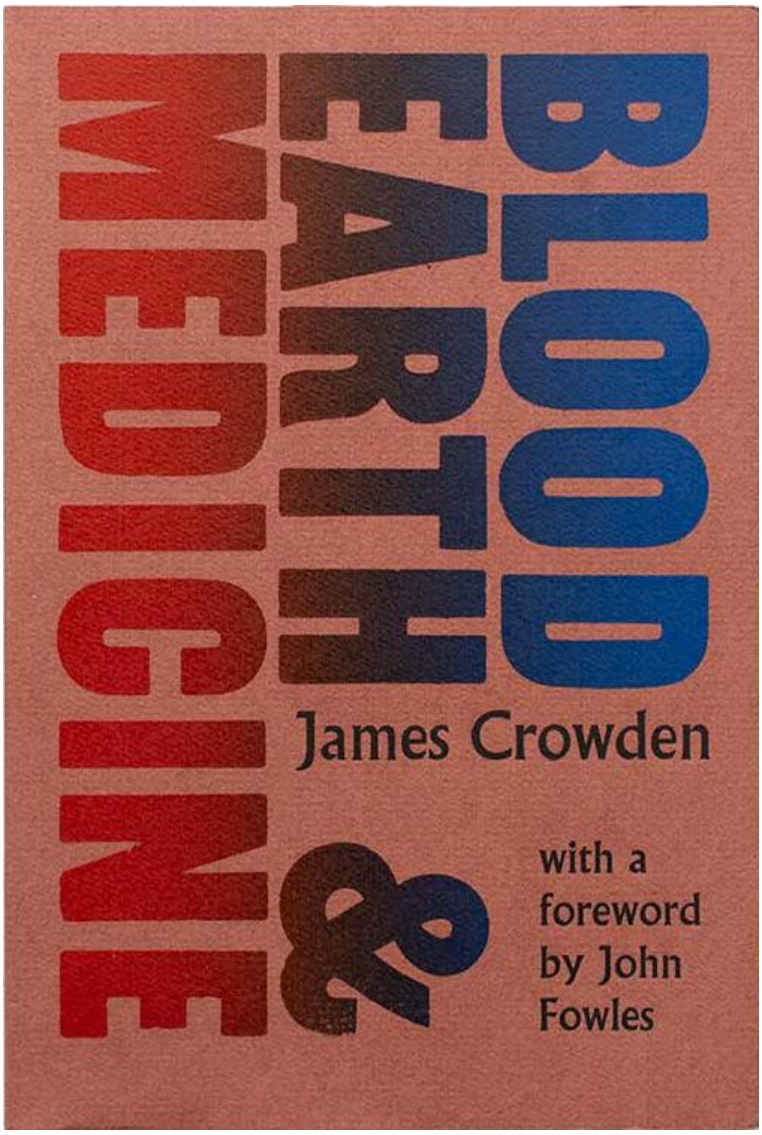
—Winston Graham



(This edition from Random House, 1979)

"A small, rich, wise book full of pathos and an essential home-bred humanity that is becoming more and more scarce in the world. It lights up a way of life that is not so long past and shows . . . how very much we have lost."

—WINSTON GRAHAM



Back cover blurb:

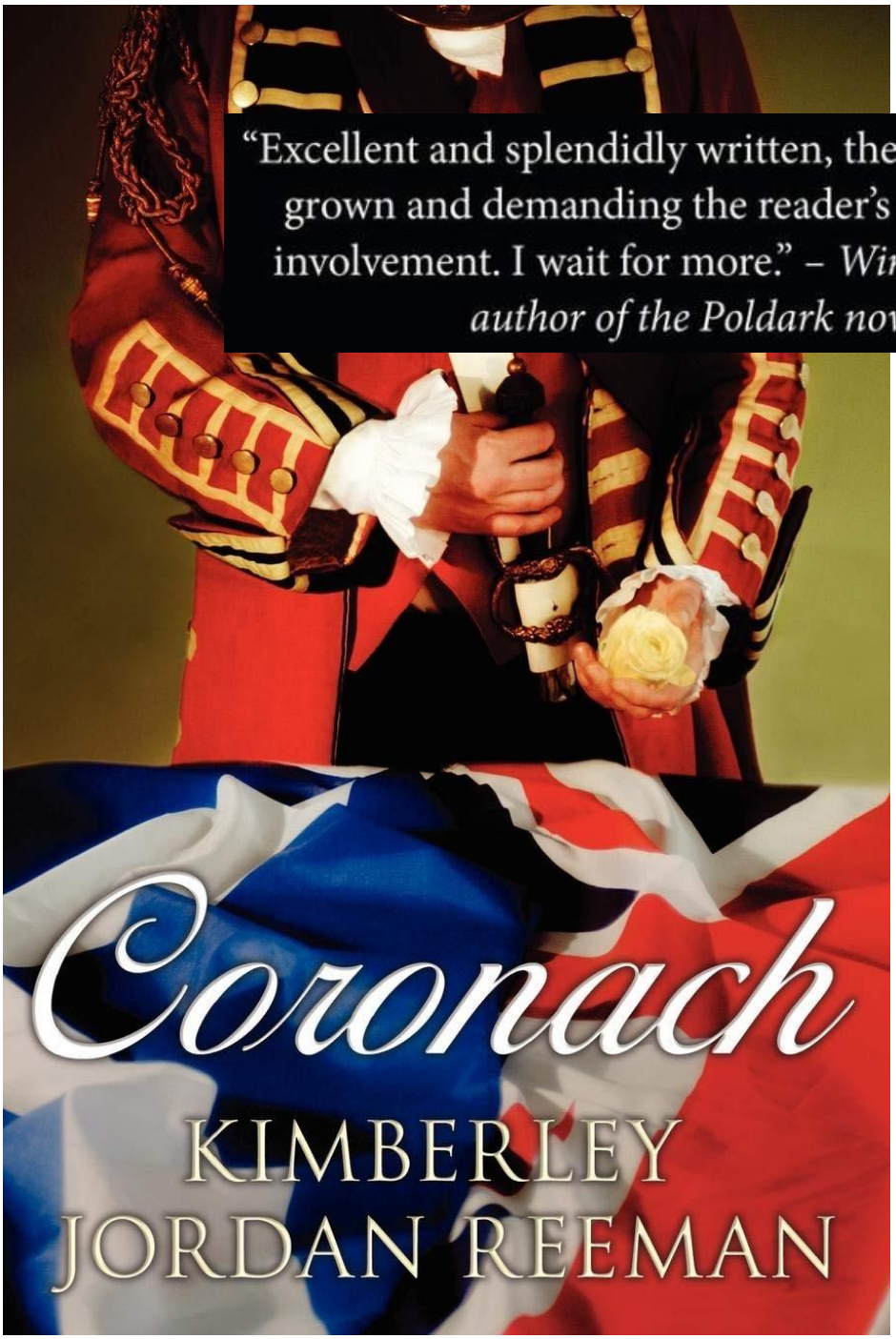
"*Blood Earth and Medicine* is a collection of poems charting the progress of a casual agricultural labourer voyaging through the seasons, seeing with strange eyes the ocean of hedgerows and woods, farms and farmyards, flocks and orchards, the work of hands and generations of hands. A way of life little known about, for by its very nature it is nomadic and impermanent.

The sequence begins and ends with a hurdle-maker working in a hazel coppice, one of the most ancient of agricultural technologies, little changed since neolithic times."

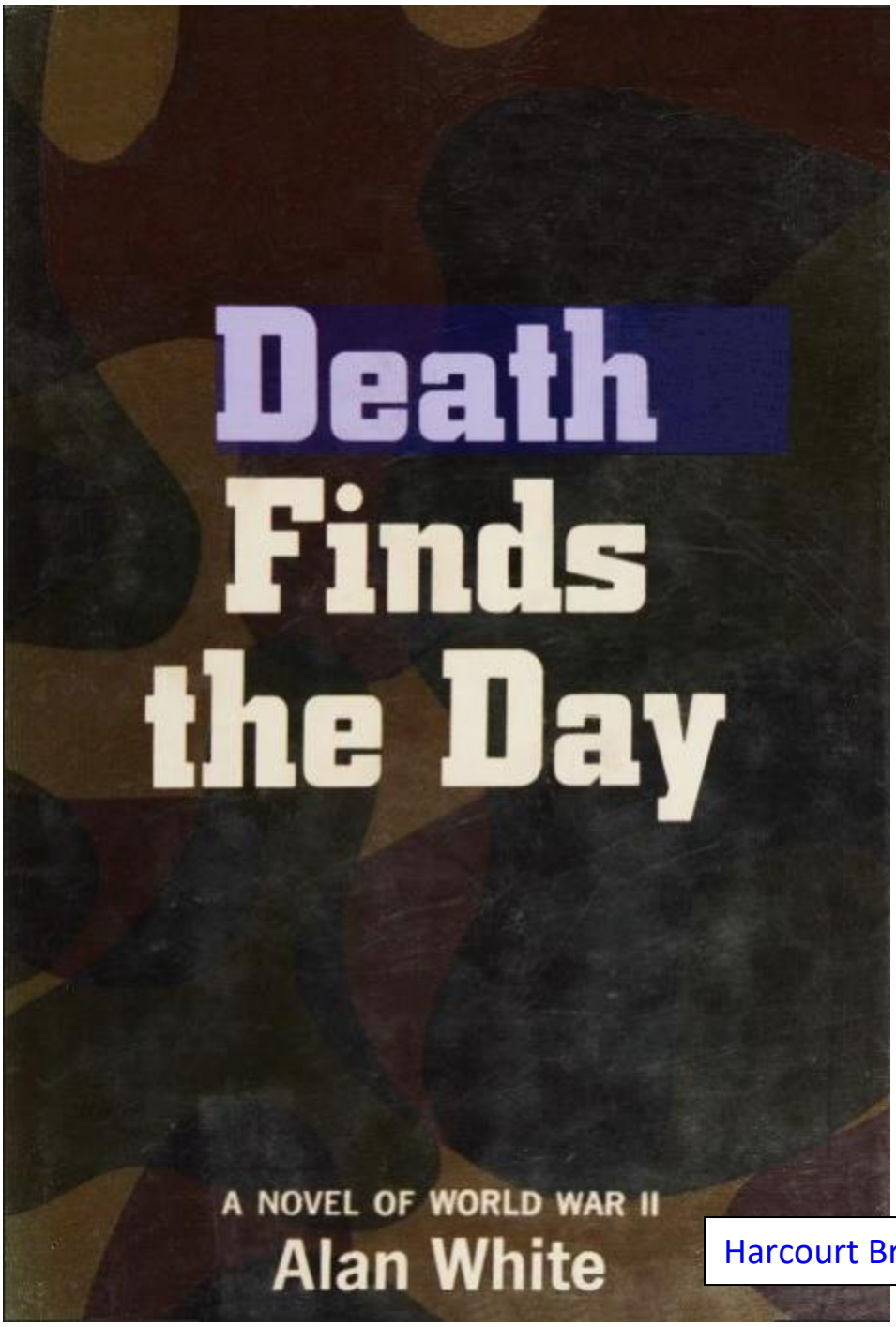
Born in Plymouth in 1954, James Crowden was distantly related to WG, who was a cousin of the poet's grandmother. When Crowden's first volume of verse, *Blood Earth and Medicine,* was published by Parrett Press, Martock in 1991, WG was pleased to recommend it:

I found your poems very striking and evocative ... Alas that so much of this life is disappearing and it is very good that you are setting it down to be recorded and appreciated while there is still time.

–Winston Graham



There is something strange about WG's puff for this long historical epic set in eighteenth-century Scotland, since it was first published by AuthorHouse in August 2007, four years after his death. He is one of three "cherished friends" the author (a Canadian living in Surrey) thanks in a note "for their faith and encouragement", so must have read some or all of the book in draft, with the comment above presumably lifted from a letter.



Harcourt Brace, 1965

"It's emphatically a book to be read at a sitting, and you can quote me on that . . . an original picture . . . a group of green berets, trained, almost over-trained in the art of war."—*Winston Graham*

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