

'Peter Howard: Life and Letters' published

'I who never met him feel I know him' says publisher

PAUL HODDER-WILLIAMS, Chairman of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, presided at a dinner for 104 people in the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre, London, on the occasion of the publication of *Peter Howard: Life and Letters* by Anne Wolrige Gordon.*

He said that very few men have lived the sort of lives that could stand up to the close exposure that *Peter Howard: Life and Letters* gives. 'I very much admire Anne's courage in undertaking it and her success in achieving her purpose which was quite simply to answer the question: "What sort of a man was this?" I who never met him feel I know him.

'The book gives the picture of a man against the background of the English scene—Suffolk farm merging into the twin posts of Twickenham, the black glass of Beaverbrook's pal-

ace on Fleet Street and later a picture of the great cities of the world.'

He described Peter Howard as he lives in the pages of Anne Wolrige Gordon's book:

'Deeds not words make the quality of life. Peter was a man of deeds. He said, "In my own life if I am living straight and the maximum God shows me, people change. If people do not change there is some sin in me which is preventing that happening around me." He manifestly lived with that conviction relentlessly.

'I know no one who has tried to be so absolute in his selflessness as that one time self-ambitious Peter Howard. Yet some people still say that man cannot change.

'Quoting Peter Howard, "It is better to have one man a hundred per cent committed to God than 99,000 men ninety-nine per cent committed."'

The publisher said *Peter Howard: Life and Letters* would continue the

work of bringing people together with a common purpose. 'The only common purpose I know of that can embrace the whole world is to see the rule of God in the affairs of men.

'There are millions who are desperately wanting to find that common purpose. Peter Howard through his life was the means through which many did find that purpose. Why should not many more find it through this true and honest book?'

He introduced Anne Wolrige Gordon who said the book would be 'a controversial challenge' in the same way as her father's life had been controversial.

The dinner was attended by members of Peter Howard's family and friends, among them figures in British politics, the Press and theatre.

The occasion was jointly arranged by the Directors of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd and the Trustees of the Westminster Memorial Trust.

* 45s. from your bookseller or from MRA, 4 Hays Mews, London W1X 7RS. Postage 2s.

photo Strong



Paul Hodder-Williams, Chairman of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd; Anne Wolrige Gordon and Kenneth Belden, Chairman of the Westminster Memorial Trust

'By any standards a great book'

Edward England, Hodder and Stoughton executive, speaking at the Westminster Theatre, said:

WHEN I WAS ASKED to come along here, I went and told my Chairman, Mr Paul Hodder-Williams. I asked him what I should say and he replied, 'Treat the audience as if they are an audience of representatives.' In other words he was thinking of our annual or bi-annual sales conference when our representatives come together from all over the country.

So, first of all, the book itself.

It is about Peter Howard, a household name in many parts of the world and a controversial figure.

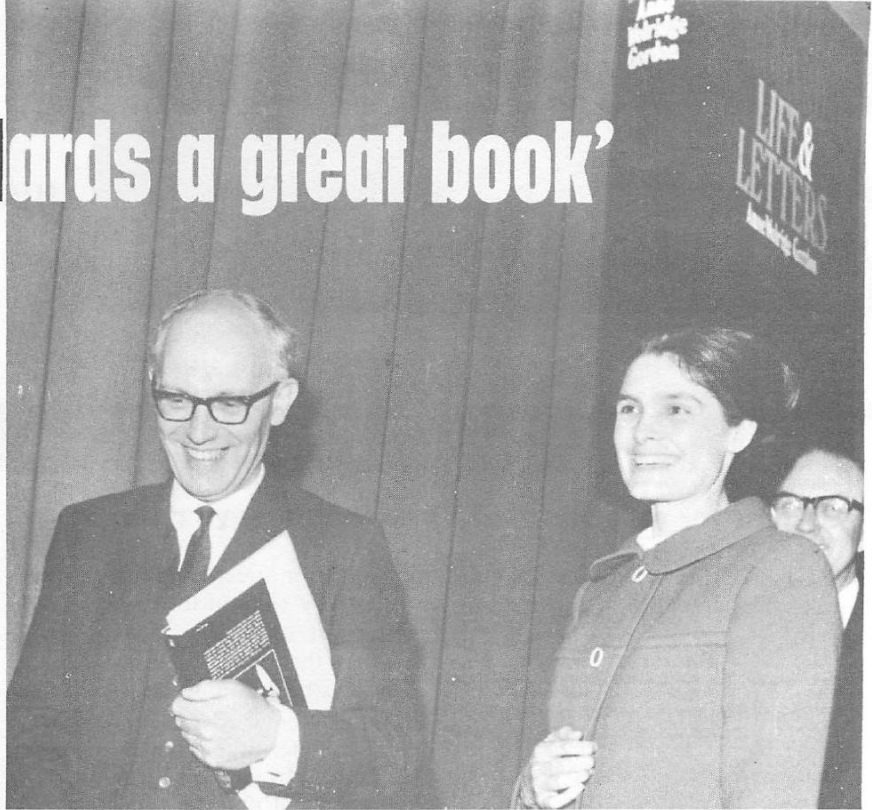
We have already discovered as publishers that there are some people who liked him very much and some who disliked him very much. Another Hodder author, Quintin Hogg, described him as 'generous, gay, loyal and understanding; a man of courage, a man of unaffected goodness, who was determined that goodness should not perish from the earth.'

Peter Howard was a man who not only spent his life well, but who in fact enjoyed his life.

I would tell the sales representatives that he was an international figure. Charles Graham wrote in *The Scottish Daily Express*, 'Few men have left their families such a magnificent legacy of love and pride as Peter Howard. His memory is a treasure for them to cherish all the days of their lives and an inspiration to all who knew him.' By publishing this book, the family is sharing that inspiration with the whole world.

This manuscript came on to my desk about 10 months ago. Two other manuscripts came on to my desk just about the same time. And the reading of the three of them together is an experience that I shall never forget.

The first manuscript was by Dr Martin Luther King. It was just under 100 pages in length and it was written just before he was assassinated. And when I read it, I knew that I was touching an historical document. Almost immediately afterwards, there came on to my desk a second manuscript and it was by Richard Wurmbrand and it was called, *Sermons in Solitary Confinement*.



Edward England, Hodder and Stoughton executive, and Anne Wolrige Gordon at the Westminster Theatre

photos: Strong

And then, by one of those strange coincidences, the third manuscript that I got at that time was handed to me by Robin Deniston, our Editorial Director. It was called, *Peter Howard*. I knew very little about Peter Howard. Once, as a young newspaper reporter, I remember borrowing from the library a copy of a book called, *Ideas Have Legs*. That was the only thing I knew about him. But when I read that manuscript, I was quite excited.

I have no connection with MRA at all and I know very little about MRA, but when I put down this manuscript of *Peter Howard*, I realised that one could be in a publisher's office for fifty years and never in succession get three manuscripts like the ones that I had just handled. By any standards, this is a great book.

Anne Wolrige Gordon, in our opinion, achieved almost the impossible. She has written a fine portrait of her father. She has painted the whole picture, successes and failures, strength and weakness. And the way she has done this is not by telling about Peter Howard, but by letting him speak for himself, whenever possible, in his own words. The picture, therefore, is a true picture and not a pose. What comes out of the pages is a real man, and not a two-dimensional figure.

When I put the manuscript down I felt as if I knew Peter Howard. Now

if you do not like Peter Howard, you won't like the book. And when you read reviews of the book, you must remember and keep this fact in mind. Equally, if you do like the man, you will like the book. And if, like me, you have never met the man, when you have read the book once, you will do so again, because you will have undergone an experience which will have disturbed and challenged.

International market

Now let me talk to you for the moment about the market for this book. It is, of course, a vast market and it is an international market. We have been talking to a lot of people about translations of the book into many languages.

The market for the book, first of all, consists of those people who knew Peter Howard personally and these are people in over 50 nations, people who met him, people who remembered some talk that he gave, some personal word that he spoke to them, some challenge, some idea or ideal that he sparked off in their minds.

The second part of the market is those who are in association with MRA, who either work for MRA, or have friends in connection with it. They too are all over the world.

The third part of the market are those millions of people who are try-

Continued on page 3

'... will draw millions of people'

Anne Wolrige Gordon, addressing a meeting of 600 last Sunday in the Westminster Theatre on the launching of her book, said:

THIS BOOK will simply be a weapon. A lot has been said about MRA in this country—not always favourable, nor always true. Yet I wonder if at any time in her history has the morale of Britain been so low, or our economic condition so precarious, or our Parliament so disrespected, or our students so unable to work, or our industry so divided.

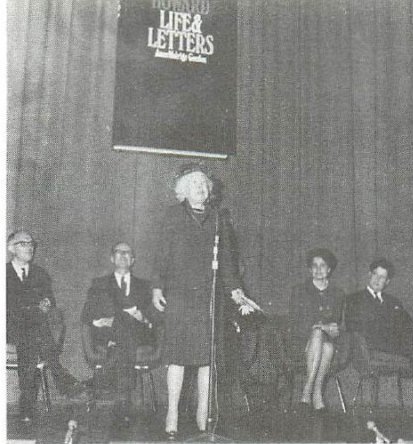
I do not think this has come about by chance or bad management alone. I think it has come about because for many years those most precious of British qualities—moral virtue and sound thinking—have been destroyed and neglected. For a long time we have tried to say that economic prosperity and moral integrity were unrelated. But the sad fact is that a permissive nation is usually a very lazy one.

The answer to this will only come about by a return to the faith and purity which this country has so keenly set out to annihilate over many years. This involves change for all of us. MRA offers us the means of acquiring that change.

I believe this book will introduce many millions of people to MRA.



Jim Worthington, a member of the executive of the National Union of Seamen: 'This is the book the trade unionists throughout the world should be carrying. It shows us a practical way to face the problems today and in the future.'



Dame Flora MacLeod, Chief of the Clan MacLeod, on the platform with Edward Gordon, Kenneth Belden, Anne Wolrige Gordon and Patrick Wolrige Gordon, M P, her grandson.

'... will pierce the cushions of ignorance'

Dame Flora MacLeod said:

IT IS A PRIVILEGE to be 91 and still to be able to speak to you on this very great and historic occasion.

You have listened to some very wonderful speeches, from very wonderful people. Mine is going to be very short and down-to-earth. You see, grandmothers would be boring if they tried to teach you anything!

So, I am just going to say that it was the greatest day of my life when Patrick and Anne married. I cannot be grateful enough to Patrick for making this wonderful opening into life for me. I was at that time quite a lot over 80 and I had begun to think that life was rather uninteresting and finishing, and then they brought Peter to me and Peter revolutionised my life. I began to think life was worthwhile and there were still things that I could do.

This book is a tremendous challenge and I think every one of us has got to use it, as a powerful weapon to enable Moral Re-Armament in Britain to pierce through the cushions of ignorance—and deliberate ignorance—that we have here.

I had the honour of travelling on several journeys with Peter. In every place he was sought after by the greatest in the land. He was consulted by high and low. In this country every effort is really made to stifle us.

Now that is the apathy we have got to fight. That is the stifling we have got to pierce and I think Anne's book is going to help us to do that.

'... quite an experience'—U Nu

U NU, the former Prime Minister of Burma, reviews *Peter Howard: Life and Letters* in the Asian weekly, *Himmat*, this week. U Nu writes that reading it 'has been quite an experience—as much an experience as meeting Peter Howard in the flesh.'

He refers to meeting Howard in London, Helsinki and Caux and to the privilege of inviting him to Burma'.

'*Peter Howard: Life and Letters* is a useful book', he continues. 'It is a good book, because it portrays Peter Howard as he really was. I cannot think of him as anti anything or anybody. He was the most positive person—as positive as the four absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love which he cherished.'

'He says somewhere in the book he felt he was *in a movement trying to do the most important things in this world*. We who have had to contend with tyranny, immorality, hatred and war, practically all our lives, could not agree with him more.'

Continued from page 2

ing to live Christian lives. They have a lot to learn from one of the great ones who tried himself to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, there are all those religious agnostics, of all races, who are fascinated by any man who is motivated by one single idea or one purpose in life and who lives to achieve that purpose. These are the people who say, 'This one thing I do.'

In particular I think those who are grappling with this tremendous problem of communication will be interested in the *Peter Howard* book. There is no doubt that he knew a tremendous amount about communications, how to communicate with people, and this is one of the twentieth century problems.

Now if this book was only moderately good, if it was lopsided and presented an untrue picture of Peter Howard, or if the man himself could not stand up to such honest and open exposure, then the big sales are impossible. But this book is very good. The man is seen whole and he does stand up to the complete exposure. And so we expect very big sales.

'Film of genius' says Vatican journalist

The film of Peter Howard's last play, 'Happy Deathday', had its African premiere at the MRA international conference in Asmara, Ethiopia last month.

Fred Ladenius, international affairs correspondent for 'L'Osservatore Romano', works for Radio Vatican and is Rome correspondent for Dutch radio and television. He writes:

SINCE I BECAME a member of the Golden Globe Committee which awards the International Press Prize for the best film of the year I have had my fill of films. But I have been often saddened or sickened and almost always had a feeling of emptiness.

One instance shows what confusion can be sown in people's minds by certain ideas projected on the screen. At the Venice Festival, a film which had been banned for obscenity by the Italian court, received the prize of the International Catholic Film Centre. This decision was the occasion for a severe reproof from the Pope.

Everything seems to point to a rivalry, conscious or unconscious, between certain producers to reach the deepest abyss of moral degradation. Then suddenly from this wreckage arises a film like *Happy Deathday*.

Seeing this film reminded me of something that happened several years ago. There was a showing at the Vatican of *Voice of the Hurricane*, which was based on a play by Peter Howard and Alan Thornhill and produced by Moral Re-Armament. Hundreds of priests filled the hall of St Peter's Oratory which lies in the shadow of the huge Cathedral. Our host, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani had taken his seat in the front row. This Cardinal is known for his fighting spirit and calls himself the 'Watchdog of the Church'.

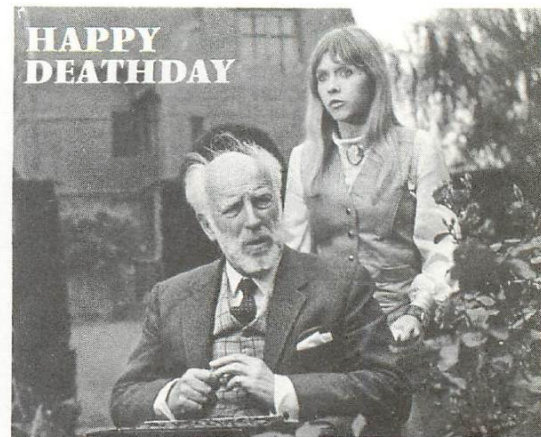
I would like to term this film show historic, for it is not every day that films are shown within the walls built by Leo IV. At the end, Cardinal Ottaviani made this comment: 'One film like that is sufficient justification for the cinema'.

These words came back to me as I thought of *Happy Deathday*. This film

will allow you no peace, everything in it combines to strike deep into the soul of the person who sees it—the depth of human feeling in the story; the chief characters who belong to three generations and in whom anybody can recognize several facets of his own personality; the dialogue, which is hard hitting and moving, sometimes poetic, but always real and ringing true; and the colours which are used with masterly restraint. With their purples, yellows and the whole range from green to mahogany they are one with the life and meaning of the film.

I will not tell you the plot; stories of this kind are awkward to tell. You must read the text or better still follow the story on the screen, letting yourself enter into its action as if the author's inspired pen had taken you to the spot.

Henry Cass in producing this film has added some great cinema to Peter Howard's writing. I think of the palette of the technical artist which transforms colour into states of the mind, of the child's swing which beats time to the development of the drama, of the gay and almost blasphemous noise of the transistor radio lying beside the body



The souvenir book of the film will be published shortly. Price: 6s

of the girl who had taken her own life; of the camera passing quickly from the twilight room of the night-worker in the laboratory to the room full of noisy young hippies who swarm under the projector's light.

Finally, I see Jetta again—the fruit of our mistakes, 'Jetta, beloved like the morning sun' on her swing in the twilight and then quickly swallowing the blue pills which will allow her to slip away on tiptoe from those who had nothing to give her. I see again too, the long road back from the cemetery. In the ice-cold dawn which succeeds the twilight and the long night. This, thank God, is a film of genius.

Australia—ideas for export?

THE NEWSPAPER of the West Australian mining town of Collie, the *Collie Mail*, on 1 May published, without charge, a full page entitled, 'Australia—Ideas for Export?'

It was written by the company of the MRA play, *The Forgotten Factor*, which was performing in Collie.

They said:

'This is an exciting time to live in Australia. The country bounds forward with kangaroo-size paces.

'Millions already depend on the food she exports.

'Millions more will benefit from her mountains of minerals.

'But the world is hungry for more than grain and goods.

'These things alone do not solve the bitter conflicts that keep poor

nations poor and make rich nations disintegrate.

'New ideas are needed.

'Could Australia export these new ideas, born of a new quality of life, and so reshape history?

'The men responsible for Australia's new industrial projects have a chance perhaps unique in history,' wrote Anthony Craig, whose family have been for three generations in the management of the Scottish steel industry. 'They could so run industry that it develops character, faith and initiative in the communities it creates.'

The full page was widely read in Collie. 'We have never sold so many copies of the paper over the counter,' said the receptionist at the *Collie Mail*. 'It must be your page.'