Editorial
by Stephen Holden

The Anthony Powell Society was officially formed at 7.30 pm on Thursday 1st June 2000 at 7 Ormonde Gate, Chelsea. The aim of the Society is: To foster interest in, and appreciation of, the life and works of the English author Anthony Powell. The Anthony Powell Society will be producing a quarterly Newsletter which will be sent to all members of the Anthony Powell Society. The Newsletter will include, among other things, articles on Powell and associated subjects, news from the Society, and reports from members around the world. This first edition includes an interview with Keith Marshall, founder of the Anthony Powell Resources Pages on the Internet, from which unlikely source grew the Society. It also includes details on the forthcoming Anthony Powell Conference, to be held at Eton College on 23rd April 2001. This Newsletter even includes the first page of the 13th volume of A Dance to the Music of Time, though I shall leave it to the cognoscenti to decide whether this is the genuine article or the kind of parody that X Trapnel might have produced for Fission...

All Newsletter contributions are welcome and should be sent to the editor, Stephen Holden, The Anthony Powell Society, 76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK (email: sjholden@hotmail.com).

Dancing the Literary Society into the New Millennium

The literary society is dead. Long live the literary society! Well at least the old literary society - those collections of enthusiasts meeting in dusty libraries to enthuse over their hero - may be moribund. But a new venture is breathing life and modernity into a transformed style of literary society. The newly formed Anthony Powell Society has emerged out of the Internet - probably the first literary society to do so. We went to see Dr Keith Marshall, the Society's Honorary Secretary, Webmaster and visionary.

Interviewer: You’re the Secretary of the Anthony Powell Society, and helping organise its first conference, but it is no ordinary literary society. How did this literary revolution come about?

Keith Marshall: Well, I suppose it is revolution really – at least viewed from the literary society viewpoint – because in many ways we have re-invented the literary society. But to me it feels much more like evolution. Because in many ways we have re-invented the literary society to do so. We went to see Dr Keith Marshall, the Society’s Honorary Secretary, Webmaster and visionary.

Interviewer: You’re the Secretary of the Anthony Powell Society, and helping organise its first conference, but it is no ordinary literary society. How did this literary revolution come about?

Keith Marshall: Well, I suppose it is revolution really – at least viewed from the literary society viewpoint – because in many ways we have re-invented the literary society. But to me it feels much more like evolution. Maybe that’s because I’ve lived with it for so long. It all grew out of my being recommended Anthony Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time by an old school friend of my wife’s - with whom I happened to be having an affair at the time (yes, it’s OK, my wife knows, we’re still happily married and it’s water under the bridge). I was captivated - by Dance that is – and it sustained me through a bout of Glandular Fever. Powell became one of my heroes. That was in the early 1980s.

I: Why did Powell become one of your heroes?

KM: I think for two reasons. First of all I found in Dance a world which I could inhabit; a world which is surprisingly true to life, with the paths of the large and varied cast of characters, from all walks of society, interlinking and crossing at seeming random times and in unexpected ways as it chronicles the changes and interactions in their lives from the eve of the First World War to the heady cults of the late-60s and early-70s. I think I also recognised – rightly, of course – Powell as being one of the greats of twentieth century English literature, not just for his many novels, biography, memoirs and journals, but also because for some sixty years he was a highly knowledgeable reviewer and literary critic who knew many of the great writers of the century.

I: So how did you get from there to here?

KM: When I started my own web pages, back in 1994, it was natural to write a page about my heroes. And then I realised there was almost nothing else on the web about Powell; no central Internet information resource site. So I started one, first with just an outline chronology and a small bibliography. Gradually the content expanded.

I: Was there a real turning point; a major jumping off point?

KM: Yes. Actually I think there were three. The first was the broadcast of the Channel 4 TV films of Dance in the autumn of 1997. Suddenly I was getting e-mail from people around the world wanting information, giving me information, telling me about televisions in other countries. So I started publishing news and information about Powell on the web site.

I: And the second?

KM: This was in early 1998 when I was contacted by Julian Allason. That was to be the beginning of some months work we did on the sources for the real life models Powell used for the characters in Dance, and which we published on the web site. (We hope there may be more revelations at the conference – libel lawyers permitting!)

I: Can you give us an example of this work on the character models?

KM: Well let me give you just a taster. We disproved, using Powell’s own sources, the urban myth that Widmerpool (the villain of Dance) is modelled on the Earl of Longford – a myth that his lordship still perpetuates. In fact Widmerpool is modelled on a couple of people Powell met around the time of the last war. … It was during this work on the character models that I decided to start the AP e-mail discussion list (APLIST) and invited my, by then long, list of e-mail contacts to join and discuss Powell.

I: What is an e-mail discussion list?

KM: How can I best describe it? It is like a discussion you’d have in the pub with your mates. Only it’s all done by e-mail. I write an e-mail and send it to the site hosting the list. From there it is sent to all the list members – so they get everyone’s comments in their e-mail in-basket. They reply … and so on …

I: Was that successful?

KM: Not initially. Like all these things it took time to get started, and you need a critical mass of participants (and contributions). That took about a year. Now the list has over 100 members spread around the world – in Europe, America, Japan, Australia. And they’re a glorious mixture of distinguished academics, students and enthusiasts … all discussing and contributing as equals; no undue deference and no pulling rank. That means a transformation of the study of an author’s work, making it...
accessible around the world, in a new and participatory way, and at negligible cost. We even have as a member the person currently making a new Dutch translation of Dance – it’s brilliant for him; he has a ready means of understanding the intricacies of English society and Powell’s literary style; and it’s enormous fun for us.

I: Is this where the Anthony Powell Society had its roots?

KM: Yes, very much so. This really was the start of the Anthony Powell Society. From early on in the life of the APLIST people were asking me to start a Powell society. But I wouldn’t: not only did I not feel there was enough critical mass, no-one else was volunteering to do any of the work involved … and to be honest it wasn’t where my real interest lay.

I: So what was the catalyst that made you found the Society?

KM: This was the third real turning point: and one we all knew had to happen sooner or later. Powell died. On 28 March 2000. At the age of 94.

I: Yes, I remember. I was surprised at the extent of the obituary and appreciation coverage given to Powell.

KM: Surprised?! I was absolutely gobsmacked! I had expected a good obituary in the Daily Telegraph, after all Powell had worked for them for some 50 years as a book reviewer and critic, but little more. Instead of which the media did him proud; on both sides of the Atlantic.

I: But how was this the catalyst?

KM: When some of the dust began to settle several of us realised we shared a vision of a conference devoted to Powell, as a form of celebration. And when a handful of us got together and started discussing the idea we quickly realised we needed an organisation as the foundation for the conference. Hence the Anthony Powell Society was formally founded on an English summer’s evening in Chelsea. But of course it had already existed in all but name since mid-1998 in the guise of the APLIST and the website.

I: So if you are all dispersed around the world, how does the Society operate? Clearly some of you have to meet?

KM: Yes, some of us do meet – but that is largely the team organising the conference and then irregularly. As for the Society, yes, several of the committee are part of the conference team and are based around London. But our Treasurer lives in Belfast. And we have two committee members in America. And of course the membership is worldwide. Few of the members have actually ever met in the flesh. Why do they need to? We have shown that pub discussions can happen just as well over the Internet! And as papers can be published so easily on the Internet, why have to be read aloud at meetings in dusty libraries and church halls?

I: So with a worldwide Society operating successfully over the Internet, why have a conference, which I assume means you’ll all meet somewhere?

KM: Yes, many of us will meet – finally. We started out looking at the idea of a virtual conference, with the whole thing being conducted over the Internet. It is possible, but technologically tricky to do well at anything but the most basic level; something for the not too distant future, I hope. So we started looking at possible venues. And one of the team found that Eton College (where Powell was educated) were keen to host the conference. This was beyond our dreams! We couldn’t refuse! We just had to make such a one-off opportunity available to the members, especially given that the opening scenes of A Question of Upbringing (volume one of Dance) are set at what is a barely disguised Eton of the early 1920s. And A Question of Upbringing was first published in January 1951, making this an ideal 50th anniversary conference! Despite all that, most of the conference organisation is being conducted on-line; team meetings are rare, communications are going out by e-mail (as you know) and bookings are coming in by e-mail.

I: When exactly is the conference?

KM: Monday 23 April 2001 - appropriately both St George’s Day and William Shakespeare’s birthday. And it will be held in the Farrar Theatre of Eton College, Windsor. And yes, we are taking provisional bookings now! Oh, revelations? Well Nigel West, the intelligence historian, will be speaking …

I: Only a one-day conference?

KM: Yes. Although one of the team is a professional conference organiser, we decided to learn to walk before we tried running.

I: So are there plans to try running?

KM: Oh definitely. Our vision is that this will be the first of a series of biennial conferences. We are already thinking about a 2-3 day event in Oxford in 2003. And then a 4-5 day extravaganza in Venice in 2005 to celebrate the centenary of Powell’s birth, and the 25th anniversary of Hearing Secret Harmonies, the last of the twelve volumes of Dance. Why Venice? Because AP sets a large literary conference there in Temporary Kings. And then of course we have to organise events for the members around the world; apart from a newsletter, we have lots of ideas … perhaps even duck shooting in Venice?!

I: Finally, how do people who are interested in the Society or conference get in contact?

KM: It is very easy. Go to the website (http://www.anthonypowell.org.uk/) where you will find a membership form, and from where you can e-mail us. Or you can e-mail me at kcm@ecn.co.uk. On the website you’ll also find more details of the conference, including the Call for Papers. Of course real Luddites can write to me: Dr Keith C Marshall, Hon. Secretary, The Anthony Powell Society, 76 Emmismore Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK.

Anthony Powell’s A Writer’s Notebook is published by William Heinemann in February 2001. A Dance to the Music of Time is still in print and is available in paperback from all good bookshops.
My U-turn
by Auke Leistra

Many clever remarks have been made about translating in general, not every one of them necessarily flattering for the trade. But let’s face it, I am a Dutch translator, and since 1999 I am a Dance translator. As a translator I am, of course, well aware of the fact that many people claim it’s better to read a novel in the original: in a translation, they say, “so many subtleties get lost”. The Dance, however, is one of those books that do not seem to require a foreign passport for readers to miss out on a lot of details: even native readers admit to missing their share. This happy-go-lucky carelessness is a privilege that is not granted to the Dance translator, who must chew every sentence thirty-seven times before even making an attempt to render it in his mother tongue. If he is lucky, every subtlety has, by the thirty-eighth jaw movement, found its way into his brain. If he is conscientious, he is unable to produce a sentence in his mother tongue that leaves out any of those details, however subtle.

One of the details that kept me busy while translating A Question of Upbringing is something that the English do not even have to bother with. I am referring to the way people address each other. In English they all say “you”, however high the addressed may have climbed on the social ladder, however low he may have fallen. In Dutch a choice has to be made: is the addressed person a “jij” (or “tu”, as the French say), or a “u” (French “vous”)? In this case the choice was made even more difficult by the fact that A Question of Upbringing takes place, not only in well-to-do circles in England, but also in the 1920’s, while I live in the utterly democratised Netherlands of eighty years later. There’s no denying that my first impulse was to let them say “jij” to each other till they were all one big happy family. First impulses are often right, but not this one. A casual question, put to my friends of the APLIST, and the fervent discussion that followed, started winning me over. One by one the relations in the book were redefined. Would a student say ‘jij’ to a don? In the 1920’s? In, let’s say, Oxford? Would Uncle Giles address schoolboy Stringham as a jij-person? A tricky one. And Le Bas, would he call his pupils ‘jij’? Would Jenkins, during his stay at the Templers’, have said ‘jij’ to Sunny Farebrother? The Templers’! That’s where he first laid eyes on Jean. Would Jenkins have called her ‘jij’, there and then? Would he? I had my doubts about every single instance, but in time all the addressed persons I have mentioned were turned into u-persons. What really kept me from violating the etiquette, every time I was led into temptation, was the thought of my grandparents, who dated from the nineteenth century. After more than fifty years of marriage and intimacy, they still called each other ‘u’. What, then, I thought, would have been the problem for Jenkins, who’d only just caught his first glimpse of Jean? I made a U-turn, and have never looked back.
A Peg to Hang Dreams On

Anthony Powell
A Writer’s Notebook
ISBN 0 434 00915 6
by Keith Marshall

This is a curious book. So curious in fact that I’m not at all sure how to review it! Is it the writer’s equivalent of an artist’s sketchbook – and what can one say about a sketchbook? Just as an artist would draw an odd lamp-standard, a window, birds on a roof, half a nude model, this is a collection of phrases, names, ideas, fragments of conversation, which caught Powell’s imagination and are jotted down for potential future use. It is full of Barnby-esque epigrams, especially on the subject of women – “after a hundred lovers women have still drawn no conclusions about life” – which give the impression that Powell was a misogynist. Was he? Or is it just that we’ve grown accustomed to a more misogynist slant on life that was prevalent in society in Powell’s earlier years?

These notes contain some wonderful examples of Powell’s sense of humour and acute observation. For instance he jots down that (presumably some jockey) “rides like a monkey sitting on a commode”. Or elsewhere he notes: “Offa’s Dyke, a study in Anglo-Saxon lesbianism”. And again: “A cat muezzin calling other cats to prayer”.

Powell used a publisher’s dummy in which to record all these notes; his literary sketches – few of which are more than 3 or 4 lines long. He says in his short introduction that the notebook was probably started about 1930. Unfortunately only a very few – maybe just a handful – of the entries in the book are dated. While dates would have been an irrelevance for Powell (this was his sketch book) they would have made the volume much more interesting for the enthusiast – and much more useful to the scholar – as they would have made possible observations and research on the relationship between the notes and their subsequent use in Dance as well as Powell’s other works. Neither do the entries throw further light on the models for the characters in Dance; few if any of the entries obviously relate to real people.

However, as we would expect, there are many significant, and interesting, snippets that all too obviously appear later in Dance. What is interesting is to see how Powell changes them; massacring the rough original into the polished final version. For instance there is a note: “Does Ann Stepney finally organise student riots?” No, but arguably the Quiggin twins do. Or again: “When Matilda is a hostess she shows Jenkins the photographs of the Seven Deadly Sins”. And: “Roland Watkin keen territorial company commander falls in love, neglects his duties, he is cut out by some spurious civilian, sent to a holding battalion” – apart from Watkin being changed to Gwatkin that’s not far off how it finally turned out.

Using the book for research is further hindered by the fact that there is no index. I can see the argument that the book is sufficiently esoteric, and the entries so fragmentary, that an index would be pointless. However I don’t agree. In my view every work of non-fiction should be indexed; such books are written for use, to impart knowledge and information, not just for entertainment.

Without an index a book is emasculated and becomes only a pale remnant of the fount of knowledge it should be. As Powell himself notes: “A good book demands a good index but a good index redeems even an indifferent book”. I just hope that the lack of an index is only because I read an early “manuscript” copy of the book and that an index will be added to the final published version.

I was also concerned because my copy was littered with spelling mistakes – many of which look to be the result of the pages having been electronically scanned and text-interpreted – as well as many “widows and orphans”. However I was pleased to learn from John Powell that the proofs were being corrected by his mother, Lady Violet; so a good production should result.

Notwithstanding my gripes, this is an interesting and curious volume. Not, it is true, a volume for the average reader, but one which will doubtless find a welcome home on the shelf of all true Powell enthusiasts – who will enjoy it for Powell’s sense of humour if nothing else.

Anthony Powell’s A Writer’s Notebook was originally scheduled for publication in early November 2000. At the time of writing, publication has slipped to February 2001.

My First Encounter with the works of Anthony Powell

“I first encountered the novels of Anthony Powell in the mid-1980s in an English friend’s flat in Uppsala, Sweden. The friend kept up pretty well with English literature and had acquired the paperback editions of the whole Dance. I tried the first page with the workmen warming themselves at a brazier, and gave up. About a decade later, I discovered that AP had been to Tallinn, I city I have frequently visited. This fact made me buy a battered copy of Venusberg, which I read and rather liked. I then remembered the Dance. In the meantime, my friend in Sweden had read eleven-and-a-half volumes of the cycle, giving up at halfway through the last volume. This rather perverse action, plus the fact he’d nonetheless read so much and liked it, made me start again, this time in earnest. I didn’t look back, read the whole Dance. Never in my life have I read books by the same author, one after the other, with such eagerness.” - Eric Dickens

“One of my favorite authors (besides Anthony Powell) is Anthony Burgess. I am especially appreciative of the Enderby novels and Earthly Powers. Many years ago I took 99 Novels by Burgess out of the library. His recommendations led me to A Dance To The Music Of Time by Powell, to the works of Robertson Davies, to reread the Alexandria Quarter by Durrell and to a number of other authors. I am currently trying to slog my way through a book by Henry Green (Yorke), a school mate of Powell’s and a recommendation by Burgess. I am finding Green more dated than either of the ‘Anthony’s’” - Richard Goerne
Crossword No. 1
By Persecutius

Across
5. The centre of Uncle Giles’s concerns (5)
7. Gwatkin’s dependable CSM (11)
9. A Templer wife, very much like Lisa (4)
10. She, the lover of Jimmies (4)
11. Hotel, which sees the demise of Uncle Giles (8)
12. A rude dog (3)
13. The naval Foe (6)
15. The fourth trilogy (6)
17. Milly …….. (9)
19. The first trilogy (6)
21. Furnished by books (4)
23. Sugar-pouring happened at one of these (4)
24. One of the Tolland sisters (5)
25. Herbert Stevens (3)
26. Jean’s brother (5)
27. Lord Widmerpool, informally (3)
28. A bungalow near Aldershot (10)
32. … Pilgrim (3)
33. General Liddament’s recommended breakfast (8)
34. Item of apparel kept in a box (3)

Down
1. A watering hole you might find in Madrid (4)
2. Lady McReith (4)
3. A film tycoon (6)
4. Welsh battalion Adjutant (8-5)
5. Whose music is danced to? (4)
6. Demolished by Widmerpool’s car (3)
8. …… Walpole-Wilson (7)
12. Area of London known for its hotels (9)
13. Peter’s sister (4)
14. Astrological sign (7)
16. The Wallace …….., where Poussin’s painting hangs (10)
18. …… Gilbert; immaculate spare man (6)
20. Colour of Stripling’s chamber pot (5)
22. Pub where Jenkins and Moreland first meet (8)
25. A Norwegian (3)
26. Jenkins’s platoon sergeant (6)
29. …. Moreland (4)
30. He scores a bull’s-eye with a banana (4)
31. A shilling (3)

The solution will be published in the Spring 2001 Newsletter
The Wondrous Gift is Given
By
Anthony Powell

The first page of a recently discovered holograph being the unpublished thirteenth volume of

Widmerpool was dead. Of that there was no dispute, except, possibly, within those *louche* purlieus north of the Euston Road where one or two of his old acquaintance, or even some eviscerated and unmanned survivor of Lady Widmerpool's more devastating sexual predations, might chance to meet, wheezing and hacking over a pint of barely tolerable bitter. Of the final years, there had been little to remark: the Hockney portrait, depicting its subject on the verge of a Californian swimming-pool in which something had gone seriously amiss with the colour values; a literary event or two on Channel 4: guest appearances with popular and ennobled pianists in the Isle of Wight; the controversial Anthony Isbister statue in Trafalgar Square, on the plinth formerly occupied a general whose amatory exploits in Ootie or Darjeeling were remembered only by such as Aylmer Conyers, and whose memory died with them.

But the name of Widmerpool remained, however dimly, engraved upon the brass plate identifying the North London publishing house where, between engagements, I eked out a precarious existence by re-editing works of historical fiction, destined for a not inconsiderable, though predominantly female, readership. There was, at this time, I recall, a particular demand for those whose amorous intrigues could be located, with greater or less verisimilitude, in the ante-bellum South, and the imagined scent of magnolias, old cigars, mint julep and faithful retainers, taken with the erotic delights to be anticipated as another silk bodice was cursorily dispatched from Miss Annabelle's ample *poitrine*, became catenella and cilice to the celibate imagination immured in that grim cubicle, at once stuffy and bitterly cold, occupied by myself and an electric heater of which only one bar was permitted to be in use at any given time.

"Fresh air," Fairbrother would remark, when terminating any infringement of that invariable requirement and briskly throwing up the window sash, "nothing like it. Twenty years in the Army taught me that. Gives a fellow an advantage in the City over a chap half-asleep from bad posture, stale air or too much burgundy at luncheon. What you need old boy," he would add, observing my threadbare overcoat and frayed comforter, "is a capital little commodity, recently come onto the market, in which I have, I admit, a proprietary interest. Worth every penny, Sir Magnus tells me, and I have several myself. Now you see ..."

It was after such an episode, with concomitant evasion of proffered thermal underclothing, gymnastic apparatus or surgical truss, that I had returned to my lodgings in Shepherd Market, and after my customary slice of Hovis and beaker of Ovaltine, retired to bed. The hours passed, midnight struck, my attention wandered. I had replaced Burton on the table and composed myself for the night, when I was made aware of an exogenous noise strangely familiar and yet not entirely capable of identification: suggestive of one's cat Jeffrey, perhaps, or a necessary visit to the ironmonger: although, considered in terms of duration, timbre and tessitura, quite evidently not of rodent origin. Amorous activity from the adjoining chambers could also be ruled out, as I knew for certain that its nubile tenant had retired to the bosom of her family in Hendon Central. Whatever the source, it steadily increased in amplitude and persistence, eliciting memories of linoleum, coal-tar soap and the Beverley Sisters, footfalls in the memory, a podiatric *madeleine*.

It ceased: the door to my chamber abruptly swung open and a not unfamiliar figure emerged from the darkness, bearing before it a small and grime-encrusted lantern, illuminating a rather weighty and thick-soled pair of boots, the toecaps of which had been raised to an almost military perfection of sheen, and no doubt the source of the audible frictions which had preceded them. As my eyes grew accustomed to the transient but by no means embarrassed spectre before me, I observed a greatcoat, of not quite standard issue, whose shoulders were surmounted by a kind of white and glittering obelisk, a little resembling the head of Liszt in old age, capped by what might have been a uhlan helmet, as drawn by Tenniel in the process of mysteriously assuming the identity of some High Victorian household utensil in pewter or silver plate.

At that point the telephone rang. I lifted the receiver. A dull, depressive and lugubrious voice, possibly that of a cultural studies lecturer from the Midlands or the receptionist of a singularly unremunerative legal partnership, could be heard indistinctly at the other end of the line:

"Major Widmerpool," it said, "is disembodied..."
First Biennial

Anthony Powell Conference
A One-Day Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of
A Dance to the Music of Time

Monday 23 April 2001
Eton College, Windsor, UK

First Announcement and Call for Papers

E-mail Enquiries: enquiries@anthonypowell.org.uk
Anthony Powell Resources Website: http://www.anthonypowell.org.uk/

Aim
The aim of this international conference is to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of the life and works of Anthony Powell. It is expected that the majority of the conference will be devoted to his twelve-volume novel A Dance to the Music of Time.

Submission of Abstracts
Prospective authors are invited to submit synopses of 400 words for review by 08 December 2000. These should be in English, outlining the scope of the paper and the principal points to be discussed. The committee would be particularly interested in papers on A Dance to the Music of Time and on Anthony Powell's life.

Authors will be advised by during January 2001 whether their paper has been selected for presentation. Final papers will be required by 02 April 2001. The final papers should be of no more than 5000 words and the allotted presentation time is expected to be 20 minutes. Authors should note that synopses will be accepted on the basis that the authors pay the registration fee and attend the conference to present their paper.

Synopses may be submitted either electronically to papers@anthonypowell.org.uk or by mail (3 copies please) to the Conference Office (address overleaf).

Date and Venue
The conference will be held on Monday 23 April 2001 at Eton College, Windsor, Berkshire.

Publication of Papers
Papers available by the deadline will be published and circulated to all registered delegates after the conference. The synopses of all papers available by the deadline will be printed and made available to the delegates at the conference and on the Anthony Powell Resources website. Papers from the conference may also be published by the sponsors and/or the news media. Other than stated above it is intended that authors retain the copyright and rights to publication of their papers.

Organising Committee
- Sue Frye, Conference Consultant
- Catherine Mansel Lewis, PR Consultant, CML Associates