Colin Donald Interviews
Koyama Taichi

Dr Koyama Taichi, who lectures at Wayo Women’s University near Tokyo, will be familiar to many readers of Newsletter from the Eton and London conferences and by reputation as the leading Japanese scholar of Anthony Powell.

Last autumn his adapted PhD thesis was published by Hokuseido in Japan as The Novels of Anthony Powell – A Critical Study, a perceptive, comprehensive and at times highly provocative study of the entire novelistic output of Anthony Powell. The book also contains an exceptionally useful bibliography.

Hailing from the semi-rural hinterland of the ancient Japanese cultural capital of Kyoto, Koyama Sensei is a graduate of the elite Tokyo University, and completed his PhD at the University of Kent.

He is a distinguished translator of contemporary British fiction, including several acclaimed versions of the novels of Ian McEwan. He has already translated Afternoon Men into Japanese, the only Powell novel available in that language, and he hopes shortly to undertake the first Japanese translation of Jikan no ongaku no odori, or A Dance to the Music of Time.

Koyama Taichi’s book on Anthony Powell is available online from www.amazon.jp (press “In English” on the title page, then type in the full title of the book). The price is ¥4001 (around £17 or $33.50 US). Taichi-san can be contacted at hakubishin@nn.em-net.jp.
From the Secretary’s Desk

None of us likes change and there is scientific evidence that procrastination is our default mindset – “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” makes good evolutionary sense. But change is a two-edged sword: both “good” and “uncomfortable” it can be serendipitous: opening unexpected doors; bringing fresh visions; new opportunities.

The Society is about to see one of those changes which are, from time to time, thrust upon us all. Our Chairman, Patric Dickinson, has indicated that for personal reasons he will be standing down at this year’s AGM. Patric has been tremendous value as Chairman: not only has he opened numerous doors for us and worked quietly and tirelessly for the Society, he steered us through centenary year. While we shall be sad to lose Patric’s undoubted skills, sooner or later we must all ensure that we look after ourselves.

How to replace such a Chairman? My personal view, and not everyone will agree, is that we need a quiet, “doing” Chairman. Someone who, like Patric, can open doors; work for us behind the scenes as well as out front; add their skills and experience to help run and develop the Society. That is a tall order; Patric will be a hard act to follow.

We are announcing this now not so that there can be a campaign to persuade Patric to stay on – I’ve already tried, quietly, and failed, and we should respect Patric’s decision – but so that we all have time to search our hearts and minds and ask “Could I be Chairman?”. You can find a short description of the Chairman’s role in the Strategy Review Report at the centre of this Newsletter. The only thing I would add is that to satisfy the Charity Commission our Chairman should probably be resident in the UK. Many members would do an excellent job as Chairman and bring us valuable skills. Who will be bold enough to volunteer?

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Colin Donald: How did you first encounter the writings of Anthony Powell and why did you choose to study him for your PhD?

Koyama Taichi: Does the name Yoshida Kenichi ring a bell? He is the celebrated novelist-critic and high-spirited drunkard who interviewed Powell in Tokyo (see The Strangers All Are Gone). Yoshida later became one of Japan’s foremost critics, writing extensively on Japanese, Chinese, English and French literature. I am a great fan of Yoshida’s writings, and his mention of Powell in one of his essays started it all off for me. To be honest I chose Powell as the subject of my PhD partly because few others were “doing” him, but mainly because I had always been fascinated by the English comic novel and Powell seemed an exceptional figure within that tradition.

You have revised your thesis and turned it into a book, but who is your “imagined reader” of The Novels of Anthony Powell?

I wrote it to appeal to fellow Powell fans, and to win over those who haven’t read Dance but who are interested, however slightly.

How would you summarise the substance of the book?

“A close analysis of one of the greatest comic representations of the modern world”. I’m no great theorist – or a blurb writer!

Is Powell studied or read much in Japan?

Regrettably, Powell’s readership in Japan is quite small at present. I published my translation of Afternoon Men in 1999, and some of the original 2,000 copies are still...
available in major Tokyo bookstores. I do my best!

**Are there any Dance-style novel sequences in modern Japanese literature?**

The elegiac beauty of Tanizaki’s *Sasameyuki* (1943-1948, in English *The Makioka Sisters*), comes immediately to mind. But as a trilogy it’s too short to be called a full roman fleuve, and its tone is not necessarily comic.

At the risk of sounding eccentric, I would name *Shinsei Kigeki* (*Divine Comedy*, though it’s not translated into English yet) by Onishi Kyojin. Onishi (1919-) reminds me of Powell’s friend George Orwell: a left-wing writer at odds with the Communist Party. *Shinsei Kigeki* is, roughly, Dance’s war trilogy extended to eight volumes. Onishi’s way of depicting life’s irrelevantly comic moments in a sober, deliberate style makes them all the funnier, often making me think of Powell and Dance. *Shinsei Kigeki* even includes an officer-soldier interrogation that goes seriously awry, in the same way as the Gwatkin-Sayce scene! I don’t think Onishi had ever read or even heard of Powell when he wrote the 1955-1980 series; it’s just one of those Powellian coincidences that happen from time to time.

**In his memoirs Powell mentions his admiration for The Tale of Genji by Lady Murasaki [Lady Violet!] (ca. 973-1014). What do you think appealed to him about what is arguably the first-ever novel in any language?**

Her keen sense of social nuances and the interaction of human desires, especially sexual ones. Also, *Genji* is a novel about the passing of time. I must confess that her Japanese is a bit too classical for me; reading it through in the original remains one of my great ambitions. There is however a wonderful translation into modern Japanese by the aforementioned Tanizaki.

**What inspired a young student from Japan’s cultural heartland, with no family tradition of foreign studies, to go on and master English language and literature?**

Scene from the 11th century book *The Tale of Genji*. 
My father was a fan of classic Hollywood movies; he introduced me to the films of Ford, Capra, Hawks et al. I was fascinated by the sophisticated comedies of the thirties and forties, and became motivated to study English. Then one day I came across a Japanese edition of Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*. It was an 80-year old translation, but an excellent one. That was my introduction to English literature and made me think about becoming a translator, which I did in my early postgrad days. Nick Jenkins reflects in *The Acceptance World*, that

Intricacies of social life make English habits unyielding to simplification, while understatement and irony – in which all classes of this island converse – upset the normal emphasis of reported speech.

This also applies to Japan, hence my interest in the English novel. I knew I would end up in England some day and fortunately, a scholarship came my way.

**What determined your choice of British university?**

Don’t tell anyone, but Cambridge rejected me! Kent was my second choice. I read in the prospectus that Professor Michael Irwin was also a novelist, and I vaguely knew he once taught in Tokyo. So I decided that he should be a good choice as a PhD supervisor. It turned out that he had indeed taught at Tokyo University, but it was before the 1964 Tokyo Olympics! I was probably his last PhD supervisee.

I gather Prof. Irwin was actually quite hostile to Powell’s work. Did his prejudices influence the writing of your thesis/book?

Irwin’s main gripe was the “triviality” of the things described in *Dance*, a view shared by Patrick Swinden in his 1986 study *The English Novel of History and Society*, which I recommend to Powell fans, who may enjoy countering its arguments. My view on Powell was certainly influenced by their views: though I’m not sure how deeply. Studying under someone who is stubbornly anti-Powell prevented me from writing the eulogy that I had intended, which is probably a good thing. I had to work hard to convince Irwin, a bitter fight that I’m not so sure I won; but my views on Powell became more rounded in the process.

When I started my thesis; the bizarre elements of the fourth trilogy (Pamela, Murtlock and converted Widmerpool) appealed to me most. While I still enjoy that aspect of *Dance*, I’m struck with the flimsiness of the contrivance. Nowadays it’s the multi-dimensionality of supporting characters such as Ted Jeavons and Matilda Wilson that strongly attracts me.

**In your book you say that “a great intrinsic weakness of Dance is its seeming lack of purpose”. Isn’t entertainment enough of a “purpose”?**

Umm ... for pure entertainment, I’d rather go for PG Wodehouse’s fantasy world. And surely, *Dance’s* opening pages alone are enough to make us expect something more than intellectual soap-opera, aren’t they?

**One of the bones you have to pick with Powell is that “the personality of the narrator does not have enough weight to support his extremely long narration” (p 278). What do you mean by this?**

It is interesting to compare him with his namesake from a novel Powell admired – Nick Carraway in Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. Nick Carraway’s life after
Gatsby’s death is obviously “another story”, and just as obviously he has a life of his own to be lived out. That way, the reader can be at ease with Nick Carraway’s position as an opinionated bystander within the novel’s enclosure. On the other hand, Nick Jenkins is a character who gradually grows old until, at the ending of Hearing Secret Harmonies, he is a man in his mid-sixties. However, he becomes more and more of a pure narrative function as the volumes go on. In the first and second trilogies (and in the third, though intermittently), Nick Jenkins was part of the world he narrated, however implicitly. In the last trilogy, his relationship with the activities of the world gets almost unbearably tangential, while we learn so little about his own life as a writer and family man. The unease I feel about it is somewhat similar to the sense of unreality I have when I hear a disembodied voice from somewhere I can’t see. I know Powell’s argument about the advantage of setting a narrator of Nick Jenkins’ type, and see much reason in it. I would like to stress that the above opinion is basically a “yes but …”

I am fascinated by your theory that the character of Henchman in The Fisher King is a self portrait of the artist as an honourable failure, referring to the final trilogy of Dance, Powell’s own apologia pro vita sua as you put it. Why do you see the post-War volumes in this negative light?

My answer to the previous question just about covers it. And if I may add, Powell might have been too busy contriving to put a convincing end to it all; he had to put his shirt on the plot of Widmerpool’s symbolic downfall.

You conclude that Powell was “destined to wander eternally among the texts of human struggle that are daily woven and sooner or later consigned to oblivion in the flow of time” (p 282). Do you think the novelist would have minded this conclusion?

Your question reminds me of a remark by Bob Dylan: “I’m just a song and dance man [so don’t take me too seriously]”. Our “Dance” man might have said the same thing, if someone had told him outright that Dance is an everlasting monument of modern English literature (which it is – for all the faults I have found with it).

What other novels have you translated into English?

My first job was Mick Jackson’s Booker short-listed Underground Man. I still feel great affection for this eccentric little piece. Then Ian McEwan’s Amsterdam, which was a minor hit in Japan and helped me to fund my foreign studies. I also translated his Enduring Love and
Atonement, and am currently working on his latest, Saturday. I discovered when I visited him that he was a Powell admirer.

The great Ian McEwan a Powell fan? Tell us more!

As a preliminary to discussing the new translation we chatted over tea in his basement kitchen. Ian is much more easygoing than he appears in his dust jacket photos. Talk turned to Powell when he asked me about the subject of my doctoral thesis. He and his wife had been to the Powell exhibition at the Wallace Collection and he had recently reread the early part of Dance.

It was rather a surprise to me that he had read Dance when he was younger. Considering his enfant terrible reputation I took it for granted that he would detest it in principle. Sure enough, he hadn’t warmed to Powell when he first read Dance, but then, he didn’t like Jane Austen either at that time. Nowadays he is fascinated by the intricacy of social texture in Austen’s novels and seemed to me that he had come to enjoy Dance for exactly the same reason.

I also think he might even have learned a thing or two from Powell’s technique of comically describing social occasions that go awry: see the scene in Atonement where a family and their guests surround a roast dinner with sinking hearts – it’s an intensely hot day – and have to drink lukewarm Barsac [sweet Bordeaux] instead of water.

I know you are a great Wodehousian – can you say more about this interest?

Well, the great Japanese Wodehousian is my co-translator, Masakatsu “Mike” Iwanaga. He was, until he retired recently, a businessman who was deep into

A close analysis of one of the greatest comic representations of the modern world

Wodehouse. So deep that one day he decided to push his hobby translations into press, and he asked for my help. Of course I had read Wodehouse and enjoyed it, but it wasn’t until I tried to put the prose into readable Japanese that I realized the man was a great stylist. I agree with Powell’s opinion that Wodehouse was a genius in a limited field, but there’s nothing like Wodehouse when it comes to restoring balance of mind after a stressful day.

How did you enjoy attending the Eton and Wallace Collection conferences?

They were great. At Eton, I had a brief talk with the novelist DJ Taylor, whose novels have similarities to Powell’s. I was very glad to find he agreed. My presentation at Eton was, I’m afraid, rather poor – I talked overtime – but I learned a lesson from the experience: stick to the point. Also, the Eton conference gave me many new ideas for my thesis. The London conference was even better: it was a festive occasion for all Powell fans and scholars. I’m sure the Bath conference will be just as enjoyable.

Studying under someone who is stubbornly anti-Powell prevented me from writing the eulogy that I had intended
Koyama Taichi’s book (the family name is written first, following the custom in Japan) covers all of Anthony Powell’s novels and is an ambitious project by a scholar who originates from a very different background to his subject. Koyama is from Kyoto and is a graduate of Tokyo University. His book was originally written for a doctoral dissertation and his name will be familiar to delegates of the first Anthony Powell conference at Eton in 2001 where he gave a paper on methods of comic realism in *At Lady Molly’s*. Any Powell aficionado will be eager to read such a thorough and detailed study as this wide-ranging book. The good news is that Koyama writes very well and his book is a pleasure to read. What may be less agreeable for some Powell fans are many of his opinions and conclusions, for, while appreciative of Powell’s long literary career and achievements, he also has many harsh judgments to make on the ultimate success of the novelist’s work.

The book follows a straightforward chronological survey of Powell’s novels. There is one chapter for each of the four “movements” of *Dance* plus a chapter on “Aspects” of *Dance*. These are preceded by a chapter on the early novels. The book ends with a chapter on the post-*Dance* novels and then with a general conclusion which gives an overview of the novelist’s career as a writer of “fictional comedy”. Each of the chapters dealing with the novels begins with an overview followed by a more detailed explication of their content. The author has obviously read an enormous amount around his subject. The bibliography itself runs to almost 40 pages and makes for some very interesting reading in its own right with a wealth of secondary sources, both well-known and more obscure, that may intrigue and delight even the more ardent Powellian readers. Koyama has certainly done his homework and whenever necessary brings his vast army of sources into play to support his arguments or to further illustrate a point. Fortunately, this never becomes excessive or tedious and we are quite clearly in the hands of the writer himself as he guides us on his journey through the novels. In the text, his sources are, in fact, more like sauces: used sparingly to bring out the flavour of the dish. Inevitably, the main focus is on *A Dance to the Music of Time* but both early and later novels are also given a fair treatment.

It may be a good idea to pause here to address the question of just why a Japanese academic would be so interested in these novels. As one who has also lived in Japan for many years I have grown accustomed to giving regular explanations of just who Anthony Powell is, to my frequently bemused Japanese friends and acquaintances. I am also long past the stage of surprise when told that Somerset Maugham is the far better known and more highly regarded novelist in this country. And so, in his introduction,
Koyama addresses the topic of his own fascination with Powell. He writes that the preliminary answer to this question is that Powell interests him because of his “comic representation of the world in the realistic mode”. He then goes on to say:

…but can I absolutely deny that Powell’s novels fascinate me also because I live in a society as full of artificiality, protocols and polite evasion of radical questions of existence as the one Powell deals with? After all, Japan is where The Makioka Sisters – Tanizaki’s huge novel that delves into the nature of social artifice and customs, deception, decay, and the mental power-struggle fought under the serene surface of bourgeois society, but does not offer any element of judgment on such aspects of life – was conceived and put into words. In the case of Powell’s comic novels, too, the charge of tacit connivance with upper-middle-class snobbery is a problem that cannot be sidestepped. Probably, I am attracted by Powell’s novels because certain deeper psychological strata of his superficially detached narration that meticulously traces the details of people’s behaviour in society, have a remote affinity with the elements of snobbery – the desire to formalistically defend one’s social fort, and to stick to the right kind of social persona – that have always been working, whether one likes it or not, in Japanese life, high and low, past and present.

Despite these similarities, he points out that there is no tradition of comic representation of these societal matters in Japanese novels and so Powell becomes even more interesting for him as an example of the British tradition of “seeing the artifice of society with a comic eye”. It is therefore the aim of his book to provide, as well as a summary of all the novels, a critical account of the relationship between comedy and realistic representation of the world, and how this relationship grows and changes in Powell’s work.

His treatment of the early novels is brisk and to the point. He is quite scathing about them but also makes some useful comments connecting these early novels with the later development of characterisation and comedy in Dance. In footnotes, he also provides good summaries of the plots of each of the first five novels, as those familiar with Dance are nevertheless often forgetful of these early stories. His fairness and willingness to criticise constructively continues into the chapters on Dance and throughout the book. Generally his argument is that the Dance is far more successful in its early stages than in its later development. After The Acceptance World we learn much less of Jenkins’ personal life and this is viewed as “one of the serious technical drawbacks of the series”. Koyama believes that it would and should have been possible for Jenkins to give more of himself to the
novel without adversely upsetting the balance, but he doesn’t simply complain about the lack of details of the Jenkins marriage: he looks for reasons. Describing the last six volumes as “something of a let down”, Koyama takes the view that Jenkins could get away with giving so little of himself in the first half of the series as he was quite likely to be able to live an unobtrusive existence among the familiar upper-middle class background of school, university, and London’s bohemia. The war is a different matter altogether but Jenkins never seems to attract any more attention in the army than anywhere else. Powell readers are sometimes critical of the ending of Dance but for Koyama the rot sets in long before that.

In his section on the wartime trilogy Koyama notes – rightly to my mind – the lack of structure in The Military Philosophers compared to the previous two novels, and he concludes that the novelistic quality of The Military Philosophers oscillates between weakness and desperate contrivance. It lacks in plot, and many descriptions of the war here are disturbingly similar to those in Powell’s memoirs. In fact, the wartime books as a whole offer little room for the actual enactment of war and “the question of what the war is for, or why one has to be a part of it, is never once asked”.

He contends that this deterioration in quality continues throughout the final six volumes of Dance and one reason for this is that the major new characters introduced (in particular, Pamela and Trapnel) are two-dimensional and puppet-like. They are there to keep the ball rolling, as it were, and to hurry the Dance along to its conclusion where loose ends can be neatly tied up. To this end Widmerpool also becomes something of a caricature of himself with his somewhat bizarre political manoeuvrings and subsequent involvement in a religious cult. Powell’s need to reach a conclusion means that the comedy becomes predictable and tends to function purely at the level of device. Finally Koyama writes that the most serious complaint against Dance would be that the personality of the narrator does not have enough weight to support his extremely long narration.

Jenkins is, in fact, “the weakest link” and the greatest intrinsic weakness of Dance itself is its seeming lack of purpose.

Of the two post-Dance novels, O, How the Wheel Becomes It! is described as being “light-weight in every respect”, while The Fisher King is seen as “Dance in a nutshell”. But it is the author’s critical view of Jenkins’ narration and of the second half of Dance that will cause most controversy and consternation among Powell devotees. In Dance’s defence it might be worth asking why the novel sequence has maintained such a strong following if its comedy and narrative method is really as contrived as this author would have us believe. Nevertheless, Koyama has posed many interesting questions and given us all plenty to argue about. I have long thought that Jenkins’s self-effacing manner would go down very well in Japan where harmony is so important and open confrontation a thing to be avoided. It is now my hope that Koyama, who has already translated several books into Japanese, including two novels by Ian McEwan, will introduce the world of Jenkins to a new audience by translating the Dance into his native language.

John Potter is Associate Professor of English at Kogakkan University, Nabari, Japan.
Like all grammar and public school boys of my generation I was subjected to learning Latin. Or, more accurately in my case, not learning Latin. It totally passed me by; I miserably failed every piece of Latin I ever had to do. Foreign languages were a lost cause with me from the outset. No wonder then I struggled with Latin. Learning a dead language, by rote, when I wasn’t interested just didn’t work for me. To stand any chance I had to be captivated; enthralled; motivated – and I wasn’t; my teachers didn’t know how; they assumed all bright kids to be equally good at everything and equally interested too. What’s more (unknowingly at the time) I agreed with Winston Churchill in not seeing the point of conjugating nouns and declining verbs – or should that be the other way round? Likewise, even as a scientist, I couldn’t see the point learning all those Maths theorems by heart.

So why was I given a copy of Harry Mount’s book? And, more puzzling, why did I try reading it? Perhaps in the hope I might be re-enthused?

“Mons” is a Latinist, having read Classics at Oxford, and he sets out in this book to reawaken Latin in those of us who have cast aside what little of it we ever learnt. Or, for some, kindle the fires of wanting to learn Latin. This not a Latin text book – for that we are told to get Kennedy’s Shorter Latin Primer – it is more of a holiday brochure for Latin with a bit of education on the side.

The book takes as its approach to capture and enthral us. Yes, of course, we do get subjected to declension and conjugation – sadly they are an unavoidable necessity – but the details are asides which can be returned to as and when. Intertwined with the necessities are short chapters and passages on Roman history and Latin esoterica. Mount, in his light, chatty and witty style, introduces us to such diversities as Roman Emperors, classical architecture and Latin masters he has known.

This is a great little book for a light-hearted introduction to Latin and some classical background. It is a book which you can read and enjoy even while bypassing the necessities of learning Latin; and it is also a book which will give you a quick overview of the basics of learning Latin, and more. It almost worked its magic on me! I don’t think I know any more Latin now (though I could do if I read it again) but I do now know the difference between Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns. Oh, and Anthony Powell gets a couple of mentions.

Harry Mount is an author and journalist. He is the son of Powell’s nephew Ferdie Mount.
We are pleased to announce that the winner of the competition to summarise *Dance* in 150 words is Terry Empson. In the words of the judges:

The entry by Terry Empson first of all stood out from among the other entries through its format – the poem. Rather than summing up the novel in a few sentences – a daunting task in itself – the winning entry used the freedom of the poetic genre to simply list important names and events of Powell’s novel sequence. This shows an in-depth familiarity with *Dance* that must appeal to all readers similarly acquainted with Powell’s work. It could be argued that this makes it difficult for a complete newcomer to Powell’s work but, in the opinion of the judges this handing out of tempting bits and pieces might arouse reader curiosity and get new readers started.

Interestingly, all the other entries foregrounded Widmerpool in their summing up, as if Powell’s novel was, indeed, called *A Dance to the Music of Widmerpool*.

Congratulations to our winner for a very innovative approach to summing up Powell’s work! And thanks to all those who were unsuccessful.

Terry Empson’s winning entry is printed opposite. Terry’s extended membership will be winging its way to him shortly.

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**Result of the Summarise *Dance* Competition**

**A Dance to the Music of Time**
*summarised by Terry Empson*

Wat’ry-gladed, nobbish schooling,  
Le Bas-baiting, Widmerpooling.  
Dreaming spires and scheming Sillery  
Pulling wires (see Spurling, Hilary).

Moreland, Barnby, High Bohemia  
Follow hard on academia.  
Intervals on best behaviour,  
White tie-wearing in Belgravia.

Monkey club where Deacon sniffs it,  
Sunday lunch while Erridge roughs it,  
Jeavons, Umfraville and Norah,  
Quiggin and La Passionora  
(Hendon North-type). Lacking caution,  
Widders pays for her abortion.

War and Welshmen, red-tabbed Kenneth.  
Death, destruction reach their zenith –  
Lovell; Molly: Bijou’s party  
Die to Max’s *mezzo-forte*.

Post-war Soho, drinks with Trappy.  
Pamela thinks his novel crappy.  
Venice, artwork on the ceiling,  
Gwinnett’s bollocks get a feeling.  
Louis Glober, rich and pushy  
(Mopsy still a tuft less bushy).

Widmerpool, the final curtain.  
Smoke from bonfire brings back Burton.  
All appropriate, says the Maître,  
Cotillion or fête champêtre,  
Stepping round with Poussin’s maidens  
We are bondsmen of the cadence.  
Though appearances may fool us,  
Terpsichore, Euterpe rule us.

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Sadly there were no entries for the competition to write a short story based on the solution to the crossword.
Christmas Quiz Answers

Quiz 1: Quotations
1. George Orwell, review in the Fortnightly Review.
3. Robert Byron, First Russia, Then Tibet.
4. Jilly Cooper, Polo.
5. Osbert Lancaster, Pillar to Post.
7. Maurice Bowra, attrib.
9. Malcom Muggeridge, Tread Softly For You Tread on My Jokes.
10. Cyril Connolly, Enemies of Promise.
12. Kingsley Amis, One Fat Englishman.
14. Terence Rattigan, Separate Tables.
18. Graham Greene, Travels With My Aunt.
20. Philip Larkin, interview with The Observer.
22. VS Naipaul, interview with Radio Times.
23. Peter Quennell, The Sign of the Fish.
24. Roy Fuller, January 1940.
25. CP Snow, A Coat of Varnish.
28. Siegfried Sassoon, Dreamers.
29. Peter Fleming, letter to his brother Rupert.
30. Constant Lambert, Music Ho!

Quiz 2: Britain in World War II
1. Neville Chamberlain.
2. CC41 was the British Utility Clothing standard (it stood for Civilian Clothing 1941) which was introduced in 1941 and not finally withdrawn until 1952. L-85 was the US Utility Clothing standard which ran between 1942 and 1946.
3. Franklin D Roosevelt.
4. Conscripts and volunteers who were sent to work in the coal mines.
6. Camp: Liquid coffee essence, the forerunner of instant coffee.
7. Rhinosole: Spread on the soles of boots to make them waterproof.
10. Irving Berlin’s White Christmas sung by Bing Crosby.
11. V1 was the Doodlebug, basically a pilotless guided missile or “flying bomb”; first V1 falls on Bow, 13/06/1944. V2 was a rocket successor to V1, an early ballistic missile; first V2 attack 08/09/1944.
14. Britain went on to Double Summer Time.
15. Codebreaking.
16. His *A Christmas Carol* was read on radio (CBC) for the first time.
17. Spitfires.
18. Noel Coward.
19. Pearl Harbour.
20. Lord Haw-Haw, the pseudonym of William Joyce (although there were probably others who also broadcast as Lord Haw-Haw).
21. Lt-General Bernard Montgomery. (Later of course to become Field-Marshal and 1st Viscount Montgomery.)
22. Bread.
24. Chad was a ubiquitous piece of popular culture graffiti often seen in the United Kingdom during and shortly after World War II. He was usually seen saying “Wot no …!” Sometimes known as Kilroy.
25. Evelyn Waugh.
27. *Mrs Miniver*.
28. 183 people were crushed to death on the steps of the underground station in panic at sound of a new anti-aircraft rocket.
30. The Anderson air-raid shelter.
31. John Betjeman.
32. Storage of national art treasures.
33. They are “The Famous Five” who first appeared in print in Enid Blyton’s *Five on a Treasure Island*.
34. First digital computer; built at Bletchley Park by scientists and engineers from the Post Office Research Establishment, Dollis Hill.
35. The cost of posting a letter.
36. Clement Atlee. He had defeated Churchill at the general election held between VE Day and VJ Day.

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**Solution to Christmas 2006 Book Titles Crossword**

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  1. F
  2. L
  3. S
  4. P
  5. C
  6. I
  7. I
  8. C
  9. L
 10. O
 11. S
 12. F
 13. P
 14. C
 15. I
 16. S
 17. T
 18. E
 19. N
 20. W
 21. M
 22. E
 23. T
 24. M
 25. N
 26. A
 27. O
 28. D
 29. S
 30. H
 31. A
 32. Y
 33. R
 34. S
 35. Y

Sorceresses, more than most, are safer allowed their professional *amour propre*.  
[Anthony Powell, *Temporary Kings*]```
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Until now we were led to believe that this applied only to UK citizens paying UK tax. However thanks to one of our Swedish members it appears that the net is wider.

Providing you pay UK income tax of at least as much as you pay the Society, and complete a Gift Aid declaration, we can claim back basic rate tax paid by any member, anywhere, even if they are not a UK citizen. This means that overseas members who have UK-based shareholdings, and receive share dividends with UK tax paid, may Gift Aid their payments to the Society and we are able to reclaim that 28p for every £1 paid.

Any member (whether in the UK or overseas) who wishes us to take advantage of the Gift Aid facility is asked to contact the Hon. Sec. who will provide the appropriate form.

Subscription Renewal

Subscriptions are due for renewal on 1 April and renewal notices will be sent out during March to those members whose subscription expires this year. In order to help keep our costs – and your subscriptions – down please renew promptly.

We are pleased to announce that the “5 years for the price of 4” subscription offer is to continue indefinitely, subject to annual review by the trustees. This offer applies to all grades of membership and is available to both new and existing members.

We are able to accept subscription payments by Standing Order (UK members only) and recurring credit card transactions; appropriate forms will be sent with your reminder notice. Payment may also be made in UK funds by cheque, Visa, Mastercard or online using PayPal.

Members who are UK taxpayers are asked to GiftAid their subscription. (See left for more on GiftAid.) This enables the Society to reclaim basic rate income tax already paid on the subscription; currently this is worth 28p for every £1 paid to the Society.

Any member who does not renew their subscription by September will be removed from the membership register.
Society Events

Visit to Widmerpool
Saturday 14 July

We are pleased to announce a Society outing to the Nottinghamshire village of Widmerpool on Saturday 14 July.

Arrangements are not yet complete but we hope the day will include:

- Visit to Nottinghamshire County Records Office to view some Widmerpool family archive papers
- Lunch at the former Widmerpool Railway Station (now a pub)
- Visits to Widmerpool church and Widmerpool Hall (Victorian Jacobethan, now being converted into flats)
- Visit to nearby Wysall church to view the Widmerpool monument

The village of Widmerpool is about 12 miles (20 km) SE of Nottingham.
Timings will be arranged to connect at Nottingham with a suitable London train. We plan to arrange transport between Nottingham and Widmerpool by coach.

Full details, including detailed itinerary and cost, will appear in the next (June) Newsletter. All members and guests will be welcome. If you would like to join the trip please let the Hon. Sec. know as soon as possible – so we can book a large enough coach and enough seats for lunch – please include a deposit of £5 per person. Bookings will be confirmed in June when full details are available.

Local Groups

London Group
Area: London & SE England
Contact: Keith Marshall
Email: kcm@cix.co.uk

North East USA Group
Area: NY & CT area, USA
Contact: Leatrice Fountain
Email: leatrice.fountain@gmail.com

Great Lakes Group
Area: Chicago area, USA
Contact: Stephen Pyskoty-Olle
Email: widmerpool@hotmail.com

Swedish Group
Area: Sweden
Contact: Regina Rehbinder
Email: reginarehbinder@hotmail.com

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you wish to make contact with a group and don’t have email.
Any member wishing to start a local group should contact the Hon. Secretary who can advise on the number of local members.

Widmerpool Hall (top) and Holy Trinity church, Wysall
**Dates for Your Diary**

**Saturday 21 April 2007**
**NE USA Group Meeting**
Further details when available from Leatrice Fountain

**Saturday 12 May 2007**
**London Group Pub Meet**
The Audley, Mount Street, London, W1
1230 to 1530 hrs
Quarterly London Group meeting. Good beer, good food, good company & Powell chat in a Victorian pub AP would have known. Members & non-members welcome. Further details from Hon. Secretary.

**Saturday 14 July**
**Visit to the Nottinghamshire village of Widmerpool**
More on page 16; full details in the Summer Newsletter.

**Saturday 11 August 2007**
**London Group Pub Meet**
Details as for 12 May.

**Saturday 8 September 2007**
**Fourth Biennial Conference**
University of Bath
Details to follow; see also below.

**Saturday 27 October 2007**
**Annual General Meeting**
1400 hrs
Details to follow.

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**Conference**

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**2007 Conference**

The Fourth Biennial Anthony Powell Conference will be held on Saturday 8 September 2007 at the University of Bath.

This will be a one-day symposium with five or six speakers each of whom will get a longer time to present and lead discussion.

The speakers have not yet been finalised, so there is still time for Society members to submit proposals for a 45 minute session. If you wish to submit a session proposal please contact the Hon. Secretary without delay.

On the Sunday following the conference we hope to be able to offer some optional extra events for those wishing to stay over in Bath. A literary walk round Bath, Sunday lunch and a visit to The Chantry are among ideas which are being considered.

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**Centenary Conference Proceedings Update**

We are acutely aware that we have not yet published the proceedings of the Anthony Powell Centenary Conference in December 2005. Editing of the proceedings has been delayed but is now progressing well and we hope the book will see the light of day in the next few months. We apologise for the disappointment this delay may be causing.
Twelve of us met in the Audley on Saturday 10 February for lunch and conversation. We congratulated each other on having got there despite the recent snowy weather (half an inch of snow is usually quite sufficient to bring public transport to a halt in the UK) and discussed our usual wide range of topics over fish and chips and other similarly comforting dishes.

I wonder what Widmerpool would have chosen from the menu? Among other things we went on to talk about whether he took ‘substances’ (Chloral, anyone?) – and whether there is too much concentration on him in discussions about A Dance to the Music of Time. Of course, at that point we hadn’t seen the judges’ comments on the results of the ‘Summarise Dance’ competition on p 12.

Talk turned to the fact that a number of aspects of Powell’s work have recently been the subject of research by members and APLIST participants: Jeff Manley’s work on music in Powell and John Gould’s on Constant Lambert, for example, and Keith Marshall’s work in tracing the sources of Powell’s book titles (which range from Shakespeare to traditional song). [Watch this space for more on these – Ed.] Two subjects which came up as relatively unexplored were Powell’s network and the dedicatees of his books.

Hemingway, Norman Mailer, Steinbeck and Proust were among the other authors we talked about and, as often, there was considerable discussion of the stage and the current London theatrical scene.

Recent performances of the Pinter plays The Caretaker and The Dumb Waiter were mentioned; the current Patrick Barlow adaptation of John Buchan’s The 39 Steps, in which four actors and “a mystery arm” play 150 parts, was felt to be particularly ingenious.

We also talked about Powell and sport, assisted by the fact that the pub was showing two of the weekend’s Six Nations rugby matches (England beat Italy 20-7, and Scotland won their match with Wales by 21-9). Bridge, whist and cribbage also came under discussion: many of the card games which were such an important and popular feature of the social scene when AP was a young man are now almost unknown to the general public. My 1932 copy of The Official Rules of Card Games: Hoyle up-to-date lists dozens of games such as bezique, écarté, faro, euchre and Klondike which for most of us are now familiar only in name.

Architecture, food, regional dialects and genealogy helped to round out the conversation still further, and there was a good deal of pleasurable anticipation regarding Rhythms of Dance, the forthcoming Paul Guinery illustrated talk on the musical references in Dance on 26 February.

Present were: Patric Dickinson, Stephen Holden, Keith and Noreen Marshall, Sandy Morrison, Prue Raper, Guy Robinson, Bob Rollason, John Rollason, Victor Spouge, Peter Taylor and Elwyn Taylor
The East Coast meeting took place on Saturday 17 February. Six members turned up which was not bad considering the cold weather and bad road conditions. At Ed Bock’s suggestion, we asked members to select a favourite passage from *Dance*, read it aloud and be prepared to discuss it briefly. His idea was a splendid ploy, highly entertaining and informative. Later I asked members to email me the identity of their readings.

*From Eileen Kaufman:*
Conyers putting the shawl around Billson from *The Kindly Ones* (p. 61). Because it is funny, because it speaks to commanding in time of crisis (the war is about to start) and because Conyers is a favourite of everyone although hasn’t a lot of centre stage scenes.

*From John Gould:*
I chose the opening paragraphs of *A Soldier’s Art*, in which Nick buys a greatcoat to accompany him into the army. The shop also deals in costumes for actors, and the seller, mistaking Nick for an actor, asks him what he is appearing in. He replies, “Oh, just the war.” “Ah,” says the fellow, *The War,* believing that this is the name of a new drama.

I love the set-up, and the release of this joke, which suggests that the war will indeed be a drama, with lots of actors playing their parts – as, in many senses, it was ....

*From Ed Bock:*
My selected passages were the post-seduction or post-coital pages in *A Buyers Market* (pp 257-258) concluding with Gypsy Jones’s observation about her sunburned legs.

Also, the one-line selection on page 20 of *At Lady Molly's*, where Nick Jenkins describes the house in South Kensington, ending “not particularly encouraging echo of High Renaissance.”

*From Leatrice Fountain:*
My chosen passage was from *A Question of Upbringing* (p. 229). After being put off by Stringham for a more entertaining invitation, Nick considers the fragility of human ties, beginning

> The evening was decidedly cool, the rain was half-heartedly falling. I knew now that this parting was one of those final things that happen, recurrently, as time passes.

This whole paragraph stopped me cold the first time I read it. It’s poignancy and beauty lingers in my mind many years afterward.

*From Joe Trenn:*
The passage I chose begins on page 148 of *The Military Philosophers* at the sentence “The first two cut-out” through the end of the chapter. I was impressed with the subtlety with which AP kept the violence and carnage of the war off stage and then reveals it in this scene in which Jenkins the observer-narrator and the reader see and hear “shots fired in anger” for the first time. Of course, as he does throughout, AP alternates the larger picture with the personal throughout the scene concluding with the reference to George Tolland whose condition will affect the Tolland family long after the war.

References are to the UK first editions and are the same as the Little, Brown trilogy first editions – Ed.
Anthony Powell’s earliest recollection of Aleister Crowley occurred when he was a young child in 1911. It was a story his mother had told him.\(^1\) It begins with her waiting for a train which was to take her to a luncheon on the outskirts of London.

At the station my mother noticed getting into one of the compartments a man whose appearance made her feel a sudden sense of extreme repulsion. At her destination, this man reappeared on the platform. She found herself almost praying that he would not be her fellow-guest at the luncheon. Needless to say he was. It was the magician, Aleister Crowley. When Anthony asked his mother what they talked about during the luncheon, she simply replied, “Horrors.”

So his mother apparently didn’t enjoy the acquaintance of the Great Beast, but what of his father? Anthony Powell believed that his father was strongly influenced by the writings of Aleister Crowley. In fact his father owned a full set of Crowley’s *Equinox* along with many of his other books. Despite this Powell had a firm conviction that his father had never met the Great Beast. In any case it is fairly certain at an early age that Anthony Powell knew of Aleister Crowley. If he did not hear such from his parents, it might have come from a close friend of the family who was a big Crowley adherent, namely Major-General JFC “Boney” Fuller. He was the author of a book entitled *The Star in the West*, a critical essay on Aleister Crowley’s writings which was published in 1907.

Some twenty years later, Anthony Powell found himself working as a publisher for the firm of Duckworth in London. One book he helped publish was by a woman named Betty May. Claiming it was a somewhat bizarre work which I was responsible for Duckworth’s publishing – not without some trepidation on Balston’s part [one of the three owners of Duckworth].\(^2\)

The book was entitled *Tiger-Woman*. It was a biography by Betty May, who had lived with Aleister Crowley at the Abbey of Cefalu.\(^3\) Powell also writes, that soon after its publication...
Crowley telephoned to the office, inviting me to lunch with him at Simpson’s in the Strand. I had never met him in person, but his celebrated near-cockney accent grated at once on the ear, as familiar from stories.  

When Powell asked how Crowley might be recognized, the Beast replied, “You will recognize me from the fact that I am not wearing a rose in my buttonhole”.

So, with many memories of Crowley from his childhood running through his mind along with numerous new images, Anthony Powell found himself going to a similar luncheon, like his mother before him. En route to the restaurant he wrote,  

I wondered whether I should be met in the lobby by a thaumaturge in priestly robes, received with the ritual salutation: ‘Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law’; if so, whether politeness required the correct response: ‘Love is the Law, Love under Will’. 

[...]  

The reality at Simpson’s was less dramatic. Instead of a necromantic figure, sonorous invocation, a big weary-looking man rose from one of the seats and held out his hand. He was quietly, almost shabbily, dressed in a dark brown suit and grey Homburg hat. When he removed the hat the unusual formation of his bald and shaven skull was revealed; so shaped as to give the impression that he was wearing a false top to his head like a clown’s.

Both gentlemen talked on numerous subjects, Anthony with his pint of beer and Crowley actually “drinking a glass of milk”. The main topic, as everyone might suspect, was the injustice which Crowley felt at Duckworth publishing Betty May’s book. According to British law at the time, Crowley could not sue Duckworth since most of the information had been serialized previously in the Sunday Express in 1923. If legal action was to be filed, it should have been taken with them, not Duckworth, and basically too many years had passed to pursue a lawsuit. This Crowley regretted. Powell later wrote that throughout the luncheon,  

it was never quite clear what he had really hoped to gain from our meeting; perhaps merely hungering for a new listener.

A year after the publication of Tiger-Woman a letter arrived at Duckworth with a Berlin return address. It addressed Aleister Crowley’s suicide on 21 September 1930. Of course this was a publicity stunt and never really occurred. The letter simply read

My dear Powell,  
I am the beautiful German girl for whose love the infamous Aleister Crowley committed suicide ...

Powell continues stating,  

the gist of this not always very lucid communication seemed to be that Duckworth’s was offered “the story of our elopement” – entitled My Hymen – for an advance of £500 on a 15% royalty.

The signature was said to be a woman’s, probably Hanni Jaeger, who was Aleister Crowley’s Scarlet Woman at the time. Duckworth decided not to accept the offer – especially when they compared the handwriting to that of Aleister Crowley’s and found that the letter was actually written by him!
A few years later Nina Hamnett’s book, *Laughing Torso*, was published. Crowley, feeling he was again slandered, wasted no time in bringing a lawsuit against her and the publishers. To make a long story short, he lost the lawsuit. However, Powell felt,  

Had Crowley won the case … he would certainly have instituted another suit regarding *Tiger-Woman* against Duckworth’s.  

Due to this possibility, Anthony Powell was sent to the trial to observe the proceedings. He made it a point to avoid any and all personal contact with the Great Beast. He was successful. He simply sat in the back of the court, watched and kept a low profile. 

Throughout Powell’s life the Great Beast always seemed to be nearby – even though the two actually met only once. Even when Anthony Powell was living in London, he would often look out the window of his apartment and notice Aleister Crowley walking down the street. He describes Crowley on one occasion as being “Hatless, heavily bespectacled, he was dressed in green plus fours, as for golf”. Years after Crowley’s death Anthony Powell would visit George Sims, a rare book dealer in London. Apparently when sharing stories regarding Aleister Crowley’s last days in Netherwood, Powell told Sims that he believed “Aleister Crowley was probably the least eccentric figure living in that seaside boarding-house”.  

This might have been written tongue-in-cheek but if Powell honestly believed that Crowley was the “least” eccentric, it makes you wonder who else he knew in the area?  

Another story worth relating from one of Powell’s books is about a woman from South Africa named Sylvia Gough. He records that upon meeting Crowley, Sylvia remarked, “you’ve got such a kind face”. Mrs Gough might have actually viewed Crowley as such but Powell quickly follows this statement with a brief description of his memories of that “kind face” by stating  

The countenance that had thus struck her was dull yellow in complexion, the features strangely caught together within the midst of a large elliptical area, like those of a horrible baby, the skin of porous texture, much mottled, perhaps from persistent use of drugs required for magical experiment. 

Like many writers who knew Aleister Crowley, when Anthony Powell wrote his novel entitled *The Kindly Ones* in 1962 he used elements of Crowley “as one of the components of Dr Trelawney”. This character appears in book six in the series *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Trelawney is described as running a centre for his own peculiar religious, philosophical – some said magical – tenets, a cult of which he was high priest.  

Like Crowley he has a special greeting which he uses when meeting everyone but instead of, “Do what thou wilt”, Trelawney cries out, “The Essence of the All is the Godhead of the True” and instead of Crowley’s response which is, “Love is the law, love under will”, you must reply with, “The Vision of Visions heals the Blindness of Sight”. Although physically  

Dr Trelawney does not much resemble Crowley … nor were Powell’s autobiographical records of Crowley encountered over a lunch table incorporated into Dr Trelawney’s portrait. The two are very different.
It is fitting that one woman in the book states that Trelawney is not a person with whom I ever wanted my name to be too closely associated ... too much abracadabra.\(^{20}\)

This makes it sound like Anthony Powell really did base his character of Dr Trelawney on Aleister Crowley.

**Notes**


**For Further Reference**


Men who talked or slept with her were often found frozen to death.

*[Anthony Powell, *A Writer’s Notebook]*

**Copy Deadlines**

The deadlines for receipt of articles and advertisements for forthcoming issues of *Newsletter* and *Secret Harmonies* are:

**Newsletter #27, Summer 2007**
Copy Deadline: 11 May 2007
Publication Date: 1 June 2007

**Newsletter #28, Autumn 2007**
Copy Deadline: 17 August 2007
Publication Date: 7 September 2007

**Secret Harmonies #2, 2007**
Copy Deadline: 7 September 2007
Publication Date: 27 October 2007
From Jeff Manley
Could this be the Bag o’ Nails to which Stringham took Audrey?

Since it’s near Pimlico [on Buckingham Palace Road, behind Buckingham Palace and near Victoria Station – Ed.] it would have been on her way home from nearly anywhere north of the river. I can’t recall offhand where Stringham’s mother was living at the time. It seems to be going strong and has attracted a fair amount of chatter on [a] pub website. One [post even claims] some historic connection to an Elton John incident and song but that is disputed by another who refers to a pub in Soho. If we can verify that this is indeed the pub mentioned in Dance … [it] might help attract a higher class of clientele, or not, as the case may be.

From David Hallett
To be precise, suggested taking Audrey. The excursion was forestalled by the arrival of Tuffy and the horrifying realization (for Nick) that Stringham is more or less kept penniless by his guardian as a way of controlling him.

Is the Elton John incident related to his song “All the Girls Love Alice” or is there something altogether other in that reference?

From Michael Henle
I lived above this Bag o’ Nails for 5 months in 1992 (or so). Fitting, I suppose, that it might turn out to have an AP connection but I never realized it at the time. It seemed to be a perfectly ordinary pub (if there is such a thing). We enjoyed their Shepherd’s Pie. Another reason this could be Stringham’s Bag o’ Nails is its proximity to his lodgings on West Halkin Street where Widmerpool put him to bed in A Buyer’s Market.

From John Perry
A marvellous catalogue of bad behaviour. The Bag appears also to feature in mid-60s London lore; numerous bands either play, or go on there from The Scotch of St James. Certainly it was a venue used for ‘launchs’. There was even a (non-musical) group of hipsters who styled themselves The Bag, partly in deference to this their local, and partly referencing James Brown & the colloquial ‘it’s in the bag’. Has anyone ever seen the BoN used as a venue for live music?

From Ellen Jordan
I found the discussion on this pub interesting, but I have some doubts about whether such a classic pub as the picture shows could have been what AP meant. Stringham seems pretty certainly to be talking about a nightclub, given the preceding mention of Dicky Umfraville’s, and furthermore it is not very likely that an ordinary pub would have been still open at that time of night. If the party was held after the concert it must have been pretty late by the time
Stringham was ushered out. Also it is referred to by both AP and Barbara Comyn as “the bag of Nails”. On the other hand since it was, as Michael Henle points out, close to Stringham’s former lodgings on West Halkin Street, he may simply have been suggesting going to his “local” of earlier days without considering the question of licensing hours. What do others think?

Barbara Comyn’s book, by the way, was called A Touch of Mistletoe.

––––––

From Jeff Manley

Ellen [makes] some pretty good points against Stringham’s reference to the present Bag o’ Nails as the place to which he was inviting Audrey. It may be that AP merely used that name because he was familiar with it. The pub is just near the Rubens Hotel which was the location of the Polish legation during WWII and AP might well have repaired there after a hard day with the Poles. The bus he took daily between Whitehall and Chelsea might well have passed the Bag o’ Nails.

AP refers to The Lord Nelson as his ‘local’ during the war years when he lived in that neighbourhood. I looked it up on the pub site but found no entry. AP says it was located next to the Chelsea Palace Variety music hall which was pulled down in the 1960s or 70s to make way for Heal’s furniture store on the King’s Road west of Sloane Square. Does any one know of a pub adjacent to Heal’s that might once have been The Lord Nelson?

––––––

From David Butler

Following on from the discussion, I believe that I may have found a reference to a “Bag O’Nails” which may very well be relevant to that mentioned by Stringham in CCR. It has nothing to do with the pub in Victoria which, like Ellen, I am sceptical about.

Searching in The Times Digital Archive I found an article dating from 14 July 1936 (ie. roughly contemporaneous with Mrs Foxe’s party). The article is headlined “BOTTLE PARTIES” and goes on ...

Summonses alleging infringement of the Licensing Act at seven bottle party establishments in the West End were down for hearing before Mr McKenna at Bow Street Police Court.

The premises concerned were: - The Mother Hubbard, Ham Yard W.; the Top Hat, Ham Yard, W.; the Venetian, Kingly Street, W.; the Bag o’Nails, Kingly Street, W.; the Lamp Post, Upper James Street, W.; the Coconut Grove, Regent Street, W., and the Oriental, Leicester Square, W.C.

Mr Vernon Gatti, prosecuting, said that bottle party establishments had taken the place of the old night clubs. If the law was observed persons who visited bottle parties for the first time were told that they could not then be supplied with liquor, but that they might give an order. That order, if given during permitted hours, was transmitted to a wine company and was delivered when the customer next visited the bottle party.

But the difficulties of observing that procedure were obvious, and a device was sometimes adopted which was quite illegal. Dance hostesses employed at the parties, whose only remuneration was tips from their partners, deposited with a wine store a large order for liquor. Then when a visitor wanted drink, one of the bottles so ordered by the dance hostesses was sent for ...
Anthony Powell Resides Here

CRAWFORD DOYLE BOOKSELLERS seeks and sells early editions of Anthony Powell’s works together with those of other distinguished British authors such as Evelyn Waugh, P. G. Wodehouse, Virginia Woolf, Henry Green and James Lees-Milne. In addition to rare books, we offer a complete collection of new books in our store near the Metropolitan Museum. Catalogs issued upon request.

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The article continues on to explain how this amounted to illegal resale of liquor and concluded with the Penalties handed out to the various venues which, in the case of the Bag o’Nails was:

... MISS MILDREDTH HOEY, proprietress, of Hatherley Grove W, against whom there was a previous conviction, fined £150, with an order to pay £35 costs, for selling alcoholic liquor without a licence.

GIOVANNI SERVINI, waiter, fined £30 and MISS ODETTE GILL, dance hostess, fined £10 for aiding and abetting.

Given the location (Kingly Street is just a short way east of Berkeley Square); the possibility that such a venue might have had a later licence than a pub; the 1936 dateline; I think the link with the venue Stringham / CCR is more than intriguing.

From Jeff Manley

David, You may well have hit the Nail on the Head. (Sorry, couldn’t resist the twofer.) The only question would be whether the Bag O’ Nails mentioned in the Times article would have been sufficiently notorious for AP to have remembered it when he wrote CCR in the 1960’s. If so, that seems a more likely destination than the pub in Victoria (or any pub for that matter).

He would surely have remembered the pub in Victoria (assuming it was there in the war years) but as Ellen has noted, Stringham doesn’t seem to have had a pub in mind no matter where it was located. Unless there is something in AP’s memoirs or letters (whenever we get those) there’s probably no way to know for sure.

From John Perry

The mid-60's Bag o' Nails (presumably lasting into the early 70's if Elton John / B Taupin figure in its lore) was also in Kingly St. Thus the pub in Victoria is a complete herring.

Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome and should be sent to:

Newsletter Editor, Stephen Holden, Anthony Powell Society 76 Ennismore Avenue Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK Fax: +44 (0)20 8864 6109
Email: editor@anthonypowell.org
Letters to the Editor

Fettiplace-Jones

In the correspondence section of the last Newsletter, there was speculation as to whether Powell was acquainted with Chastleton House and the genealogy of its occupants (a Jones family allied to one named Fettiplace). Oddly enough, I can produce some evidence to show that Powell never visited Chastleton – or at least that he had not done so before completing Dance.

In September 1975 Michael Ratcliffe interviewed Powell for an article in The Times, which appeared two days before the publication of Hearing Secret Harmonies. It contained the following passage:

I told him I had recently visited Chastleton House in Oxfordshire, whose period (1603), perfect state of preservation and terrible family paintings had reminded me of the country houses which form so important a setting in the earlier novels of the sequence. No, he had never been there. To whom did it belong? Alan Clutton-Brock. How extraordinary: Clutton-Brock had been a fellow-member, along with Harold Acton, Henry Yorke (“Henry Green”), Robert Byron, Brian Howard and Oliver Messel, of the Eton Society of the Arts, about which he had been trying to write that very morning. “I’m pottering with my Memoirs.”

Clutton-Brock duly secured a mention in Infants of the Spring.

There had indeed been a Jones/Fettiplace marriage. Henry Jones (son of Walter Jones, who built Chastleton) married Anne Fettiplace in 1609, which accounts for the Fettiplace arms appearing in the decoration of a Jacobean chimney piece in the house. It is just conceivable that Powell knew of this particular marriage but it seems on the whole unlikely because it doesn’t appear in the article about the family in Burke’s Landed Gentry. As it happens, Clutton-Brock was not himself descended from the marriage, having inherited the property by a sideways route. But in the guidebook that he wrote about Chastleton, Clutton-Brock says: “There is reason to believe that Henry and Anne Jones were among the ancestors of George Washington.”

In the final volume of his diaries, James Lees-Milne describes a visit he made to Chastleton six months before he died in 1997, recalling that he used to go to children’s parties there in the 1920s. I myself have been to Chastleton twice, in 1966 and 1986; on the second occasion I was shown round by Alan Clutton-Brock’s widow Barbara, a wonderful old duck who richly deserved the substantial obituary she was given in The Daily Telegraph when she died two years ago.

Patric Dickinson
London, EC4
Still with Us

My heart leapt when I read the following in the *Daily Telegraph* on February 17:

In the 34 years since WH Auden’s death in Vienna, there have been several biographies and memoirs of the ‘I knew Wystan’ variety. Now there is another book on the way, by Nicholas Jenkins, which seeks to reclaim Auden as, first and foremost, an English poet. Writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Jenkins challenges the established view that Auden was ‘the poet of a deliberately willed uprootedness’. His Auden is a writer who remained English by instinct through all those years in New York, Ischia and Austria ...

It’s comforting to know that Jenkins, who like many of us must be at least a little long in the tooth by now, is still active in London’s literary world. His choice of subject may surprise some in view of Auden’s flight to USA in 1939, but for me these names raise many memories of old friends from the past. Did Auden contribute to *Public School Verse* in 1924 (or was it 1923?) alongside Mark Members? Certainly Members’ ‘H-bomb Eclogue’ of 1960 would I am sure have impressed the author of *The Age of Anxiety*. Did Auden I wonder admire fellow poet Malcolm Crowding’s work? Your members will know the answers, but I simply wish to record here my pleasure that Nick should still be on the active list. I look forward to his new biography of Wystan with keen anticipation.

JG Quiggin
London, WC1


Modigliani Sketches

I have just been reading Nina Hamnett’s autobiography, *Laughing Torso*, and her various references to her friendship with Modigliani have made me wonder how Stringham acquired his Modigliani sketch, which having made a brief appearance in *The Acceptance World* and re-emerged in *Books Do Furnish a Room*, plays a vital role in the last volume.

Stringham’s other artworks, the engraving of Glimber and the coloured prints of monkeys riding dogs, sound the kind of things that a young man of his interests and background would have been offered by conventional print-dealers, but the Modigliani must have come from the world of *avant garde* art, much more Nick’s world.

Nina Hamnett records that when she was in Paris in 1913 Modigliani used to pay for his drinks by selling his sketches to acquaintances and that she bought a number. She also describes an exhibition of recent French art, including a number of Modigliani paintings and sketches, mounted by a Polish entrepreneur in London in 1919. While this suggests that there were a number of Modigliani sketches circulating in London in the 1920s and 1930s (much in the manner of the John drawings described in *Temporary Kings*) it does not sound as though these were circles Stringham frequented. So one wonders why Powell chose to give him just that single work of *avant garde* art. Could it perhaps be an oblique private tribute to his affair with Nina Hamnett, memories of which must have been much in his mind when writing *The Acceptance World*?

Ellen Jordan
Newcastle, Australia
The Firbank Connection

This week’s *TLS* [15 November 2006] carries a longish article by Alan Hollingworth about Ronald Firbank. He makes the not altogether revolutionary claim that Firbank heavily influenced Powell, Waugh and Henry Green:

The newly lightened and aerated form as a vehicle for a view of social life as absurd and inconsequential was what Waugh and other writers of his generation loved in Firbank, whose mark is also clearly seen in the droll futility of Anthony Powell’s early novels and, more deeply, in those of Henry Green, who combines Firbank’s ear for the oddity and inconsequence of speech with his imagistic eye for detail and oblique application to plot.

He goes on to report that when Duckworths reprinted Firbank’s novels, they set about regularizing his grammar, spelling and punctuation, stripping out the capital letters and italics, even rewriting passages in ways that changed their meaning and spoilt their music or their wit, and inevitably introducing new errors of their own.

He doesn’t mention (or if he does I missed it) that Powell in his memoirs reports that he “pressed the claims” of Firbank on Duckworths’ directors who were at first reluctant to proceed until they found out that Firbank left £800 in his will to help finance such republication. After the initial deluxe, limited edition unexpectedly sold out quickly, they followed up with various cheaper ones [*Messengers of Day*, p 75]. I know this only because I was rereading *Messengers* a day or two before the *TLS* article appeared.

So Powell was not only influenced by Firbank but responsible to some extent for assuring that his influence reached other writers of his and later generations. I wonder whether Powell was responsible for the edits about which Hollingworth complains. Somehow, it doesn’t sound like something Powell would do, at least not on his own initiative.

Jeff Manley
Maryland, USA

Nothing is interesting unless you are interested, and conversely.

[Anthony Powell, *A Writer’s Notebook*]

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