We wish all members & friends of the Society a Peaceful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year
From the Secretary’s Desk
Saturday 17 November 2007 saw yet another important, even momentous, day for the Society. It was the occasion of the inaugural Anthony Powell Lecture, given at the Wallace Collection in collaboration with the Society. The inaugural lecturer was the novelist, historian, film-maker and left-wing activist Tariq Ali.

While his talk concentrated mostly on a discussion of Dance, it was wide-ranging, thought-provoking and touched on almost the whole of Powell’s œvre – only the two post-Dance novels got no major mention. Tariq touched too on his personal likes and dislikes within Dance and tried to make some sense of the recent rather anti-Powell remarks by Sir Vidia Naipaul. The questions posed after the lecture were equally interesting and incisive.

One interesting point Tariq made in his talk was that one cannot properly understand any work of fiction (indeed any work) without understanding the context against which it was written. This reflects something I have been saying for a while about understanding Dance, although I had not crystallised my thoughts in this beautifully clear and precise way.

The Society thanks Tariq Ali for this inaugural lecture; we hope it is the first of many more; Tariq will certainly be a hard act to follow. We also thank The Wallace Collection, especially Jeremy Warren and Emmajane Avery, for their continued support, friendship and hospitality.

It remains only for me to wish all our members and friends a peaceful Christmas and a prosperous 2008.
This article first appeared in *The Observer* on 7 September 1975.

*Tomorrow, the final volume of Anthony Powell’s much-acclaimed novel sequence, A Dance to the Music of Time, will be published by Heinemann. Here, MICHAEL FRAYN explores the extraordinarily complete world that Anthony Powell has created.*

Sometimes, when I pass the Quadriga, at Hyde Park Corner, I remember for an instant what has long been too obvious to be noticed: how it felt to be grown-up. I suddenly catch the flavour of a sweltering summer’s night in the 1950s, when I walked all round this part of London talking to a girl I’d just met at a party. It must have been nearly dawn. We walked down the middle of the empty roadways, and I felt that after all those unsatisfactory years of being young I had suddenly inherited the entire city as my rightful estate.

Sometimes, though, it’s another memory that the Quadriga brings to mind – also of something that happened here after a party on a hot summer’s night. But this one was in, I think, 1929, several years before I was born. On the edge of the pavement here, in Grosvenor Place, Kenneth Widmerpool confided to Nicholas Jenkins the agonies of love he had been suffering over Barbara Goring. They had just left the Huntercombes’ dance in Belgrave Square, where Barbara had poured the sugar over Widmerpool’s head. It was a disclosure that came as something of a shock to Jenkins, partly because he too had been suffering over Barbara, and partly because in those far-off youthful days he used to think that people who looked and behaved like Widmerpool had really no right to fall in love at all.

Widmerpool, Jenkins, Barbara Goring, and all the events of that night are of course part of another world – the world created by Anthony Powell in *A Dance to the Music of Time*, the huge novel which is finally completed tomorrow with the publication of the twelfth volume, *Hearing Secret Harmonies*.

People think because a novel’s invented, it isn’t true, [says X Trapnel, one of the novel’s several characters who are themselves novelists, in this final volume.] Exactly the reverse is the case. Because a novel’s invented, it is true. Biography and memoirs can never be wholly true, since they can’t include every conceivable circumstance of what’s happened. The novel can do that. The novelist himself lays it down. His decision is binding.

I think (and I think that Powell thinks) that the relationship of imagined worlds to perceived ones is more complex than this, particularly where, as with Powell’s, they occupy objective space and time. But in essence Trapnel is right. The world
remembered by Nicholas Jenkins (Powell’s first-person narrator) is in many ways better established, more publicly accessible, more objectively there, than the worlds we ourselves remember (or imagine we remember).

You don’t remember my walking up Grosvenor Place, but (if you’ve read Powell) you remember the night that Widmerpool was there. In fact I remember it better myself. I’ve forgotten now who was at the party I’d come from, and I don’t know what’s become of the girl I was with. But I could tell you the names of quite a number of the guests at the Huntercombes’ dance.

I know what became of Widmerpool. I remember clearly the sequence of events which now began to occur in Grosvenor Place, and the position they came to occupy in the larger pattern of events which developed over the next 40 years. How Widmerpool stepped back to say good night, and collided with Edgar Deacon and Gypsy Jones on their way home from selling ‘War Never Pays!’ to late travellers at Victoria; how all four of them went off to have coffee at the stall by Hyde Park Corner – Widmerpool already falling in love with Gypsy, already becoming entangled into 40 years of increasingly bizarre political affiliations; how the air was full of the heavy summer night scent of the park; how, as they drank the coffee, Charles Stringham, with whom Jenkins had shared a study at school, reappeared from the past, urbane and detached, and already in that state of curiously sober inebriation in which he was going to spend so much of his life.

For 25 years this world has been in the process of creation – the first volume appeared in the same year as the Festival of Britain. I didn’t stumble upon it until somewhere in the early sixties, when it had reached the outbreak of the Second World War, and the threshold of my own conscious experience of life. It was like discovering a complete civilisation – and not in some remote valley of the Andes or the Himalayas, but in the midst of London, in the midst of my own life. It altered my perception of the world – and not only of Hyde Park Corner. I began to see in my own life the kind of patterns which were emerging in Jenkins’s life; glimpsed how tremendous changes prepared themselves unseen beneath the surface of the apparently immutable course of events, and then quite suddenly deflected one’s life into some new course, apparently no less immutable. Another world had been superimposed upon my own, refracting and reflecting it.

One of the pleasures of Powell’s world is its sheer size. You can live in it – you can get lost in it. Its texture is close and fine, its population dense enough to operate as an autonomous society, with its own political and business life, its own books and paintings. And everything in it is in perpetual movement and evolution, from the first appearance of Widmerpool, like some legendary ancestor of the tribe, as he doggedly returns from one of the runs he imposes upon himself at school, on a bleak December afternoon “in, I suppose, the year 1921,” until his final disappearance from the stage, now in his late sixties and stark naked, on another self-imposed run in (I suppose) 1970.

You come across people you knew donkey’s volumes ago, often in the most unexpected places, as when Charles Stringham, now dried out and burnt out,
but as stylishly self-contained as ever, turned up in 1941 as Jenkins’s mess waiter. Widmerpool, by now in a position of power at Divisional Headquarters, saved us all a lot of embarrassment on that occasion by having him smartly transferred to the Mobile Laundry Unit, and eventual death in a Japanese prison-camp.

The sharpness with which Widmerpool is seen as he first looms up out of that lost December dusk is characteristic. (“Two thin jets of steam drifted out of his nostrils, by nature much distended.”) But so is the slight uncertainty about the date. In the background definite, dateable events occur – the Gold Standard is abandoned, Dollfuss suspends parliamentary democracy in Austria. But Nick recalls only that Maclintick, the music critic was found dead “three or four days” after he and Moreland visited him, and that he had lasted about “eight or nine years” since the evening he’d talked about suicide in *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant* (and Barnby, characteristically, had got off with the waitress whom Moreland fancied).

The geographical locations, too, have this same careful mixture of definiteness and indefiniteness. They shade outwards from Grosvenor Place and the other London settings, always real and often identified only by name; through Eton, unidentified but unambiguous; and Oxford, unidentified, and distinguished from Cambridge only (I think) by the presence of a Rhodes Scholar, to an outer landscape of purely fictitious great houses in unspecified counties.

A similar uncertainty hazes many of the events. Recounting, at third hand, the nocturnal encounter between the elderly father of Books-do-furnish-a-room Bagshaw and the naked Lady Widmerpool, in the hall of Bagshaw’s house (“a bit north of Primrose Hill”), Jenkins speculates, with characteristic interest in practical minutiae, as to why Mr Bagshaw should have had to go through the hall to get to the lavatory.

An upper lavatory may not have existed, been out of order, possibly occupied, in view of what took place later. On the other hand, some preference or quirk may have brought him downstairs … Perhaps sleeping pills, digestive mixtures, medicaments of some sort, were deposited at this lower level.

Sometimes this measured diffidence borders on disingenuousness. “Some sort of embrace may even have taken place,” records Jenkins, describing his conversation with Gypsy Jones, at the birthday party of Edgar Deacon’s which finished that unsuccessful painter off. I suppose it may be possible to forget whether you kissed a girl at a party; but, when Jenkins breaks off his career as a writer to serve in the war, he tells us he has produced “three or four novels,” which is as plausible a modesty as admitting only to possessing one or two feet.

One of the ways in which Powell both suggests and distances landscapes and faces is to see them through the brush-strokes of particular painters; and what the receding planes of definition and knowability in his world recall is an aspect of painting which he mentions more than once: “recession” – the receding planes of colour by which perspectives can be suggested. And, in the depths of the picture, the world we are being shown opens into other, half-glimpsed, worlds beyond, like the sunlit street beyond the open door of the room in a de Hooch.
You can almost see the paintings and read the books that Powell’s characters are producing. You know exactly the stiffness of poor Edgar Deacon’s academic studies of classical scenes (like the Boyhood of Cyrus, hanging on the stairs at the Huntercombes’), and the coarseness of Isbister’s portraits of industrialists, which reflect only too accurately the fashionable preconceptions of the moment. If anyone, in a literary competition, produced a quotation from the once-fashionable novels of E St John Clarke – Fields of Amaranth, say, or Match Me Such Marvel – you feel you’d place it at once, sight unseen. Huge panoramas of critical tendentiousness open out from the title-page of JG Quiggin’s long-awaited Unburnt Boats; of knowingness from the wrappers of the novels by which Quiggin’s wife, Ada Leintwardine, made her name in the fifties – I Stopped at a Chemist and Bedsores; of hideous campness from the Quentin Shuckerley title, Athlete’s Footman.

Even the characters in the immediate foreground of the picture retain a rare inner privacy, a sense of being worlds in themselves, of having (as Jenkins says of Widmerpool) their being in obscurity.

One passes through the world knowing few, if any, of the important things about even the people with whom one has been from time to time in the closest intimacy.

This is something he keeps coming back to – “the difficulty in understanding, even remotely, why people behave as they do.”

Like the world we ourselves inhabit, and unlike most of the worlds fabricated in novels, the world in which Nicholas Jenkins lives is not fully integrated. We have to make our own sense of its ambiguity, place our own construction upon its events, just as we do with the world around us. Sometimes, years and volumes later, the most radical reappraisals become necessary of everything that Jenkins and we have taken most for granted. His love affair with Jean Duport at the beginning of the thirties is as absolute and unambiguous as anything in life ever is. You have a sense of the whole fabric of the world crumbling when Jenkins discovers, eight years and three volumes later, that she had in fact been simultaneously beginning an affair with the disconcertingly unimpressive Jimmy Brent. You can’t help beginning to worry (though the thought doesn’t seem to occur to Jenkins) that on that memorable day when Jean opened the door of the flat (“somewhere beyond Rutland Gate”) to Jenkins dressed only in a pair of slippers… No, surely not! Not then!

But in fact we’re left to make all sorts of connections without being prompted. It occurs to you only afterwards, and with an uneasy shock, why it must have been that Priscilla Tolland suddenly insisted on abandoning her lover without any coherent explanation in the middle of that wartime dinner at the Café Royal. And when, at the end of the war, Colonel Flores, the South American whom Jean marries after she has divorced Duport, tells Jenkins he was at the Ritz with his family 15 years before, you can’t help wondering (though again Jenkins doesn’t) if that wasn’t the South American family Jenkins was idly watching in the hotel on that very day in 1931 when he met Jean with the Templers, and first became her lover.

Powell’s, of course, is not the only imaginary world relating to this particular piece of space and time. Evelyn Waugh’s novels are another extensive comic projection of the upper classes over the same period. Yet they might be about
different planets. Waugh’s world is besieged by middle-class barbarians of grotesque pretensions and threatening loathsomeness; Powell observes his *arrivistes* (like Ted Jeavons, the former car-polisher who is taken up and married by Molly, Lady Sleaford) with exactly the same steadiness and detached sympathy as everybody (though I suppose Widmerpool is never forgiven the middle-class laboriousness of his efforts to rise).

In Waugh’s world the comedy arises from the puppet-like helplessness of the characters in the grip of external forces that they cannot control, and internal codes of behaviour that they cannot abandon. Powell’s world is driven by human willpower; the comedy arises from the success which the characters have in imposing themselves upon their material.

Another related and powerful current, too, charges Powell’s world: eroticism.

Genuine erotic feeling is surprisingly rare in English fiction (perhaps in all fiction), and at the very end of *The Music of Time* the sexual interest coarsens to take in voyeurism and necrophilia, and finally an entirely unconvincing excursion into mystical orgiastics. But the earlier volumes are alive with fascination for the complexity of sexual behaviour –

the tangled strands of appetite, tenderness, convenience or some hope of gain.

The condition of marriage Jenkins passes over as too complex to be described at all from the inside, but in the affair with Jean Duport he touches the living nerve throughout. The evocativeness is heightened by the tact with which the affair is both conducted and described; from the first unpremeditated embrace, in the back of the Templers’ car, just beyond the neon sign on the Great West Road of the girl forever diving; to the irritation displayed later by Mona Templer, “perhaps due to an inner awareness that a love affair was in the air, the precise location of which she was unable to identify”; to “that terrible sense of exhaustion that descends, when, without cause or warning, an unavoidable, meaningless quarrel develops with someone you love”; and the apparently simple observation that goes to the heart of the affair (and all affairs): “There is, after all, no pleasure like that given by a woman who really wants to see you.”

I wonder if, when he passed the Quadriga in later years, Widmerpool (or Lord Widmerpool, as he later was) ever recalled that first meeting with Gypsy Jones (or Lady Craggs, as she later was, more dizzyingly but no less logically). Probably not. But he almost certainly hadn’t read the book; he was never one to waste his time on novels. Some of the other characters might have read at any rate the earlier volumes. You’d think Jenkins would have done – he’s read everything else, from E St John Clarke to Ariosto. He speculates on the relation between the fictitious and the factual in Proust, but says nothing about Powell. Professional jealousy, perhaps? He doesn’t tell us much about his own work, after those “three or four” pre-war novels, and a later study of Burton. Was he, too, writing his twelve volumes? Is there a complete Jenkins world, bearing upon Powell’s world in the same way that Powell’s world bears upon ours? And is there, in Jenkins world, a writer who is producing a twelve-volume meta-meta-novel in his turn ...

Sadder worlds than ours, if there aren’t.

© Guardian News and Media 1975
Colonel Allason served on the Joint Planning Staff at the War Office in 1945, briefing Churchill and the Chiefs-of-Staff in the Cabinet War Rooms. Here he recalls the atmosphere of intrigue in which Colonel Denis Capel-Dunn, Anthony Powell’s inspiration for Widmerpool, conducted meetings as Secretary to the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC).

Rain lashed my face as I made my way along Whitehall, heading for the secret heart of the war effort. It was February 1945 and plans for victory were at the forefront of my mind. Ahead, just visible through the downpour marched a squat figure in a sodden British Warm. Despite his slow progress, I did not hurry to catch this officer up as he turned right into Parliament Square.

Denis Capel-Dunn enjoyed some notoriety hereabouts, famed for his forcefulness with subordinates, not excluding one Captain Anthony Powell, manipulation of equals, and ingratiating of superiors, particularly those of ministerial rank. His reputation had spread up St James’s Street for a different reason. “Young Bloody” they had christened him in Brooks’s, where he occupied the unchallenged position of club bore. Although my section of the War Office was one of the Joint Intelligence Committee’s principal clients I was in no hurry to establish more than a nodding acquaintance with the spider at the centre of its very tangled web.

Approaching the anonymous sandbagged entrance in Great George Street, I fished my pass from the pocket of a riding mac off which water now streamed. The Royal Marine Colour Sergeant at the portal saluted with as much enthusiasm as could be considered reasonable in the circumstances. By the time I had exchanged a word in the cramped lobby with my naval opposite number, Captain “Ruggy” Macintosh (later Black Rod in the House of Lords) Capel-Dunn had vanished into his subterranean lair like the Demon King.

The Cabinet War Rooms, to which I was so frequently summoned in these tense days to give briefings, attend meetings and amend plans, occupied the fortified basement of the steel-framed Office of Works building in Storey’s Gate opposite St James’s Park, the strongest structure in Whitehall. Known simply as “George Street” or “Storey’s Gate”, it was protected by a raft of concrete several feet thick strengthened with tram rails and had been
so the best test was to see whether what we had prepared made any sense when typed up the next day. That composed at 4 pm was notably better than the 4 am version. The Premier’s sleeping habits were in any event an unreliable guide, as he was as likely to take an afternoon siesta as he was to keep the Chiefs-of-Staff up most of the night, often with us in attendance. More frequently, though, he worked and slept immediately above us in the six first-floor rooms of the Number 10 Annexe, the windows barred with steel shutters during bombing alerts.

Unlocking my briefcase in the spartan room that served as our outpost I reflected upon “Need to Know”. As a young subaltern in India in 1937 I had trained my mounted troops to charge into battle, knowing only that war was coming. Later, commanding a squadron of tanks against the Japanese my knowledge of the enemy’s disposition had been less than was comfortable. By the time I joined Mountbatten as a senior military planner to the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia full information had become a working necessity. Today, although afforded oversight of all military intelligence, I was surrounded by, yet largely ignorant of a further element, the political dimension. Not so the JIC and its indefatigable secretary, whose tentacles appeared to reach into every nexus of power and ambition to know no bounds.

Appearances can mislead, however. For, although this was known only to a few, Capel-Dunn had in October of the previous year mounted an invasion of his own. His attempt at a takeover of MI5 had, however, proved an intrigue too far, easily parried by the Director of the Security Service and his eminence gris, Guy Liddell, Director of Counter-Espionage. Thereafter the influence of the
Joint Intelligence Committee had been constrained by a closing of secret ranks intended to keep Young Bloody in his box. It seemed that there were confidences to which even the co-ordinator of secrets was not privy. And one of them was under his very nose.

Periodically the Prime Minister would disappear into his private lavatory in the bunker, which otherwise remained securely locked. And there he would remain for a considerable time, giving rise among the secretaries to a tender concern about his insides. It remained a closed secret that behind the door, with its “Occupied/Vacant” sign, the PM was talking over an encrypted transatlantic radio link to the President of the United States. An early computer, located in an annexe basement of Selfridges department store in Oxford Street, was required to scramble speech securely on this, the first “hot line”. The highly classified system was codenamed SIGSALY, the London terminal being X-RAY.

With my own papers now prepared to give my briefing I proceeded to the figurative centre of the George Street complex, the Cabinet Room, protected by its own guard post. Within a square had been formed of trestle tables covered in baize, with a narrow gap to allow members of the secretariat into the centre to take notes. Around the outside facing inward sat members of the War Cabinet and Chiefs-of-Staff. Whatever the hour a meeting was likely to be in progress in the Cabinet Room. From it issued a stream of demands for information, some of which it was our task as planners to answer; others washed into the JIC.

From a spare meeting room at the far, Whitehall end of the building the JIC’s quarters had by now migrated westward, ever closer to the focus of power. For as its secretary well knew, access is all. Not just to people but to information and intent. For the secret heart of the bunker was not the Cabinet Room, but the Map Room. And Capel-Dunn was drawn to it as a moth to a flame.

Entering I reflected that it was no coincidence that the Map Room should be located next to the Prime Minister’s bedroom. From the Map Room he had broadcast to the nation during the dark days of 1940, and I well knew that he still met heads of state and military leaders within its closely guarded confines. The walls were covered with large-scale maps of Britain, the Atlantic and Far Eastern theatres of war, bearing notes of force deployments and convoys. Outside it was posted a list of those granted access. (It is still there today, bearing Capel-Dunn’s name and my own.)

An essential component of planning is access to the best intelligence, and my principal source of processed intelligence was Capel-Dunn’s boss, Bill Cavendish-
Bentinck, immensely successful as Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee who doubled as Foreign Office Adviser to the Directors of Plans. I did not know that he was of ambassadorial rank (soon to be appointed British Ambassador in Warsaw), and always found him very helpful and never stuffy. This was unusual among diplomats of the period.

Bill had succeeded Ralph Stevenson as Chairman at the JIC and had the personality to co-ordinate all Britain’s intelligence activities. It was an immense task, but one he fulfilled with rare skill and a tact not always displayed by the Secretary. Bill was admired by all the directors of intelligence, with the possible exception of Admiral John Godfrey at the Admiralty, who had – rightly – suspected that Cavendish-Bentinck was arranging his removal from his post because he was un-cooperative and disruptive. Godfrey was transferred to the Indian Navy, minus the anticipated knighthood. It was a manoeuvre that Capel-Dunn must have relished, if he had not indeed suggested it.

He and I remained contractually bound together yet distant until the cessation of hostilities. As I climbed the bunker steps for the last time on August 15th, breathing in a lungful of fresh air, Capel-Dunn remained somewhere in the bowels beneath preparing his next intrigue. It proved to be the post-war review of intelligence in which more than a few scores were settled, the report being published for classified circulation under his name. Instead of the springboard to the political career and peerage projected by Anthony Powell in *A Dance to the Music of Time* it became Capel-Dunn’s epitaph. Having survived the war without hearing a shot fired in anger he died in an air crash that same year, returning from the San Francisco Conference that established the United Nations.

*****

*Ringside Seat – the Wartime and Political Memoirs of James Allason* is published by Timewell Press at £20. It is available to readers at the special price of £15 post free (UK & Europe). Cheques payable to the Blackthorn Group, PO Box 41, Wallingford OX10 6TD.

The Cabinet War Rooms and Churchill Museum, Clive Steps, King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AQ are open daily from 9.30am to 6pm; [http://cwr.iwm.org.uk](http://cwr.iwm.org.uk)

*Ringside Seat* will be reviewed in the Spring edition of the Newsletter.
It is a long haul for me to get to the Anthony Powell Conference, as I live in Japan, but this 4th biennial event was luckily the second in succession that I have been able to attend. Like the previous Centenary gathering, there were also a number of delegates who had travelled from far and wide to be in Bath, and a glance at the list reveals attendees from Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Spain, the USA, and Canada, in addition to the UK. Once again I was able to meet up – albeit briefly – with Koyama Taichi who was also visiting from Japan. Both of us had been asked to chair sessions at the Conference, which must have made it seem a little as if Japan was taking over.

The University of Bath provided a fine setting for the discussion of all matters Powellian and was a worthy successor to previous events held respectively at Eton, Oxford, and London’s Wallace Collection. It was my first visit to Bath. Trips to the West Country are rare indeed for me – and this was even the case when I lived in England – so this was a welcome adventure and the city of Bath did not disappoint. I had been told it was nice in a “chocolate box” kind of way, but it was an old English friend who said that and I have grown used to his cynicism … The Oldfields Hotel is on the outskirts but within walking distance of the centre and provided an excellent place to stay which I can recommend. Swedish delegate Malin Siddiqi and her husband Faik were also staying at the Oldfields and were responsible for discovering it through the internet, so they must take the credit. While the Oldfields is usually described as a “bed and breakfast” it’s a very superior one, with champagne on the breakfast menu. (This was indulged only once, on the occasion of Malin and Faik’s fifth wedding anniversary, celebrated the day before the Conference.)

The Conference itself was, of course, a one-day event, in contrast to the two days and prolonged celebrations of the Anthony Powell Centenary in 2005, but to me it didn’t feel diminished in any way and was thoroughly enjoyable with an excellent collection of speakers. No doubt there will be proceedings published in due course and so the details of what was said will be widely available. Here I will just mention something of the speakers who enlightened us all.

The morning session got under way, following welcoming remarks by the Society’s Chairman Patric Dickinson, with
a talk from the novelist and biographer DJ Taylor. This was entitled “Bright Young People”, and is also the title of his new book which came out shortly after the conference. He elaborated on the 1920s “exclusive gang of blue-blooded socialites and rackety bohemians”, many of whom were known to Anthony Powell during his Eton and Oxford days. One aspect of Taylor’s paper was the effect that these contacts and relationships had on Powell’s novels of the 1930s and on the early volumes of Dance. I have since acquired David Taylor’s new book and am looking forward to reading it when time permits (or “whenever feasible” as Widmerpool might say). In the meantime, his talk was quite an appetiser.

This year I read four of Taylor’s novels – three recently collected in one paperback volume under the title Returning, plus his newest novel, the Victorian mystery Kept. As a fellow Norwich native, I was fascinated by his novel Trespass (one of those collected in Returning) as it describes the same Earlham area of the city where I was brought up. I mentioned this to David Taylor and it turned out that the newsagents in his novel was modelled on the very same shop I used to visit almost every day as a boy back in the 1960s. And as fellow Norwich City FC supporters (Taylor is a season ticket holder) we were also able to bemoan the plight our club currently finds itself in. Unfortunately, he had to leave the Conference after the morning session for an appointment back in Norwich and this may explain the somewhat worried look on his face in the photo we had taken together as he remembered just how late he was.

The second morning session had been a nice contrast. First, Dr Jonathan Black from Kingston University, London, talked on “Always at the Ritz: Anthony Powell, Modernist Design and the Visual Arts in Britain”. He focused particularly on Misha Black’s jackets for Powell’s books and the later ones by Osbert Lancaster for Dance. Powell’s interest in Weimar German design was covered and also his collages and knowledge of Modernist art and design which he knew considerably better than many realised. Following this, Professor Paul Delany of Simon Fraser University, Canada gave his paper “Public Contentions and Private Egotisms: Dance and the Politics of the 1930s”. Delany pointed out that “Powell is not a Tory novelist, but rather a novelist who happened to be a Tory”. His contention is that although Powell’s treatment of the Left is comic, it is not malignant. The personal myth of which Powell writes is almost universal and “the mechanisms of self-deception and hypocrisy not peculiar to the Left, but are just as common in, say, the Army or big business”. Ultimately, Jenkins believes that Labour and Tory MPs have more in common than those outside politics. This reminded me of something Powell said (in the 1983 Arena television documentary, I think) to the effect that however different they might appear, a literary figure such as Dostoevsky has more in common with, say, Barbara Cartland than either of them have with someone not involved in the business of writing novels.

After a buffet lunch, the third session was again a good balance of different but equally enthralling subjects. At the last conference John Gould spoke of the composer Constant Lambert in relation to Hugh Moreland. This time, Jeffrey Manley presented “Name that Tune: Preparing a Guide to the Musical References in Anthony Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time”. He described the
work going on in preparing a guide to the musical references in *Dance* to complement the ones already in existence on paintings, books and places in Hilary Spurling’s handbook. Despite Powell having probably less interest in music than the other arts, there are popular songs, hymns and opera in *Dance* which perhaps shows Powell’s preference for music with lyrics.

The third session concluded with Professor Zachary Leader of Roehampton University giving an illuminating talk on “Kingsley Amis and Anthony Powell: A Friendship” in which he was able to draw on his own research into Amis. As the Amis biographer and also the editor of his letters, there could hardly be anyone better qualified to do this. While every presentation was a success, my own view was that Zachary Leader’s paper was the highlight of the day. It was enormously informative while at the same time maintaining a light touch to keep his audience thoroughly entertained throughout. A model presentation.

In the day’s final session, the novelist and biographer Alan Judd gave the talk “Would it be Possible Now?” This focused on how a contemporary novelist might go about writing a modern version of *Dance*. It concluded the proceedings in an interesting and sometimes light-hearted way with much input from the audience on the subject of who might actually write such a novel and also who might be modern day models for the characters of *Dance*. Patric Dickinson rounded things off with some closing remarks.

Although the Conference officially ended with the close of presentations on the Saturday, it could really be said to have continued for another day as there was a full programme for those willing and able...
to stay on for the Sunday. The day began with a walking tour of literary Bath for those of us who met up at Bath Abbey at ten o’clock that morning. The two groups were led by Joanne and Tony Edmonds of Ball State University. I am a relative newcomer to walking tours, not having first participated in one until Stephen Holden guided us around the footsteps of that long night of the parties in from *A Buyer’s Market* at the Conference two years ago in London. But I have become addicted to them since, so much so that I had already been on a walking tour of Bath provided by the council the day before the conference began. This had been led by a rather garrulous woman who seemed to do rather more talking than walking. Tony Edmonds led the group that I joined from the Conference and struck the perfect balance between the two. The architecture of Bath is of course one of its main attractions too and among its buildings we saw the creations of both John Wood the Elder, and his son John Wood the Younger (who designed and built the Royal Crescent), and of Robert Adam who was responsible for designing and building Pulteney Bridge.

Among other sights, the walk took in the Theatre Royal, the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, Gravel Walk and, of course, Bath’s most famous claim to tourist fame, Royal Crescent. The ghosts of Jane Austen and her characters loom large over the city, but also those of Richard Sheridan who eloped from a house in the Crescent with Elizabeth Linley; Samuel Pepys who bathed in Cross Bath in 1668; and literary characters such as Mr Pickwick, and Anne Elliott and Captain Wentworth who took the Gravel Walk near the end of *Persuasion*.

A pub lunch is something not to be missed on any visit to England and after food and drinks at The Raven in Queen Street it was off on our visit to The Chantry where a sizeable number of delegates were lucky enough to be the guests of John Powell for afternoon tea. There was some concern that we might not actually make it to The Chantry as our coach lurched slowly and tentatively through the narrow and narrower lanes approaching the house. Like most others, I was making my first visit there and so was particularly excited to finally see the former home of the creator of *Dance*. We wandered freely around the house and its grounds. Not least of its attractions were the collages in the downstairs “boiler room”. The effects of the lunchtime drink were taking their toll and I can now confess that I availed myself of the toilet facilities there, while admiring Powell’s artistic handiwork. There was also time for visitors to have a walk by the lake where Powell’s ashes were scattered and to explore the fascinating grotto beyond.

To end on a more personal note, attending this, and the Centenary conference, has enabled me to make and keep in touch with many new friends with similar interests. As the Society becomes part of the literary landscape, its conferences important landmarks along the way, I must add my thanks and appreciation to Keith Marshall. Not just for his work in helping to organise this conference but for his continual encouragement, energy and enthusiasm. And now I must start thinking about attending the next conference in Washington.

*Other photographs from the conference are scattered throughout this issue.*
Copy Deadlines

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

**Newsletter #30, Spring 2008**
Copy Deadline: 8 February 2008
Publication Date: 7 March 2008

**Newsletter #31, Summer 2008**
Copy Deadline: 9 May 2008
Publication Date: 6 June 2008

**Secret Harmonies #3, 2008**
Copy Deadline: 8 September 2008
Publication Date: 24 October 2008

Dates for Your Diary

**London Group**

**Powell Birthday Lunch**
Saturday 1 December 2007
Strada, 4 St Paul’s Churchyard
London EC4
Time: 1215 for 1230 hrs
Please contact the Hon. Sec. if you wish to attend

**New York Anthony Powell Birthday Celebration**
Wednesday 19 December 2007
Century Club, 7 West 43rd Street
New York, USA
12 noon
Please contact William Warren on +1 212 259 8700 or wwarren@dl.com
if you wish to attend

**London Group Pub Meets 2008**

Saturday 09 February
Saturday 10 May
Saturday 09 August
Saturday 08 November

The Audley, Mount Street, London, W1
1230 to 1530 hrs

Regular quarterly meeting. Good beer, good food, good company, good conversation in a Victorian pub AP would have known. Members & non-members welcome; further details from Hon. Sec.

**Annual General Meeting 2008**

**Saturday 25 October**
Venue tbc
1400 hrs
Followed at 1500 hrs by a talk Details when available from the Hon. Sec.

**Conference 2009**

We are pleased to announce that the 5th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference will be held over the weekend of 10-13 September 2009 at Georgetown University Washington, DC, USA

Further details, including exact dates, programme, booking arrangements to follow.
Local Groups

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

New England Group
Area: New England, 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 & Finland
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. If you wish to start a local group the Hon. Secretary can advise on the number of members in your area.

Robert Rollason
1930-2007

It is with great regret that we announce the recent death of member Bob Rollason after a short illness. Bob was an active member of the Society’s London Group and an occasional contributor to this Newsletter – indeed his last article appeared in the previous issue within days of his death. Amongst his other interests, Bob was an enthusiastic and active member of the Betjeman Society.

A Memorial service was held on Friday 9 November in the parish church at Penn, Buckinghamshire. The Society was represented by the Hon. Secretary.

All who knew Bob will miss his charm and quiet erudition. Bob’s wife, Jean, and son John remain members of the Society. We send our deepest condolences to all Bob’s family.

Toronto Group

Joan Williams reports that members in the Toronto area of Canada are forming a local group. Anyone who is interested and not already in touch with Joan may make contact with the group through the Hon. Secretary.

Holy Trinity Church, Penn, Buckinghamshire
Centenary Conference Proceedings

ERRATUM

 Somehow, sometime, the Gremlins got into the production process of the Centenary Conference Proceedings and they mangled the title of Marcel Proust’s magnum opus throughout the volume but especially in John Roe’s paper (pages 61-69). The title of Proust’s work should, of course, correctly be A la recherche du temps perdu.

As publisher, the buck stops with me and I take full responsibility for this inexcusable error howsoever it arose. Personally, and on behalf of the Society, I extend sincere apologies to Dr John Roe and to the other authors affected and regret any embarrassment we have caused.

Anthony Powell would very definitely not have been amused.

Keith Marshall, Hon. Secretary
Part of Anthony Powell’s Boiler Room collage at The Chantry

Cornell University fraternity photograph from 1965, mentioned by John Gould on page 21. John Powell is 4th row, 2nd from right with George Glober two rows immediately above.
Subscriptions

Subscription Changes – Reminder

In undertaking a periodic review of Society finances and subscriptions the trustees have concluded that it is time to make some adjustments. While an increase in subscriptions is not needed at this time (indeed some members will see a reduction) we need to compensate for the increasing cost of overseas postage. The trustees have therefore agreed the following changes to the membership and subscription structure:

- The Gold and Founder membership grades are withdrawn from 1 April 2008. Current Gold members will revert to being Individual members. Existing Founder members will retain their status but pay the Individual rate.
- To compensate for the above, those few Gold and Founder members who have already pre-paid subscriptions to 2009 and 2010 will have their membership extended by one year, and those paid up beyond 2010 will have their renewal date extended by two years.
- In order to more equitably distribute the escalating cost of overseas postage it has been decided to introduce an annual £5 supplement payable by all non-UK members. This represents around 65% of the additional postage costs incurred mailing the Newsletter and journal overseas as compared with the UK while recognising overseas members have less ready access to Society events. We hope that this will not deter our overseas members.
- These changes took effect on 1 June 2007 for new members and come into force on 1 January 2008 for existing membership renewals.
- It is anticipated that all subscription rates will need to rise by around 10% from 2009, but this will be reviewed again during 2008.

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. 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 whose subscription is not renewed by the end of September will be removed from the membership register.
For many of the 2007 Anthony Powell conference-goers in Bath, the event most nearly approaching sublimity was Sunday afternoon tea at The Chantry. John Powell most graciously opened the house and the grounds to a coachful of us, serving tea and plates of goodies – not a rock bun in sight! – as we passed from dining room and library, upstairs through the bedrooms, and down to the lower floor. The upstairs walls were covered with art, much Dance related: Osbert Lancaster covers, a Michael Ayrton sketch of Constant Lambert (ie. Moreland), paintings of Powell himself, and so much more. But for many of us, the lowest level of the house contained the most treasure.

The Chantry possesses four floors, which are long and lean: the rooms stretch out in a line, like what in New York city are called “railroad apartments.” Because it was built against a falling topography, the front of the building reveals three stories, but the rear façade has four; in the basement, windows open toward the southwest. There are two significant rooms down here: the Collage Room (my designation) and the billiards room. Because I had visited The Chantry before, and knew some of the secrets of these two rooms, I offered to function as a downstairs docent.

Hilary Spurling described the Collage Room at the 2005 conference, and it really needs no docent. For a number of years Powell used to unwind from the mornings of writing by cutting and pasting photographs of faces and landscapes on the walls, ceiling, and anything else in this room (see photograph on page 19). It contains a small loo, enclosed by a stall; the walls and door of this are fully covered as well. Everyone from John Lennon to Gandhi to Disraeli to Twiggy to anonymous 17th century courtiers watch from the walls. It is an extraordinary experience, like visiting a museum; one could spend hours lost in the images.

I spent my time docenting in the billiards room. It is dusty and fusty, a long time removed from actual billiards play. But there were treasures in there. On the ancient billiards table were arranged photographs, one of Powell’s father in company with a number of other officers, and a similar one of Powell himself and his military fellows. On one wall were long shelves filled with 20 or 30 bound copies of The Boy’s Own Paper. Was Erridge far away?

To me, the most interesting artefact in the room was a composite photograph from Cornell University fraternity in the late 1960s (again see photograph on page 19). This is a gridded arrangement of small photographs of members of the fraternity. Searching carefully, a visitor can find the face of a young John Powell, for he spent a year as a student at Cornell and was a member of this fraternity. If the visitor looks two rows higher, she will see John’s best friend, with whom he spent vacations in Washington. Powell was delighted that John had a friend to visit when he could not come home to The Chantry for shorter holidays. The friend’s name was George Glober – now an admiral in the US Navy – and Powell commemorated the friendship by giving George’s surname to Louis Glober, that charismatic film producer in Temporary Kings.
Those members who attended the AGM in October were fascinated to hear the valedictory paper by retiring chairman Patric Dickinson, who explored Anthony Powell’s relationship with the College of Arms and the records of many genealogical inquiries he had pursued in the course of a long life. Particularly intriguing was the revelation that Powell’s own pedigree included a certain Robert de Umfraville, Earl of Angus, who lived in the time of Richard II, dying in 1325 at the height of the Despenser rebellions. He had been present at the beheading of the Earl of Lancaster at Pontefract Castle in 1322, and as a co-conspirator had been lucky to keep his head although he lost his Earldom.

Umfraville of course, is a name that runs like a silver thread through all the volumes of *Dance*.

But it was equally tantalising, subsequently, to find a possible origin for another recurrent *Dance* character, Lindsay “Books do furnish a room” Bagshaw, with some remarkable coincidences worth exploring.

In 1948, Powell published his researches on the 17th century antiquarian John Aubrey (1626-97) and provided readers with a long, annotated appendix of all the books in Aubrey’s library, most of which were given to the Ashmolean museum at the end of his life. Two volumes were by one Edward Bagshawe, one of which, published in 1571 was *The Life of V Powell*.

Surely not Violet, which would have been prescient indeed! Who then was Bagshawe and why was he writing a life of V Powell?

A little literary sleuthing reveals that Bagshawe was a member of the Rota Club, a short-lived political debating society (1659-60) that included Aubrey and Pepys; it met at the Turks Head in New Palace Yard and was more than once broken up by Cromwellian soldiers, then in power. Bagshawe was, said Aubrey, “a violent controversialist”.

Only two other facts are known; he was briefly imprisoned by the Cromwellian authorities and he is buried in Bunhill Fields in the City of London. As to V Powell, he turns out to be one Vavasour Powell, an equally lively political debater who was also imprisoned with Bagshawe and others for being too keen on the return of the King!

Is it then just a serendipitous co-incidence that in real life both Umfraville and Bagshawe were at the heart of the rebellious times in which they lived, and in their later fictional reincarnations both contributed more than a little effort to challenging the rhythm of the *Dance*? After all, Nick Jenkins says of Bagshaw: “forever fascinated by revolutionary techniques …”

---

**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
The Bright Young People (or “BYP”) of the 1920s and 1930s must be one of the most well-chronicled groups of people of the last century. Famous for being famous, they filled the gossip columns of the day and were fictionalised by Evelyn Waugh and Nancy Mitford, photographed by Cecil Beaton, and painted by Rex Whistler and Edward Burra. DJ Taylor has produced an interesting history of this “lost generation”, using not only the usual sources (Waugh’s and Beaton’s diaries, novels of the period such as *Vile Bodies* and *Afternoon Men*) but also secondary sources, such as magazines and newspapers of the day. Elizabeth Ponsonby – whose story forms a central strand of this book – was one of the prime movers in the BYP, and Taylor has also had access to her long-suffering parents’ diaries.

Taylor says of the BYP that as a group they defy instant analysis. Some “became successful writers, journalists or artists, while others plumbed the depths of drink, drugs and disappointment”. Nor is it possible to write off the BYP as a bunch of “gilded triflers” since the society they moved in produced so many leading writers and artists. But DJ Taylor covers the failures as well as the successes. There’s a particularly good chapter comparing two of Powell’s Eton contemporaries, Brian Howard (failure) and Robert Byron (success).

Anthony Powell features heavily in Taylor’s book, not just as a participant in the jollities but also as a chronicler of them. Taylor quotes Powell on many of the main characters of the time – Robert Byron, Harold Acton, Brian Howard, Henry Green, Evelyn Waugh etc. He also sees *Afternoon Men* and *From a View to a Death* as particular “party” novels of the time. Taylor also identifies Powell’s role as an influential man behind the scenes, because through his job at Duckworths he managed to get published early works by Waugh, Byron and Inez Holden, among others.

Taylor has also had access to the letters Powell wrote to Henry Yorke (Henry Green) in 1927-1928, when Powell was working in London and Yorke at the family manufacturing firm, Pontifex, in Birmingham. Powell reports on the progress of his social life and the activities of mutual friends, while Yorke is increasingly aware of his detachment from that life. Several of Powell’s letters mention the Biddulph sisters, Mary and Adelaide (known as “Dig”), to whom both Powell and Yorke were romantically attracted. In 1928 Powell wrote to Yorke:

> The more one sees of the Biddulphs, the more one learns. I’m at a loss to know why they tolerate one at all. Mary, describing a dinner party at the Russells at which we had both been present, said with extraordinary venom: “and they talked about Oxford the whole time and all the books everyone had written there”.

DJ Taylor surmises that “the faint air of coldness that infected their relationship” when Henry Yorke married Dig in 1929 had two sources. On the one hand Powell felt that his rejection as a suitor was...
because of his inferior social status (son of an army officer competing with son of a wealthy industrialist), and on the other hand that Yorke had somehow behaved disingenuously in the whole matter.

In his conclusion, Taylor says of the BYP that

like many a youth movement they began unobtrusively, found themselves seized upon by a grateful media and were rapidly converted into a stylised and decadent version of their original form.

Like many other youth movements the BYP “carried with them the cause of their future destruction”, ending up in pursuit of spectacle for its own sake. Going back to the BYP’s “successes”, Taylor notes that for some people,

mostly ambitious young men from middle-class backgrounds, this milieu offered a springboard for international success.

He cites in particular Waugh and Beaton as finding the milieu they inhabited as offering them both a subject and a range of connections from which they could forge durable careers.

Taylor’s book finishes at the start of World War 2, with the publication of Yorke’s Party Going (a novel that is seen as a kind of coda to the whole BYP whirl), and the death from drink of Elizabeth Ponsonby (in many ways the central character of Taylor’s book) in 1941.

Bright Young People is an excellent account of a fascinating period of English social life, and DJ Taylor, as usual, makes many perceptive comments about the era and its characters.

**Why Not Advertise Here?**

***

**Display Advert Rates**

- Full Page: £30
- ½ page or full column: £20
- 1/3 page (horizontal): £15
- ¼ page (½ column): £10
- 1/6 page (1/3 column): £8
- B&W artwork only

***

**Flyer Inserts**

- £30 per A4 sheet
- £15 per A5 sheet plus printing costs

***

**Small Ads**

- Free to Society members
- Others 10p/word, minimum £3

***

**Births, Deaths & Marriages**

- Free to Society members
- Others 25p/word, minimum £5
From Alice Thompson in the Daily Telegraph (20 September 2007):

Bank managers might be tyrants, like the one in the Private Eye cartoon saying: ‘Yes, I am prepared to grant you an overdraft, but first I’d like a little more grovelling please’. But often they acted as father figures, ‘men dedicated to duty’, as Anthony Powell described his fictional bank manager. At least they were accountable, unlike the blank screen staring at Northern Rock’s online customers or the call-centre man in Bangalore.

Quiggin’s Mint Cake

Prue Raper noticed this advertisement in a recent Sunday Times:

Quiggin’s,
The Home of Kendal Mint Cake

We have been making Kendal Mint cake since 1880. This is longer than any other company still in existence and which is why we believe that we are the home of Kendal Mint Cake. Kendal Mint cake has long been known as a supplier of energy and therefore very popular with outdoor field pursuits like climbing and walking. Today Quiggin’s range of products extends to more than the original mint cake. We make Rum & Brandy Butters, Truffles & Marzipan, Fudges, Chocolate Creams and even a refreshing line of Herbal Punches.

Paul Willetts Talk on Julian Maclaren-Ross

On Monday 10 December 2007 (in Fitzrovia at Bourne & Hollingsworth, 28 Rathbone Place, London W1) Paul Willetts will talk on “Fear & Loathing in Fitzrovia: The Strange Lives of Julian Maclaren-Ross”. Maclaren-Ross was, by Powell’s own admission, the character model for X Trapnel in Dance. Paul Willetts is author of a biography of Maclaren-Ross, Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia (published by Dewi Lewis Publishing) and a forthcoming edition of Maclaren-Ross’ selected letters.

The talk is at 7 pm, followed by live jazz from Alan Weekes & cocktails from Hendrick’s Gin.

Gypsy Jones Character Model?

Dr Jonathan Black (who spoke at the Bath conference) has identified a possible role model for Gypsy Jones:

By the way, Misha Black’s Gypsy Jonesish Bolshie artist lady friend Pearl Binder (1904-1990) became ‘Lady Elwyn-Jones’ when her hubbie leftie lawyer and Labour MP for West Ham Fred was made Attorney-General in 1964 by Wilson. An AP link, perhaps? Fred was also a noted bibliophile …

Do any members have any further information about this couple?
From Max Hastings in the *Guardian* (17 September 2007):

The Northern Rock crisis, and the City’s excesses, expose the dangers in our remaining ignorant of market complexities.

Financial management is the new witchcraft, an art that makes many of its practitioners absurdly rich, commands the grudging respect of millions, but relies upon skills and secrets that remain opaque to all outside the Magic Circle.

Few of those who preside over the cauldrons possess social or cultural graces. In the company of City folk, I often recall some lines from Anthony Powell’s novel *A Buyer’s Market*, describing the tycoon Sir Magnus Donners at a lunch party:

> On the lips of a lesser man his words would have suggested processes of thought of a banality so painful – of such profound and arid depths, in which neither humour, nor imagination, nor, indeed, any form of human understanding could be thought to play the smallest part – that I almost supposed him to be speaking ironically, or teasing his guests by acting the part of a bore in a drawing-room comedy.

From Simon Barnes in the *Times* (21 September 2007):

Because the truth is that Mourinho’s (former manager of UK football club Chelsea) power was only ever an illusion. He drew attention to himself, he had the nation’s football press delighting in every pose, every absurdity, every contradiction, but he was never truly in charge of Chelsea. Such power as he had was loaned, not achieved or given.

Mourinho reminds me of the critic in Anthony Powell, whose goal ‘was to establish finally that the Critic, not the Author, was paramount’. The cult of the manager is designed to promote the idea that the manager, not the player, is paramount and Mourinho’s is the ultimate expression of this cult. And that’s why Mourinho had to go – because the cult is based on a false premise. In the end, the players are the stars.

Prompted by the new film *Interview* Ginny Dougary presents a primer for real interviewers in the *Times* (September 2007); it includes:

However much work you put in, be prepared for the caustic or batty put-down. A very elderly Anthony Powell berated me for not having read the whole of *A Dance to the Music of Time* – and indeed every book he had written. He then complained about my ‘quite horrible, horrible voice’ and the interview was brought to a close.
From AN Wilson on *The Great Gatsby* and Powell’s debt to Fitzgerald in the *Daily Telegraph* (29 October 2007):

Reading it again, I became aware of how very many writers borrowed from Scott Fitzgerald; more than that, were in his thrall. Three of my favourites came to mind. When the narrator is introduced to Jordan Baker, the silent, beautiful golf champ, he roars out ‘‘Hello’. My voice seemed unnaturally loud across the garden. ‘I thought you might be here,’ she responded absently, as I came up.” It is “pure Anthony Powell”. Powell, who acknowledged his debt to, as well as personal fondness for, Scott Fitzgerald, learns from him the trick of making dialogue authentic by not allowing the characters, exactly, to respond to one another. Questions never get directly answered. There are many other aspects, especially in his handling of big crowds at parties, where one is aware of Powell drinking at Fitzgerald’s teats.”

From Michael White in the *Guardian* (14 September 2007):

It transpires that as a new MP Mr Brown was startled to receive a letter from the then-prime minister [Margaret Thatcher], expressing interest in an economic speech he had just made: they met and, Top Sources said yesterday, ‘disagreed on nearly everything’. When Mr Blair left in June Lady T sent a routine ‘good luck’ note. The novelist Anthony Powell once said that people who write fiction have more in common with other people who write fiction than with anyone else: the same is true of the prime ministers’ club.

From *The Independent* (15 September 2007):

News that an elderly couple has been living in a Travelodge for 22 years has been greeted with disbelief. In fact, says Andy McSmith, they are part of a great tradition.

Who would want to live in a hotel? Not just stay in one, for a pampered holiday, but actually live in it, right through all four seasons, year after year, like the deaf old major in *Fawlty Towers*, or the eccentric Uncle Giles in Anthony Powell’s *A Dance to the Music of Time*?
Thoughts for Discussion – Responses

From John Powell

Some comments on ‘Thoughts for discussion’ on page 13 of the 28th AP Newsletter:

1. The name of our butcher in Albany Street just off Chester Gate in London was Cutts. I know AP regretted not having been able to buy Mr Cutts a Guinness in the pub before we left London for Somerset in 1952. The surname may, therefore, also be a small tribute to Mr & Mrs Cutts as well the surname of Roddy the MP in Dance.

3. AP did say categorically that both the name Gypsy Jones and her character were invented.

4. Both AP & VP were familiar with Douglas Byng (among others). My mother was a bit of an expert from her days of going to cabaret. We do have a copy of Byng’s memoir As You Were published in 1970, long after Max Pilgrim first appeared in Dance.

This is all expendable. I thought that you might, at least, like to know about Douglas Byng.

———

From Mr AC “Sandy” Morrison

In Newsletter number 28 comment is invited on what Powell may have had against Hendon in the context of disparaging remarks about Gypsy Jones’ background.

At the time of A Buyer’s Market (1928-1929) the development of Hendon would (or could) have been seen as part of the increasing despoilment of the green fields of Middlesex in consequence of the Northern underground line creeping from Golders Green through Hendon to Edgware. Certainly there was a boom development of middle-class housing estates bordering that line, which enabled my parents to acquire their first (and only) house in Hendon in 1928, and I arrived a year later.

In my young days (pre-1940) Hendon Borough Council was seen as a model local authority in terms of encouragement of parks and other open spaces and public libraries. Now things are very different. The parks are notoriously neglected and the central public library is seen as more of an internet café with library facilities attached, for the benefit of students at Middlesex University next door.

In the time-frame of A Buyer’s Market it is understandable that Powell may well have for that time taken a somewhat jaundiced view of Hendon.

On a quite different subject, I have wondered which three characters in the Dance might be tempted to join me at a table for four at, say, the Café Royal, regardless of age and contemporaneity. My own choice might be General Conyers, Gypsy Jones and Erridge. Sparks might fly – disappointing if not! I could also have perhaps eavesdropped on the exchanges between Priscilla Lovell and Odo Stevens.

Have other members other choices?

Sorceresses, more than most, are safer allowed their professional amour propre.

[Anthony Powell; Temporary Kings]
Singing Locomotives

From Colin Donald

Greetings Comrades! If you have ever thought that Powell went too far with his spoof title for the “frank propaganda” manuscript submitted to Quiggin & Craggs The Pistons of Our Locomotives Sing the Songs of Our Workers (BDFR 142, 239), I have news for you. A review by Jonathan Keates of a new biography of the Polish-born film director Roman Polanski (Polanski by Christopher Sandworth, Century, £18.99) in this week’s Spectator contains the following paragraph:

The postwar communist culture of relentless agitprop and uplift, in which Warsaw theatres staged plays with titles like The Workers’ Hearts Sing Out Like the Locomotive Whistle, made further demands on his survival skills. While still a student at film school in Lodz, he began plotting to ‘get the f*** out of Poland, grow a beard and become a writer’.

So this is where Powell got that title! I wonder who his Polish-speaking source was? You couldn’t make it up – and he didn’t!

Lonely Spectators?

From Andrew Clarke

In a recent Spectator competition, readers were asked to submit a lonely-hearts column advertisement ostensibly from a well-known literary character. The following entry by Adrian Fry, published in the issue for 29 September 2007, may be of interest:

Substantial, successful self-made gentleman (NSOH) with interests in spheres political, commercial and cultural, and key to a commensurate wide social network WLTM socially advantageous, volatile woman with a penchant for administering humiliation. I enjoy fine dining (though my digestion is not good and I cannot abide having sugar at table), attending to such affairs of state as are put my humble way, and broadly supporting the efforts of Mr Stalin; so, I trust, shall you. Encumbered only by my splendid if elderly mother, roots in the fertiliser business and certain hush-hush commitments about which it would be impolite to discourse upon at this juncture, I might even go so far as to suggest that here is an opportunity for a lucky lady to become a luckier lady. I shall say no more.

Kaarina Huhtala with Jake, The Chantry’s current resident cat.
Society Merchandise

**Centenary Conference Proceedings**
Collected papers from the 2005 centenary conference at The Wallace Collection, London.

UK Price: £10  Overseas Price: £14

**Secret Harmonies: Journal of the Anthony Powell Society, Issue 1, 2006**
86pp of Powell-related articles.

UK Price: £4  Overseas Price: £5

**Centenary Newsletter**
Bumper 120-page celebratory Centenary Newsletter (issue 21; December 2005).

UK Price: £6  Overseas Price: £7

**Oxford Conference Proceedings**
Collected papers from the 2003 conference at Balliol College, Oxford.

UK Price: £8  Overseas Price: £9

**Eton Conference Proceedings**
Papers from the 2001 conference; limited edition of 250 numbered copies signed by the Society’s Patron.

UK Price: £9  Overseas Price: £10

**Writing about Anthony Powell**
The talks given at the 2004 AGM by George Lilley, Michael Barber and Nick Birns; introduced by Christine Berberich.

UK Price: £4  Overseas Price: £5

**The Master and The Congressman**
A 40-page monograph by John Monagan describing his meetings with Powell.

UK Price: £4  Overseas Price: £5

**Wallace Collection Poussin Poster**
The Wallace Collection’s 48.5 x 67.5 cm (half life-size) poster of Poussin’s *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Mailed in a poster tube. Picture, page 27.

UK Price: £6  Overseas Price: £7.50

**Society Bookmarks; pack of 10.**
UK Price: £1  Overseas Price: £1.50

**BBC Radio Dramatisation of Dance**
Originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4 between 1979-82. 26 one-hour episodes. For copyright reasons, available to Society members only.

**Single CD** of 26 MP3 files. **Price: £11** (£3 + minimum £8 Donation)

**26 Audio CDs. Price: £70** (£26 + minimum £44 Donation)

(CD prices apply to both UK & overseas)

**Audio Tapes of Dance**
Copies of the following audio tapes of Simon Callow reading (abridged) volumes of *Dance*:

- *A Question of Upbringing*
- *The Kindly Ones*
- *The Valley of Bones*
- *The Soldier’s Art*

UK price: £3 each  Overseas Price: £4 each

**Fitzrovia: London’s Bohemia**
Written by Michael Bakewell and published in the National Portrait Gallery “Character Sketches” series this small volume contains snapshot biographies of Fitzrovian characters including Powell and many of his friends.

UK price: £4.50  Overseas Price: £7

**Society Postcard**

UK Price: £2  Overseas Price: £3

**Wallace Collection Poussin Postcard**

UK Price: £2  Overseas Price: £3

**Newsletter Back Numbers**
Back numbers of *Newsletter* issues 6, 8 to 20 and 22 to 28 are still available.

UK price: £1 each  Overseas Price: £2 each
Society Merchandise

**Pricing Notes.** The prices shown are the Society members’ prices and are inclusive of postage and packing.

**Please note the different UK and overseas prices** which reflect the additional cost of overseas postage.

**Non-members will be charged the overseas price shown plus postage & packing at cost.**

**Ordering.** Please send your order to:

Hon. Secretary, Anthony Powell Society
76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford
Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK
Phone: +44 (0) 20 8864 4095
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8864 6109
Email: secretary@anthonypowell.org

Payment may be by cheque (UK funds drawn on a UK bank), Visa, Mastercard or online using PayPal to secretary@anthonypowell.org.

---

**Anthony Powell Society Merchandise Order Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Unit Cost</th>
<th>P&amp;P</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I enclose a sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank
  Please make cheques payable to **The Anthony Powell Society**
- Please debit my Visa / MasterCard
  Card No.:
  Valid from: Expires: Security Code:

**Name & Address of Cardholder & for Delivery**

Name:
Address:

Town:
County / State:
Postcode / Zip:
Country:
Date: Signed:
### Membership Form

**Member Information**

**Type of membership** (please tick):

- [ ] **Ordinary Member** – £20 a year.
- [ ] **Joint Membership** – £30 a year.
  Any two persons at the same address.
- [ ] **Student Member** – £12 a year.
  Please send a copy of your student card.
- [ ] **Non-UK residents please add £5 pa supplement towards overseas postage**
- [ ] **Buy 5 years membership for the price of 4 (any grade)**

Membership for organisations also available; please ask. Subscriptions are due on 1 April annually. If joining on or after 1 January, membership includes following full subscription year.

**Full Name:**

**Address:**

**Postcode/Zip:**

**Country:**

**Email:**

**Number of years membership being paid:**

1 / 2 / 3 / 5 years for price of 4

**Overseas members please remember to add £5 pa postage supplement**

**Payment Information**

- [ ] **Total amount payable:** £______
  (No. of years x membership rate)

**Overseas members please remember to add £5 pa postage supplement**

- [ ] I enclose a sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank. Please make cheques payable to The Anthony Powell Society.
- [ ] Please debit my Visa / MasterCard

  **Card No.:**

  **Expires:**

  **Security Code:**

  (Please give name & address of cardholder if different from the above.)

- [ ] I authorize you, until further notice, to charge my Visa / MasterCard account for the sum of £______ on, or immediately after 1 April each year. I will advise you in writing immediately the card becomes lost or stolen, if I close the account or I wish to cancel this authority.

- [ ] I am a UK taxpayer and I want all donations I’ve made since 6 April 2000 and all donations in the future to be Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.

By completing this form I agree to the Society holding my information on computer.

**Gift Membership**

If this is a gift membership please attach the name & address of the recipient plus any special message on a separate sheet of paper.

**Where shall we send the membership?**

- [ ] Direct to the recipient
- [ ] To you to give to the recipient personally

Signed:

Date:

---

Please send the completed form and payment to:

Hon. Secretary, Anthony Powell Society
76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK

Phone: +44 (0) 20 8864 4095
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8864 6109