**A Link Broken, Part 2**

by Jean Rollason

My husband promised a sequel to his article which appeared in the Autumn 2007 Newsletter, issue 28, about the link between Anthony Powell and Sir Oliver Millar. This sequel was to be based on a second letter received from Powell in 1976, but was never written as Bob died suddenly in hospital at the end of last August. I therefore feel I owe it to him and to readers of the Newsletter to attempt a version, albeit an inadequate one, of Part Two.

**Gyges and Candaules**

On 7 September 1976 Powell wrote to Sir Oliver Millar saying how absolutely delighted he was to receive from him a Gravelot drawing of Gyges and Candaules, which he felt added a very acceptable dimension to the various conceptions of the story. Soon after the publication of Temporary Kings in 1973 Powell had been told by one of his fans, a Pakistani undergraduate, that Agnews had four scenes by Guido Cagnacci (1601-1681) depicting the story. Until that moment Powell had been under the impression that the subject had never been illustrated. Then he received from a Swedish fan a photograph of a Jordaens at Stockholm. “It is more Jordaenesque than you can imagine,” Powell wrote, “the Queen just putting down a chamber-pot”. Just before the Gravelot drawing arrived from Sir Oliver, Powell had been highly entertained.
From the Secretary’s Desk

I am not by nature gifted with an excessively abundant imagination, so it always taxes me when it comes to writing this column. Can I think of a new theme? A new slant on an old theme? Or do I have to be boring and repeat an oft sung message? Well this time I make no apology for repeating a boring old message ...

Members will have noticed that the Society is organising few events this year. And you will have asked “Why?” The answer is as simple as it has always been: those of us doing the work just do not have enough time. Sadly most of us still have to work to live. I am busier at work now, and under more stress, than I ever have been; I just do not have the time, or the spare energy, to do more than I am doing.

And it isn’t just me: every member of the Executive is currently “under the cosh” at work; suddenly in the last year things have become more demanding and more stressful for everyone; we have all become much busier, when we already thought we couldn’t do any more. One can only assume it is something in the stars, or the water!

Something has to give. Unfortunately that means the Society is suffering. We desperately need your help. From a personal perspective I need someone to step forward and take on the roles of Membership Secretary and Merchandise Coordinator. Without this there is a real danger that I will have to give up my work for the Society completely, or I’ll just sink under it all!

And of course we need people to organise events; one or two members to organise just one or two events in the UK each a year would make a huge difference – it is more difficult to cater for overseas members due to the sheer geographical spread, but events outside the UK are most welcome too!

So let’s have some volunteers, please.

The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No. 1096873

The Anthony Powell Society is a charitable literary society devoted to the life and works of the English author Anthony Dymoke Powell, 1905-2000.

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by a letter about his imagined Tiepolo from an American reader. The latter stated that he thought he knew most Tiepolos, but asked where exactly was the one described in *Temporary Kings*. The whole affair must have caused an eminent art historian like Sir Oliver much amusement. He had a high opinion of Powell’s discernment in art appreciation. He told us that he thought his allusions to portraiture, *eg.* the work of Van Dyck, on whom Sir Oliver himself was a world authority, were “always precisely apt”.

**Constant Lambert Film**

Many of us will remember the scorching heat of the summer of 1976 when the landscape of England looked more like that of Spain. It was interesting to learn from Powell’s letter that there was actually a heavy shower in Somerset in the third week in August. But it was all “pretty dried up” again by early September.

At that time Powell and Lady Violet had watched on television a repeat of a film about Constant Lambert, originally made in 1965. Powell remarks that he really could not imagine why he had not been asked to contribute to it, although in fact he had been very glad to have avoided it for a variety of reasons. These, alas, were unspecified.

His letter ended with the news that the first volume of the memoirs would be out that October and he hoped that it might amuse Sir Oliver. At the end of the earlier letter of 1975 he had said how glad he was Sir Oliver had enjoyed re-reading *The Military Philosophers*, as it was very autobiographical.

**Whatever Happened to Varda?**

Powell’s friendship with Constant Lambert brings me to the intriguing question raised by Jeff Manley in the Summer 2007 *Newsletter*, issue 27, as to what happened to Dorothy Varda. The answer to this has turned out to be rather more than a footnote.

Powell himself described Varda (as she was always known), in *Messengers of Day*, Chapter VI, page 93, as

> … both a beauty, and a personality not to be disregarded. Her taste for strife caused trouble in the lives of a lot of men, several women, at one time or another, but, when in good form, no one could be wittier, or show greater appreciation of wit in others. She was unfortunately incapable of finding tolerable any known pattern of existence.

Powell almost certainly met Varda through Constant Lambert. As he tells us in *Infants of the Spring*, his friend lived in one of the two small flats above the *varda*.
bookshop at 189 High Holborn (all trace of the building having, alas, vanished) and would occasionally stand in for her in one of her absences. Michel Salaman, a rich art collector, had set Varda up in the bookshop in 1926 because he thought it would be good for her intellectual talents. His friendship with Varda, thought to be strictly platonic, lasted long after the bookshop closed in 1928. In fact Michel Salaman’s son Arthur was present at Varda’s funeral. It would appear that Powell was not, although he wrote in Messengers of Day that he was to know her “for years until the terrible devils of self-destruction took their final revenge”.

The Millar Connection
My information about Varda’s later activities came from the Millar family. Lunch with Sir Oliver invariably included conversation about Powell. After one such occasion, as we were showing him out, I asked him if he thought Powell had had a youthful love affair with Varda, no indication of this having been given by him. Sir Oliver replied, “I know so. Varda was my mother’s best friend”. And with that parting shot, off he went. At the end of his thank-you note, as always a gem, he wrote, “I could slightly fill you in about Varda. That’ll test you!” She was to be topic number one at our next lunch. Sadly, it never took place.

In due course I asked his eldest daughter Cynthia if she could tell me anything about Varda. Cynthia knew nothing of her but put me in touch with her father’s younger sister, Mrs Sarah Ellis, who lives in Suffolk. With her I had a long and fascinating conversation.

Arrival in Essex
Sarah had no knowledge about any affair with Powell which in any case would have been over before Varda entered the lives of the Millars. In fact Sarah first saw Varda in 1934 when she herself was four years old and living in Little Sampford in Essex. A lady in the village one day rang her parents, Gerald and Ruth Millar, to tell them that she was going abroad for a year and was letting her cottage to a couple from London. Would the Millars welcome them? They were invited for tea. Varda arrived, accompanied by a tall, distinguished-looking gentleman called Dennis Proctor. Sarah said that Gerald and Ruth on seeing Varda for the first time were absolutely stunned by her beauty. This reinforces the view that Mrs Mendoza in Agents and Patients was based on Varda. In the novel there are several clues: she takes a country cottage, thinly disguised as being in Sussex, not Essex; her flower shop, la cattleya, has its sign in lower case letters à la varda bookshop. But above all Maltravers promises Blore-Smith that he will introduce him “to the most beautiful woman that you have ever seen”.

Dennis Proctor and Gerald Reitlinger
Tea at the Millars was a great success with instant rapport between Ruth and Varda. Dennis was a charming guest – a very intellectual man, educated at Harrow and King’s College, Cambridge, and holding a senior post at the Treasury. Varda added to
her beauty and elegance a lively wit and intelligence. In her thank-you letter she told the Millars that they were not yet married, as she was waiting for her divorce to be finalised. She would like this to be kept quiet to avoid jeopardising Dennis’ position at the Treasury.

Varda was still married to Gerald Reitlinger, the well-known rich Jewish writer and porcelain collector, who bequeathed his beautiful ceramics to the Ashmolean Museum. Reitlinger was a kind and generous host who lived in an inherited residence – a large house in Kensington, sometimes visited by Powell. He also owned a redbrick farmhouse in Sussex where he threw weekend parties and became known to his friends as The Squire. One wonders if the lavish host Schlumbermayer in Agents and Patients was partly based on Reitlinger. It was at one of his parties that Dennis Proctor met Varda, instantly fell in love with her and persuaded her to leave Gerald and go away with him.

1934
The year 1934 seems to be a significant date in our story. Agents and Patients was published in January, Varda arrived in Essex, and Powell and Lady Violet became engaged that year, marrying in December.

Varda’s divorce came through and she and Dennis were married, buying a pretty house near Saffron Walden, from which Dennis commuted to London. They remained in the country until the outbreak of war. Varda built up a very close friendship with Ruth Millar who enjoyed her lively, sparkling company, despite her unpredictable temper and waywardness. Sarah described her to me as blonde with blue-green eyes, a long well-shaped nose and the most beautifully-proportioned head. She was tall and very slim and always extremely elegant and well dressed. She had obviously had lots of men in her life and had been very wild in her youth, leading a rakety existence.

A Surprising Background
Varda was born in 1900 and, in contrast with her exotic appearance and mysterious-sounding name, actually came from Birmingham and from a humble background. She had no money of her own and never talked about or had any contact with her family. Her real name as we know was Dorothy – Sarah did not know her maiden name – but she always called herself Varda, following her marriage to the Greek surrealist painter Jean (Janko) Varda, who, as Jeff Manley says, had soon abandoned her and their daughter Minka, emigrating to America.
Minka
Sarah saw little of Minka, who seemed to disappear from Varda’s life and was certainly not at her funeral. There is a reference to her in Powell’s *Journals* of 1990 being looked after by a Universal Aunt during the school holidays in the bookshop period. In truth, Varda seems to have had little maternal instinct.

In contrast to this Varda was extremely fond of Sarah and when she and Dennis moved to London in 1939, Sarah was invited to spend a weekend with them in their little house in Tryon Street, Chelsea. She has a vivid recollection of being taken to a Beethoven concert by Varda and then returning to Chelsea for a lovely supper with Dennis, home from the Treasury. She found him very kind and thoughtful and wonderful company. Sarah’s mother had made her a red housecoat and when she appeared in it at breakfast the nine-year old was thrilled to be told by Dennis that she looked like Velasquez’s Infanta.

After the war years the couple returned to the country, living again in another cottage near Saffron Walden. At that time the marriage sadly began to fall apart. Varda became very miserable and felt her life was aimless and that she was losing her looks. She visited Ruth Millar regularly, sometimes every day, accompanied by a cocker spaniel to which she was devoted. Ruth was feeling more and more concerned about her and her temperamental ways. She was becoming impossible to live with, creating frightful rows with Dennis.

The Terrible Devils of Self-Destruction
One day in 1948 Ruth, increasingly anxious about her, suggested to Sarah, now 18, that if she were to ring and invite Varda to lunch she would surely come. There was no reply to her call. The handyman coming to work at the cottage found the curtains drawn and Varda dead in bed. There was no sign of the dog. It appeared that she had taken the cocker spaniel to the kennels for it to be put down and returned home to take her own life with an overdose of pills.

Dennis hurried home from London in a dreadful state. Sarah recalls hearing him say to her mother, “I could do nothing with her”. She was buried in Radwinter churchyard. Not many were present: Arthur Salaman, as mentioned earlier, was there and of course Gerald Millar, who described it as a very bleak occasion. Much later Dennis was to find new happiness when he married again.

When I visited Cynthia Millar at the family home after her father’s death, John Saumarez Smith from the Heywood Hill Bookshop at 10 Curzon Street was there looking at Sir Oliver’s library. At the mention of Varda, he told me that he had for sale a group of five books, published by Duckworth 1931-1936. These had been given by Powell to Varda and included a copy of *Afternoon Men*, 1931, inscribed “For Mrs V. with lots of love, From Tony Powell, May 27th 1931 …” and a copy of *Venusberg*, 1932, inscribed “For Mrs Varda, with the author’s love, Tony Powell, Oct 6th 1932. God! It’s good to be alive”.

These and other inscriptions would suggest that Varda and Powell were probably very close to each other. When John Saumarez Smith was at The Chantry, John Powell very kindly showed him a file of his father’s about Varda. The scraps written by her to him and carefully preserved confirmed this probability.
Though I claim Anthony Powell as one of my favourite authors, I have read *Dance* completely once only … and that twenty-five years ago. I was therefore excited to learn that Radio 4 was to broadcast all twelve novels as “The Classic Serial”. I wasn’t even put off by the absurd version of *Mr Sponge’s Sporting Tour* in the weeks immediately beforehand.

How wrong I was to be! This new adaptation reduced *Dance* to one basic theme: Widmerpool’s (supposed) humiliation by Jenkins *et al.* at school leading to his over-riding ambition including, where possible, revenge on them. In the process, Jenkins is turned into a rather vicious and stupid character bearing little resemblance to Powell’s narrator and who never ceases to be astonished by the reappearances of earlier acquaintances. Many of *Dance*’s incidents are mentioned; few explained – a practice that must have puzzled those unfamiliar with the books. I myself found it difficult to concentrate on much of the material simply because it annoyed me. I did keep listening to the end, however; many *Dance* readers, I suspect, will not have done.

Of course, reducing twelve novels to only six hours requires much to be lost. It is the needless changes and the silly internal inconsistencies that are a measure of the lack of care in this dramatisation. Sillery’s rock buns become rock cakes, but several episodes later turn back into Powell’s original buns. Jenkins is at university in Cambridge (whereas Powell hints strongly that he is at Oxford) … except that occasionally we hear that he is in Oxford. Major Widerpool becomes Captain Widmerpool just a few minutes later. V1s are striking London before Singapore falls. Extraordinarily, Jenkins refers to Lady Widmerpool as Lady Pamela – would the son-in-law of an earl ever make such an error? (On the other hand, this is now standard practice in the BBC.) Most bizarrely, Newton’s First Law of Motion has been altered. When the engine of a V1 cuts out above Priscilla Tolland’s house, the V1 doesn’t continue along a ballistic path but immediately drops out of the sky destroying the house. The adaptor seems to have read *Dance* through a strictly twenty-first century lens and thoroughly disapproved of what he found, even the lack of modern vocabulary. (Was “match-fit” really used in the 1920s?)

This adaptation throws up two major questions. First, does Radio 4 intend to destroy every classic serial in this way? Listening to “The Classic Serial” (then broadcast on Sunday evenings) during my teens and twenties gave me – a scientist – an excellent introduction to a vast range of English literature. This would not be available to me now – hardly an improvement for any broadcaster, let alone one that benefits from a licence fee.

Secondly, what will those who have never read *Dance* make of it from this dramatisation? Will they be inspired to read Powell’s novels in the way that I was by the adaptation of the early 1980s (also on Radio 4 incidentally)? A few might. Of course they will find the novels so different that they may stop reading. Others, however, will surely realise what a fascinating world they have entered … albeit accidentally.
Mike Jay Revisits Anthony Powell on John Aubrey

With the onset of the Second World War, Anthony Powell was commissioned into the British Army. For the six year duration of the conflict his literary product naturally ceased, yet his creative bent found its outlet not only with ruminations of a possible long novel but also through compiling notes for a biography on John Aubrey (1626-97). In Dance, Jenkins, similarly employed in the army is preparing a book on Robert Burton (1577-1640), author of The Anatomy of Melancholy. Whenever possible during the war Powell was able to research Aubrey’s original manuscripts at the Bodleian library in Oxford. He was able to complete the book shortly after the war and John Aubrey and His Friends was first published, eventually, in 1948, three years before A Question of Upbringing – Volume 1 of Dance.

Aubrey was the elder son of a landed family, but not a member of the titled branch. His eventual inheritance was encumbered with debt which Aubrey was incapable of managing effectively. His failure in this area caused the eventual loss of the property, and not only brought him continually to the attention of the law but also created familial problems with his younger brother William.

John Aubrey will be remembered though for the considerable product of his intellectual life. Whilst only a young boy he was introduced by his grammar school’s headmaster to the much older Thomas Hobbes, the great philosopher, but Aubrey’s early life was somewhat secluded. He managed to get to Oxford but his arrival coincided with the English Civil War and Oxford became an important centre as the king, Charles I, used the university city as his headquarters. Aubrey also briefly studied law at the Middle Temple. He continually used friends in Oxford (which he loved) and London as bases throughout the rest of his life.

After hunting with friends at Christmas 1648 Aubrey wrote “the chase led us ... through the village of Avebury ... where I was wonderfully surprised at the sight of those vast stones”. This was a most important discovery, or more precisely, recognition of a most important archaeological site. Aubrey would also later be commissioned by Charles II to make a review of (close by) Stonehenge.

We will remember Aubrey more though for his contribution to letters, but typically the author was unable to benefit from this. Only Miscellanies was published in his lifetime: one year before his death. Powell takes many pages to list and describe all of Aubrey’s “literary remains” and it must have taken much patience on Powell’s behalf to reassemble the many fragments in the Bodleian, no matter how witty and humorous they may be. Brief Lives is possibly Aubrey’s most famous work. This is a collection of some 400 biographic pieces written between 1669–96. Here one can find a compendium of writers, clerics, statesmen, lawyers, scientists, rakes, ladies of the town and obscure old friends. Consequently, Aubrey can be considered England’s first serious biographer.
In London, Aubrey was most active in the founding of what is now the Royal Society, the UK's academy of Science. With his wide range of interests and his long list of contacts Aubrey contributed to the RS with, for example, geological, astronomical and astrological observations.

Aubrey never married, although he was engaged twice. Katherine Ryves died and Joan Sumner caused Aubrey to be arrested! His circle of friends was broad and included many of the famous personalities of that period such as Hooke, Wren, Dryden and Pepys.

Both the Powell and Aubrey families derived from the Welsh marches. As children, both were weakly and lonely. Both had their lives interrupted by war. Both men had a broad range of similar interests including history, genealogy, heraldry, painting, music and the occult, but above all an appreciation for the oddness of individuals and the vast extent of human oddness. However, while Aubrey remained a true amateur and always led a “tumble down life”, Powell was a professional who used every piece of information and all his sources to his full advantage. Powell therefore created a large and respected body of work while Aubrey seemed never able to finish any of the many projects he began. In his own defence Aubrey said he was never made to manage an estate and was predestined to be cheated. Late in his life he was also mugged and received fifteen head wounds!

Both men knew the pain of broken friendships. Aubrey’s with Anthony Wood suffered over production of Lives when certain words were used (which caused offence to the subjects) and some pages went missing. Lives can be seen as amusing if somewhat unreliable gossip.

Aubrey was generous to a fault and as little shrewd as a man could be. Powell finds Aubrey a social butterfly who knew everyone and everything about them. Powell also found Aubrey “a writer in whom a new sort of sensibility is apparent … who has a mastery of the ideal phrase for describing people”.

If the series of Powell’s novels from 1931 to 1986 can be thought of as a continual series or in totality a flowing river then John Aubrey and his Friends is Powell’s ox-bow lake. It is a piece of work left behind for only students of the period inhabited by Aubrey or for readers of Powell.

Powell’s book is, as one would expect, deeply researched and highly organised in presentation with manageable chapters and sub-chapters. It is the product of an academic rather than that of a novelist and suggests that Powell could have worked more in academia had he wished. As a biographer, one aim is to try to bring the subject to life for the reader. This is not easy to accomplish with the huge gap of 250 years and I found it very difficult to ever picture Aubrey or imagine his speech. I have always found John Aubrey and his Friends a laborious yet ultimately rewarding work. As others have said it is more of a book to dip into, as one would with a reference work. Friends is not an easy read – it does not flow – and for me has too many long quotes from letters in 17th century style and also too many copious notes, all of which make following the main thread a hindrance.

I am sure there are many possible Dance characters in Friends – Aubrey himself can be seen as Erridge as both find estate management burdensome. One can also find a Chemical Earl and when some pages of Lives go missing one has to think of X Trapnel and Pamela Flitton.
Bust-up in Bristol: the Full Story!

by Derek Hawes

One of the less glorious moments in the life of Anthony Powell – indeed one might say, a blot on his escutcheon – occurred in Bristol on 7 July 1982 when he was honoured by the award of an honorary DLitt by the University and responded with an uncharacteristic piece of boorishness that is still remembered in that distinguished institution. Lady Violet later called it “an unexpected drama”. Here, for the first time, is the full story.

The University senate had felt it appropriate to honour one of the most outstanding West Country residents and Powell had consented to accept a DLitt honoris causa. Professor WD Howarth, the Public Orator, had gone to tea at The Chantry a month before, to discuss the ceremony and his own oration in presenting the candidate.

We should remind ourselves that this was at a point just after the end of the Falklands War; the last volume of Dance had been in print for eight years, and the last volume of To Keep the Ball Rolling was about to appear. Powell was at the peak of his literary fame. Mrs Thatcher was struggling with a failing economy and public finances were tight. Having beaten the Argentines she was shaping to take on another tyrant in the coalfields of middle England.

However, the day started with appropriately literary wit and decorum. In a masterly oration, Howarth, Professor of Classical French Literature and a distinguished linguist and translator, said:

There is one feature of Anthony Powell’s writings that is much prized by university teachers of foreign languages like myself: they are first class quarry for really testing passages of translation. A highly individual use of irony and allusive wit, allied to an insistence on the precision of the mot juste and a penchant for an elliptical, parenthetical, often complex, sentence structure: these must all provide a perpetual headache for Mr Powell’s official translators in the many languages in which he has been published, but they are an academic’s delight.

He then referred to the fact that Powell had recently refused to contribute to a book about the Falklands War as an example of the fact that he was not a “committed” writer; but,

he stands equally far apart from those avant garde novelists of our day, for whom problems of technique and stylistic experiment are all important … his detachment is not the dispassionate objectivity of the theoretician but the more humane attitude of the tolerant, albeit ironic, observer of the human scene.

Whilst there was nothing much in that oration that could have disturbed Powell, it is clear that the University Chancellor, whose address followed, introduced a distinctly more “committed” tone from which he was less inclined to remain detached.

The Chancellor who conferred the degree was Professor Dorothy Hodgkin one of the most outstanding academic chemists of the 20th century, a Nobel prize-winner, an OM and Fellow of the Royal Society with a world-wide reputation in X-ray crystallography; discoverer of the structure of penicillin, cholesterol and insulin.
Hodgkin had, since her youth, been a long-time collaborator with the great JD Bernal who had supervised her thesis and worked with her on many of her discoveries in X-ray crystallography. In the 1930s they had also been lovers. Both Bernal and Hodgkin’s husband were members of the Communist Party and she had been awarded the Lenin Peace prize; she was President of Pugwash from 1976 to 1988. She was also much loved by all who knew her. As her biographer records she was always concerned about social inequalities and stopping conflict, influenced by a strong Puritan ethic of selflessness and service to humanity which reverberated throughout her lifetime achievements.

Her address on this occasion was a pained and detailed attack upon the cuts in grants to universities, spelling out the damage they would do to learning and demanding that the Government think again and that the nations begin to reduce their spending on arms and the money saved be used “for education and other useful purposes”.

Turning to Powell, an old Etonian, she then said, in what sounded like a somewhat barbed rebuke, “I should tell you the story of a very different world than yours, Dr Powell” and described the founding of a school for girls which had been set up in a village on the Blue Nile seventy-five years ago and had cost all of £10, but had gone on to great achievement.

At the reception that followed, Powell, clearly feeling provoked, immediately confronted Dorothy Hodgkin. In his Journals he reports:

Left Wing old hag … I cornered her before luncheon, said it would be hypocritical on my part, after receiving an honorary degree at her hands, not to tell her that I utterly disagreed with her, that I was all for education, but not before the defence of the country. If the country was not safe there would be no education to be protected …

One who was present tells it a little differently: “Powell told her she was talking a lot of balls! I have never seen anyone look so surprised …”

If this was an accurate account of the exchange, Michael Barber, in his biography of Powell seeks to mitigate what was, by any standards, an ungracious, ill-tempered and ill-judged outburst.

He suggests that, like many others, by 1980 Powell had come to think that the country had become ungovernable. He notes that the author’s memoirs are notable for an absence of spleen but he seems to have decided, after seventy years of gentlemanly reticence he had earned the right to let off steam. In future, if someone says something, then regardless of who they are, he will tell them where to get off.

It is also true that the occupation of the Falklands seems, to Powell, to have been a particularly outrageous act. He comments several times in The Journals about friends who are equivocal in regard to the British task force and records joyfully an incident at the launch party for volume four of To Keep the Ball Rolling when Vidia Naipaul had a brief but extraordinary rant about the Argentinean policy and called the Americans “pusillanimous” for their half-hearted attitude to the British invasion. Later, Max Hastings was invited to lunch at The Chantry to recount his exploits in reporting the war for television. Poor Dorothy Hodgkin clearly struck a raw nerve, but as one of her colleagues said, “she would keep going on about Pugwash!”
Letters from Bohemia

by Paul Willetts

Even before the advent of email, letter-writing was often portrayed as a lost art. Julian Maclaren-Ross (1912-64), that quintessential literary bohemian whom Anthony Powell used as the model for the character of X Trapnel, belonged to what was probably the last generation to practice it with widespread vigour. For someone who claimed to dislike writing letters, Maclaren-Ross produced an unexpectedly large and engaging body of them. The extent of his output as a correspondent is also surprising in view of the circumstances of his troubled life, circumstances scarcely conducive to staying in touch with people by post. A brisk trawl through his letters reveals frequent changes of address, many of these enforced by landladies or hoteliers to whom he owed money. Sudden departures, leaving behind no forwarding address, only a sense of smouldering grievance, were commonplace. As if that didn’t make correspondence hard enough, his pub and club-going – which came to dominate his daily routine from the summer of 1943 onwards – allowed him little time for anything but paid writing, necessary to fund his drinking and prolong his precarious tenure at his current address. Those addresses range from cramped lodgings to suites in luxurious hotels, the grandeur of his accommodation bearing scant relation to his income.

A significant proportion of his letters were written on luxurious, complimentary stationary dispensed by imposing London hotels. Down the left-hand margins, there are usually small sepia photos of that establishment’s facilities: ornate Turkish baths, winter gardens, ballrooms and cavernous, chequerboard-floored entrance halls, evocative of a world that’s remote from our own. Yet Maclaren-Ross’s letters, in common with his other writing, are never remote, their crisp, unadorned manner lending his travails considerable immediacy.

With rare exceptions, these marking moments of extreme stress, his letters are masterpieces of penmanship, each tiny, carefully delineated letter as reluctant to come into contact with its neighbour as a neurotic on a crowded tube train. In his entertaining Memoirs of the Forties, he describes an occasion when someone asked him how he did it. His curtly dismissive response was, “With a pen”. I wonder what a graphologist would make of his handwriting. It’s certainly the handwriting of an obsessive, its creepy
restraint offering a paradoxical contrast to his flamboyance and exhibitionism, to the lack of restraint that permeated so many other aspects of his existence. That said, there’s a remarkable continuity between his handwriting and prose style. Both share the hallmarks of clarity and precision, traits conspicuous in all but the rambling letters which he wrote during the height of his obsession with George Orwell’s widow, Sonia. These letters pore over every nuance of her behaviour, their overloaded sentences and tortured syntax mirroring his state of mind.

Unfortunately, there are long stretches of his life from which little if any of his correspondence appears to have survived. There is, for instance, nothing from his childhood or adolescence. A high proportion of the surviving letters, spanning most of his adult years, focus on his work. Far from endorsing the clichéd view of him as a feckless barfly, content to squander his time and energy, his letters draw attention to his diligence and productivity, not to mention the humility that lurked beneath the veneer of self-confidence. Here was a man who, as his friend Anthony Powell so eloquently described, somehow succeeded in combining a multitude of contradictory roles, each of them enacted with similar conviction. The serious-minded, professional writer coexisted with the boozy bohemian, the impervious dandy with the vulnerable middle-aged man, the victim with the aggressor, the gentle and considerate friend with the nightmarish egotist.

Besides illuminating his relationships with publishers, editors, radio producers and fellow writers, Anthony Powell among them, his letters offer a fascinating insight into the literary milieu of that halcyon period when John Lehmann, Cyril Connolly and other perceptive editors wielded such influence.

Like his previously published writings, his letters are wide-ranging in tone and subject matter. They can be formal, gossipy, observant, irreverent and amusing. Unlike the work for which he is celebrated, though, they can also be paranoid, irascible and disturbing in their monomaniacal intensity. The majority of them are nonetheless vivid, lively and stylish.

This is an edited version of the introduction to Julian Maclaren-Ross’s Selected Letters to be published by Black Spring Press in June 2008. We hope to review the volume in the next issue.

Black Spring Press publish three further volumes of Julian Maclaren-Ross’s writing: Collected Memoirs, Bitten by the Tarantula and other writing (2005) and Selected Stories, as well as Paul Willetts’s acclaimed biography of Maclaren-Ross, Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia (2003).
AP Mini-Conference in John Gould’s Living Room at Amhurst

By Joan Williams

I had the great pleasure of attending the AP Mini-Conference in John Gould’s living room on Friday March 19, 2008.

After reading The Soldier’s Art, fourteen students delivered papers. Their insight and ability to ferret out new points was amazing. Here is just a taste of the range of papers we enjoyed in that hour and a half in the living room.

Michael Donelan teased the foreshadowing of Stringham’s death out of a verse from Browning’s Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came.

Cassidy Carpenter intrigued us with a possible medical explanation, Wernicke Encephalopathy, for Stringham’s behaviour once sober.

John Bukawyn chilled us with his reminder that chance encounters and incidents turn grim in this volume, where death forms one of the party.

James Seman turned a historian’s eye on governments-in-exile during World War II, part of Nick Jenkins’ brief in the army.

Nicole Lee made an imaginative comparison between the mental states of Priscilla and Betty, Templar’s wife.

William Koven also demonstrated great powers of imagination, and historical detail about WWII aircraft, inventing a scenario of Barnby’s last flight, told from the point of view of the pilot.

Nick Anschuetz shows us how the story darkens in this volume as the characters face far more serious problems than having sugar dumped on their head at a society dance.

Jimmy Yang took us through a thoughtful comparison of Jenkins’ commanding officers.

Paul McCarthy gave new meaning to the term “theatre of war”.

Kym Louie traces the rise of Widmerpool in parallel to the sinking of Stringham as their positions of influence are reversed.

Erica Bakies drew out for us the vignette of Bithel’s aspirations and the sad end to his army career.

Corey Simpson, in looking clinically at Audrey McClintock’s awfulness delighted us with the entertaining thought of Widmerpool and Audrey as two characters who might deserve each other.
Alex Svec also traced the fall of Stringham in relation to Widermpool’s rise to power, touching on the sad breaking apart of the three friends, Jenkins, Stringham and Templar.

Alyssa Warren drew a parallel between the cadence of military and civilian wartime life, each with bursts of dramatic intensity interspersed with long periods of drabness, waiting and marking time.

I hope this small taste will tempt readers to go to www.andover.edu/english/jgould/dance/dance08b.html#donelan where you will find the full papers. John will happily pass reactions on to the students.

During my visit John graciously toured me around Phillips Andover Academy, including its Art Gallery, then toured me around the local Andover area. The drive included a trip to the Atlantic Ocean where we walked (very briefly) in a chilly wind.

John plans to host another such mini-conference at the end of the spring term, and I hope others will have a chance to attend. It was inspirational to see John’s dedication to his students and it is equally inspirational to see this young group tackle the complexities of Dance with such enthusiasm.

Postscript. John Gould retires from teaching at Philips Academy this summer. His last class will be these students’ final papers – the planned mini-conference to which Joan Williams refers – in the first week of June. We would like to thank John for his work introducing Powell, indeed all of literature, to his students and wish him a long, fulfilling and happy retirement. We also hope he will continue to teach Powell to us all for many years.

Photographs by the author.
Dates for Your Diary

5th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference 2009

Weekend of 10-13 September 2009
Georgetown University
Washington, DC, USA

Further details, including exact dates, programme, booking arrangements to follow

London Group Pub Meets 2008

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.

Exhibition

Cartoons and Coronets: The Genius of Osbert Lancaster

The Wallace Collection
Manchester Square, London, W1

Thursday 2 October 2008
to Sunday 11 January 2009
Admission Free

Osbert Lancaster was one of the most famous artistic personalities of his day, renowned as an architectural satirist, illustrator, theatre designer and cartoonist. This exhibition, which marks the centenary of his birth, will celebrate the astonishing range of Lancaster as an artist and as a chronicler of style and fashion, drawing on an unparalleled archive of original designs, illustrations, works on paper, sketchbooks, theatre sets and photographs, none of which have ever been previously exhibited.
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

Baltic Group
Area: Sweden & Finland
Contact: Regina Rehbinder
Email: reginarehbinder@hotmail.com

Toronto Group
Area: Toronto, Canada
Contact: Joan Williams
Email: jwilliamsto@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.

Copy Deadlines

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

Newsletter #32, Autumn 2008
Copy Deadline: 8 August 2008
Publication Date: 5 September 2008

Newsletter #33, Winter 2008
Copy Deadline: 7 November 2008
Publication Date: 5 December 2008

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

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
Annual General Meeting 2008

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The Anthony Powell Society will be held on Saturday 25 October 2008 at 1400 hrs. London venue to be confirmed.

Nominations for the three Executive Officers (Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer) and up to six Executive Committee Members must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 4 August 2008. Candidates must be proposed by two members, indicate their willingness to stand and provide a short biographical statement. Nominations will be accepted by e-mail, post or fax.

Motions for discussion at the AGM must also reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 4 August 2008. They must be clearly worded, proposed by at least two members and contain a statement in support of the motion which will be published to members.

The AGM agenda and voting papers will be included with the Autumn Newsletter in early September. Proxy votes must reach the Hon. Secretary by Friday 17 October 2008.

The AGM will be followed at 1500hrs by a talk (speaker to be confirmed)

Note: Members of the Executive Committee (three officers and six committee members) are the Society’s legal trustees. Those elected must not be barred from being trustees under English law and a majority of the trustees must be ordinarily resident in England and Wales.

Subscription Renewal

Subscriptions are due for renewal on 1 April annually and renewal notices are sent out during March to those members whose subscription is about to expire. To keep down costs and subscription rates please renew promptly.

The “5 years for the price of 4” membership offer is to continue indefinitely, subject to annual review by the trustees.

Subscriptions can be paid by Standing Order (UK members only) and recurring credit card transactions for which forms are included 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. 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.
At last awakened from our winter sleep, the Baltic group met for lunch sitting outside in a chilly Stockholm on 13 May. Karina Huhtala had arrived by boat from Turku early the same morning and we started off with a discussion about what to do in Stockholm at 6.30 am on a week day without arriving at any good advice.

The Horse Guards riding music corps on its way to the Royal Palace for a while prevented discussion but when it had passed we talked for a while – without reference to the Anthony Powell Society – about various problems occurring in international cultural organizations.

Regina has through the son of Ulf Brandell, a Swedish well-known literary critic, got hold of copies of letters between him and Powell. We had a look at some of them and came to the common opinion that they would be of interest to a wider circle of Powell fans. After having exchanged vacation plans, we decided to meet again before next winter’s sleep.

Over the years the consumption of alcohol at these meetings seems to have fallen – are people really heeding the dire warnings about our drug of choice? However the assembled company retains its enthusiasm for good pub food, and especially The Audley’s fish and chips.

Present were: Keith & Noreen Marshall, Robert Tresman, Peter & Elwin Taylor, David Butler, Derek Hawes, Jean Rollason, Sandy Morrison, Victor Spouge, Guy Robinson, Pat and Derek Miles.
Literary Anniversaries in 2008

In 1608 Thomas Coryat began his walking tour of Europe which culminated in his gastronomic travel book, *Coryat's Crudities Hastily gobbled up in five moneths travells in France, Savoy, Italy, Rhetia commonly called the Grisons counry, Helvetia alias Switzerland, some parts of high Germany and the Netherlands; Newly digested in the hungry aire of Odcombe in the country of Somerset, and now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling members of this Kingdome.*

On 31 March 1608, *Hamlet* was performed aboard the East India Company ship *Red Dragon*, under the command of Captain William Keeling. Shakespeare’s *King Lear* was published, as was Thomas Middleton’s *A Mad World, My Masters*. John Milton was born in 1608.

Books published in 1808 included the first part of Goethe’s *Faust* and Walter Scott’s *Marmion*. The French symbolist poet Gérard De Nerval was born in 1808.

1858 books included Anthony Trollope’s *Doctor Thorne*, Ivan Turgenev’s *A House of Gentlefolk* and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

New books in 1908 included: Arnold Bennett’s *The Old Wives’ Tale*; GK Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday*; EM Forster’s *A Room With a View*; Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*; Jack London’s *The Iron Heel*; Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* and HG Wells’ *The War in the Air*.

Born in 1908 were Simone De Beauvoir, the writer of westerns Louis L’Amour, Frederic Prokosch, Theodore Roethke, Ian Fleming, MM Kaye (author of *The Far Pavillions*), Richard Wright, Osbert Lancaster and John Creasey. Literary deaths that year included Ouida and Joel Chandler Harris.

The Nobel Prize for Literature in 1908 went to the German philosopher, Rudolf Christoph Eucken, author of *The Problem of Human Life as Viewed by the Great Thinkers* and *The Struggle for a Spiritual Content of Life*. The citation read:

in recognition of his earnest search for truth, his penetrating power of thought, his wide range of vision, and the warmth and strength in presentation with which in his numerous works he has vindicated and developed an idealistic philosophy of life.
In 1958 Boris Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and sent a telegram to the Nobel committee saying, “Immensely thankful, touched, proud, astonished, abashed”. However, four days later, he declined the prize, probably out of fear that he would be stripped of his Russian citizenship if he accepted it. Alfred Noyes, Rose Macaulay and Robert W Service all died in 1958.

1958 saw the controversial publication in the USA of Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita*, previously published in Paris by the Olympia Press in 1954. Novels published in 1958 included Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Truman Capote’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*; Kingsley Amis’ *I Like It Here*, *Balthazar*, the second novel of Lawrence Durrell’s *The Alexandria Quartet*; Ian Fleming’s *Dr No*; Graham Greene’s *Our Man in Havana*; Lampedusa’s posthumous *The Leopard*; John O’Hara’s *From the Terrace*; Mary Renault’s *The King Must Die*; and Jack Kerouac’s *The Dharma Bums*. New drama included Samuel Beckett’s *Krapp’s Last Tape*, Harold Pinter’s *The Caretaker* and Tennessee Williams’ *Suddenly Last Summer*.

Non-fiction in 1958 included John Steinbeck’s *Once There Was a War*, Brendan Behan’s *Borstal Boy* and John Kenneth Galbraith’s *The Affluent Society*.

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**Oeufs Meyerbeer**

Moreland’s favourite dish in *Dance* is said to be Oeufs Meyerbeer. Paul Whitfield sent in this recipe for the dish.

For 4 persons allow:

- Six eggs
- Two or three lamb’s kidneys
- Sauce Périgueux (made from veal stock, black truffle peelings and Madeira wine) is available in jars at good supermarkets and delicatessens

Scramble the eggs and grill or fry the kidneys. Cut the kidneys in half and place on either side of the eggs on a warmed plate. Pour over the Sauce Périgueux.
Theatrical Aubrey

The recent revival of Brief Lives with Roy Dotrice as John Aubrey
Reviewed by Noreen Marshall

Our introduction to Dotrice as Aubrey is his environment: a wonderfully cluttered set by Simon Higlett. A monumental four-poster bed and unfeasibly high bookshelves frame a vast collection of antiquities, curiosities and domestic impedimenta, all garlanded in dust. The action of the piece follows a day in Aubrey’s life, as he stokes the fire, uses the chamber-pot, bangs on the wall to quieten his noisy neighbours and gossips happily to us about everyone from Elizabeth I to the woman next door.

Dotrice – “I’m almost too old”; he is 84 compared with the 73 year old Aubrey he plays – remains on stage throughout, even during the interval when Aubrey spends his time dozing fitfully, which is perhaps one of the things which does most to establish the character and carry the audience with him.

The second act is more poignant than the purely broad humour of the first – the approach of evening reminds us that this is Aubrey at the end of his life. He faces death alone and frail, but witty and defiant, something most audiences cannot help but find moving after their initial amusement.

However Anthony Powell, as Aubrey’s biographer, was apparently not a fan of the production, which originally began in 1967 and ran for a record-breaking 1,782 performances. As Hugh Massingberd recalls in Daydream Believer: “‘The point is that Aubrey was a gent’ said Tony. ‘He was not portrayed on stage as one.’”

Dotrice revived the role in response to the comments of his wife, Kay Newman, who died recently:

Although I had travelled all over the world with this show, she told me that the more I did it, the more over the top I became. She felt I was playing it purely for the comedy and asked if I would do it again, more naturally, so I could get it right.

The truth is perhaps somewhere between these two points but the play was no less successful for that.

This revival of the Patrick Garland stage adaptation of John Aubrey’s writings was presented at several provincial theatres in early 2008. Noreen Marshall saw one of the final performances at the Richmond Theatre in late March. Sadly it appears the show did not transfer to the West End as had been hoped.
Letters to Anthony Powell
by The Rev. Frank Peterson

My first “fan” letter to Anthony Powell was in 1979. I wrote to say how much I had enjoyed Dance and the first two volumes of his memoirs. Never expecting an answer I was thrilled to receive a thank you in return. I then took to sending birthday and Christmas greetings notes and would always receive a reply. Often just a line or two but always a thank you. Powell usually closed his note by writing “Much cheered by your letter” which I think is a wonderful way to close correspondence.

In one letter I commented on an article on The Chantry in the American House and Gardens magazine of 1988. As many drawings are on the walls of The Chantry in the photos I wrote that I had recently been in London and visited Abbott & Holder picture dealers. Powell responded that he had had dealings with Abbott & Holder and that the Portuguese angels in the front hall of The Chantry are from there.

One correspondence we had concerned a great-aunt of mine. In Faces in My Time, volume three of the memoirs, Powell wrote of his time in Hollywood writing film scripts. He and Lady Violet lived at 357 North Palm Drive in Beverly Hills. My Great-Aunt Helen Mays lived for a short time in the late 1940s on North Palm Drive. Perhaps the same building. In 1981 I wrote Powell about my connection to North Palm Drive. In his response he wrote that he found it amusing about my Aunt and that it was really “quite a pleasant place but our end was not very chic”. I’m sure Aunt Helen’s end was not very chic either. Supposedly Ava Gardner was living in my Aunt’s building at the time. I told Powell that my Aunt had taken her son to Hollywood to get him in the movies. The family was full of Aunt Helen’s sojourn in Hollywood – more fiction than fact, I suppose. Her son, with perhaps the Powellian name of Airey Winchester Mays, used the stage name of Clay Randolph. He never got very far in films – though he came close. He grew too fast and too tall for a lead juvenile role in a film he had been signed for. I think that quite ruined his life.

My last correspondence I received was a lovely note from Lady Violet in 2000 after Anthony Powell’s death. These are all cherished memories to revisit and to have along with his writing.

Collage from The Chantry.
Photo: Faik Siddiqi
From “100 Years Ago”

Scientific American, May 2008

MAY 1908. “CATERPILLAR” TRACTOR – For some months past the British military authorities have been experimenting with a new type of tractor for the haulage of heavy vehicles over rough and unstable ground. Briefly, its object is to crawl over the ground, there being a series of feet disposed along the periphery of two heavy side chains passing over fore and aft wheels. Because of its peculiar movement, the soldiers at the Aldershot military center, where it is in operation, promptly christened it the ‘caterpillar.’ The engine is the invention of Mr David Roberts.

[NOTE: Patents for this invention were later sold to Benjamin Holt, co-founder of Caterpillar Tractor Co.]

One wonders if, as an infantry officer, Powell’s father may have been involved in this new development which ultimately led to the tank.

Cold Cream: My Early Life and Other Mistakes
by Ferdinand Mount
Published by Bloomsbury Publishing
ISBN: 978-0747595076

Ferdinand Mount’s autobiography has been recently released (April 2008) and has received many excellent reviews.

As a nephew of Anthony Powell (Mount is the son of Lady Violet’s sister Lady Julia Pakenham) it naturally contains a number of snippets about Powell as well as much background information on the Pakenham family and their milieu.

a five-star autobiography … so elegantly written (… Mount didn’t go to Eton for the Wall Game … but to obtain a classical education, and it shows!) … eminently readable, not only for its description of the various moving moments of his own life but also for the unique insights into the workings of 10 Downing Street. [Amazon.co.uk]
Powell Fun for Everyone …
A Collage & AP Quotation Book

by Keith Marshall

WE NEED YOU TO HAVE FUN …

We are opening the Society’s Collage & AP Quotation Book for your contributions to these important (and fun) Powell themes.

It doesn’t matter if you think you’re not creative! If you have scissors and glue you can make a collage. If you can read you can find a telling Powell quotation. The idea is to have fun! This is how it works …

1. The “Collage Book” moves through a chain of members.

2. When member A receives the book they contact me for the mailing address of the next member (B) in the chain.
   (Email preferred, but any other method is OK. This way only I and the chain member preceding you know your mailing address.)

3. I send A the address of member B.

4. Member A completes their piece of collage and/or adds a Powell-related quotation(s) to the book, and signs & dates their entry. (Please write legibly!)

5. A then packs and (air) mails the book to B; and tells me they have done so.
   (Please don’t delay sending the book on; we need to keep the chain moving!)

6. Steps 1 to 5 repeat until the book is full (or the chain breaks) when the book is returned to me.

7. I will scan the completed book and if possible make the scans available on the Society website; the original book is put in the Society archive.

The book will be a light-weight 40 sheet (80 page) 8vo Moleskine cahier. Each chain member will be allowed a double page spread for their contribution. Consequently we need at least 25 participants to make the chain worthwhile.

Sign up for the chain by sending me your name, mailing address and, if available, email address or fax number.

Your commitment is (a) to contribute a double page spread collage and/or Powell-related quotation(s) and (b) the cost of (air) mailing the book to the next chain member (who may be the other side of the world!).

Participants will be added to the chain in the order in which I receive their names. The book will be sent to the first participant when we have 25 people signed up. Open to all; membership not required!

I will maintain the chain (names only) on the AP website, adding the member’s state/country and date only after the book has left them. In this way everyone can see where they are in the chain and where the book is.

I have seen similar things done in other contexts, but this is a bit experimental. Let’s see if it works. And above all let’s have some fun!

We need more participants to make this project worthwhile. Why not sign up now by contacting me at the address on page 2, or by email to kcm@cix.co.uk.
Letters to the Editor

Powell and Woolf

*From AC Morrison*

I had not previously thought there was much inter-connection between Anthony Powell and the Woolfs apart from the fact that for a short period they had addresses in Tavistock Square – Powell at 33, the Woolfs at 52. So I was surprised to read in Victoria Glendinning’s life of Leonard Woolf the following passing reference, in the context of Leonard Woolf’s sexual self-denial, the following (I quote literally):

The novelist Anthony Powell told a story about a conversation with Leonard and ‘a bunch of chaps’ late one evening about how they would spend their last hours on earth. ‘Leonard Woolf said he’d like to spend his fucking. We were all rather embarrassed because we knew Virginia wasn’t all that keen.’

(Attributed to private information.)

I’m not at all aware that I find this attribution at all convincing but is there any evidence that Powell is likely to have indulged in this sort of earthy talk in the presence of, or about, Leonard Woolf?

Moreland as Fats Waller?

*From Andrew Clarke*

I would like to suggest that Fats Waller is arguably the best role model for Moreland. Both were musicians – Fats, like a lot of jazz musicians, was a great Bach interpreter – both were heavy drinkers, and Moreland’s passion for coin in the slot player pianos may refer subtextually to Waller’s unmistakeable stride piano style.

Moreland’s passion for French symbolist poetry doesn’t appear to have been shared by Fats. It may, however, be a sly reference to the French Quarter of New Orleans, although I do not know if Fats ever appeared there.

Fats, unlike Moreland, seems to have had no interest in Elizabethan/Jacobean tragedy, but his surname does echo that of Edmund Waller (1606-1687) poet and ex-Etonian. It has even been suggested that Waller, E turned up at Eton in the wrong kind of doublet and was dragged to and fro through the mud by opposing gangs of Scholars and Oppidans, thereby originating the Eton Waller Game, but this tale is now regarded as spurious.

Edmund Waller is now best known for the much anthologised “Go, Lovely Rose”, immediately suggesting “Honeysuckle Rose”, Fats’ most popular composition.

Even more remarkable is how Powell’s multilayered irony gives Moreland characteristics that were not shared by Fats – skin colour, death in hospital rather than in a railway carriage, appearance as an orchestral conductor, etc. Never underestimate the creative process.
Robert Greacen, A Memory

From Neville Keery
When I returned home to Dublin after “discovering” Anthony Powell at the 2005 centenary tribute exhibition at the Wallace Collection in London, I mentioned my new enthusiasm to the poet and writer Robert Greacen, with whom I had become friendly. To my great surprise and fascination, I learnt that Robert knew Anthony Powell quite well. He had become one of Powell’s team of reviewers when the novelist was Literary Editor of Punch from 1953-1958. This patronage continued when Powell became Chief Reviewer of the Daily Telegraph in 1959.

Robert Greacen died in Dublin on 13 April 2008 at the age of 88. He was born and brought up in Northern Ireland and decided at an early age that, without any family interest or encouragement, he was going to be a writer. It gave him great satisfaction to be able to say he achieved his ambition, although his income must have been very precarious at times. Going to London to seek work as a writer and teacher was essential to his career as a poet. Election in 1986 to membership of Aosdana, the state-funded organisation for supporting Irish artists, enabled him to make Dublin the home of his later years. He was widely respected in Ireland as an outstanding poet and his final volume of Selected and New Poems, edited by Jack W Weaver, was published in 2006.

Greacen greatly enjoyed his working relationship with Anthony Powell, particularly their occasional lunches. He was very happy that Powell recognised the value of his highly professional approach to reviewing. Greacen was prepared to review whatever he was given and would always meet meticulously whatever conditions were imposed as to date of delivery and length. If Powell asked for a book to be covered in 100 words, that was exactly what he got. Other editors also appreciated, as I did, Greacen’s high intelligence, broad insight, good humour, and the precision and economy of his approach to all aspects of writing. William Hazlitt was one of his heroes.

I am sorry that I shall no longer be able to meet Robert Greacen for lunch. How much I would have loved a lunch in London with Anthony Powell and his valued reviewer!
From John Powell
More on Douglas Byng from the excellent Encyclopaedia of Pantomime by D Pickering (publisher Gale 1993).

“Byng, Douglas (1893-1987) English comedian and singer, born in Nottingham, who became a major star in review and cabaret and one of the most popular of all pantomime dames. Byng began his theatrical career as a costume designer but made his professional debut as a performer in 1914 as a member of a concert party. He gradually established himself as a comedian and a singer of outrageously camp comic songs which he wrote himself.

“He made his first appearance in Pantomime in 1921, when he starred in Aladdin at the London Palladium and soon won recognition as one of the most accomplished dames of his era. This was in spite of a curious ailment that caused his right arm to fly suddenly upwards and his head to flick to one side; the condition proved incurable but Byng successfully incorporated it into his act. His most successful dame roles included Eliza the Cook in Dick Whittington which he played at the New Oxford Theatre in 1924, forming a memorable partnership with Wilkie Bard** – his song “Oriental Emma of the ’Arem” was the hit of the show.

“Despite the fact that some critics thought Byng’s humour too sophisticated for young audiences (he was banned several times by the BBC) he remained hugely popular and was star of no less than 27 pantomimes. He was particularly noted for his comic costumes which included a fur cap made entirely from bathroom loofahs. As a cabaret star he topped the bill of the famous Cochran revue between 1925 and 1931; his first solo variety appearance was in a one-man Burlesque entitled Cinders or Hop o’ My Thumb. During WWII he toured widely as a member of ENSA.”

** Wilkie Bard sang original tongue twisters ‘She sells Sea Shells’ and ‘The Leith Police Dismisseth Us’.
**Bijou Ardglass Inspirations?**

*From Terrence Eccles*

I believe Bijou Ardglass is inspired by elements of the Irish aristocracy particularly those in County Down whose possessions included Ardglass and Kilkeel and which area Powell might have known through his wartime posting to Gosford Castle in County Armagh.

While I am suspicious of the idea of Powell encrypting his characters so heavily, there are some entertaining if far-fetched resonances to consider:

Jumbo Ardglass is Viscount Kilkeel with the family name Jamieson. The real JAMESONs of course were Dublin-based whiskey distillers.

Is ‘Jamieson’ intended to resonate with GUINNESS the Dublin-based brewers whose paterfamilias Edward Guinness was made 1st Baron Iveagh in County Down in 1891?

His grand-daughter, Maureen Constance Guinness (1907-1998), became Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava. She was the celebrated socialite, model to Evelyn Waugh and scourge of Oswald Mosley.

And tracking backwards: The 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava and Viceroy of India was Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (1826-1902) whose seat was Clandeboye in County Down.

Frederick’s daughter, Lady Victoria Alexandrina Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (1873-1938), was married first in 1894 to William Lee Plunket, 5th Baron Plunket and had eight children by him, and secondly to Colonel Francis Powell Braithwaite CBE DSO.

Lady Victoria’s son, Terence Conyngham Plunket, 6th Baron Plunket was married to Dorothé Mabel Lewis, the illegitimate daughter of Charles Stewart Henry Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 7th Marquess of Londonderry whose estate, Mountstewart, is adjacent to Clandeboye in County Down, of course.

This is perhaps the interesting part: This Dorothy Lewis’s mother was the American silent movie star, Fannie Ward. Fannie Ward’s first husband was Joseph Lewis, the American diamond broker said to be worth $50 million.

Bijou (?Diamond) Ardglass was born in 1901, is described as being of theatrical parents and died in 1941 when a bomb hit the Café de Madrid.

Dorothy Lewis, daughter of a film actress, was born in 1901 and died with her husband, the 6th Baron Plunket, in 1938 in an aeroplane crash in California on their way to visit Randolph Hearst at his estate, San Simeon.

So Dorothy’s husband Terence Plunket was a scion of the Blackwoods of Clandeboye into which the Guinesses married and of the Rowan-Hamiltons of Killyleagh.

What does this tell us other than that aristocrats like to marry their cousins? Not a great deal perhaps but something of these family histories surely fed into Powell’s imaginative casting. Certainly the reality is almost as colourful as the fiction.

Incidentally, the 7th Marquess of Londonderry mentioned above was Secretary of State for Air from 1931 to 1935 and famously had von Ribbentrop as a guest at Mountstewart. I suspect he must appear somehow in *A Dance*.

This may be a bit nebulous but the Irish connection is clear if even via the Pakenham family.
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 and Issue 2, 2007
UK Price: £4  Overseas Price: £5 each

**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 28.
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**
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**Newsletter Back Numbers**
Back numbers of *Newsletter* issues 6, 8 to 20 and 22 to 30 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.

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

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Email: secretary@anthonypowell.org

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**Anthony Powell Society Merchandise Order Form**

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