Dance Class
American High School students Encounter Dance
by John Gould
with a Foreword by Dr Nicholas Birns

*Dance Class* offers an extraordinary collection of essays about Anthony Powell’s great comic novel from John’s two courses (2001-2 and 2007-8) teaching *Dance* to senior high school students. The young authors discuss issues of character, plot and theme; investigate historical background; chart personal relevance; parody characters and situations; even write a treatment for a drama. This book reveals fresh new ways of looking at *Dance*.

Published by iUniverse and being launched at the Washington Conference.

Pre-order now from iUniverse.com, Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk.
Available from the Society from mid-September.

We are grateful to John for pledging the royalties from this book to the Society.
From the Secretary’s Desk

Odd. That’s the only way I can describe it. Odd. Eccentric. Even strange.

Have you ever found that sometimes when you do a piece of work it feels perfectly normal and straightforward. But very occasionally the result is something other; something odd? That’s rather how I feel about this edition of the Newsletter.

No, I don’t know why. This edition just feels different, somehow maybe more eclectic; more eccentric (in the literal sense of being off-centre or unbalanced). Mrs Erdleigh would undoubtedly divine that there is some strange juxtaposition in the heavens – Deimos and Phobos crossing Aldebaran perhaps? Or maybe, as I’m writing this on the evening of 12 August, it is something to do with the Perseid meteor shower which supposedly peaks tonight.

Indeed there are some more than usually eccentric, curious, even whacky, articles in this edition – although as always there is an AP connection in every one. And for some reason there seems to have been a recent spate of AP references in the media, which is in part at least why this issue feels so eccentric and eclectic: we always try to include these where we can.

This issue also contains two important items. First the announcement of this year’s Anthony Powell Lecture at The Wallace Collection on 28 November which is to be given by the historian David Kynaston. Details are on page 16.

You will have noticed the second important item on the front cover: John Gould’s book of his students’ essays from his two courses teaching Dance in high school. This has been in gestation for a long time: I recall walking through Oxford during the Balliol conference in April 2003 discussing ideas for this book with John. And here it is, being launched at the Washington conference which is itself almost upon us.
Anthony Powell and Washington, DC

by Jeff Manley

Washington, DC is noted more for its historical and political sites than for its associations with US literary history. Because of the transient nature of its population, however, many writers have passed through Washington and left records of their impressions. While Anthony Powell leaves no record so far published of any visit to Washington, he has left comments on many of the writers and others of note who do have Washington associations. In view of the Biennial Conference in September at Georgetown University, I have put together the following survey of at least some of those writers and others with Washington connections on whom Powell has left comments.

**Kingsley Amis (1922-1995).** Novelist, poet, literary critic, friend and correspondent of Powell from 1953. In October 1958, while teaching at Princeton, he made a trip to Washington during which he and his family stayed with his Aunt Gladys Case, his father’s sister, who lived there with her second husband Virgil (“Uncle Virg”). As described by Amis,

> The house was on S Street – just that; strange that a people so fond of colour and tolerant of a bit of faking should have given streets in major cities mere numbers and letters … It was a small house and not a prosperous household … There was a rather dreadful prole-style parlour with heavy furniture and no drinks in it or anywhere else on normal occasions. But they had their sun porch and rumpus room and plenty of parties, and in a beat-up-Chevy, hamburger-joint kind of way they showed us something very American: what a good time non-well-off people could have. [Kingsley Amis, *Memoirs*, Penguin, 1991, 202-3]

**Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997).** Philosopher, writer, Oxford professor and administrator, and friend and admirer of the great and the good. His time as a student at Oxford (1928-32) did not overlap with that of Powell (1923-26) but they certainly were known to each other and shared mutual friends, including Maurice Bowra and Evangeline Bruce. Briefly mentioned in Powell’s memoirs [*Strangers*, 173] and more frequently in the *Journals*, most notably when he sent a congratulatory note upon announcement of the bestowal of Powell’s Companion of Honour by the Queen. Berlin lived in or near Georgetown during much of WWII. The first visit took place in 1940 when he arrived in the US on what he hoped would be a trip to Moscow arranged and accompanied by Guy Burgess (who at the time worked – or claimed to work – for the British Intelligence Service) where Berlin was to be appointed Press Attaché with the support of Harold Nicholson and Gladwyn Jebb. The FO either in Washington or London thought better of that venture, in particular because of the inherently unreliable Burgess’s involvement in it, and sent Burgess straight back to London, leaving Berlin...
somewhat stranded in the US where he picked up work from the British Information Office which at the time was actively promoting entry of the US into the war [1]. Based on his success in the Information Office and after a brief trip back to London then in the midst of the blitz, Berlin was reposted to Washington in 1941. On this visit, which extended to 1945, when he finally was able to make a trip to Moscow, he lived during part of the time in two interesting Georgetown situations...

The first was in the house of a somewhat eccentric Englishwoman, Anne Fremantle (née Jackson), whom he knew from Oxford and who was a writer of books about religion but at the time was working in the Indian Section of the British Embassy. Berlin described Georgetown to his parents as the most charming possible suburb of Washington, at the tip of which is the British Embassy itself … The whole thing … has a strong Oxford flavour … which I prefer to the grandeur of life in towns. [2]

In September 1943 Berlin moved to another Georgetown location on a hill “overlooking the River Potomac on one side and the gardens of Georgetown on the other”. The situation reminded Berlin of Amalfi. Berlin found this house after its previous resident, a 31-year old socially prominent Chicago heiress who was a secretary at the Office of Strategic Services (predecessor of the CIA), was murdered there by her spurned lover and supervisor at the OSS (a former professor of English) who then killed himself. According to Mrs Fremantle, Berlin “used to put fresh red ink where the blood had been on the floor when he gave dinner parties” [3]. He lived there until 1945.

Evangeline Bruce (née Bell) (1914-1995).
Friend of the Powells and frequent visitor to The Chantry. Daughter of American father (Ned Bell, diplomat) and English mother (Etelka Surtees, whose forebears were Tory politicians, writers, actors); lived at the Georgetown house purchased before WWII by her husband, US diplomat David KE Bruce (1898-1977). Evangeline married Bruce in 1945 a few weeks after his divorce from Ailsa Mellon, daughter of Andrew Mellon, Pittsburgh banking and manufacturing tycoon. She is mentioned briefly in Hearing Secret Harmonies [197-198] in the context of discussion by Susan Cutts of Fiona’s recent marriage to Russell Gwinnett: “‘I wish Evangeline were still here,’ said Susan. ‘She might know something about the Gwinnetts …’” Powell comments on both Evangeline and her husband several times in his Journals. He met her at a party at Pamela Berry’s in 1963/64 when her husband was Ambassador to the Court of St James and got on well from the start (“a beauty, well dressed, intelligent, funny, slightly mysterious, perfect Ambassadress”). Although half British, she was, according to Powell, determinedly American. She graduated from Radcliffe College where her contemporary (at Harvard), Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, commented on her “wry grace, effortless style, shy and subtle intelligence and indestructible beauty”. He goes on to comment that “enriched by time, she remains [in 1991] elusive, bewitching, amused, romantic, ironic, forever lovely” [4]. Her sister was the English writer, Virginia Surtees, but
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Powell doesn’t provide any connection between her family and one of his favourite neglected writers, RS Surtees. According to David Bruce’s biographer, RS Surtees was also her relative so it seems odd that Powell fails to mention that connection. [5]

After David’s term as ambassador in London, they maintained a London residence in the Albany which Evangeline continued after his death and where she was sometimes visited by Powell and his wife on London trips. She was also a frequent visitor at The Chantry, with a mid-summer picnic becoming something of a tradition. Of David Bruce, Powell’s comments are most complimentary (“perhaps the nicest man of affairs I ever met … most perfect social demeanour [and] charm of any man of affairs I could mention … a most exceptionally nice chap whenever I met him”). After Bruce’s death, Powell was enlisted by Evangeline to help in the editing and production of a 37-page memorial volume privately published in 1980 [Lilley, Anthony Powell – A Bibliography; B.19].

F Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940). American novelist and story writer. His father Edward was from the then rural Montgomery County, Maryland, now a Washington suburb, and he is related to Francis Scott Key (after whom he is named) who wrote the lyrics to the Star Spangled Banner and lived in a house near the bridge to Virginia that bears his name. Fitzgerald made frequent trips to Maryland to visit his relatives and wrote the first drafts of Tender is the Night (1934) while living near Baltimore. Fitzgerald is buried in Rockville in the cemetery of St Mary’s Roman Catholic Chapel. His daughter and the Women’s Club of Rockville oversaw the reburial at St Mary’s in the 1970s from a nondenominational cemetery in Rockville which had fallen into disrepair. Roman Catholic authorities denied burial in the churchyard family plot at the time of Fitzgerald’s death in 1940 because his adherence to that faith was deemed to have lapsed (along with his literary reputation); by the 1970s, with his reputation as a writer well-established, these religious scruples seem to have become less pressing. His daughter was herself buried in the family plot at St Mary’s in 1986.

Powell admired Fitzgerald’s work, particularly The Great Gatsby (1925). His 1937 meeting with Fitzgerald in Hollywood, where the latter had recently begun work for a film studio, is fondly recounted by Powell in his memoirs [Faces, 61-67] as probably the high point of his otherwise futile US sojourn in quest of work as a scriptwriter.

Barbara Fritchie (1766-1862) Heroine of a 1864 poem of that title by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-92) based on the invasion of Maryland by Confederate troops in September 1862 during the War Between the States. According to the poem, Fritchie, who was 95 at the time, flew the Union flag from her house in nearby Frederick, Maryland, in defiance of the Confederate troops as they marched past. The exchange between her and the Confederate officer, Stonewall Jackson, is described in the poem:

“Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country’s flag,” she said.
A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;
The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman’s deed and word;  
“Who touches a hair of yon gray head  
Dies like a dog! March on!” he said.

Powell, who shared with Constant  
Lambert an abiding interest in the War  
Between the States, used the incident in  
the poem to describe Widmerpool’s  
entrance into the dining room at the  
Magnus Donners Prize award banquet  
where he entered “with the air of  
Stonewall Jackson riding into Frederick,  
that is to say, glaring round as if on the  
alert for flags representing the Wrong  
Side”. [HSH, 104] [6]

Graham Greene (1903-1991). Greene made  
several visits to the US, the first in 1938. During  
that first trip, he stopped in Washington on the  
way to Mexico and visited Georgetown  
University where, according to his  
biographer Norman Sherry, he met with  
Father Wilfred Parsons, SJ, Professor of  
Political Science. Fr Parsons was an  
expert on relations between the Mexican  
Government and the Roman Catholic  
Church, a subject Greene later developed  
in his travel book The Lawless Roads  
(1939) and his novel The Power and the  
Glory (1940). On Greene’s last trip to the  
US in October 1985 he was again hosted  
by GU and spoke to an invitational  
gathering in connection with the deposit of  
a selection of his manuscripts and  
correspondence at the GU library. GU has  
a substantial archive of Greeneiana,  
including his correspondence with  
Catherine Walston and letters to him from,  
inter alia, Evelyn Waugh, John Hayward,  
Edith Sitwell and Antonia White.

Pamela Harriman (née Digby) (1920-1997). Possible contributor to the  
character of Pamela Flitton. Born in  
England. Married to Randolph Churchill  
1939-46 despite his reputation of being  
unmarriageable and is said to have used  
their union to curry favour with his father  
Winston, who found her duly impressive.  
During their marriage she had fairly open  
affairs with, inter alia, US diplomat,  
Averell Harriman. Others included  
William Paley (US broadcasting tycoon),  
Edward R Murrow (newscaster) and John  
Hay Whitney (sportsman). These liaisons  
were in part responsible for the break-up  
of her marriage to Randolph. Evelyn  
Waugh described her as a “very tasty  
morsel, indeed” in a letter to Nancy  
Mitford. According to one source, “She  
was interested in power and money but  
money primarily as a means of acquiring  
power” [7]. After the war she renewed her  
acquaintance with Harriman whom she  
eventually married in 1971. Although  
Harriman had numerous houses scattered  
throughout the US, they seemed to settle  
into his house in Georgetown. After  
Harriman’s death in 1986 she became  
immensely wealthy and was active in  
Democratic Party politics, serving as US  
Ambassadress to France in the Clinton  
Administration and dying in Paris in 1997  
at the age of 76 while serving in that post.  
At the time of her death she was said to be  
having an affair with a swimming pool  
attendant at the Ritz Hotel. So, if not a  
contributor to the character of Pamela  
Flitton (Powell says he never laid eyes on  
her [Journals 87-89, 181]) she seems to  
have conducted herself in the same  
tradition and may at least subconsciously  
have influenced Powell’s choice for his  
character’s name.

Donald Maclean (1913-1983). British diplomat and  
traitor who spied for the  
Soviet Union beginning in  
1934. Associated with Guy  
Burgess with whom he
absconded to the USSR in 1951 to avoid questioning by the FO. Later Kim Philby and Anthony Blunt were found to be part of this ring. Maclean worked at the British Embassy in Washington from 1944 until August 1948 when he was posted to Cairo. There is a reported argument between Maclean and Isaiah Berlin that took place at a Georgetown dinner party where Maclean attacked Berlin for the latter’s friendship with the politically conservative Washington hostess Alice Roosevelt Longworth [8]. Although Berlin found Maclean’s attitude unforgivable, he also said that he “liked him very much” and considered him “very very nice” to the extent that the two Embassy employees made up after their quarrel. Berlin had the misfortune to be the close acquaintance of both Burgess and Maclean without in the least realizing that either was a Soviet agent.

Powell had met Maclean before the war when he shared a house with Adrian Daintry who introduced him to Powell as a somewhat eccentric FO employee who was thought by Daintry to be “more or less a Communist”. Powell found him not in the least agreeable but “vain, pompous and in his own way, notably snobbish” and recorded his negative reactions at the time. Powell saw him occasionally after the war and found no reason to change his opinion of him. In his memoirs Powell makes the point that Daintry, “a painter without the least interest in politics,” recognized Maclean as a Commie before the war, whereas his FO superiors, supposed to be expert in these matters, apparently never noticed, tending to think his leftist posturing merely a form of humanitarianism.

John S Monagan (1911-2005). Fan, friend and correspondent of Powell. US Congressman (Dem. Conn.) 1959-73. Picked up A Question of Upbringing while visiting his sister and never looked back. His four visits to the Powells at The Chantry between 1975 and 1988 are recounted in the Powell Society booklet The Master and The Congressman (2003). On those occasions, the Powells offered lunch at home or were entertained by the Monagans at nearby restaurants in Frome or Nunney. In their conversations (some of which were taped by Monagan) they discussed Powell’s recent works (eg. O, How the Wheel Becomes It!) and works in progress (eg. The Fisher King) as well as writings of Monagan, such as his biography of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Powell also noted two of these visits (1987 and 1988) in his Journals, describing them to much the same effect as Monagan. His correspondence with Powell began in 1969 and continued for 23 years. Powell mentions many of these communications in his Journals (especially the 1990-92 volume). This correspondence is now archived at Georgetown University.


Prosopography is the study of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective investigation of their lives. Schlesinger concludes that this is just what Powell has accomplished in *Dance*. He makes an interesting comparison between the pre-war novels with their emphasis on the individual and the *Dance* novels with their concentration on the collective. This change in emphasis also affects Powell’s writing style which in the earlier novels combines the “deadpan description of cumulatively dotty scenes” and “sardonic use of slapstick” with a readiness to “grapple in a comic novel with themes of poverty, madness and death”. In *Dance*, on the other hand, rather than a “brisk procession of blackouts,” Powell employs a “highly intensive … cultivation of material [with] minute and exhaustive analyses of single episodes”. Although Schlesinger and Powell shared a close friendship with Evangeline Bruce, they do not seem to have met, or if they did, to have mentioned it.

**Gore Vidal (b. 1925).**

American novelist and essayist. He was raised in Washington. Powell reviewed his early novel *The City and the Pillar* in 1949 and found it reminiscent of post WWI British novels dealing with wartime experience and sexual abnormality. He thought that “an occasional gleam of humour might have lightened a difficult and unexhilarating theme” [unsigned review, *TLS*, 13 May 1949]. The novel is frequently cited in the US as one of the first novels by an American to deal openly with the theme of homosexuality. Powell and Vidal met at a writers’ conference in Bulgaria in 1977, described by Powell in *Strangers*, where he recalled to Vidal being told by Harold Acton of Vidal’s arrival at Acton’s Florence villa with a dead dog in a suitcase which he wished to bury on the grounds. In his own memoirs, *Palimpsest* (1995) [298-99], Vidal recalls the same dog story “which had become much improved in the telling” but reports that the dog was actually buried in the grounds of a friend’s house in Lucca. Vidal also reports that he was never able to finish a book by Powell, which may be just as well as it spares Powell the sort of assessment Vidal leaves us of Evelyn Waugh, a writer all of whose works he had read with pleasure but whom he personally “found singularly detestable”. According to Vidal, Waugh “wrote small funny novels of no great appeal until television realized that the books – particularly *Brideshead Revisited* – contained soap opera elements, which, properly exploited, could fill with vicarious joy the dismal lives of consumers everywhere” [Idem., 198-99].

**Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966).** Waugh visited Washington in February 1949 where he was the guest of Georgetown University and delivered a lecture on British writers GK Chesterton, Ronald Knox and Graham Greene (all, like him, Roman Catholic converts). After the first performance on 10 February sold out another was scheduled three days later. The papers of Waugh’s friend and biographer, Christopher Sykes (including several letters from Waugh), as well as letters from Waugh to Mary Lygon and Graham Greene are on deposit at Georgetown University.

**Notes:**

[1] Powell knew Burgess primarily by his bad reputation, a “notorious scallywag, to whom no fully baked person … would ever have dreamt of entrusting the smallest responsibility, or access to
secrets of even a low grade” and a “man to steer clear of”. At the time of his notoriety following his escape to the USSR in 1951, Powell did not recall ever having met him until finding a written report among his papers. He met Burgess in 1939 and described him at the time as a “nauseating character called Guy Burgess…a BBC fairy of the fat go-getting sort” [Messengers, 91-2]. Burgess had returned to Washington in June 1950, posted at the request of Kim Philby, another nasty piece of work who was also part of the Cambridge spy ring and who by then was also assigned to Washington. Burgess lived in the basement of Philby’s house near the Embassy. He returned to London at Philby’s direction in May 1951 to warn Maclean when Philby learned that Maclean’s espionage in the 1940s had become known to British and US authorities.


[5] Nelsom D Lankford, The Last American Aristocrat: The Biography of David KE Bruce (Boston 1996). Lankford is also the source of much else in the entry for Evangeline Bruce, including quotes from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. He interviewed Powell for the biography and mentions him among his interviewees but doesn’t seem to cite Powell’s recollections in the text. Powell himself fills that gap when he recalls that interview in [Journals 90-92, 96-7 which is quoted in the above entry].

[6] An error occurred in the first edition of Hearing Secret Harmonies which had Stonewall Jackson marching into Fredericksburg, which is in Virginia, not Maryland, and was also the site of much action in the war but not that involving Barbara Fritchie. In the first US edition, the error was corrected.


Michelle Obama Follows in the Footsteps of AP Soc.

As many members will know, the Audley pub in Mount Street, at the heart of London’s Mayfair district is the regular meeting place of the Society’s London Group. With such prestigious customers as Society members and being as it is about the nearest pub to the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, it should have come as little surprise to staff at the Audley when on Monday 8 June they were hosts to US First Lady Michelle Obama and her two daughters (Malia and Sasha), plus the obligatory security men. President Obama was undertaking formal business at the D-Day 65th Anniversary celebrations in France, but Michelle and the girls stayed in London for a two day break. As well as the obligatory shopping and sightseeing of Westminster Abbey they descended on the Audley for an informal dinner in the pub’s private dining room. Apparently the Obama girls both ate the Audley’s fish and chips (highly rated by Society members!) and Mrs Obama indulged in a sirloin steak.

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Lost Scenes from *Dance*

A set of copy-edited drafts of the novels comprising the Dance sequence has come to light in the throne room of Heinemann’s. The blue-pencilled typescripts reveal the author’s initial racy approach anticipating many developments in the modern novel, and memorable passages lost to literature in the editing process. 

*Julian Allason* summarises the key deletions.

**A Question of Upbringing**
Uncle Giles’s unfortunate misunderstanding with the ticket inspector at Slough. Readers are spared a detailed account of the loss of Templer’s innocence. Le Bas proves to be Braddock alias Thorne, headbutts the constable and goes on the run.

**A Buyer’s Market**
Prequel to Mrs Andriadis’s party: Mr Deacon’s surprising relationship with Mr Andriadis and the discovery of Millie’s secret passion for thuggee. Widmerpool misunderstands Barbara Goring’s instruction in cocaine snorting.

**The Acceptance World**
The original draft of the séance scene has the spectral figure of Karl Marx conjured up by Mrs Erdleigh and an emission of ectoplasm that propels Quiggin to the brink of Trotskyism.

**At Lady Molly’s**
Ted Jeavons entertains the company to an account of Mildred Haycock’s surprising party trick with a pencil, learned, he claims, from her friend Wallis Simpson who had acquired it in a Sing Song house in Shanghai. Widmerpool, still a keen supporter of the Windsors, defends the honour of his fiancée with an umbrella.

**Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant**
Arriving late at Casanova’s Nick and Ted stumble upon a Tong meeting: a vicious kung-fu fight breaks out in which Ted receives a karate chop to his old war wound. [This scene was later adapted by Chips Lovell for the aborted screenplay of *Fu Manchu and the Bothersome Bacilli*.]

**The Kindly Ones**
The Seven Deadly Sins tableau goes hideously wrong when Sir Magnus, overcome by excitement, runs amok in the dungeons and poor Betty is garrotted. Widmerpool runs over Dr Trelawney who has been lurking behind the urn.

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**The Valley of Bones**
Captain Gwatkin’s passion for the barmaid is in this version requited, and a steamy episode ensues in which they sing a duet to the tune of ‘Kiss Me Good Night Sergeant-Major’. [The sequence was deleted following unsuccessful copyright negotiations with Arthur Askey.]

**The Soldier’s Art**
Captain Biggs takes a fancy to Stringham who shows no interest in playing cricket. To deflect unwelcome attentions Stringham introduces Biggsy to the pleasures of auto-erotic asphyxiation. Unfortunately the experiment goes awry.

**The Military Philosophers**
Pamela Flitton invites Nick into the back of the staff car outside Polish HQ. At the critical moment Szymanski appears with a hyena-bashing mallet torn from the walls of the Ufford. [Powell seems to have had second thoughts about where this might lead the plot and Pamela is restored to type-cast grumpiness.]

**Books Do Furnish a Room**
Erridge’s funeral is disrupted by an unexpectedly demonstrative display of grief on the part of Gypsy, Lady Craggs, who rends her garments. Uncle Alfred comes to the rescue with his pocket kerchief and BOAC sewing kit.

**Temporary Kings**
An elaborate honey trap prepared by MI5 for Widmerpool fails when the target takes the wrong vaporetto and ends up on the Lido. Louis Glober has an accident with his scissors and Pamela succumbs to septicaemia after being nursed by Gwinnett.

**Hearing Secret Harmonies**
Scorp is bitten by a crayfish, also suffers septicaemia and is pushed into the Vortex of Being by Gwinnett. Bithell takes over the cult, recruiting the Quiggin twins and Canon Fenneau as archimandrite. [Powell was so offended by Kingsley Amis’s laughter that this draft ending was altered and a memorable scene involving Bithell’s teeth was excised.]

Heinemann are understood to be considering a revised collectors edition based upon the original text. “It has got everything: sex, drugs and genealogy,” says a company spokesman. “Scholars and general readers will be equally fascinated”. The Sunday Times has acquired serialisation rights to the original typescripts which are undergoing verification by Dr David Irving and B Douglas Russell.
OBITUARY: Flossie Lane of Leintwardine

Edited version from The Daily Telegraph, 19 June 2009

Flossie Lane, who died on 13 June aged 94, was reputedly the oldest publican in Britain and ran one of the last genuine country inns. For 74 years she had kept the tiny Sun Inn, the pub where she was born in the pre-Roman village of Leintwardine on the Shropshire-Herefordshire border.

According to beer connoisseurs Flossie Lane’s parlour pub is one of the last five remaining in England and is listed by English Heritage for its historical interest. The Sun is as resolutely old-fashioned and unreconstructed today as it was in the mid-1930s when she and her brother took it over. With its wooden trestle tables, pictures of whiskery past locals on the walls, alcoves and a roaring open fire, the Sun is listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide as “a pub of outstanding national interest”.

There is no conventional bar, and no counter. Customers sit on hard wooden benches in the unadorned quarry-tiled front room. Beer – Hobson’s Best at £2 a pint – is served from barrels on the kitchen floor. She held a licence to sell only beer but recently started selling wine as a gesture towards modern habits. Since Flossie began to ail, after a fall in 2006, her customers have helped themselves. There is no till. People put the money in a row of jam jars, one for each denomination of note and coin.

Her regulars have formed themselves into a Flossie Lane Society, run as a kind of guild, and are known as Aldermen of the Red-Brick Bar. Every year they appoint a mayor, nominated by the outgoing one, who wears a squirrel-skin cape made by a local butcher. The mayoral handover involves the eating of squirrel pie and a parade through the village led by the new mayor wearing the honorary mayoral chain, hat and staff which bear a symbolic sun in homage to the pub.

Both Flossie and her brother (who died in 1985) were particular about who drank there; sons of the tillage were preferred, although some approved non-rustics were tolerated. The pub is still the base and meeting point for the local cricket club, bellringers and fly fishermen drawn to the River Teme which runs through the village.

During her infirmity Flossie Lane’s regulars rallied round to keep the Sun going, manning it on a rota basis. The owner of the neighbouring chip shop ordered the beer from the brewery, served the customers and delivered chip suppers which were washed down with pints of ale. The accounts, washing-up, laying the fire and even the sweeping-up were undertaken by the volunteers.

Flossie Lane was proud of not having kept up with the times. “The pub hasn’t changed in all the years, and they are all good people here – I won’t have no rough,” she insisted. Although she had been serving ale since the Twenties, Flossie’s secret recipe for a long life was simple. “I’m a teetotal. I like a nice cup of tea. I leave the drink to the others.”

The broadcaster Jeremy Paxman once described the pub: “Flossie, the landlady, sits in the middle of the room, wearing a pair of surgical stockings. The only food is a pot of eggs, which Flossie pickled several moons ago”.

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Both Flossie and her brother (who died in 1985) were particular about who drank there; sons of the tillage were preferred, although some approved non-rustics were tolerated. The pub is still the base and meeting point for the local cricket club, bellringers and fly fishermen drawn to the River Teme which runs through the village.

During her infirmity Flossie Lane’s regulars rallied round to keep the Sun going, manning it on a rota basis. The owner of the neighbouring chip shop ordered the beer from the brewery, served the customers and delivered chip suppers which were washed down with pints of ale. The accounts, washing-up, laying the fire and even the sweeping-up were undertaken by the volunteers.

Flossie Lane was proud of not having kept up with the times. “The pub hasn’t changed in all the years, and they are all good people here – I won’t have no rough,” she insisted. Although she had been serving ale since the Twenties, Flossie’s secret recipe for a long life was simple. “I’m a teetotal. I like a nice cup of tea. I leave the drink to the others.”

—

OBITUARY: Flossie Lane of Leintwardine

Edited version from The Daily Telegraph, 19 June 2009

Flossie Lane, who died on 13 June aged 94, was reputedly the oldest publican in Britain and ran one of the last genuine country inns. For 74 years she had kept the tiny Sun Inn, the pub where she was born in the pre-Roman village of Leintwardine on the Shropshire-Herefordshire border.

According to beer connoisseurs Flossie Lane’s parlour pub is one of the last five remaining in England and is listed by English Heritage for its historical interest. The Sun is as resolutely old-fashioned and unreconstructed today as it was in the mid-1930s when she and her brother took it over. With its wooden trestle tables, pictures of whiskery past locals on the walls, alcoves and a roaring open fire, the Sun is listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide as “a pub of outstanding national interest”.

There is no conventional bar, and no counter. Customers sit on hard wooden benches in the unadorned quarry-tiled front room. Beer – Hobson’s Best at £2 a pint – is served from barrels on the kitchen floor. She held a licence to sell only beer but recently started selling wine as a gesture towards modern habits. Since Flossie began to ail, after a fall in 2006, her customers have helped themselves. There is no till. People put the money in a row of jam jars, one for each denomination of note and coin.

Her regulars have formed themselves into a Flossie Lane Society, run as a kind of guild, and are known as Aldermen of the Red-Brick Bar. Every year they appoint a mayor, nominated by the outgoing one, who wears a squirrel-skin cape made by a local butcher. The mayoral handover involves the eating of squirrel pie and a parade through the village led by the new mayor wearing the honorary mayoral chain, hat and staff which bear a symbolic sun in homage to the pub.

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BOOK REVIEW

Diaries, 1984-1997
by James Lees-Milne, ed Michael Bloch
John Murray, £30

Reviewed by James Mitchum

James Lees-Milne was educated at Eton (a contemporary of Ian Fleming and Sir Anthony Wagner) and Oxford, and in 1936 became secretary of the Country House Committee of the National Trust. He held various advisory positions with the National Trust for many years.

Although predominantly homosexual (he had encounters with Robert Byron, Sir Harold Nicolson and Sir John Gielgud, among others), in 1951 he married the garden designer Alvilde Chaplin, a bisexual who had an affair with Vita Sackville-West (coincidentally the wife of Sir Harold Nicolson). They remained married till Alvilde’s death in 1994.

Lees-Milne wrote several biographies, novels and architectural works but it is for his diaries that he is best known. The diaries cover the period 1942 through to his death in 1997 and are a splendid mixture of snobbery, name-dropping, catty remarks and descriptions of his beloved country houses and their inhabitants.

He often had a love-hate attitude to aristocrats, both fawning over them in person but capable of venomous remarks about them behind their backs. For example, he writes that

basic politeness and civilised behaviour are the attributes of a gentleman, nurtured in country houses and on the playing fields of Eton. Outside such sanctuaries of good breeding, brutishness and vulgarity flourish.

Yet he can describe a dinner party of aristocrats as a “crowd of fatuous, arrogant drones”.

Like many snobs, Lees-Milne is quite happy to bend the knee and accept the hospitality of members of the Royal family but then to disparage them in his diaries. He complains that one

can’t take the slightest liberty with royals, which makes their presence a bore and a blight at social gatherings.

He visits the Michaels of Kent often, remarking on meeting Prince Michael that he is “a dear, sensitive, courteous and very stupid little man”, and of one of Princess Michael’s books, that it is “half-baked pseudo porn”. On her death he describes Princess Diana as “shallow and devious, as cunning as a vixen … totally uneducated and stupid”.

He was acquainted with the Powells and visited them occasionally. At one point he says,

I can see Tony now at The Chantry, running out of the library to greet us in his blue-and-white striped apron, a touch of flour on his black eyebrows, announcing that his curry dish would be ready in five minutes. And over the library shelves those prim and purse-lipped ancestors like the chorus dolls in Petrouchka.

Commenting on Powell’s Journals, he says,

Tony Powell’s diaries are very enjoyable and hard to put down. His comments are out of the ordinary, and very sharp and pointful. He is, so far, charitable about A and me. Yet he does not emerge as sympathetic. There is a hard wooden superiority about him, a censoriousness, and
immense snobbishness. Very self-centred, like most literary stars; most of the engagements he mentions are for newspaper and television interviews.

In 1997 he says,

I am deep in Tony Powell’s third volume of diaries. His cleverness and learnedness fill me with veneration and awe. His personality freezes me up. I have always liked him and loved Violet, but A[lvilde] never felt at ease with him. From his few references to me, he was clearly bored with me. Writes that Jim is never interested in his own work. Truth is that I never wanted to discuss my writings with him. The difference between our diaries is that between a highbrow and a middle-brow. I suppose I’m a poor man’s Anthony Powell.

Elsewhere he says, he visits Thrumpton Hall in 1993 and describes someone as “resembling Violet Powell but without her intellect”.

Talking of Powell’s interest in genealogy, he notes:

I lunched with Hugh Massingberd at the Travellers Club … We talked of how Tony Powell and Simon Blow are both obsessed with their lineage. Hugh thinks it is because they both feel they have something to hide.

There is also the following interesting snippet about Powell. Bruce Hunter (literary agent for Powell and Lees-Milne) lunches with him at Brooks’s. “Bruce asked if I would consider doing an ‘album’ – the fashion these days – on Tony Powell’s Dance to the Music of Time, describing all the books and paintings mentioned therein. Extraordinary idea. I explained that I liked Tony immensely but his novels left me cold”.

The diaries contain some excellent anecdotes. When visiting Lady Diana Mosley (née Mitford), she tells him she had to obtain a copy of her marriage certificate to Sir Oswald Mosley after he died to avoid French death duties:

This was difficult, as they had married in the garden of Goebbels’ house in Hitler’s presence. She applied to … the East German government, as the site was now on the Eastern side of the Berlin Wall. Amazingly, such is German efficiency, she obtained it.

When Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort (a leading figure in the hunting world, and the Lees-Milnes’ landlord) dies, Lees-Milne notes that hunt saboteurs try to dig up his grave. “They threatened to sever his head and deliver it to Princess Anne. Charming”.

There are several amusing sketches of people he has encountered. His wife, for example, is commissioned to design Mick Jagger’s garden in the south of France. Sir Mick is described, on their first meeting, as “A nice little man, unassuming … Proffers the fingers to shake hand. No firm grip”. Sir Cecil Beaton is “the most lamentable sucker-up and social climber. He made me feel sick”. Another acquaintance is described as “Always the society man, but scratch the surface and there was a little bounder”.

Noting the publication of a volume of his diaries, he sighs, “I fear the critics will wallop me for gossip and snobbery”, but that it precisely the appeal of this engrossing book, with its acid remarks and shameless name-dropping. ■
Local Groups

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

NY & NE USA Group
Area: New York & NE USA
Contact: Leatrice Fountain
Email: leatrice.fountain@gmail.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.

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscription renewals were due on 1 April, and that regrettably subscription rates were increased at the start of this year (see back page for new rates). Prompt renewal is appreciated as this obviates the expense of sending reminders.

Sadly most of those UK members with Standing Orders failed to update their instructions to their bank, despite a reminder. Please adjust your Standing Order to reflect the new rates.

Members are also reminded that subscriptions and membership enquiries should now be addressed to Graham & Dorothy Davie at:

Anthony Powell Society Memberships
Beckhouse Cottage
Hellifield
Skipton
N. Yorkshire, BD23 4HS, UK
Email: membership@anthonypowell.org
Phone: +44 (0) 1729 851 836
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8864 6109
Dates for Your Diary

The Anthony Powell Annual Lecture

**Anthony Powell's Dance: One Historian's Inspiration, Exasperation, Consolation**

To be given by **David Kynaston**

The Wallace Collection
Manchester Square, London, W1

Saturday 28 November 2009
1830 hrs
followed by drinks until 2030 hrs

Cost £10 (includes a glass of wine)
**Booking essential** on 020 7563 9551 or booking@wallacecollection.org
[Please mention the Society when booking]

David Kynaston is author of the widely acclaimed *Austerity Britain*, first part of *Tales of a New Jerusalem*, his multi-volume social history of post-war Britain. Volume 2, *Family Britain*, covering the period 1951-57, will be published in early November.

David has said he “envisaged the project as owing something to two types of artistic inspiration: the thickly textured panorama of a 19th century “loose, baggy monster” realist novel, with perhaps a dash of Frith’s *Derby Day* painting; and the *roman-fleuve* of Anthony Powell’s *A Dance to the Music of Time* novels”.

In his lecture David offers a personal response to Powell's sequence and reflects on the value of historical fiction.


NY & NE USA Group Fall Luncheon

Saturday 17 October 2009
at 12 noon

Roger Sherman Inn
New Canaan, CT, USA

Further details from Leatrice Fountain, leatrice.fountain@gmail.com

Annual General Meeting 2009

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The Anthony Powell Society will be held on

Saturday 24 October 2009 at 1400 hrs

Proxy votes must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 19 October 2009.

Followed at 1500 hrs by a talk

**The Quest for Varda**
by Patric Dickinson

Details in centre spread.

London Group Pub Meets

Saturday 14 November 2009
Saturday 13 February 2010
Saturday 08 May 2010
Saturday 14 August 2010
Saturday 13 November 2010

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

Good beer, good food and informal conversation in a Victorian pub AP would have known. Why not bring something AP-related to interest us? Members & non-members welcome.

Further details from the Hon. Secretary.
Dates for Your Diary

Whitechapel Bell Foundry Tour
Saturday 5 December 2009
Whitechapel Bell Foundry
32/34 Whitechapel Road, London, E1
Time: 0930 hrs prompt
The Guinness Book of Records lists the Whitechapel Bell Foundry as Britain’s oldest manufacturing company, having been established in 1570 (during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I) and being in continuous business until that date.
This is a rare opportunity to visit this working foundry which is a genuine part of Britain’s cultural heritage. While not directly Powell related the tour provides an intriguing look at the quintessentially English art of bell-ringing.
Unfortunately we have been able to obtain only a small number of tickets which are already allocated. It is hoped to offer a further tour in 2010; if you are interested please contact the Hon. Secretary.

Powell Birthday Lunch
Saturday 5 December 2009
Spaghetti House
20 Sicilian Avenue, London WC1
1215 for 1230 hrs
Following the success of last year’s Birthday Lunch we will again visit the Spaghetti House in Sicilian Avenue.
If you wish to come, please contact the Hon. Secretary so we can ensure we have a large enough table.
Non-members are welcome.
Why not join us for the usual convivial time: good food, good wine and good conversation – and follow it with a cultural stroll round AP-land, a visit to the British Museum or a little light Christmas shopping?

Copy Deadlines
Newsletter #37, Winter 2009
Copy Deadline: 9 November 2009
Publication Date: 4 December 2009

Newsletter #38, Spring 2009
Copy Deadline: 12 February 2009
Publication Date: 5 March 2009

Secret Harmonies #4, 2009
Copy Deadline: 7 September 2009
Publication Date: 23 October 2009

Contributions to the Newsletter and Journal are always welcome and should be sent to:
Newsletter & Journal Editor,
Anthony Powell Society
76 Ennismore Avenue
Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK
Fax: +44 (0)20 8864 6109
Email: editor@anthonypowell.org

2008 Secret Harmonies
The trustees have decided that the much delayed 2008 edition of Secret Harmonies will become the 2009 edition. It is hoped that the edition planned for 2009 will be published as an additional volume in Spring 2010.
Local Group News

London Pub Meet
by Noreen Marshall

Twelve of us gathered in the Audley on Saturday 8 August for our third pub meet of the year. The weather was pleasantly warm, and we tucked into a good discussion of Society matters accompanied by a wide variety of good food, but did not sample the lamb dish which was listed as costing £1375 rather than £13.75!

We particularly focussed on Society events. This year’s have been so successful that there are already requests for repeats of the Bodleian Library tour and the Whitechapel Bell Foundry tour, both of which were oversubscribed; and a proposal for making May’s collage day an annual occasion, perhaps with a prize.

Of course, the Society’s major upcoming event is the 2009 Conference in September, in Washington, DC – our first such event outside the UK. Despite the Hon. Secretary’s existing commitments, work on the 2011 Conference has already started, and there was a lively discussion about a suitable venue for it. Suggestions so far include Wales, Sweden, Edinburgh, London, Cambridge, Helsinki, Reykjavik, Chicago and Tokyo. As is traditional, it is anticipated that an announcement will be made at the close of this year’s Conference.

The food inspired us to talk of restaurants, including the recent visit to Elena’s L’Etoile, and this year’s Anthony Powell birthday lunch (see page 17). We also talked about possibly having a Society meal at one of the Polish restaurants in London to celebrate Powell’s wartime work with the Allies, and came up with at least four nominations, three with appropriate connections. Ognisko, the Polish Club’s restaurant in Prince’s Gate, is in a building used by the Polish Resistance during WW2. Daquise, in Thurloe Street, is near Glendower Place, where Powell once lived during his roving childhood. Finally, L’Autre, evidently the world’s only Polish-Mexican bistro, is in the same street as Powell’s former residence in Shepherd Market. No, not a model for Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant, but one with a two menu system resulting from a Polish chef replacing a Mexican one. Nachos and pierogi, anyone?

Other AP-related topics under discussion included the exact nationality of Colonel Flores; possible models for Sillery; and a Powell-themed question which Derek Hawes has had accepted for BBC Radio 4’s Round Britain Quiz. Some favourite Widmerpool episodes were discussed, notably the tryst with Mrs Haycock. We wondered whether the Widmerpool Award should be revived, there being surely no shortage of candidates at the moment.

We also talked about John Betjeman, and a talk on Maurice Bowra given to the Betjeman Society by Leslie Mitchell; Evelyn Waugh and his family and friends; names; tattoos and piercings; Wyndham Lewis and TS Eliot; classical music; the concept of ivory basements (rather than towers); classical myth and legend and the writings of Robert Graves; and popular music of the 1920s and ‘30s.

Present were: Dorothy Davie, Graham Davie, Derek Hawes, Keith Marshall, Noreen Marshall, Derek Miles, Sandy Morrison, Prue Raper, Guy Robinson, Jean Rollason, John Rollason, Robert Tresman.
On page 63 of *A Writer’s Notebook* Powell jots this superb description. How he never managed to use it in *Dance* – tagged to Dicky Umfraville, of course – I will never know. It is just one of the many apposite entries in *A Writer’s Notebook*, which is Powell the novelist’s equivalent of the needlewoman’s button box.

OK, so Powell jotted down apposite, humorous, but meaningless, ditties for possible later use. Well “up to a point, Lord Copper”.

Despite my total ignorance about horses and racing, the above quote had stuck in my mind as being such a brilliant description of the modern jockey’s style – especially flat race jockeys. I had assumed that this was the result of Powell, or some friend or acquaintance, being tongue-in-cheek and whimsically derogatory at the expense of the racing fraternity.

Reading, a few weeks ago, a web-based science news feed *ScienceNOW* I spotted an item with the title *How the “Monkey Crouch” Transformed Horseracing* [1]. Now I wouldn’t normally notice anything relating to horse racing, but this set off alarm bells in my head ... Ping! ... Ping! ... Ping! ... The report was a news item about an academic paper in the journal *Science* [2] and the headline brought to mind the Powell quote. Being ever curious I went to investigate.

Horseracing has existed in its current form for over 200 years, but that’s not to say it hasn’t changed at all. In 1897 the 23-year-old American jockey James Forman “Tod” Sloan came to the United Kingdom and revolutionized horse racing. Up until then the riding style had been for the jockey to dangle his (they were all men, then!) legs down the sides of his mount, much after the style of modern dressage riding.

But Sloan shortened his leathers and squatted high in his stirrups, thus introducing the apparently uncomfortable modern race riding posture. To the British this looked awkward, and indeed it does require a high degree of horsemanship: normally the jockey’s dangling legs act as stabilisers but with short stirrups this stabilisation is removed and it is much easier to be thrown. Because of the awkwardness the style was nicknamed the “monkey crouch” by the British.

Nevertheless the new style caught on quickly and between 1890 and 1910 jockeys using Sloan’s technique improved their race times by about 6%, first in the United States and then, because of Sloan, in the UK. Now veterinarians at the Royal Veterinary College (part of the University of London) and the British Racing School in Newmarket have worked out the dynamics.

To determine how energy-efficient Sloan’s pose is the scientists attached sensors to a horse’s saddle and to a jockey’s belt. As the horse raced around the track, the sensors recorded the vertical and horizontal movement of both horse and jockey.

As horse and rider move forward, they also bob up and down with each stride. Using the “monkey crouch” a horse averaged a vertical movement of 150mm.
on each stride while the jockey’s vertical displacement was just 60mm; the jockeys, by using their legs as dampers, stay relatively stationary compared to the horse. This is in contrast to the almost identical displacements of horse and rider with the old style of riding.

By, in effect, floating above his mount, the jockey saves the energy the horse would otherwise use shoving him back up with each stride – something which is obviously hard work even with a featherweight jockey like Lester Piggott, an arch proponent of the “monkey crouch”. In their Science article the authors report that no other change has brought such dramatic improvements in race times. Speeds of around 109 seconds per mile in the 1890s fell dramatically and settled at less than 103 seconds per mile for most of the 20th century.

So what of Sloan? Well he was an astonishingly successful jockey. Such were his abilities that in 1896 he won nearly 30% of all his races, increased it to 37% in 1897, and upped it again to an astonishing 46% in 1898. Compare that to a career “strike rate” of only just over 20% for Lester Piggott, one of the most successful jockeys ever to ride on the flat.

Sloan’s success on the racetrack, combined with a flamboyant lifestyle filled with beautiful women, made him one of the first to become a major international celebrity in any sport.

But however spectacular his racing career it was relatively short. In 1900 the Prince of Wales offered Sloan the job of riding for his stable in the 1901 racing season. But there was a cloud of suspicion that Sloan had been betting on races in which he had competed. Advised by the British Jockey Club that they would not renew his
license, he never rode for the Prince of Wales. The ban in Britain was maintained by the American racing authorities, and Sloan’s racing career came to an end.

After leaving racing Sloan starred in an Oscar Hammerstein one-man show in a New York vaudeville theatre, but that too was short-lived. Subsequently he went to Paris where he ran a small bistro (later to become the famous Harry’s New York Bar) but financial problems from his lavish lifestyle forced Sloan to sell up and return to the US. With no money, in 1920 he tried acting in motion pictures but by then his name was no longer sufficient to carry him. Married and divorced twice, Sloan died in 1933 from cirrhosis. He is buried in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery (Glendale, CA) which was satirised by Evelyn Waugh in his novel *The Loved One*.

Eventually however British racing historians restored Sloan’s reputation – his betting on races had been a dubious charge at best – and he was posthumously inducted into the US National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame in 1955.

But it is for the “monkey crouch” that Sloan will be long remembered.

And as with so many things Powell was in fact right on the ... err ... money!


Anthony Powell Society Newsletter #36

Anthony Powell’s War

by John Powell

In Newsletter #35 Raymond Delaunay writes:

I was discussing Powell’s war time service with a friend recently. She claimed that because he was an Old Etonian etc., he had a “cushy war”. I explained about his serving in the Welch Regiment (hardly a chic regiment), but she insisted that his background meant that he would never have seen action. Is she right? Would Powell have served in the front line or would his connections have always got him out of the messy fighting?

As Mr Delaunay says my father joined the Welch Regiment in 1939 after a contact by chance with the officer dealing with the AOER (Army Officer Emergency Reserve), a Capt. Perkins, whose wife had recently taken in Bosola and Paris, my parents’ Siamese cats.

There was a moment of anxiety during the sight test in the medical. However on 11 December 1939, three weeks after his first contact with Capt. Perkins, AP travelled by train to Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire to join his regiment. At thirty-five the oldest by over ten years of the Second Lieutenants.

His OTC training at Eton was helpful; three or four days after joining his unit AP was changing guard as orderly officer. On the second Sunday he had to march the company to church and back past the Brigadier’s saluting base; an event which he described to me vividly when I was a child.

Among the first skills to be taught was stripping a Bren machine gun which had superseded the Lewis gun. There had been changes in drill as well; soldiers used to form up in fours, now they fell into three ranks at once.

Writing in Faces in My Time AP says

There was no disaster [marching to church] but I had not shouted commands such as were required for more than sixteen years. Many officers were away on courses, I would find myself in charge of two platoons, forty or fifty Welsh miners to be taken into the country and taught how to attack a hill or ‘lay down smoke’.

The person with whom Mr Delaunay was discussing my father’s war service should be disabused of the impression that life during WW2 was in any way ‘cushy’ on the ‘Home’ front.

My father was a determined recruit to the war effort and army life. The fact that all his intellectual powers were concentrated on whatever the army demanded to the exclusion of all work on novels or articles for the duration is an indication of his application.

Soon after AP joined, the regiment was ordered to Northern Ireland in December 1939. In the following February he was sent on a ‘polishing up course’ in such matters as square-bashing, trench digging, barbed wire erecting, together with the more theoretical sides of army training.
The action which AP saw in Belfast was as a result of air raids; these unexpectedly hotted up in the Spring of 1941.

For a time I had orders to turn out the defence platoon, mount Brens as practice for anti-aircraft cover, but no dive bombing taking place, this routine was after a while abandoned he wrote in *Faces*. The decision for my mother and Tristram to move to Belfast because the city had been free of raids demonstrated the unpredictability of events in the early years of WW2.

Would my father have served on the frontline or would his connections have kept him away from the messy fighting? The questioner ignores the harsh reality of wartime London. AP describes the situation in London in June 1944 when ,at the very moment the Normandy landings renewed Allied optimism,

the flying bombs (V-1s) came into action, the first of such raids persisting night and day, every few minutes without cease, for seventy or more hours on end [...]

The worst of the blitz – short of being hit – was the manner in which its detonations murdered sleep. One’s windows would occasionally be blown in, flying bombs were undoubtedly disagreeable when they floated over, three at a time, just before one rose from bed in the morning, cutting out their buzz (prelude to an explosion) immediately above (as it always seemed) the block of flats [in Sloane Avenue], but the chronic burden, as time went on increasing attrition, was trying to concentrate on work [at MIL in the War Office] after a series of sleepless nights.

Military Intelligence (Liaison) looked after relations with, and the basic material needs of, foreign troops in exile; the section purposely remained totally separate from MI5, MI6 and SOE. My father devotes over seventy pages in *Faces* to his time with the Welch Regiment and at MIL in the War Office. The details of work in MIL are possibly a unique record of the section’s activities, which are not well known.

My father’s progress in the army had its setbacks. Early on he was painfully aware, at 35 years old, that his age was a definite drawback as a potential company commander in the field; he was fitter than one might think having, for reasons of economy, dispensed with his car on getting married. He was a habitual walker to urban destinations.

After being marked down for the Intelligence Corps, mainly as a result of his performance at the Politico -Military course, his first choice was to work with the Free French. However his lack of fluency in the language meant he was turned down. After about 18 months in MIL looking after the Poles he was drafted into the Cabinet Offices in early 1943. This was a step up, but he relinquished the post after nine weeks, finding himself incompatible both with commanding officer Lt-Col Denis Capel-Dunn and the work. In retrospect he felt that he had been invited into a job for which he needed some basic instruction. In the absence of this support from Capel-Dunn (prototype for Widmerpool), he was
discarded. This resulted in a demotion from the rank of Captain but, luckily, he was able to return to his previous job at MIL after a short period.

In contrast to this unhappy time in the Cabinet Office, before which there was no preparation, the earlier Politico-Military course at Cambridge surely gave my father the attitude to approach liaison work with enthusiasm at MIL. Describing the course in *Faces* AP writes:

The P-M course was extremely well organised. I cannot picture a more inclusively concentrated account of conditions, historical, political, social, economic of Europe between the wars, than was given there. So far as my subsequent employment (in the War Office) was concerned this instruction turned out very handy, and has since been useful in all kinds of ways.

To return to the friend in Mr Delaunay’s letter who suggests that advantages would have been gained from being a Old Etonian. It is striking how few of the people recorded in *Faces in My Time* were school friends. While discussing a young reviewer’s complaint that too many of the characters in his novels lost their lives in the services AP gives the figures of casualties in the two world Wars on the Eton Roll as 1150 in the first war and 750 in the second. Of the latter figure he knew 40 by sight, five of these members of the same house during the years he was at the school.

My father’s wartime friendships, outside his war office colleagues, were mainly professional, made through liaising with allied armies in exile from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, Belgium and (later on) France. Some of these contacts remained friends and became occasional correspondents after the war. AP’s rapport with people from formerly free countries in Eastern Europe was shown long after WW2 in the early 1960s when, as described by my mother, AP became locked in conversation at a local party with Alf Francis, the inspiring chief mechanic for Rob Walker’s motor racing team (and previously for Stirling Moss). Francis had been a member of the Polish Brigade in the early 1940s (Polish name Alphons Kovaleski from Grudziadz in Poland). His skills as a diesel engineer were combined with a mechanical ingenuity, necessary in the years of post war shortages of all car spares (racing or otherwise) that stretched well into the 1950s.

If the letter writer requires more proof of the random risks of war, my mother and Tristram in keeping away from the latest blitz, stayed at Dunstall near Shoreham in Sussex suddenly directly under the corridor where the V1 flying bombs crossed the Channel and, where, throughout the war returning enemy aircraft jettisoned bombs – incendiaries often littered the fields below the house.
where a mobile barrage balloon unit was occasionally stationed.

At this time a bomb hit a nearby farmhouse, in open countryside, killing a mother and child, known to the family. As a result of this upsetting tragedy my mother and Tristram moved from Sussex staying with various friends until Christmas 1944. There was really no respite in and around London. In fact the adjoining house to 1 Chester Gate had been hit by a bomb and burnt to an empty shell by the time my parents returned there in late 1944.

For his service in the Army Anthony Powell received two General Service medals as well as the 1944 France Germany Star for escorting a group of Allied military attaches from Normandy to Montgomery’s 21st Army Group Tactical HQ in November 1944 three miles from Roermond, Holland then held by the Germans. For representing the interests of foreign armies in exile as a liaison officer he received the following decorations: Order of White Lion (Czechoslovakia), Oaken Crown (Luxembourg), Order of Leopold II (Belgium), Croix de Guerre (Luxembourg).

To conclude by quoting from “Anthony Powell’s War Trilogy” the talk by Alan Judd at the 2nd Biennial Anthony Powell Conference at Balliol College, Oxford in April 2003:

As to their obvious differences Evelyn Waugh saw action, Anthony Powell didn’t. Guy Crouchback’s experience of action is Waugh’s – failure, disaster, defeat. Powell is not known as a war writer partly, I suspect, because he does not write about action in the battle sense. In fact he did see action, he saw quite a lot of action, but it was called bombing, it was called the Blitz.

But anyway, it takes a bit of time to realize that all of the odds and ends milling about round one are the process of living.

[Anthony Powell; Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant]
From an article in the *Daily Telegraph* 29 May 2009 by Jake Arnott titled “The Fictional Lives of Aleister Crowley”:

Though he led a precarious fictional life, it was reality that got Crowley into trouble, in tabloid reports and his appearance in scandalous memoirs. After initial success in suing for defamation, the Beast was finally bankrupted by a disastrous libel case in 1934. Anthony Powell was working for the publishers Duckworth at the time and he met Crowley over lunch to discuss yet another “factual” book that mentioned him. Powell came away with a sketch for two sinister characters in *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951-75): Dr Trelawney, who is “hounded by the Sunday papers after a devotee had fallen to her death at a temple” and later Scorpio Murtlock.

After the Second World War, Crowley’s status as the wickedest man in the world seemed faintly ludicrous, and his eligibility as a literary villain began to wane. Indeed, by the Sixties he had been reinvented as a hero to the counter-culture movement, which questioned traditional morality just as he had done. He featured on the cover of the Beatles’ Sergeant Pepper album and in the lyrics of Led Zeppelin and David Bowie. He was still the consummate baddy for the old-guard novelist Powell though, who used the Beast once more, reincarnating him as the vicious cult leader Scorpio Murtlock in *Hearing Secret Harmonies* (1975), the final volume of his epic cycle.

From *The Spectator* 13 May 2009 article about “Raymond Carr at 90” by Eric Christiansen.

He had the art of remedial brutality, hitting to be hit back, getting into the ring with pupils without either an air of superior knowledge or the chill of indifference. He made it clear where he stood. Moral relativism? No! Religion? You mean petty-bourgeois religiosity? There was a good deal of that, and we took his advice, flinching a bit, about love, literature and the sorry aesthetics of modern life. ‘No New College man may leave the college without reading Proust’ was one of the axioms. ‘Not Anthony Powell. Feeble imitation.’

*Dance* is mentioned somewhat condescendingly in Richard Vinen’s new book, *Thatcher’s Britain*. Talking of Sir Anthony Meyer, who announced in 1989 that he would challenge Mrs Thatcher for party leadership, Vinen says: “Meyer was a little-known MP from Wales who gave the impression of being a character escaped from *A Dance to the Music of Time*”.

Vinen goes on to say that Meyer’s “background and style evoked the world of patrician superiority that so exasperated some Thatcherites”. Such an over-simplification of Powell’s work mars an otherwise very interesting interpretation of the Thatcher years.

[Spotted by Tony Edmonds]
From Anecdotal Evidence (“a blog about the intersection of books and life”) by Patrick Kurp 30 July 2009:

To escape the Houstonian heat which we thought we had escaped when we escaped Houston, I took the boys to the new Harry Potter film. We enjoyed the air conditioning for three hours, and they enjoyed the movie for more than two and a half hours, and my only complaint was that they dimmed the house lights so low I was unable to read Anthony Powell.

I called my wife as we left the theatre and walked into the Tandoori oven of a parking lot. The thermometer on my dashboard said 116 but plummeted to a brisk 103 by the time we got home. I wanted a medical opinion on the effects of prolonged heat on the human mind and body, and consulted Dr Robert Burton, whom I quote:

“Piso, Benedictus Victorius Faventinus, will have [melancholy] proceed from a hot distemperature of the brain; and Montaltus … from the brain’s heat, scorching the blood. The brain is still distempered by himself, or by consent: by himself or his proper affection, as Faventinus calls it, or by vapours which arise from the other parts, and fume up into the head, altering the animal facilities”.

From James Wolcott in Vanity Fair (June/July 2009):

Books not only furnish a room, to paraphrase the title of an Anthony Powell novel, but also accessorize our outfits. They help brand our identities. At the rate technology is progressing, however, we may eventually be traipsing around culturally nude in an urban rain forest, androids seamlessly integrated with our devices. As we divest ourselves of once familiar physical objects – digitize and dematerialize – we approach a Star Trek future in which everything can be accessed from the fourth dimension with a few clicks or terse audibles. Reading will forfeit the tactile dimension where memories insinuate themselves, reminding us of where and when DH Lawrence entered our lives that meaningful summer. “Darling, remember when we downloaded Sons and Lovers in Napa Valley?” doesn’t have quite the same ring to it. The Barnes & Noble bookstore, with its coffee bar and authors’ readings, could go the way of Blockbuster as an iconic institution, depriving readers of the opportunity to mingle with their own kind and paw through magazines for free.
In *The Spectator’s* Competition No. 2604 readers were invited to submit a passage from a novel that is the product of collaboration between two unlikely bedfellows:

Hot on the heels of eminent literary partnerships past – Somerville and Ross, George and Weedon Grossmith – came such unlikely yet intriguing alliances as Eric Carle and Marcel Proust, Jean Rhys and Capt. WE Johns, Ian Fleming and Wilkie Collins. PG Wodehouse found himself in bed with, among others, Iris Murdoch, Daphne du Maurier and St Mark, though you resisted the temptation to tuck him up with AA Milne, which might have produced some entertaining squabbling.

Adrian Fry submitted the following collaboration between Andy McNab and Anthony Powell:

“A crisis will occasionally furnish one with a moment of almost pre-Raphaelite clarity. Burst firing my M4 assault rifle into the contingent of Iraqi insurgents in that supposedly abandoned Basra warehouse, I felt able simultaneously to appreciate multiple dimensions of each moment. I at once apprehended, for instance, both the redundancy of my repeatedly bellowed expletives and the absolute psychological necessity of giving them vent, a realisation which called to mind Dickie Umfraville’s exclamations during horse races. The insurgents, doubtless shocked that their lives should fail, in the abruptness of their ending, to conform to conventional narrative rhythms, died either wordlessly or with the sort of sub-literate utterances that become oddly ludicrous when transcribed. Then, from the corner of my eye, I caught a bulky figure attempting escape with just that combination of fastidiousness and incompetence that could belong to only one man. ‘Good Lord! Bin Widmerpool,’ I cried”.

From a new paperback novel by Derek Johns, called *Awakening*:

A young university drop-out starts clerking in a London bookstore in 1968. His first customer asks for a used copy of “Anthony Pole’s” *The Valley of Bones*. The clerk, ignorant of the correct spelling, can find nothing by “Pole,” so the customer huffs off to Foyles, after telling the lad, “You really ought to have all the Poles”.
From an article about the Spring Gardening Show at Malvern in the July 2009 issue of Herefordshire and Monmouthshire Life:

Paul Hervey-Brookes, who was awarded the scholarship, managed a clever contrast between formal and woodland garden in A Dance to the Music of Time, modelled on Poussin’s celebrated painting. The woodland could have done with a little more spring underplanting, but one could easily imagine Anthony Powell’s Widmerpool, recovering from a jog through the woods, mopping his brow in one of the formal alcove bowers.

[Spotted by John Powell]

From the “What Book?” column featuring Tom Parker Bowles in the Daily Mail, 7 August 2009:

... LEFT YOU COLD?  
Any form of ghastly self-help book. And I’ve tried to get into Anthony Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time, but to no avail. My grandfather, a voracious reader and bibliophile, was a huge fan and his taste was usually impeccable. I’ll give him another try in a few years, but at the moment, he leaves me very cold.

[Spotted by Prue Raper]

From “Ten of the Best, Novels about Novelists” in The Guardian, 25 July 2009:

A Dance to the Music of Time by Anthony Powell  
Every character in this roman fleuve is vivid, except the narrator, Nick Jenkins. As the impresario of Powell’s 12 novels satirising English mores over five decades, it is convenient that Nick is a novelist, though it’s hard to imagine him writing as entertainingly as Powell.

[Spotted by Prue Raper]
### 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**
**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 15.
**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**)
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**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*

**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

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**Newsletter Back Numbers**
Back numbers of *Newsletter* issues 9 to 19, 22 to 29 and 31 onwards are available.
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Society Merchandise

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

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**Total**

- □ I enclose a sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank
  - Please make cheques payable to **The Anthony Powell Society**
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