We wish all members & friends of the Society a Peaceful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

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Hon. Secretary’s new fax number: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483
From the Secretary’s Desk

It was brilliant! I am, of course, talking about the Washington conference. It is such a shame that more weren’t there to enjoy it. As you will see from the reports and photographs on the following pages everyone who was there had a thoroughly good time; right from the opening dinner (graced by Rosemary Monagan and by Alan Furst’s amusing speech) through the papers, Ed Bock’s play, Waiting for Belkin to the Saturday afternoon sightseeing bus tour. At the end no-one wanted to go home; what better measure of success?

Sadly though the Society has made a significant loss on Washington. In consequence the Trustees have decided the next conference must be closer to the majority of members; so the 6th Biennial Conference in 2011 will be in London, in early September. The theme will be “Anthony Powell’s Literary London”. We are currently in the process of finding a suitable, but reasonably priced, venue.

Meanwhile 2010 has a good line-up of Society events, including a celebration of the Society’s 10th birthday and the 50th anniversary of Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant. You’ll find dates on pages 18 & 19, so please get them in your diaries and book early: the repeat tours of the Bodleian Library and Whitechapel Bell Foundry are sure to sell out fast!

Hopefully the Society events will contribute to a happy and fun 2010. In the meantime my best seasonal Christmas wishes to all our readers!

Please note the Hon. Secretary’s fax number has changed to:
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The Anthony Powell Society
Registered Charity No. 1096873

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Washington Conference Reports

From Dr Peter Kislinger

I had the pleasure of attending, and presenting a paper at, the 5th Biennial AP Conference, held at Georgetown University Conference Center.

I had to rush back to this side of the pond in the afternoon of the first conference day, more’s the pity, thus missing inspiring papers, discussions, conversations and networking in the evening.

The conference had been perfectly prepared and organised – praise and thanks to (in alphabetical order) Nick Birns, Jeff Manley and Keith Marshall.

It was a wonderful opportunity to meet old friends, meet familiar names in the flesh and make new friends – as well as an opportunity to gain new insights into, or new perspectives on, matters Powellian.

Michael Henle, judging from the quotes he seems to be drawing on in his forthcoming New England branch lecture, would have enjoyed Rick Rylance’s keynote speech.

Annabel Davis-Goff’s paper impressed me among other things with a welter of details (the structuring leit-motif of “tipping”, for example, and her memorable phrase: “at the centre of Dance there is a space rather than a spine”), Gabriela Walfridson with her enjoyable exploration of male friendships in Dance; would it be an exaggeration to say it was almost a vindication of a – moderate – feminist reading of Dance? And the reading of an enthusiast! Mark Facknitz in his talk quietly enthroned Powell as the most original and profound writer of his generation – his title “Was there a Powell generation?” – turned out to be purely rhetorical.

Alison Lurie (all of us who shook her hand are now just one handshake away from AP, and two from ... !!!!) was a joy to listen to; Alan Furst’s (enthusiastic) novelist’s perspective on a fellow writer was both great fun and enlightening (his informal talk at the dinner and a brief personal conversation made me want to read his novels). And then all those Powell-related books Joe Trenn had lovingly arranged and spread out – irresistible. Not to mention the most attentive, active and knowledgeable participants one could wish for.

Nick Birns was the ideal compère – erudite, witty and charming. Don’t miss the 6th conference.

What a pity I (and so many other members) missed John Gould and three former students of his master class (but we can buy his anthology!), the world premiere of Ed Bock’s play and Keith’s guided tour through Powell-land on Saturday. Thank you all for an unforgettable event. ■
From Noreen Marshall

Friday 4 September. Our journey to Washington went so smoothly that we hoped it would be a good augury for the important event to come. The Society’s first conference outside the UK, and it was a packed programme. It was great to be able to attend as ordinary delegates, and of course we doubly appreciated all the hard work put in by everybody organising in the States. Sadly we could not have AP’s friend John Monagan as guest of honour, as he died during Centenary year (2005) but his widow Rosemary attended Thursday’s pre-conference dinner.

Thursday 10 September. Italian buffet dinner at Georgetown University. This got things off to a sparkling start, with delicious food, good company, and readings from AP’s work. Alan Furst was the after dinner speaker, on intimate aspects of Dance – what can I say? Warm, incisive, witty, entertaining … definitely a high note to begin on.

Friday 11 September. The Papers. We started out by mysterious Hyperborean seas with Peter Kislinger; Rick Rylance’s keynote speech diverted us to Anthony Powell and the Burden of the Typical; Annabel Davis-Goff considered Powell and the problems of the long novel; and we shared Alison Lurie’s memories of AP, complete with an astrological chapter. At which point we paused for a lavish lunch and a lot of conversation ...

In the afternoon Gabriella Walfridson dwelt on male friendships in Dance, Mark Facknitz considered whether there was an AP generation, and John Gould not only spoke about his Dance Class project, but brought along some of the students who had contributed to it.

We were then treated to a performance of Ed Bock’s play Waiting for Belkin, acted by members of the Society under the direction of Leatrice Fountain, to rapturous applause. The action of the play wittily explores the predicament of some of the un-named characters from Dance and their application for an identity to the Doctor and his ‘Non-Entity Nurse’. (See various photographs throughout this Newsletter.)

Saturday 12 September. To Georgetown University Library. First to hear the Hon. Secretary give a guided photographic tour of AP’s London. And then we were shown some of the library’s Powell-related holdings, which include the Monagan-Powell material. This had one slightly surreal moment: “Is that Powell’s signature?” the Archivist asked me, as he showed round a Society postcard from the collection. “No, I think you’ll find it’s his,” I found myself saying, indicating the Hon. Secretary who had written the card to John Monagan.

Lunch at The Tombs – still with literary connections: founder Richard McCooey was nicknamed for TS Eliot’s Bustopher
Jones and took his restaurant’s name from *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*.

Then off on the Grand Coach Tour devised by Jeff Manley, which took in both the quirky and historical charms of Georgetown and the monumental and marmoreal splendours of central Washington.

**Sunday 13 September.** Those still able to stand took a walking tour of Georgetown, for a closer look at all those charming celebrity residences seen from the coach the previous afternoon, ending with well-deserved refreshments at Mr Smith’s bar.

To those unable to be at this conference, it was brilliant – nobody seemed to want to leave. And in accordance with Conference tradition, Keith announced the next one – so try your best to join us in London in 2011, for Anthony Powell’s Literary London. ■
The fleshpots of Cairo in which Widmerpool intrigued against Templer and Pamela cavorted with Odo Stevens were neither a lurid invention of Powell’s nor the consequence of World War II. The city’s louche reputation had been earned long before. Indeed the novelist – who did not visit the city until 1964 – appears to have drawn upon a mythology that evolved during the Great War with even earlier roots.

From 1914 Egypt had been a British protectorate, although what was in reality being protected was the Suez Canal, a vital artery in the imperial circulation. Thus troops bound for India would find the bars and enticing brothels of Port Said at their disposal. (“Feelthy English postcards, effendi?” was still the dockside offer as recently as twenty years ago.) To officers in transit or stationed in Cairo the sumptuous maisons d’amour, forerunners of the nightclub patronised by Pamela, opened their anonymous doors. The interiors are recorded as having been “of red plush, potted palms, art nouveau bronzes, and mildly erotic prints from La Vie Parisienne” with a pianist playing dance music or French music hall numbers. Invariably presided over by French madams, and decorated by the most beautiful and accommodating women, many of them Italian, they also enjoyed the patronage of the Corps Diplomatique and thus inevitably that of intelligence agents, and in turn police informers to spy upon the spies.

Such was Cairo’s importance, in counterpoint to Damascus and Constantinople which were both under Ottoman control, that by the dawning of the 20th century it boasted no fewer than six grand hotels – as many as London or Paris. Of these the grandest was Shepheard’s in Sharia Kemel, five minutes from the station, resplendent with its tropical gardens, palatial restaurant and ballroom. The hotel still exists though sadly diminished by an uninspired reconstruction, its original pediments and cast iron balconies having given way to stained concrete. In its original marbled foyer the great names of Edwardian England would meet the dragomen who would conduct them down to the Nile landing stages to board private feluccas for Luxor and the Valley of the Kings where gentlemen archaeologists and tomb robbers were engaged in an arms race of discovery.

Following the outbreak of the Great War Shepheard’s rival, the more comfortable Savoy Hotel, was commandeered to serve as his GHQ by the cautious and immensely bureaucratic General Murray, the ever-expanding size of whose staff was a source of wonder even in India. Despite the summer heat cavalry officers were expected to wear tunics, riding boots and breeches, topped with the universal topi or pitch helmet, only clerks and other civilian staff being permitted tropical attire. With the few unmarried British women well
chaperoned the *maisons*, clubs and bars that so infuriated the indigenous population enjoyed brisk custom. The local objection was not so much to the serving of alcohol, for Cairo was by no means an entirely Moslem city, as the tendency of officers on leave, once refreshed, to commandeer the horse-drawn buses and make the passengers jump off at speed. The Australian taste for shooting up the neighbourhood was the subject of even more heated complaint by bourgeois Cairenes.

Into this exotic melée the daredevils of the Royal Flying Corps made a dramatic entrance and thereafter set the tone. From their moveable base in the Sinai desert, and later Palestine, the heroes of 14 Squadron daily risked their lives in fragile machines confected of wood, wire and canvas that flew slowly enough to present a target to anti-aircraft barrage and superior German planes. A further risk was of fire, the engines having a habit of spontaneously igniting upon landing, a terrifying ordeal for a pilot and observer likely to have been splattered with oil. Little wonder that when the airmen came on leave they raised Cain as if this were their last opportunity, as for so many it proved.

Powell’s friend, the historian Desmond Seward (who first deduced the character model for Widmerpool), has painted a vivid picture of Cairo at this period in an engaging new book, *Wings Over the Desert*. Having inherited a hitherto unseen trove of letters and photographs from his father, the flying hero Eric Seward, the author recounts the Royal Flying Corp’s hard won success in the important but now little-known desert campaign of 1916-18. Amongst the *dramatis personae* are Murray’s replacement, General Allenby, known as ‘The Bull’ for his temper, Lawrence of Arabia, and medieval Cairo itself, the “City of a thousand minarets”.

And then there are the “Knights of the Air”. Predominant amongst them is Eric Seward, a bruiser whose idea of fun was kicking a table over to start an argument. He knew Lawrence well and ferried him around the desert in a two-seater BE2C. Indeed Seward, an Arabic speaker, was nominated to head the flight detailed to support Lawrence’s Arab Revolt, though...
he declined on the grounds that he could not see where it would lead, perhaps a fair assessment of what was in military terms “a sideshow to a sideshow”. When not in the desert with the bedu, or attending the commander-in-chief at the Savoy, Lawrence often dined in 14 Squadron’s mess where they noted that, like a Bedouin, he did not trouble to brush the flies off his hands. He had spied on the German fliers’ mess, they believed, disguised as a waiter. Seward considered him a hero but, “He looked the most insignificant little fellow you ever saw, but always very pleasant”.

Nonetheless in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* Lawrence plays down the contribution of the Royal Flying Corps to his campaign. Powell on the other hand seems to have entertained a just respect for its personnel, making Mildred Blades’s first husband, McCracken, an RFC ace. If Lawrence was too shy to enjoy all that Cairo had to offer, his pilot friends (who flew without parachutes) were not, flirting, partying and drinking. For as one flyer remarks, “There is nothing like slipstream to clear a hangover”. But, as Lawrence observed, faced with the daily duel with death many of them were already “a bag of nerves”.

An impression of these doyens of Cairo nightlife may be gleaned from the unusual character of the men recruited by the RFC (forerunner of the RAF). Eric Seward, a most Powellian character, would become famed for the Seward Exploit, a painting of which hangs in the Imperial War Museum. Escorting a BE2C photographing enemy fortifications at 8500 feet over Ramleh near Jaffa (now Tel Aviv) his Jumbo Martinsyde was hit by anti-aircraft fire. The choice was grim: crash land in the desert and risk being castrated by Bedouin women (if the machine did not burst into flames first) or ditch in the Mediterranean. Seward chose the latter and managed to swim out to sea to escape fire from Turkish cavalry. A former Olympic swimmer he then floated, swam and walked – evading three Turkish patrols – over thirty miles back to British lines to make his intelligence report, earning a DSO for his courage. The inspiration for Capt. WE Johns’s Biggles character perhaps?

Such adventures took their toll on the bravest and some of those granted longer leave in Cairo would today be diagnosed as suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Certainly Seward, who was bilingual in French, preferred to talk to the madams than to their girls, however beautiful, judging the former to be better informed than almost anyone else in the city as to the true progress of the war. Eventually the airmen would make a decisive difference to it by clearing the skies of enemy aircraft and, using cameras clamped to the fuselage of their open
planes, photograph the entirety of Palestine, enabling large-scale maps to be produced. When enemy movements were spotted from the air warnings were radioed in Morse code direct to British artillery. The eventual result was the destruction of three Turkish armies.

Meticulously researched, elegantly written and profusely illustrated with contemporary photographs, previously unseen, the book catches off-duty and off-guard RFC aces otherwise engaged in improbably gallant exploits against better-equipped but equally chivalrous German pilots. It also includes anecdotes that make the hairs on the back of the neck stand on end. Walking down Bond Street on home leave Seward spots a member of his squadron, Captain Baillie, and hails him. Baillie scowls before vanishing into the crowd. On his return to duty in Palestine Seward discovers that Baillie had never had home leave, and indeed had been shot down – at the very moment of the apparition. One can readily imagine Odo Stevens recounting such a tale in Dance, and Mrs Erdleigh nodding sagely.

Wings Over the Desert also paints a compelling portrait of a city that would alter little in character between the wars, its mixture of intrigue, exoticism and oriental bureaucracy a match even for the British military machine. The true change would be effected by Nasser in the ’fifties who brought its role as the Monte Carlo of the Middle East to a sharp end, as the Powells discovered on their visit a decade later. As to Pamela, it is interesting to note that Powell’s inspiration for her character, Barbara Skelton, the tempestuous femme fatale of literary London, conducted an affair with the immensely fat King Farouk, the unorthodox logistics of which shocked even the insouciant Cairenes. Although not uncharacteristic of place and period it seems to have been an episode too rich even for the novelist to adapt for inclusion in the great Dance.

In the world of rock & roll (of which more, later) it is often remarked that few people bought the first album by the group The Velvet Underground, but of those who did all went on to form bands of their own. Many of them sounded rather like The Velvet Underground. Similarly Anthony Powell’s sales have been modest, in Wilbur Smith terms, but it sometimes seems that everyone who reads him goes on to write books of their own and stuff them with Powellian semi-colons, idiosyncrasies and references; at times amounting to full-throated homages.

One thinks of Mrs Widmerpool in JL Carr’s The Harpole Report, a copy on publication of which, Carr, a fan, inscribed and sent to Powell and which turned up, presumably not being a volume that the family particularly treasured, in the library sale that followed Powell’s death.

The Harpur & Iles crime series by Bill James (a nom de plume of James Tucker, who wrote The Novels of Anthony Powell) does amount to a full-throated homage. Some reviewer called the series “a dance to the music of crime”, which is entirely apposite, because the world of Harpur and Iles is not only constructed along Powellian lines (irony, complexity, amorality, the sense that everything will have its consequences) but is a dance in itself, proceeding in accordance with internal rules that have all the logic of the real world whilst sharing few of its characteristics. Mr Iles and the better villains have an eloquence rarely found in True Crime, let alone real life. The books are like the novels of Ivy Compton Burnett but funnier. And unlike Ivy Compton Burnett, with Bill James you never have to count the paragraphs to work out who’s talking.

Most of all, though, one thinks of DJ Taylor, and particularly his novel Ask Alice, published this year.

Taylor, lest the point get lost here by concentrating on his Powellian allusions, is a very good novelist indeed. Anyone unfamiliar with his fiction should perhaps start by investigating the three early novels republished in paperback as Returning. They are Trespass, The Comedy Man, and my favourite, English Settlement. There are Powellian concerns: oppressive melancholy, and again irony, complexity, amorality and the sense that everything will have its consequences, but Taylor is also excellent at things that Powell was far too grand to get his head round, such as America and particularly business and the
bitter trajectory of a business venture going wrong: a theme that Taylor keeps returning to.

(Why is it, incidentally, that Powell’s generation felt able to depict business people without the most basic research into what they do? We are never really told how Sir Magnus makes his money; and all that stuff about metals: Powell didn’t care, he presumably got some jargon from a friend – that’s what the Journals suggest – and we aren’t expected to care either. But it doesn’t ring true. It’s quite another thing when he’s dealing with the practice of art.)

For the present, however, we are concerned with Taylor the allusionist. He is particularly satisfactory in that respect because the allusions cover such a wide cultural area. This is where we return as promised to rock & roll. Ask Alice, the title of his new novel, is a repeated phrase from the song White Rabbit, written and sung by Grace Slick in the 1960s, first with her group The Great Society and later with the ultimate San Francisco band, Jefferson Airplane. Grace Slick’s Alice derives in turn from Lewis Carroll’s Alice, who was drawn, to an extent, from life. After Bathing at Baxter’s, Taylor’s collection of stories, is also the title of the third Airplane album. There is no reason for these allusions that I can see: it is pure joie de vivre.

There are other examples, but my favourite concerns Captain Beefheart and The Magic Band, a much tougher and more obscure proposition than the Airplane. Captain Beefheart (his real name is Don van Vliet, of the Lancaster, California, Vliets: the ‘van’ is a piece of bravado to which he is not in fact entitled) has for many years devoted himself to the solitary practice of painting to the exclusion of music, but in the 1960s and 1970s he made a number of albums of which Trout Mask Replica vies with the available-only-from-Japan Lick My Decals Off, Baby as the toughest and most obscure. Track 20 on Trout Mask Replica is entitled Orange Claw Hammer, and in Taylor’s English Settlement that is also the title of chapter 12, in which the narrator narrowly escapes death being hit over the head with just such an implement.

When I first read this I was so moved that I had to go and lie down.

We arrive at the orange claw hammer in English Settlement via introductory words from The Acceptance World (the section beginning “I began to brood on the complexity of writing a novel about English life…”: a major statement of intent, by both Powell and Taylor) and a prologue entitled Pretzel Logic. Pretzel Logic refers to the title of the third album by the American group Steely Dan, whose name in turn is taken from William S Burroughs’ novel Naked Lunch, in which a certain particularly large dildo is called Steely Dan.

Curiously, no actual hammer features in the Beefheart song, except as its title.
Before *Ask Alice*, Taylor published *Bright Young People*, a non-fiction account of the party-goers of the 1920s familiar to readers of *Afternoon Men* and *Vile Bodies*. *Ask Alice* starts at the turn of the century in the American Mid-West and ends between the Wars in London. Taylor used his research for *Bright Young People*, and the final chapters are rich with incidental detail. It is also full of references, Powellian and other.

For example, there are real people, most notably Beverley Nichols, who takes over as one of the authorial voices towards the end. At the other extreme there is a cluster of characters with names (Carbury, Clavering) taken for no apparent reason out of Trollope.

People get themselves painted by Isbister, RA, and Bilson – if it is *that* Bilson – appears briefly. The Huntercombes are referred to from time to time. They appear to be Powell’s Huntercombes; certainly they live in Belgrave Square and give parties. More intriguingly, there is a proper, speaking, character called Lady Sophie Huntercombe, who owns and half-heartedly runs a dress shop; but she can’t be one of Powell’s Huntercombes; there is no suggestion that she is, and anyway if she were she’d be called Lady Sophie Penistone, the Huntercombe family name. It is rather strange that we have two families with the same name in the same novel both in the higher reaches of the English aristocracy.

Most intriguing of all, we have the famous sugar-pouring incident, but in a different house and a week after the Huntercombes’ party.

So we have an alternative universe here, in which we are positively encouraged to spot the references and then firmly told that in spite of the similarities this isn’t Powell’s universe after all.

A question inevitably now presents itself, at the risk of spoiling the fun. Are these borrowings a good thing, or is it just show-offs gesticulating to each other, author to reader, and with the present article back again, across the literary void? I think that there are several answers.

The first and overriding one is that, like all art, it only works if it works. Does it jar? My personal reaction is that the orange claw hammer is a delight, reusing Isbister is an entirely satisfactory bit of shorthand but that repeating the sugar incident is, as we sometimes feel when actresses take off their shirts in television adaptations of the classics, unnecessary.

Secondly, for those of us with both a well-thumbed copy of Hilary Spurling’s *Handbook* and also *Grow Fins*, the boxed set of Beefheart rarities, it is nice to encounter a world where both enthusiasms are valued. It is a writer’s job to draw connections, and that is some connection.

Thirdly, *joie de vivre* is good, in itself.

Then, Powell himself did it. There are specific bits of artistic piracy, the most obvious being the previously unknown Tiepolo ceiling and the previously unknown passages of Byron, Proust and others (and, yes, the Byron extract in *The Valley of Bones* is pure showing off), but much more significant is the fact that he constantly, more than any other novelist that one can think of, refers to literary or artistic sources that are available both in Nick Jenkins’ universe and ours in order to draw a connection or make a point. In Spurling’s *Handbook*, the section for literary and artistic references takes up getting on for half the space allotted to the actual characters.
At a higher level of generality Powell plays deliberately on the fact that Moreland (for instance) is, and at the same time isn’t, Constant Lambert and indeed that Jenkins both is and isn’t Powell.

There is no need to labour the point, since Trapnel makes it so strongly, but a novel, even a supposedly naturalistic novel, is ultimately a construct, independent of both the real life it might be said to depict and the points it might be said to make – which takes us back to point 1: if it’s a good construct it works; if not, not.

The action in *The Acceptance World*, where we meet the Huntercombes, takes place around 1928. Jenkins recalled it in 1955, but continued to look back to it throughout the period until he ceased recording his recollections in 1975. Had he first recalled the events of 1928 in 1975 rather than 1955, with his recollections informed by all that had happened during the intervening twenty years, he would undoubtedly have put it differently. The whole process is informed by different quantities of water flowing under different bridges. But Taylor is commenting on 1928 in 2009. His account reflects different things we now know about the 1920s and different ways we now have of talking about the era. In particular he benefits from his own *Bright Young People*. Curiously, he also borrows much, particularly the writing style, from *Afternoon Men*, which Jenkins almost certainly hadn’t read.

This all seems to me to be fascinating, valuable and at the heart of what Powell was doing in *Dance*.

Let us finally return to Lady Sophie Huntercombe. Lady Sophie is a member of an aristocratic family but is engaged, ineptly, in trade: she has a clothes shop. She does not have enough money, and borrows clothes from stock. She has a liaison with a “madly attractive blackamoor”. “Blackamoor” is a word that Lady Sophie would undoubtedly have used in 1928, that Jenkins might well have used in 1955, but not in 1975, and that in 2009 Taylor uses to shock and spell-check refuses to recognise. Jenkins would not have known what to make of Lady Sophie at the time of the Huntercombes’ ball. Even the elevatedly bohemian revelations of Milly Andriadis’ party, later that night, would not have enlightened him. Yet she rings entirely true to us. At the risk, again, of spoiling the fun, Taylor I believe uses her to show that there is this view of 1928; then there is the view in *The Acceptance World*: both are true and life is fascinatingly contradictory. This is not post-modernism, it is plain common sense.

Would Powell have approved? The *Journals* show him dealing capably with Roger Daltrey of The Who, but Captain Beefheart might have been a step too far. He would have agonised about Lady Sophie’s precise status vis-à-vis the peerage. He might not have approved, but he would certainly have understood.
The Genesis of The Album of Anthony Powell’s ‘Dance to the Music of Time’

by John Powell

In the light of James Lees-Milne’s remarks I feel it worth expanding slightly on the origins of the Album which was not just a ‘fashionable’ whim as Lees-Milne rather implies.

The Album of Dance was assembled and published by professionals who were enthusiastic fans of the 12 volume cycle of novels. AP’s Journals 1982-1986 confirms that the diarist Jim Lees-Milne was never involved in any way.

The Album of A Dance to the Music of Time was an unusual literary project first conceived as long ago as 1970 (see George Lilley’s Anthony Powell – A Bibliography). However the serious picture research did not begin until October 1983 when the American Ken Giniger returned to an idea which he had first put forward to AP over 10 years before, through an introduction by HO Zimon then literary editor of the Daily Telegraph.

The progress of the Album is described at intervals by AP in the first volume of the Journals (1982-6). Initially my mother took on the picture research in October 1983 amid lukewarm feelings about the idea from AP and Bruce Hunter at Highams. However on 19 September 1985 AP says:

With reference to proposed Dance Picture Book, Giniger, having failed to place it with either American or British publishers, also lost his wife, talks of retiring from publishing, causing project to be abandoned.

However, all was not lost as the journal goes on to say:

by chance sorting out business letters, I came across one from Thames & Hudson, written about three years ago [circa 1982] which adumbrated a similar scheme of illustrating pictures mentioned in Dance ... turned down at the time on account of Giniger. The letter’s writer, Jamie Camplin ... lunched here today to discuss the new situation ... Camplin still seems keen on the idea of a Picture Book, with the great advantage of Thames and Hudson ... would market the book themselves (rather than a middleman like Giniger) a firm professionally concerned with art books as such ...

Jamie Camplin took away material collected by V (about 100 pictures, list of other potential ones, general notes on the subject).

There were some important finishing touches to consider,

My idea is [that V] should remain in background but [have] name on title page as General Editor with someone appropriate found to write Introduction ... I am prepared to write a brief Foreword, the point being that the Picture Book illustrates the effect on the reader, rather than being an addition on my part to what I have written. Though familiarity with Dance would be sine qua non, also readable style and a good grasp of art matters.

Moving forward over 20 years to the AP Society Newsletter No 35 Autumn 2009, James Mitchum reviewing Diaries 1984 - 1997 by James Lees-Milne (ed. Michael Bloch) writes:
There is the following 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.”

At the earliest this would have been in 1984 when the work on the *Album* was well under way. (Note is there a date for this entry? It would be interesting to compare this with the *Journals 1982-1986* which contains much about the *Album*.)

In fact I do not think that it would have crossed AP’s mind to involve Jim Lees-Milne with the *Album*, even for the introduction. Besides by the time he makes these barbed comments in this newly published diary extract much had been ‘done’ by my mother. In addition it was the later work by Jamie Camplin’s team starting in 1985 which thoroughly reinforced the whole project, as AP’s *Journal* describes in the 27 November entry:

I had to do the *Telegraph* review (*Selected Night & Day* volume) in a rush as Jamie Camplin, with assistant, Mrs Alla Weaver, came to luncheon to further arrangements for the *Dance Picture Book*. Mrs Weaver, who can’t be very young, yet exceedingly spry, originated in Russia, emigrated after Revolution, a refugee in Berlin and Paris, eventually fetching up in this country. She was trained at the Courtauld. Mrs Weaver is the essence of her type in demeanour, excellent English, distinctly intelligent. She knew *Dance* extremely well. They brought some material and preliminary mock ups. I think headway was made … I am inclined to make an approach to John Bayley [for an introduction], though only after agreement on part of Bruce Hunter & Jamie Camplin.

Overall AP’s skill and experience as an ex-publisher was much in evidence as the project regained momentum ahead of its publication date of September 1987.

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Waiting for Belkin to start his surgery are (l to r) Kipper Man (John Gould), Shop Assistant (Nick Birns), Donners-Brebner Director’s wife (Annabel Davis-Goff) and Firewarden (Andrew Goldstein).
Russian Translation of Afternoon Men

by Jeff Manley

A Russian language publishing company, BSG Press of Moscow has issued a translation of Powell’s novel Afternoon Men. The translation is by Aleksandr Livergant who also wrote a brief introduction in which he notes that Powell is little known in Russia. The only other Russian translation of his novels was the single volume edition of The Valley of Bones and The Soldier’s Art issued in 1984. Livergant compares Powell to writers such as Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh and F Scott Fitzgerald. The title of the book in Russian is Sumerechnye Liudi which literally means “Twilight Men”. Indeed, a US-based Russian online bookseller, kniga.com, lists the book under that title in its English language pages.

Why it was not translated Posleobiednye Liudi, which would refer to the Russian words usually applied to the afternoon (literally “after dinner”) period of the day, is not explained in the translator’s introduction. He says that sumerechnyi in the title may be taken in its medical/psychiatric sense, presumably meaning a person who becomes active only at twilight, or in zoological terminology “crepuscular”. It’s an interesting interpretation but not perhaps what was intended by Powell (or Burton from whom he took the phrase and who referred to such men as “giddy heads”). He makes no attempt to translate that phrase from the epigraph into Russian. The Russians have certainly got the transliteration of Powell’s name right, however: Pouell which in Russian can only be pronounced just as Powell himself pronounced it.

Dr Peter Kislinger (centre) with the Society’s Hon. Archivist (left) and the Hon. Secretary at the Washington Conference.
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.

Hon. Secretary’s Fax Number

Due to technology problems while away at the Washington conference the Hon. Secretary’s fax number has changed at short notice. Apologies to anyone who has tried the old number and failed.

The new fax number for the Society is:
+44 (0) 20 8020 1483

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 8020 1483

Minutes of the 2009 AGM

As usual the minutes of this year’s AGM will appear in the Spring Newsletter.

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 8020 1483
Email: editor@anthonypowell.org
**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
*** FULLY BOOKED ***
** See page 19 for 2010 date **

**Powell Birthday Lunch**
Saturday 5 December 2009
Spaghetti House
20 Sicilian Avenue, London WC1
1215 for 1230 hrs
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 #38, Spring 2010*
Copy Deadline: 12 February 2010
Publication Date: 5 March 2010

*Newsletter #39, Summer 2010*
Copy Deadline: 14 May 2010
Publication Date: 4 June 2010

*Secret Harmonies #5, 2010*
Copy Deadline: 10 September 2010
Publication Date: 22 October 2010

**Extraordinary London Pub Meet**
with US members Jeanne & Joe Reed
Saturday 9 January 2010
The Audley, Mount Street, London, W1
1830 hrs
Details as London Pub Meets below.

**London Quarterly Pub Meets**
Saturday 13 February 2010
Saturday 8 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.

**St George’s Day & AP Soc 10th Anniversary Collage Event**
Saturday 24 April 2010
Venue: The Wheatsheaf
25 Rathbone Place, London, W1
1230-1630 hrs
Come along and learn about collage, one of AP’s artistic pastimes. Make your own collage and help us build a large communal collage to celebrate AP and the Society’s 10th Birthday. As last time the session will be led by artist Laura Miller.

Buy your own lunch; tea/coffee and biscuits provided. Small charge on the day to cover room hire, materials and refreshments.
**Dates for Your Diary**

**AP Soc 10th Birthday & 50th Anniversary of *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant***

**Tuesday 1 June 2010, Evening**

As seems appropriate we will visit one of London’s renowned Chinese restaurants.

Details to follow in next Newsletter.

**Extraordinary London Pub Meet**

**Saturday 26 June 2010**

The Audley, Mount Street, London, W1

1230 to 1530 hrs

Dr Nick Birns will discuss *What’s Become of Waring*. Details as London Pub Meets on page 18.

**Whitechapel Bell Foundry Tour**

**Saturday 23 October 2010**

Meet: 0930 hrs prompt

Whitechapel Bell Foundry

32/34 Whitechapel Road, London, E1

Cost: £10 per person

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 ever since.

An unusual tour of this working foundry which is a genuine part of Britain’s cultural heritage and gives an intriguing look at the quintessentially English art of bell-ringing.

All welcome. **Advanced booking (with payment) essential** as places are strictly limited. Please contact Hon. Secretary.

**Bodleian Library Tour and Oxford Pub Lunch**

**Saturday 19 June 2010**

Meet: 1015 hrs prompt

Bodleian Library Main Entrance

Cost: £12 per person for the tour

The Bodleian is one of the great libraries of the world and was an essential research resource for Powell’s biography of John Aubrey. The 1½ hour guided tour will include the basement and reading rooms.

After the tour we’ll adjourn across the road to the King’s Arms for pub lunch.

Even if you can’t come on the tour you will be welcome to join us in the pub.

All welcome. **Advanced booking (with payment) essential** as places are strictly limited. Please contact Hon. Secretary.

**Annual General Meeting 2010**

**Saturday 23 October 2010**

1400 hrs

V&A Museum of Childhood

Bethnal Green Road, London, E2

Followed at 1500 hrs by a talk

*AP’s Edwardian Childhood*

by Noreen Marshall

Senior Curator, V&A Museum of Childhood

Further details to follow

**6th Biennial AP Conference**

Anthony Powell’s Literary London

Early September 2011

Venue in London
Local Group News

Northeast USA Group Report

by Nicholas Birns

The 17 October meeting of the Northeast Local Group of the Anthony Powell Society took place at the Roger Sherman Inn in New Canaan, Connecticut. Roger Sherman was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, which connotes as far as America gets to the prestige of antiquity, as well as providing a pleasingly lateral connection to a Dance character, as Russell Gwinnett was of course a descendant of a signer. Alas, lunch proved to be nearly as costly as a Button Gwinnett autograph, and the Anthony Powell who, in a 1991 Journal entry, noted with dismay the dinner prices at the Ston Easton Park restaurant where a journalist had taken him to lunch might not have been enthused. Any momentary fiscal discomfort, though, was quelled by the congeniality of the gathering and especially by our guest speaker, Michael Henle of the Mathematics Department at Oberlin College, who spoke amusingly and knowledgeably about his correspondence with Powell (which he brought with him and showed around) and his views on the narrative framework of Dance.

Michael brought his daughter, Alea, a graduate student in historic preservation and American history at the University of Connecticut, and he made reference to his father, Paul (who also corresponded with Powell) and his grandfather, James (who was Powell’s first US publisher, bringing out From A View To a Death as Mr Zouch, Superman) so it was as if four generations of the Henle family were present.

Roger Sherman was famed for “never having said a foolish thing in his life”; the gathering under report here came as close as possible to equalling the Connecticut statesman’s feat. Henle’s correspondence with Powell happily included a late letter in which Powell showed his awareness of Keith Marshall’s work in maintaining the Anthony Powell website.

Others in attendance were: Arete and Bill Warren, Jonathan Kooperstein, Ed Bock, Leatrice Fountain, Nicholas Birns, John Gould and Eileen Kaufman.

A happy consequence of the meeting is that John Gould agreed to be a guest lecturer in my Nineteenth Century Fiction class next semester, speaking on Jane Austen’s Persuasion. Jonathan Kooperstein brought the September issue of Country Life with Sir Mark Palmer featured; most agreed that this one-time model for Murtlock now looked more like Widmerpool, though seemed much happier.
Society Visit to the Bodleian Library

by Elwin Taylor

As readers of Anthony Powell’s memoirs are aware, his recollection of his university career was equivocal.

I do not in the least wish that I had never been up at Oxford … Nevertheless … a great deal of my time was spent in a state of deep melancholy.  (Infants)

Either way his dates (1923-26) mark him down as part of the Brideshead generation. The many cultural productions of and about this cohort have encouraged the general interest in Oxford, already primed by Zuleika Dobson and Sinister Street, to escape gravitational pull. In fact this curiosity has been so widely diffused that the traditional factions of town and gown are now jostled for pre-eminence by a third force – tourists. Not in the least intimidated by this seat of learning and motor manufacture, their self-assurance is infectious. A recent field observation from the steps of the Museum of the History of Science gives the flavour:

Man: Let’s go in here, it’s free.
Boy: Boring.
Girl: But it’s mad stuff!

On Saturday 27 June a less instinctively judgemental contingent of visitors was provided by the Society, 12 members meeting for a tour of the Bodleian Library that was kindly arranged by Mike Jay.

Our guide, Chris, was well-informed and enthusiastic. Having done his homework on Powell and the Society he admitted to some anxiety at facing a possible barrage of erudite criticism and intervention. However, he soon relaxed and hit his stride with a fascinating introductory talk based on the history and architecture of the Divinity School which is at the heart of the library complex. This took in Eleanor of Aquitaine, the 1209 riot (pub brawl, two clerks lynched) and the origins of both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

The Divinity School (1427-83) is a late gothic masterpiece, and was established as the first separate university building. The fan-vaulted ceiling is embellished with bosses bearing the initials and arms of the early benefactors. There are also some striking vignettes of biblical events. Chris drew our attention to a carving of Saint Veronica covering Christ’s face with a shroud. It was now that the erudition of the Society came into play, with Prue Raper pointing out that the cloth was in fact a handkerchief, Christ’s face being wiped rather than covered. At first Chris stood his ground, arguing gamely for a shroud. But when opposed by reference to such authorities as The Oxford Book of Saints, he gave way with a good grace and the handkerchief carried the day. The Society can be proud of adding incrementally to the knowledge of tour groups yet unborn and still to come!

Above the Divinity School is Duke Humfrey’s Library (1488). This Humfrey was Henry V’s brother and the Gloucester of Shakespeare’s histories. He returned from the Hundred Years War service in France with a substantial collection of manuscripts, which he donated to the University, and he financed the construction of the library to house them. Almost all were destroyed in the reign of Edward VI by religious fanatics, the sort of self-righteous wreckers that are never far below the surface in any era, and who periodically break through it.
Even before then, however, the library had fallen into disrepair. As Chris pointed out, it was outdated technologically almost from the start as manuscripts were superseded by books printed with moveable type. It was this neglected facility that the Elizabethan scholar and diplomat Thomas Bodley undertook to restore in 1598. Bodley enjoyed considerable funds by way of marriage to the widow of a pilchard king, and laid down many of the foundations of modern library organization. More Anthony Powell Society erudition emerged in a discussion as to whether Bodley might or might not have been influenced by the Abbey library at St Gallen in Switzerland, but the outcome was inconclusive. What is certain is that Bodley’s arrangement with the Stationers’ Company to receive a copy of every book printed reveals the scope of his ambition, as well as being the start of the modern system of legal deposit libraries. As Keith reminded us, among those legal deposits are copies of all the Society’s publications. The naming of the whole library complex after Bodley acknowledges his pre-eminent contribution. However Duke Humfrey’s name has been restored to the specific original library above the Divinity School.

Before proceeding to Duke Humfrey’s Library itself we were shown the oak-panelled Convocation House, built in 1634-7. The lower house of Charles I’s parliament met here during the Civil War. The fan-vaulted ceiling was added later in the 17th century, but otherwise this room is unchanged from the days when Charles I occupied what is now the Chancellor’s Throne. Apparently this room, atmospheric and evocative, is in demand as a film set. It now has Hogwarts associations, and provides for visiting Potties a point of cultural reference, as well as some relief from all the mad stuff.

Adjacent to this room was the Chancellor’s Court, where University miscreants, appealed from the all too hostile jurisdiction of the Town, were arraigned for judgement. The roll of those who have appeared in this court includes the young Oscar Wilde, but for something rather uninteresting to do with money.

When we at last reached Duke Humfrey’s Library we came into contact with books for the first time on the tour. With its painted wooden ceiling and presses filled with leather bound folios, this was the library of one’s imagination. Had it been permitted to take down the books, the first to come to hand would have been Machiavelli’s Works. A functioning pneumatic messaging system added to the archaeological charm of it all.

The great majority of the Bodleian’s seven million books are in fact housed in the New Bodleian (1936-1940) just across Broad Street. It is possible to see the inner workings of this seemingly fascinating building (4 stories above and 4 below ground) but that is another tour and another day. Instead, together with Chris, we made our way to the King’s Arms for what can only be described as an Anthony Powell Society pub meet. The shade of Powell, momentarily absent during our historical, architectural and bibliophilic explorations, returned to guide our discussions over a typically wide ranging field, from which analysis of Dance was by no means excluded.
Anthony Powell’s *The Military Philosophers* (1968) opens with Nick Jenkins receiving messages about the release of Polish soldiers across the border between the USSR and Iran. Jenkins is at the time responsible for liaison between the British military and the Polish forces fighting with the Allies. This release had long been awaited as a source of additional personnel for Polish troops fighting in the Allied war effort. These troops were part of the tens of thousands of Polish military personnel taken prisoner by the Soviets after 17 September 1939, when they attacked Poland from the east in aid of the attacks by their then-Allies Nazi Germany from the west that began on 1 September 1939. The messages Jenkins reviews are received in early 1942, five or six weeks after the fall of Singapore. Even at this early date, there is concern that the officers who were in command of these troops have gone missing. Jenkins is dispatched to Q (Ops) Colonel to inform him of the arrival of these troops, who are being organized by the Polish General Anders after their release from Soviet prison camps in Central Asia; he also reports,

At least eight or nine thousand Polish officers remain untraced … It’s been put as high as fifteen thousand.

The two of them exchange hypotheses as to the fate of what Q (Ops) Colonel describes as this “large deficiency” of Polish officers, ranging as far afield as their possible imprisonment in Franz Josef Land within the Arctic Circle (*MP*, 36).

(See also *Faces*, 144 where Powell recalls his actual memories of these events to much the same effect as those described in the novel.)

In fact, the missing Polish officers were already dead in 1942, having been executed by the Soviets in the Katyn Forest area near Smolensk in the USSR. They were taken to camps in that area (such as Kozielsk) after their capture in eastern Poland in September 1939. They were held there until a proposal was made in March 1940 by Laventry Beria, head of the NKVD, that they be executed, and this was approved by Stalin and the entire Politburo. The executions were carried out...
Jenkins does not intervene in the discussion, although it made enough of an impression that he recalls the incident over 15 years later when he next sees Tompsitt, who accompanies the Widmerpools to the Seraglio benefit concert (TK, 233).^2

The 1943 discussion is brought to a close by Widmerpool’s declamation of what ultimately became the British (and US) wartime policy (MP, 107):

> whatever materializes, even if it does transpire – which I sincerely trust it will not – that the Russians behaved in such a very regrettable manner, how can this country possibly raise official objections, in the interests of a few thousand Polish exiles, who, however worthy their cause, cannot properly handle their diplomatic relations, even with fellow Slavs. It must be confessed also that the Poles themselves are in a position to offer only a very modest contribution, when it comes to the question of manpower. How, as I say, can we approach our second most powerful Ally about something which, if a fact, cannot be put right, and is almost certainly, from what we know of them, the consequence of administrative inadequacy, rather than willful indifference to human life and the dictates of compassion.

Perhaps it is unfair to say that Widmerpool’s characterization of Soviet action as one of “administrative inadequacy” was ever officially adopted by the governments, even during the war. But during the remainder of the war, both the US and British governments did suppress studies or reports which suggested Soviet responsibility. And Widmerpool spoke before the Polish troops (many of whom had crossed the
border in 1942 and served under General Anders) made more than a modest contribution to the Allied campaign in Italy, especially at Monte Cassino in winter 1943-44.

At the time MP was written (1968), the Cold War still raged and the full details of responsibility for the Katyn massacres were still in dispute. The Soviets continued to insist that the Germans executed the Polish officers in 1941 after they captured the camps where the officers were held following their invasion of the USSR. By 1968, most in the West had come to accept the view that the massacre took place in 1940 at the hands of the Soviets. In Poland, where there were witnesses who knew the truth, the Soviet line was taken, and any reference to a death at Katyn having taken place in 1940 was ruthlessly suppressed or simply edited to read 1941 (although Lech Wałęsa’s Solidarność movement had by the 1980s made a public, if not official, charge of Soviet responsibility). In 1987, when Powell discussed the Polish language publication of all 12 volumes of Dance, the publisher’s representative in the UK (who had close relations in General Anders’ corps) thought it impossible that the references in MP to Katyn could be published. Powell says he would not agree to alterations in the text and would prefer that MP be left out of the Polish translation. Whether the project ever came to fruition is not known, but if it had, the question of deleting all or part of MP would probably have been moot as a result of the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 (Journals 1987-89, 52-3).

Andrzej Wajda has now written and directed a film about Katyn. Wajda, now in his 80s, has been a noted Polish film director since the 1950s, and is the creator of such international classics as Kanal (1956) and Ashes and Diamonds (1958), both about Polish experience in WWII. His later films Man of Marble (1977) and Man of Iron (1981) reflected the frustrations of life under Communism as expressed politically in the Solidarność movement which he actively supported. Wajda’s father was one of the officers executed at Katyn and, he says, in an interview included with the DVD, that he had throughout his career hoped to make a film depicting the events surrounding the Katyn massacre. In the same interview, he explains that he wanted to show both tragedies of Katyn, the crime and the lie. His film succeeds only too well.

The story of the crime opens with the invasion of Poland by Soviet troops in 1939. A young woman (Anna) and her daughter (Nika) are searching for her husband (Andrzej), a Captain, who is among those held prisoner. When they find him under Soviet guard, he refuses to return with them to Krakow (which seems an option at that point) because of responsibility to his troops. The officers are placed on trains and moved to Kozielsk in the USSR where they are imprisoned for the winter 1939-40 in a disused church. Others in the group whose stories are told include Lt Jerzy, who is one of Andrzej’s junior officers, and another referred to as the Lieutenant Pilot Engineer, who is more outspoken in his frustration with Soviet imprisonment and also expresses
disappointment in the failure of the Polish army to fight on, even alleging betrayal by its leaders. Andrzej for his part quietly keeps a small diary in which he records arrivals and departures at the camp. To the end, he expects to be evacuated to a neutral country.

Meanwhile, the story shifts back to Krakow where Anna and Nika have returned to live with Andrzej’s mother, after being detained for several months in the Soviet zone where her sister-in-law Elizabeth is living. Anna and her mother-in-law nervously await word of Andrzej’s fate. Meanwhile, the story of the family of another prisoner, the General, is introduced. The General’s wife (in Polish, “Generalowa”) and her daughter Ewa also live in Krakow. They are introduced in a Christmas Eve 1939 scene that is intercut with contemporaneous scenes of the General in the Kozielsk camp, both the wife and the General awaiting the appearance of the first star before he addresses his officers and leads them in singing Christmas carols.

The film then skips forward to 1943, after the Germans have discovered the graves. This is the beginning of the story of the lie. The film records the German announcement of lists of those identified as among the dead. Andrzej is not listed, but Lt Jerzy, the Pilot Engineer and the General are. The Germans try to enlist the General’s wife in their propaganda efforts but she refuses, even though the Germans threaten to send her daughter to Auschwitz (a suburb of Krakow). Wajda includes clips of both German and, in later scenes, Soviet propaganda films ironically showing how each side used similar footage to “prove” with the same forensic evidence that the execution techniques and burial are typical of the barbarism of the other.

After the war, Lt Jerzy (now a Major) returns wearing the uniform of the Polish Communist government army. He finds Anna, who is still expecting Andrzej’s return, and tells her that her husband was executed and was misidentified because Jerzy had given him a sweater at Kozielsk with Jerzy’s name in it which Andrzej was wearing when he was executed. Lt Jerzy is the key figure in the film because he was a participant in both the crime and the lie. For reasons never made clear, he was spared execution. For this he feels the guilt of a survivor. He was among the survivors enlisted by the Soviets to witness and validate their investigation of the Katyn grave sites in 1944. After meeting with Anna, he and the General’s wife find each other at the showing of the Soviet propaganda film. Jerzy (who, one feels, must know the truth) tells the General’s wife that it doesn’t much matter to him who killed the officers since the truth won’t bring them back to life. The General’s wife condemns him for not accepting what she knows to be the truth. He returns to a tavern at his base where the troops are listening to a Soviet propaganda broadcast. He vents his frustration on them, then is pushed out of the room, walks away and, unable to bear the additional guilt laid on him by the General’s wife, shoots himself in the head.

The final interconnected stories are typically “Wajdian” and are the best
written and acted in the film. These make up what is really a film within the film and is a simply brilliant piece of work. In these last stories Wajda says in the interview that he tried to make the film in the tradition of the Polish Film School, and he succeeds in that goal. This part of the film is highly reminiscent of his earliest films such as Kanal and Ashes and Diamonds. It introduces the family of the Pilot Engineer in the person of his two sisters, Agnieszka and the School Director. This is interwoven with the story of Tadeusz (a nephew of Anna who had fought with the partisans “in the forest”) and Ewa, the General’s daughter. Agnieszka wants to put up a gravestone to her brother reflecting the true date of his death at Katyn, 1940. The church refuses to erect the stone showing that date. She then sells her long blond hair to a theatre to pay to erect the stone in the family cemetery plot. (Not coincidently, the theatre is performing Antigone, another story of a sister who suffers for trying to provide proper burial for her brother.) The stone cutters and her sister all urge her to give it up, but she persists, is arrested at the cemetery gate and last seen being taken to a cell. Tadeusz seeks admission to the art school where Agnieszka’s sister is director. He fills out an application showing the death of his father, who also died at Katyn, as 1940. The School Director urges him to reconsider the information on the form but he refuses. After he leaves, she tells a colleague that she will nevertheless accept him in the school so long as the colleague (a Communist sympathizer) keeps him in line. Tadeusz, back on the street, is caught tearing down a propaganda poster, chased by the police, rescued by Ewa (a stranger), begins to fall in love with her, says goodbye, is spotted again and killed by the police, all within a few minutes. At the end of this segment, a middle aged woman knocks on Anna’s door and hands her Andrzej’s diary. At first viewing, this seems a bit too much of a coincidence. But upon rewatching the movie, one sees that this scene was set up earlier when Jerzy visited a university lab where he had once been a student. The staff are busily packing up the files and effects of Katyn victims before they can be seized by the NKVD. Jerzy is looking for Andrzej’s possessions but, because of his Communist army uniform, gets a cold reception. He leaves Anna’s address and tells them to take her anything of Andrzej’s they find. The woman lab assistant hears of Jerzy’s suicide and takes the risk of delivering the diary to Anna. As Anna looks through the pages of the diary, the film, in its closing scene, segues back to 1940 and the movement of the group of officers, including Andrzej, the General and the Pilot Engineer, to their execution and burial. One of Andrzej’s last actions is to remove his coat as he is taken out of the prison van and throw it back into the van. The coat contains his diary.

The film is well written and edited (as one would expect from a director of Wajda’s reputation) and, although long, at two hours, never lags. Since one knows the ending, the film focuses on the stories of how that ending affected the families and through them the history of Post War Europe. If it has a defect, it is one of putting too many stories and characters
into too small a space. As noted earlier, however, Wajda includes all the necessary details to connect the stories. And the film is sufficiently well made to make a second viewing as enjoyable as the first, perhaps even more so as you come to see better how the stories fit together. Just as when rereading a Powell novel, it is worth the extra effort. The details you missed the first time pull everything together. This is, of course, one of the benefits of watching the film on a DVD.

Although this is not the story of the Poles who crossed the border at the beginning of MP, there are links to the events in Powell’s novel. Lt Jerzy in his discussion with the lab director tells him that he was too late in making a connection with Anders, as otherwise he would (in 1945) be in London and not an officer in the pro-Communist Polish army. This is referring to Lt-General Władysław Anders who organized the Polish troops escaping from the USSR and whose background is discussed at length in MP (16-17) at the 1942 meeting where Jenkins stands in for Pennistone in the Cabinet War Office. Widmerpool there describes Anders as

Rather a swashbuckler. A man to be careful of in certain respects. Ran a racing stable. Still, I’m no enemy of a bit of dash. I like it.

A second link arises in Jenkins’ discussions with Q (Ops) Colonel when one of them notes that, in the German broadcast of the Katyn discovery, identification of the officers was facilitated by the Polish practice of displaying “the actual insignia of a decoration” on the tunic of the holder (MP, 103). Andrzej in fact has a blue insignia on his “płasę” or coat, and his daughter thinks she has found him at the beginning of the film when she sees the insignia on a coat lying on the ground. As it turns out, Andrzej is not under the coat but in subsequent scenes his blue insignia is displayed on the outside of his coat and, at least once, the medal and ribbon of the same color can be seen underneath the coat. Powell was a very keen collector of such military trivia and would have been pleased at this detail of Wajda’s film. Indeed, the identification of characters by their uniforms is a common thread throughout the film, such as Jerzy’s wearing the uniform of the Communist Polish army and the reactions it causes. The non-specialist film viewer might not notice these fine points of detail, but Powell would have. I think overall, he would have enjoyed this film.

Unfortunately, some details, which are probably important, are lost in translation. For example, in the Tadeusz segment, the poster he tears down, attracting the attention of the police, may have some connection with Katyn. It certainly is making some political statement with which he violently disagrees. But no translation is provided. It shows a man in a military uniform with the words “Obrzym i zapluty karze reakcji”, roughly “Giant and spiteful creature of reaction” but without some help it makes no sense to a non-Polish viewer why Tadeusz should be incensed by that message. It may have to do with the uniform identifying the
political position of the soldier in the poster. Also in that segment, Ewa spots a cinema poster for a film called Świat się śmieje which is translated as The World is Laughing. It is a Soviet film according to the poster but its significance, if any, is unexplained. This is the Polish title for a Soviet musical comedy of 1934 entitled in Russian Vyesolye Rebyata (also translated into English as Jolly Fellows). It may simply be the film that was playing in that Krakow cinema (Apollo) in the autumn of 1945 or it may have some greater significance. In the same scene, Tadeusz asks Ewa if she’s seen the Disney film, Sleeping Beauty. But since that film was not released until 1959, it would seem that he should be asking her if she’s seen Snow White which was released in 1937 and probably seen by Tadeusz (and Wajda himself) as a child. The Polish film title Tadeusz mentions is Śpiąca królowna, which translates as Sleeping Beauty, but it seems unlikely that Wajda would have made such a mistake. An “extra feature” to the DVD, such as a commentary on the film explaining the meaning of such details, would have been useful.

Wajda’s film never offers any motivation for the Soviet actions. For all that appears in the film, they could have been the result of the “administrative inadequacy” attributed to them by Widmerpool. After 1989, the Russian Government accepted NKVD responsibility for the massacre and released the documentation of Beria’s proposal approved by Stalin. The matter still clouds Russo-Polish relations, however, as demonstrated by Poland’s protest over apparent Russian backpedaling during their recent joint commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the beginning of WWII. But what the Soviets hoped to gain from the executions at the time is a matter of endless speculation, including that the NKVD may have been acting in concert with their Nazi counterparts, the Gestapo. It is enough for Wajda that it happened and he can now tell the story.

1 Reference to the “Katyn” massacre has also come to be understood to include executions of Polish officers and troops held in other areas of the USSR remote from the camps near Smolensk.

2 One of the student papers (The Katyn Massacre by Nicole Lee) included in John Gould’s recently published collection Dance Class (2009) concludes that since Jenkins, like Powell, had worked with the Poles and could be assumed to take their side, Powell allowed Jenkins’ personal views on the matter (and presumably those of Powell himself) to be “inferred from the reactions of the [other] characters” (Idem., 149-50).

3 Powell doesn’t mention in this context the subsequent reference to Katyn in TK, but his “no alterations” policy would seem to have precluded publication of a Polish translation of that volume as well.

4 There is no reference in the online catalogue of the Polish National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa) of the publication of any translation into Polish of any of Powell’s works.
The New York Times Book Review, 9 August 2009, contained a letter from APLIST member Robert Barrett of Santa Monica, California. The subject was commentary on an essay “Titles Within a Tale” about faux book titles:

One of the many pleasures of immersing oneself in Anthony Powell’s 12-volume masterpiece A Dance to the Music of Time is savouring the titles of the many books, articles and poems his characters have written. I for one would love to be able to read Evadne Clapham’s 35th novel, Cain’s Jawbone. And Ada Leintwardine has left us, at least in Powell’s pages, her novels I Stopped at the Chemist (later filmed as Sally Goes Shopping), Bedsores and The Bitch Pack Meets on Wednesday. When Pamela Widmerpool tossed the manuscript of X Trapnel’s second and last novel, Profiles in String, into the Maida Vale canal, I think I was more upset than Powell’s characters; at least they had been able to read Trapnel’s story Dogs Have No Uncles and his first novel, Camel Ride to the Tomb.

[Spotted by, inter alia, Jonathan Kooperstein]

In the Chicago Sun Times film critic Roger Ebert, in an article titled “Books Do Furnish a Life”, says:

Despairing of ever getting through that 12-volume work [Dance], I listened to the remarkable audiobook recordings by Simon Callow. They had the ability to lock Powell’s character names into place as orbiting planets. There is some kind of ineffable genius in the name Kenneth Widmerpool. Now I am halfway through actually reading the handsome recent Folio edition.

From the Daily Telegraph, 9 November 2009 comes a review by Sameer Rahim of The Oxford Companion to English Literature (ed. Dinah Birch):

Oddly we are advised how to pronounce Pepys but not Anthony Powell. And does Robert Burton, the author of The Anatomy of Melancholy, deserve fewer lines than Ben Elton or – bizarrely – Star Wars?

Washington conference delegates eagerly await further entertainment.
Geoffrey Wheatcroft, reviewing Chapman Pincher’s *Treachery* in the *New York Review of Books*, 22 October 2009, observes:

In his beguiling recent book *Cold Cream*, a memoir of his high-bohemian upbringing, Ferdinand Mount describes his mother’s friendship with [spy Donald] Maclean from pre-war holidays, when he “gets very drunk on the skiing trip, though not nearly as drunk as he gets after the war” and indeed Philip Toynbee writes to Lady Julia Mount in 1950 from Cairo, “Poor Donald has indulged in a wild crescendo of drunken, self-destructive, plain destructive episodes.” Mount’s gentleman-jockey father thought [Guy] Burgess “the most ghastly type of BBC pansy, quite insufferable. Not as bad as Maclean though,” while Mount’s uncle Anthony Powell – whose own novels capture those intricate eddies and flows of English society where the most unlikely people continually bump into one-another – observed more unarguably that the Foreign Office seemed to have a positive genius for hiring the wrong people.

[Spotted by Forest Ann Newcomer]
Letters to the Editor

Lees-Milne on Powell

From John McClatchey
I enjoyed the latest issue (#36) of the Newsletter and particularly Mr Mitchum’s review of James Lees-Milne’s Diaries 1984-1997, a volume I do not have as I have all of the diaries themselves. Mr Mitchum might note that there are some interesting observations in the last volume of the Lees-Milne diaries (The Milk of Paradise) that apparently did not make their way into the 1984-1997 volume – at page 152, the following appears:

he [Powell] does not emerge as sympathetic. There is a hard wooden superiority about him, a censoriousness, and immense snobbishness ... For someone not nobly born, and indeed hailing from a frightfully unimportant family, he is remarkably obsessed with genealogy. Really very boring ...

Venetian Dance

From Jeff Manley
I just rewatched the Venetian scenes in the Channel 4 TV film and was reminded how the filmmakers changed settings in ways that confuse the memory. Members is present at the writers conference whereas in the novel he merely urges Jenkins and Emily Brightman to attend. Ada Leintwardine is there as in the novel but so is Quiggin who isn’t there in the book. They get it right with the exteriors of the Palazzo Labia/Palazzo Bragadin and the San Giorgio Maggiore conference centre but the interiors are misleading (at least at the conference centre) and must be filmed on a sound stage. Without Tokenhouse the filmmakers have to insert some central casting Soviet heavies who actually make contact with Widmerpool whereas in the novel he never makes contact with Dr Belkin so far as I recall. The small lunch in the Giardini with Glober and Tokenhouse is switched to an anonymous banquet room apparently at the conference. They are joined by Rosie and Odo who actually met Jenkins at the Florian and did not attend the conference. While Ada manages to order a negronie, somehow the humour of her action doesn’t come off in that setting. I suppose that they had no choice but to make these changes (which also infect other segments of the film) to fit in as much as they did, but they do play tricks on one’s memory when trying to remember the original. For example, the visit to Susan Tolland’s cottage in the film’s war episode which actually took place in the novel at Federica’s (who doesn’t appear in the film) and this always throws me off. Does anyone else suffer from this film-induced confusion?
Influential Books

From Joseph Trenn


*Dance* and *Ulysses* are the most often cited 20th century works of literature, 3 and 4 citations respectively. The only works of fiction to claim more are *Huckleberry Finn* (5) and *War & Peace* (6). Shakespeare’s *Complete Works* and the single play *King Lear* are the only other works outside of non-fiction to claim as many as 3 citations. The leader, no surprise, is the King James Version of the *Bible* with 7.

Hale Champion, then executive dean of the Kennedy School of Government writes

> Our one best hope (for the survival of humanity) is to understand the human condition better and give it an appropriate politics.

Of *Dance* he goes on,

> This is the life of a modern man in urban society (London), his sensibility, his relationships, his experience and his reflections over most of the same decades in which I lived. It has, for me, all the values of comparative studies. It is also wonderful reading.

James Hodgson, head librarian of the Frances Loeb Library wrote

> I would likely recommend any book that enriches the human spirit … that is likely to help us keep jolly, sane and, in some way, safe from so many others who will recommend books that champion personal power and profit.

He calls *Dance*

> A roman fleuve in twelve parts.

Suggests that a life of reflection and observation is to be prized as much as a life of action and that life’s meaning is to be found in the accumulation of small events and triumphs (often to be only dimly perceived) rather than in high moments of bombast and tangible riches.

Finally, Gordon R Willey, Bowditch Professor of Mexican and Central American Archaeology and Ethnology Emeritus, called his a very personalized list in which

> I have tried to strike a balance between the impact that they made upon me at first reading and the impressions they have left on me ever since. It is a very personalized list … Indeed only one of the six books is strictly archaeological.

I read the twelve volumes of this splendid novel serially as they first appeared, and since then I have reread the whole series twice, each time with new pleasure. I never seem to tire of it. Perhaps it is not up to Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*, but I like it better. It is witty, sensitive, involved yet remote, my sense of empathy with Nicholas Jenkins, the narrator, seems always complete.

Proust’s work was cited in the book only once by the way. ■
Society Merchandise

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American High School student essays from John’s teaching of *Dance* at Philips Academy. Perceptive insights.
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A 40-page monograph by John Monagan describing his meetings with Powell.
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