The Anthony Powell Society Newsletter #4

**Editorial**

by Stephen Holden

The Anthony Powell Society held its first Annual General Meeting on 15 September 2001. It all seems a far cry from that June evening last year when half-a-dozen Powell devotees met at Julian Allason’s flat in Chelsea and decided to form the Society. Now, 15 months on, the Society has over 130 members from over 15 countries. The First Biennial Conference held at Eton College was a great success, with the Proceedings, edited by Anthony Powell bibliographer, George Lilley, to be published shortly. The 2003 Conference, to be held at Powell’s alma mater, Balliol College, Oxford on 7 and 8 April 2003, is already being planned. And then, in the back of the Executive Committee’s minds, is Venice in 2005…

Following the AGM on 15 September, those present were invited to attend the service of dedication for the memorial to Anthony Powell in Chantry Church. After the service Lady Violet Powell very kindly invited us to tea at The Chantry. The Society would like to express its deep appreciation to Lady Violet and to John Powell for this invitation, and for their support and enthusiasm.

All Newsletter contributions are welcome and should be sent to the editor, Stephen Holden, The Anthony Powell Society, 76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK (email: sjholden@hotmail.com).

**Correction**

In the Summer 2001 Newsletter an article was incorrectly captioned. Our apologies for this error. The caption should have read:

ISABELLE JOYAU, Investigating Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time

by Peter Kislinger (University of Wien/Vienna)

This article originally appeared in Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft /XXVII 1996/2, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien, 374-382.

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Colonel Flores at The Ritz

by James Tucker

I saw the suggestion by Hugh Massingberd in the Summer 2001 Anthony Powell Society Newsletter that Jean Duport’s second husband, Colonel Flores, might have been part of a large group of South Americans seen by Jenkins in The Ritz way back in The Acceptance World. I’d also wondered. Flores would have been quite young then. I wrote to Powell about this possibility in 1977. He replied:

“The answer about whether Flores was one of the party in The Ritz (The Acceptance World) is that one simply does not know. They may have been just relations. Jenkins was going to ask him, if he had an opportunity, but that never arose. A definite linking did of course cross my mind, but I decided against being specific, as so much of life seems to be like that.” (Letter from Anthony Powell to James Tucker, 9 November 1977.)

I wrote a book on Powell’s novels and, as part of it, attempted a brief guide to characters. For Flores I put: “at Ritz with family party (?) (TAW Chap 2).” There were, in fact, quite a lot of entries in my guide followed by (?). As his letter indicates, Powell did not always want to be too precise in his fiction. Actually, my query to him was sent after my book came out (1976), so it must have arisen from a re-reading. I think that, possibly, I might also have scoured Hilary Spurling’s Handbook (1977), wondering whether her reference to Flores would clear things up: Powell, I understand, worked with her on the Handbook and perhaps I’d been expecting some pointer. But the Handbook, as far as I can see, does not discuss any possible link. I imagine I wrote to Powell in despair.

Quite apart from the remarks about The Ritz party, I think Powell’s letter is interesting as an illustration of how the fictional character of Jenkins and the author, Powell, overlap: neither of them knew whether Flores was in the group, but Powell does know that Jenkins was thinking about asking, though his intention is not, I believe, actually mentioned in the writing. Jenkins is referred to as if real, and as if responsible for what does and does not go into the novel; which I suppose he was, in a way.

*James Tucker is the author of The Novels of Anthony Powell (Macmillan, 1976). Under the pen-name Bill James he writes the acclaimed Harpur and Iles crime novels.*
The Ritz
by Julian Allason

Although in poor health by the time of its opening in May 1906, this seven-story château on Piccadilly was Cesar Ritz’s final project. Pass through the mahogany revolving doors today and one enters into the ambience he created. A milieu in which gentlemen wear Savile Row suits and women radiate elegance. Ritz historian Hugh Massingberd judges the Long Gallery to be the masterpiece of hotel architecture. From the foyer it leads past the Palm Court, a gazebo of gilded trellis and marble columns where saucy young things tuck into millefeuilles and Saudi arms dealers sip Earl Grey. The Long Gallery concludes in what is surely the prettiest restaurant in London. Views of Green Park and the hotel’s Italian Garden refract in gilt mirrors under a trompe l’oeil ceiling supported by columns of pink marble. After a long fallow period the cooking, under Giles Thompson, again does justice to the magical setting, attracting the likes of Sirs David Frost and Terence Conran, Lord Deedes, Hugh Grant and, at a discreet table, Her Majesty the Queen.

It was not always thus. For much of the latter part of the twentieth century successive owners wrestled with rising costs and expectations. The Ritz’s unlikely saviours were the reclusive knights David and Frederick Barclay, property magnates and owners of The Scotsman newspaper. Since their acquisition of the hotel in 1995 £30m has been spent restoring the 115 rooms and 16 suites in Louis XVI style, a sum that appears to defy the gravity of hotel economics.

The atmosphere of refined naughtiness, that drew Tallulah Bankhead, King Zog (accompanied by the Albanian gold reserves), Evelyn Waugh and the Aga Khan, survives. Key scenes throughout Anthony Powell’s masterly sequence of novels, A Dance to the Music of Time, are set in The Ritz, often involving the Balkan Prince Theodoric. Arranging the Anthony Powell literary luncheon at the hotel last year I received a misdirected telephone call from Scotland Yard enquiring how many sharpshooters would be required to protect the King of Romania during his visit to the hotel. In The Ritz it is customary for life to imitate art.


Tea at The Chantry
by Stephen Holden

After the Society’s AGM on Saturday 15 September, the dozen of us who attended were invited by Lady Violet Powell to the Chantry Church for the dedication of a memorial commemorating Anthony Powell. The church, built by Gilbert Scott in 1846, is set in a strangely empty graveyard. The service was attended by Lady Violet and about 30 family, friends and well-wishers. The church’s incumbent, the Reverend Dr Martin Weymont arrived with his dog who, though not allowed inside the church, took a great interest in the proceedings from the doorway of the vestibule. A board shows the church’s incumbents since 1846, and includes two by the name of Fussell, the family of ironmasters who built The Chantry. The service was short, with prayers and a single hymn, ‘Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah’, a hymn that features in The Valley of Bones. (Later one of the guests mentioned that while Powell was writing that particular novel, she and Lady Violet were required to stand at the foot of The Chantry staircase and sing the hymn to ensure Powell upstairs did not make a mistake with the lyrics.) In dedicating the memorial Martin Weymont had to stand on a pew to reach the plaque. The plaque itself, designed by Richard Kindersley, is a simple one of slate: the Powell crest surmounts the inscription, "In Memoriam Anthony Dymoke Powell, Author - CH CBE of The Chantry."

Directly opposite is a plaque to Powell’s parents, by Richard Kindersley’s father, David.

When the service had finished we walked through a field past cows grazing to The Chantry where Lady Violet had very kindly invited us to afternoon tea. The Chantry was built in 1826, and is a Regency building rather in the style of those Italianate villas in nearby Bath. Upon entering the hallway I was immediately struck by the wallpaper - it is a deep red with a very large pattern in black of a military helmet (it reminded me of Britannia’s on the old coins) framed with a fan of spears and swords. To the left of the front door is a hatstand with a tower of hats on top, a Homburg uppermost. As we passed into the dining room I noticed two long muskets on the wall, possibly Afghan jezails. The dining room is dominated by the massive William Pye head of Powell (three times life size), that stands on a table by the window. Among the pictures in the room are the 1934 portrait of Powell by Henry Lamb and the 1986 one by Rodrigo Moynihan. Another portrait, by Henry Mee, hangs on the stairs. We sat down to tea: sandwiches (cucumber, cream cheese with watercress, egg) and cake (chocolate, ginger, some others I missed). A Powell cat made a brief, blasé appearance, seemingly unimpressed by the dozen...
strangers in the room. I chatted to Hugh Massingberd about the Channel 4 series of Dance and he admitted he had become somewhat of a “groupie” on the various sets while filming. John Powell joined us and mentioned that his parents had taken a sketchbook with them when on holiday abroad, using it as a kind of illustrated journal of their travels. Later I looked through a couple of these sketchbooks in the library; one of a trip to Mexico and Guatemala, another of a voyage around the Mediterranean. The water-colour sketches were proficient and brightly-coloured: depictions of ruins and sights, sketches of local people and fellow tourists.

It felt strange to be standing in the library surrounded by the actual copies of the many books that Powell mentions in his memoirs, Journals, novels and reviews. All four walls had floor-to-ceiling white bookcases, with larger art books on the bottom shelf. Most of the books were without their dust-jackets. There were collected sets of Hardy, James, Conrad, Kipling, Fitzgerald; well-thumbed editions of À La Recherche de Temps Perdu in French and English (both the Scott Moncrieff and Kilmartin translations) together with a shelf of books on Proust; many French and Russians including old Penguin Classics of Dostoyevsky; many books by friends such as Kingsley Amis, V.S. Naipaul and Alison Lurie; books by Powell favourites such as Alexander Lernet-Holenia and Julian Maclaren Ross. The bookcase to the left of the fireplace held English and foreign editions of his own books, and those books to which he’d contributed.

John Powell very kindly showed me around some of the house. The staircase to the basement is lined with framed lists of people who subscribed to Heywood Hill booksellers to buy Dance as it was published. The walls of the downstairs boiler-room cum Gents are completely covered with a collage done by Anthony Powell. Even a knee-high alcove for some piece of plumbing has been painstakingly collaged. According to John Powell he started with some old French posters and then over the next fifteen years added pictures cut from newspapers and magazines. Certain sections of wall are “themed”, for example one corner has a cluster of pictures of French writers. A photo of Clive James led John Powell to remark that James still held the house record for the most sausages consumed at breakfast.

The billiards room next door had a half-size billiards table, more bookshelves holding bound copies of Chums and the Boy’s Own Paper (favourites of Erridge in Dance) and various genealogical works; some military headgear; and a selection of photographs (Powell crewing at Eton; a class photo from Powell’s father’s days at some military academy where a young Bernard Montgomery is also a cadet).

Then I was shown the first-floor room where Powell did most of his writing. It was difficult for me not to behave like a gawping tourist in an eagerly-anticipated museum. It’s small, now a bedroom, with a view down the lawn to the fields and hills beyond. Along with some Charles Conder pictures and a caricature of Max Beerbohm, there were also the originals of some of the Mark Boxer (“Marc”) cartoons from the Fontana editions of Dance (including one of Widmerpool as a schoolboy), and the Osbert Lancaster drawings (Castlemallock, Billson appearing nude at Stonehurst) from the Penguin Dance. There was a copy of Coriolanus on the bedside table, reminding me of Powell’s habit, mentioned in the Journals, of reading Shakespeare in bed.

Back in the dining room, Keith Marshall was having a useful conversation with Lady Violet about the places Anthony Powell had lived. She said Powell probably couldn’t have identified (in Infants of the Spring) all the odd guest-houses and so on that his family stayed at in Kensington during World War I. They discussed a suitable place for a blue plaque in London, both agreeing that 1 Chester Gate would be the most appropriate. Powell’s birthplace is a block of flats near Westminster Cathedral, and Lady Violet thought blue plaques did not go well on blocks of flats.

As we left The Chantry I overheard Lady Violet and a friend, in what struck me as a very Powellian and apt way, begin to discuss the genealogy of some of the guests.

I am very grateful to Lady Violet for the invitation both to the church and to The Chantry. It was much appreciated. As Powell would have said in his Journals, “Enjoyable visit.”
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
15 September 2001
The George Hotel, Nunney, Somerset

Present: Christine Berberich, Saul David, Sue Frye, Marianne Hinton, Stephen Holden (SH), Catherine Mansel Lewis (CML), Keith Marshall (KM), Noreen Marshall, Hugh Massingberd (HMM), Maggie Noach (MN), John Powell (JP), Aldon Rees, Tony Robinson (TR)


1. Welcome
A. Keith Marshall (KM), Hon. Secretary, welcomed everyone to the inaugural AGM, and reminded everyone that AP himself used to bring visitors to dine at the hotel.
B. There not yet being a formally elected Chairman of the Society, Keith Marshall (KM) proposed that Maggie Noach (MN) chair the meeting. Seconded by Stephen Holden (SH) and adopted.
C. MN introduced herself, and reminded everyone of AP’s description (in The Military Philosophers) of the Service of Remembrance at St Paul’s Cathedral which is similar to those which had been held in New York this week following the events at the World Trade Centre.

2. Formally Adopt Society Constitution
A. KM introduced the Society’s draft Constitution (available in advance) and proposed that it be adopted. Seconded by SH. The Constitution was unanimously adopted (all present, plus 18 proxy votes in favour, plus three “open” proxy votes which the chairman of the meeting cast in favour).

3. Receive the Annual Report & Accounts
A. KM presented the Annual Report & Accounts (distributed in advance) for the period ending 31 March 2001. He summed up the Society’s first year as a tremendous success. Particular thanks were expressed to the Powell family, particularly Lady Violet and John, for their support and enthusiasm; similarly Hugh Massingberd (HMM), who had also been the speaker at the immensely enjoyable lunch which had taken place at the London Ritz on the eve of the Conference; the original Committee and those who had worked on the 2001 Conference which had taken place at Eton College.
B. Although outside the reporting period, it was noted that the Conference had been a great success and, thanks to SH securing a research grant from The London Institute for the publication of the Proceedings, will probably break even. KM and George Lilley are working on the Proceedings at present, and it is hoped that they will be published in time for Christmas. Mention was also made of the Powell family’s subsequent depositing of Powell’s MSS at Eton College Library.
C. Looking forward, Michael Meredith, Eton College Librarian, has offered a small group of Society members the chance to visit Eton in 2002 to view the AP MSS. Tom Sutherland, Chairman of the Library Committee at the Travellers’ Club, has offered to host an event there next year (AP was a member, elected in 1930).
D. With respect to the Society’s finances, the Accounts show a healthy bank balance at the end of the financial year, but KM reminded members of the comment of the Treasurer, Ian Young, that some of this is still to be disbursed as Conference costs. Ian Young had recommended that membership subscriptions be fixed at the current rates for at least the next year.
E. Catherine Mansel Lewis (CML) asked about likely size of the Travellers’ Club and Eton College events. KM suggested that one might be used for the occasion of the next AGM, the other for a dinner/reception (HMM suggested with a speaker).
F. MN asked whether the Travellers’ Club would object to business being conducted there; HMM, as a member, said that he thought not, citing his forthcoming book-launch there.
G. Tony Robinson (TR) asked if the membership had increased proportionately in all grades, and in particular whether there were any more Gold members. KM said that he thought not: the Founder Member category is closed, and most people are paying the basic subscription.
H. KM and MN proposed formal adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts, and this was unanimously agreed (voting figures as above).

4. Confirm Appointments of Patron and President
A. MN and KM expressed the Society’s delight that John Powell (JP) was willing to be our Patron and Hugh Massingberd (HMM) to be President. The appointments were agreed (voting as above).

5. Election of Society Officers
A. The following nominations had been made: Chairman: Maggie Noach Secretary: Keith Marshall
Treasurer:  Ian Young
There being no other nominations the above were elected unopposed.

6. Elect up to 4 Committee Members
A. Stephen Holden, Leatrice Fountain (LF) and Nick Birns (NB) had been nominated and elected unopposed as Committee members. Julian Allason and Noreen Marshall have stood down from the original Committee.
B. As LF and NB are both in the USA, KM took the opportunity to assure members that non-UK representatives have the opportunity to express their opinions via the committee’s email discussion list, and to remind them that there have even been complete e-meetings before now.
C. MN asked about additional committee members. KM said that the constitution allowed for up to four elected committee members.
D. As Tony Robinson is involved in the work on gaining charitable status, KM nominated him for the committee. TR agreed to serve, and was seconded by SH. Voting was unanimously in favour.

7. Appoint 2003 Conference Project Manager
A. KM was nominated and elected unopposed as Project Manager of the 2003 Conference at Balliol College, Oxford.

8. Any Other Business
A. KM asked JP to update us on the afternoon’s events. JP replied that at 3.30pm there would be a short service to dedicate the memorial to AP in Chantry Church. All were welcome to attend the service and Lady Violet had invited those present to The Chantry for tea afterwards.
B. Balliol College, Oxford has been booked for the 2003 Conference. Keynote speakers already signed up are Tom Wallace (AP’s American editor) and DJ Taylor. Funding is still being sought: HMM suggested Christopher Ondaatje, who is also a Committee member at the Travellers’ Club and has just bought The Literary Review, which might be a good source of new members. He also mentioned The Spectator, and that Mark Amory would be keen to promote the Conference; MN added that The Spectator tends to offer discounts for multiple advertisements. The Oldie was also suggested. HMM had been asked to write a sketch on the 2001 Conference for The Spectator, but had so far been unable to do so because of ill health this summer. It was suggested that he might still write it, hung on today’s AGM or the publication of the Conference Proceedings.
C. CML asked about the format of the Proceedings. KM showed a draft of the cover and said that it would be spiral bound in card covers. Delegates had already paid for their copies and would be mailed them accordingly; the rest of the copies would be available for sale (price probably in the region of £10). It was suggested that likely sources of publicity for the Proceedings might be AN Wilson and DJ Taylor (whose piece on the conference is being reprinted as the Introduction to the Proceedings).
D. MN said that she was struck by the calibre of the membership, but felt it important to increase the Society’s membership, both to spread the word about AP, and to raise revenue. She will be trying to promote the books via contacts at the Frankfurt Book Fair. MN suggested that everyone go through their address books for prospective members and she will draft a suggested standard letter for those who wish to use it. KM can provide membership leaflets on request. Sue Frye suggested that with Christmas coming up, it would be worthwhile to organise a gift membership scheme; KM committed to look at this.
E. MN asked about publishing the Mark Boxer cover illustrations of the Fontana edition of Dance as postcards. Mark Amory is the person who needs to be approached for permission, and KM asked HMM if he would do this. HMM mentioned the Osbert Lancaster cover illustrations for the Penguin edition of Dance for the same purpose: Anne Hastings may be the copyright holder.
F. KM and TR have been looking into the question of charitable status for the Society. On current membership figures this would be worth around £750 per year to the Society. MN proposed that the Society seek to move to charitable status.
G. The meeting was adjourned for lunch after which KM auctioned a copy of Summary (Vol 1, No1) that was largely devoted to AP. The successful bidder was MN. The auction raised £25 for the Society.
Anthony Powell Society Birthday Meet in London

London-based members of the Society are planning a "restaurant meet" to celebrate AP’s birthday on 21 December. There are as yet no firm details, but the meet is likely to be around the beginning of December, so members don’t have too many conflicting demands in the run-up to Christmas. The idea is that we meet informally in an inexpensive London eatery (so you can eat and drink according to the depth of your pocket), probably on a Friday evening. All members will be welcome. Further details will be available from the Secretary towards the end of October; they will also be posted on the Society Dairy page on the website.

All Newsletter contributions are welcome and should be sent to:

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Higgledy, Piggledy
by John Gould

Hokery, jokery,
Lord Kenneth Widmerpool,
Formerly Major and
Colonel and all:

Stripped off his ranks with his
Clothing and ran till he
Cryptoharmonically
Had a great Fall.

Society Archivist

The Society is accumulating a growing quantity of archive material, including recently a box of newspaper cuttings generously donated by John Powell. As most of the material is currently unorganised and uncatalogued the Society has appointed Noreen Marshall as its Archivist. Noreen Marshall is an experienced museum curator who works for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The Society intends to publish a catalogue of the archive as a service to members. If anyone wishes to donate any items to the archive, please contact Noreen Marshall at the Society’s address.

The Anthony Powell Society
Officers & Executive Committee

Patron: John Powell (London & Somerset)
President: Hugh Massingberd (London)
Chairman*: Maggie Noach (London)
Secretary*: Dr Keith Marshall (London)
Treasurer*: Prof. Ian Young (Belfast)
Committee Members*:
Dr Nicholas Birns (New York)
Leatrice Fountain (Connecticut)
Stephen Holden (London)
Tony Robinson (Suffolk)

Newsletter Editor: Stephen Holden
Membership: Dr Keith Marshall
Archivist: Noreen Marshall
Webmaster: Dr Keith Marshall

* Members of the Executive Committee
Crossword No. 4 - set by ‘Mr Blackhead’.
Some clues are AP-related, some not.

Across
8. Violinist can sing nothing (6)
9. A Japanese game, in the past (3)
10. A Breton with no cap at school (4)
12. Boy and Spanish woman (4)
13. Clean up empty space (6)
16. Instrument to cure mild disease (8)
17. Girl to hook a painter (7)
18. Manure one shovelled in underground cell (7)
22. Main obit makes clear Widmerpool’s vice (8)
25. Strange, non-U bibelots (6)
26. Francis and Stephen, royal novelists (4)
27. Midwifery, as practised in wild Scots tribe (10)
30. Woman in cut-off denims (4)
31. The First Lady, late in the afternoon (3)
32. Sailor takes twisted road to be on ship (6)

Down
1. Foppas serves French coffee (4)
2. Sailor uses oxygen kept in iron container (4)
3. Pub, one in French Dead Sea (8)
4. Backlit principal boy obscured by actress (7)
5. Wrap chips in buffalo vellum (6)
6. Churchgoer, one who knows the ropes (10)
7. Dog died in Dorset town (6)
14. Novelist with a Tony Curtis haircut (3)
15. Burping gin reveals one’s education (10)
19. America, relatively speaking (5,3)
20. Nickname: Sodom without the fetishism (3)
21. Half-hearted dance? (3-4)
23. Girl I named Jumble (6)
24. Wife is untidy, i.e. slob (6)
28. Back Othello into chamber (4)
29. Meal for a Conservative Norwegian (4)

Solution for Crossword No. 3
Across: 2 & 26 Hearing Secret; 5 Bagshaw; 6 & 5 Golf Ball; 7 Ada; 8 Smith; 9 Paul-Marie; 14 Ted; 15 Collection; 17 Mime; 18 Temporary Kings; 20 Bernard; 22 Tallin; 23 Newspaper; 26 see 2A; 27 Odo; 28 Ken
Down: 1 Great West Road; 2 Hugo; 3 Gyges; 4 Blaides; 5 see 6A; 9 Pauline; 10 Uncle; 11 Military; 12 Fiona; 13 Quiggin; 16 Sillery; 19 Rutland; 20 babs; 21 Anne; 24 Eton; 25 Scorp