UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 14 September
Shakespeare at the Globe Theatre

Saturday 23 October
Whitechapel Bell Foundry and AGM

Saturday 6 November
London Pub Meet – CHANGED DATE

Friday 19 November
Annual AP Lecture by Earl of Gowrie

Saturday 4 December
London AP Birthday Lunch

6th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference
Anthony Powell’s Literary London
Friday 2 to Sunday 4 September 2011
Naval & Military Club
St James’s Square, London SW1
See page 18 and enclosed flyer

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From the Secretary’s Desk

Excitements, it seems, are somewhat like London buses: there are none and then three come along together. So it is that this Newsletter brings news of Powellian excitements – some are almost here, but others are timetabled for the months to come, thus stretching the London bus analogy. But then London’s buses are also a bit like tea in *Alice in Wonderland*: “Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday – but never jam today”.

The first excitement is the welcome release by Audible of a complete and unabridged set of audiobooks of *Dance*. News of this came very much out of the blue, picked up from an internet news feed about three months ago and subsequently confirmed by both John Powell and Audible themselves. You’ll find my review of the audiobooks on page 6.

The second excitement is confirmation of the dates and venue for the 2011 conference. Thanks to the good offices of our Trustee Elwin Taylor we have secured a competitive deal with the Naval & Military Club in London’s St James’s Square as conference host – an entirely appropriate and elegant venue. We will be booking invited speakers for the conference over the coming months, but meanwhile please consider submitting a paper of your own. You’ll find more conference details on page 18 and in the enclosed “Call for Papers”.

And then there are the delights of the Autumn programme of events, not least of which is the enticing prospect of Lord Gowrie giving the Annual Anthony Powell Lecture on Friday 19 November. Details of the lecture are on page 17.
Anthony Powell and George Gissing

by Anthony Curtis

To the collector of Gissing references in the work of later British novelists the fiction of the old Etonian author Anthony Powell is perhaps an unlikely quarry. But reading recently his *O, How the Wheel Becomes It!* – the novella Powell published in 1983 after he had completed the final volume of *A Dance to the Music of Time* – I discovered a reference to Gissing in relation to a novel written by one of the main characters. More of that in a moment.

Warming to the scent, I turned to *Miscellaneous Verdicts: Writings on Writers 1946-1989,* containing a collection of the lead book-reviews Powell wrote regularly for the *Daily Telegraph* and some longer pieces published elsewhere. There is no review of Gissing as such in the whole collection but my grateful recourse to the file of Gissing reviews kept by Pierre Coustillas revealed that Powell did review two Gissing works in the newspaper in 1961, the year that Gissing scholarship began to emerge from its family-induced doldrums. They were the *Letters to HG Wells* edited by Royal A Gettmann and *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz 1887-1903* edited by Arthur C Young, forerunners of the great award-winning nine-volume edition of the letters from the Ohio University Press.

It is clear from these reviews that Powell’s acquaintance with Gissing’s work and biography was fairly minimal. In writing of the letters to Wells he takes Orwell’s admiration for Gissing as his starting-point and skates over the prison sentence thus: “As a very young man Gissing had been involved in trouble about money which necessitated a year’s exile in America”. Six months later when Powell reviewed the letters to Bertz he is more explicit about what happened and his tone is much more confident:

There is an awful fascination about Gissing [he writes for his opening sentence]. Why did he make such a mess of his life? Wherever one places him as a novelist, his talent as a writer was obviously exceptional.

He goes on to add:

There is something ‘compulsive’ about Gissing’s whole career. It is as if he wanted to have a bad time. The fact that one of his friends was Mme Wanda von Sacher-Masoch, divorced wife of the writer who gave his name to masochism, seems perfectly apt.

The Gissing references in the collection of articles add nothing to this judgment. The first is in a review of James Ogden’s study of Isaac D’Israeli (Oxford, 1969). Powell tells us that the Victorian prime minister’s father:

wrote a great many other books – poems, novels, stories, essays – as well as the *Curiosities of Literature*
which was to be his chef d’oeuvre. It passed into endless editions, became a favourite of Byron’s, and was introduced into one of the Stalky & Co. stories by Kipling, and into a novel by Gissing.

There are indeed two references in Gissing’s fiction to D’Israeli’s accounts of writers, books and collectors. One in The Unclassed where the hero, Osmond Waymark, asks the prostitute Ida Starr with whom he falls in love if she has read the work! He aims to redeem her through literature as well as through love as Gissing tried, unsuccessfully, to do with Nell. This passage was among the cuts made by Gissing for the revised edition of 1895 when the novel was reduced from three volumes to one. There is also a reference in Thyrza where Gilbert Grail chances across D’Israeli’s work. To Gissing who believed in the life-transforming power of great literature, the Curiosities was a useful appetiser.

Gissing appears again in Powell’s Miscellaneous Verdicts in a review of the Letters of Stephen Crane edited by RW Stallman (New York, 1960). Powell confesses to a distaste for Crane as a writer and a man but nonetheless admits that he “brought off a revolution in American literature by treating the Civil War [in The Red Badge of Courage] in realistic, rather than romantic, terms”. He then goes on to say:

He has, perhaps, more in common with Gissing – a violent Gissing, of course – than with Kipling, with whom his contemporaries compared him.

“A violent Gissing” is a contradiction in terms but Powell spoke truer than he knew. Crane’s early tale Maggie: A Girl of the Streets is very Gissing-like in style and content.

After that Gissing appears in a review of The Unknown Orwell by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams (London, 1972):

Orwell’s method of novel-writing meant that he was using up his novelist’s material at a reckless rate and he himself realized – if one may speak flippantly – that the Gissing had to stop.

Oh dear, how many times has one heard that boring quip!

Finally Gissing emerges in Powell’s Telegraph verdict on Philip Larkin’s Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces, 1955-82 (a similar kind of book to Powell’s) in which he mentions a piece by Larkin on Francis Thompson, the Roman Catholic poet who wrote “The Hound of Heaven”.

Incidentally, [writes Powell] has it ever been noted that Francis Thompson and George Gissing must have overlapped at Owen’s [sic] College, Manchester, from one angle a splendid pair of down-and-out literary alumni, even if Gissing was in his own way intensely respectable?

He ties himself in knots making that comparison, and it is clear from Pierre
Coustillas’s article in last October’s *Gissing Journal* that the Manchester worthies, Percy Withers, Allan Monkhouse and CH Herford who instigated and implemented the memorial tablet engraved by Eric Gill and the annual scholarship in honour of Gissing in the University, formerly Owens College, must have been aware of the “splendid pair” being students at Owens at the same time as their aim was to do for Gissing’s memory what had already been done for that of Thompson, a medical student for six years from 1877 onwards.

So much for the reviews, now for the novella. It presents two English novelists whose youth was spent in the brittle bright young things’ world of the London of the 1920s, GFH Shadbold and Cedric Winterwade. The latter, killed during World War II, left behind some volumes of a diary. His publisher approaches Shadbold suggesting he edit it for publication, aiming to bring it out with a reprint of Winterwade’s best-known novel, *The Welsons of Omdurman Terrace*.

The story [of this novel, Powell writes], set at the turn of the century, portrayed a lower-middle class London family of a kind Winterwade could at best have known only second-hand…

Shadbold, who detected faint echoes of HG Wells, Arnold Bennett, even at times George Gissing, privately considered the novelist’s writing to be ‘not only old-fashioned, derivative, facetious, pedestrian, but imbued with every vulgarity of mannerism and thought possible to accommodate within fictional form.’

Shadbold’s low opinion of his friend’s novel has a sizeable element of professional jealousy in it exacerbated by the knowledge, learned from the diary, that during a pre-war weekend in Paris, Winterwade succeeded in bedding the fashionable glamorous bright young female thing with whom Shadbold only managed to remain on kissing terms.

If the reference to Gissing seems unappreciative, the novella itself may be seen as an unexpected tribute to Gissing. It is a small-scale 20th century version of *New Grub Street* revealing how that street continued to exist from 1920 to 1980. Jasper Milvain and Alfred Yule have their counterparts in Winterwade and Shadbold. The novella belongs to the whistle-blowing tradition of literature that exposes the hidden pressures at work in the writing and reviewing of literature. It begins in France with Balzac’s *Les Illusions Perdues* and Maupassant’s *Bel-Ami* and in England with *Pendennis, New Grub Street* and *Cakes and Ale*.

Just as Gissing characterised the various toilers in the vineyard of literary endeavour in his novel so likewise does Powell: Winterwade, the forgotten journeyman novelist, Shadbold the egregious hack de luxe, Grigham the provincial don, peddling structuralist gobbledegook, Jason Price, the publisher’s editor, ingratiating himself with his authors in the bar of the Garrick Club, “Proserpine Gunning”, pen name of Shadbold’s latest wife who writes highly researched feminist detective stories, all of these people avid to appear on the television programme dominated by the frantic trauma-probing interviewer, Ron Cubbage. Powell’s sardonic account of the self-regarding actions of these characters comes straight out of *New Grub Street*. Like Monsieur Jourdain, Powell was a Gissingite without knowing it.

Audiobooks have always been a slightly niche market, originally aimed at those with sight problems or who due to infirmity are otherwise unable to read. But of recent years they have become more desirable with people wishing to listen in the car, while travelling or at the gym – all of which have become more achievable with the advent of the CD and latterly the MP3 player.

Hitherto however *Dance* has not fully engaged with this market, although there have been three audio recordings of the novels. Important though they were none was, to my mind at least, wholly satisfactory.

First on the scene was, I think, Simon Callow’s reading issued on cassette tape by Hodder & Stoughton. At two tapes per book the text was highly abridged – my guess is abridged by around 50%, maybe more. These tapes have long since been deleted from Hodder’s catalogue and are now obtainable only from suppliers who happen to still have remaindered stock or on the second-hand market.

The only complete and unabridged recording was that issued by Books on Tape in the US and narrated by David Case. It appears this was originally intended for Books on Tape’s rental market although copies were later available for purchase; and of course it was always difficult to source in the UK. The advantage was that the recording was unabridged, although many, like me, found David Case’s, admittedly muted, American accent intrusive for such a quintessentially English work. These tapes have also long been withdrawn and are now virtually unobtainable even second-hand.

Thirdly there was a complete recording for Cover to Cover by Society President Simon Russell Beale. Sadly only the first two books saw the light of day, although I believe *The Acceptance World* was planned if not actually recorded. Simon Russell Beale is on record as saying how time consuming and draining such a complete recording was, although whether this or commercial pressures brought a halt to the production I know not. Cover to Cover were however shortly afterwards absorbed by the BBC’s merchandising arm and these recordings sank without trace; and are now also almost unobtainable.

At long last we no longer have such a gap. Produced by Audible (a company in the Amazon internet book retailing empire) *Dance* has been recorded in its entirety by

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**Fully Audible at Last**

*A Dance to the Music of Time*

by Anthony Powell

Audiobooks narrated by Simon Vance; published by Audible Inc.

*Reviewed by Keith Marshall*
Simon Vance, one of the leading, and multi-award winning, readers with a smooth, unaffected English voice and measured pace.

Vance records a lot of audiobooks – Audible alone list well over 100 ranging from Geoffrey Chaucer to Eric Clapton – but at over 80 hours of finished recording *Dance* must have taxed even his powers of endurance. It was worth the wait and any angst which Vance encountered because here we have an accomplished and excellent recording. Accomplished not just because of Vance’s superb voice, but because he has clearly thought deeply about the books and what’s happening between the lines, and brings out the comedy in Powell’s work from the throw-away phrase – Sillery’s description of Baby Wentworth and Bijou Ardglass as “well-known nymphs” – to the scenes of Jenkins’s encounter with Mr Blackhead and Widmerpool’s contretemps with the sugar-caster.

Simon Vance also gives voice to the various characters. He provides an interestingly thin tortured intonation for Stringham, less so for his niece Pamela Flitton; a gruffness for Finn; a definite Greek overtone for Prince Theodoric; and the expected roughness for Gypsy Jones. My criticism here would be that if anything the voices are not always sufficiently distinct one from another nor, especially in the case of Widmerpool, always consistent; Widmerpool particularly is not always immediately recognisable. But this is a small point given that to do all the voices at all, and so seamlessly with the narration, is a big ask for any reader however good the post-production editing and splicing. Also, in a way, Vance’s smoothness is, perhaps, too good because I wonder if the readings would be even better if they were just a tiny bit more dramatic.

But these are mere niggles. In general I have found listening to the recordings to be more interesting, and much funnier, than my readings of the actual books – *La Grenadière* and the encounter with Mr Blackhead being cases in point. How annoying that one cannot easily tag an apposite quotation in an audiobook as one can with the printed page, for there are plenty!

The production by Audible is top notch, with very, very few obvious edits and a consistently excellent sound quality and recording level. Audible have, too, taken the sensible approach of releasing the recordings in the four trilogies, each trilogy comprising one large MP3 file for each volume. And that brings me to the biggest bugbear with this issue: it is currently available only for download from Audible’s internet sites – and the downloads are huge with the whole set (12
Anthony Powell's A Dance to the Music of Time, narrated by Simon Vance is available (as internet downloads) in four trilogies from Audible.com at $34.95/trilogy, from Audible.co.uk at £27.59/trilogy and from Audible.de & Audible.fr at €32.85/trilogy. A CD version is likely to be released later in 2010.

On the other side of the coin, Audible are to be praised for the very reasonable cost of the recordings. At under £28 (or equivalent) per trilogy the cost is not that much more than the 12-paperback version of Dance. This has to be a bargain!

In summary, what we have is an accomplished, thoughtful and polished audiobook of Dance which should stand as the definitive recording for many years to come.

But I’ll finish with just one word of advice: don’t try listening to these recordings and doing anything else at the same time – like the books the recordings really do need your undivided attention, which is a reflection on both Powell’s wonderful prose and Simon Vance’s accomplished reading.

files) coming in at around 1.2GB of data. So those of you without internet access, or without a fast, uncapped connection, will want to wait for Audible to issue an audio CD version, which I am told is likely later this year. Maybe we should all lobby Audible asking for the CD, then hopefully you’ll get a nice surprise in your Christmas stocking.

The theme of your paper, Dean - so perceptive and humane on ... what did you call it? - yes, “the unhidden, unbidden, flagrant compulsions of promiscuity”,’ she said. ‘Pamela Widmerpool’s I mean.’

Bill James, Full of Money

Anthony Powell Resides Here

Crawford Doyle Booksellers seeks and sells early editions of Anthony Powell’s works together with those of other distinguished British authors such as Evelyn Waugh, PG Wodehouse, Virginia Woolf, Henry Green and James Lees-Milne. In addition to rare books, we offer a complete collection of new books in our store near the Metropolitan Museum. Catalogs upon request.

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Experience is a good teacher. It has taught me one thing on this rather exciting round of after-dark swing spots: that if you want the history of the club, or any point of interest, the doorman will certainly be able to supply it. That is why I spent an enjoyable fifteen minutes in the doorway of the Bag o’ Nails before going down to the ballroom.

The tall, broad doorman in a voluminous black overcoat and wearing a peaked cap is named Evans. He, like his fellow doormen, is as well informed about his own sphere of life as gossip writers are of other people’s spheres of life. For six and a-half years, six times a week, summer and winter, he has stood at the Bag’s doorway all through the night. He has hailed cabs for many celebrities and is known to thousands.

Evans seems to thrive on it, for his cheeks are a rosy red and his broad smile is a contented one. I asked him about the Bag. The nighterie has been running now for seven and a half years and is still going strong. In this time hundreds of well-known musicians have busked on its rostrum. It is to the history of British swing music what Hampton Court Palace is to the history of England. It is the show shop of promising musicians; the rendezvous of successful ones.

Ask any well-known dance band man if he has ever busked at the Bag and the answer nine times out of ten will be in the affirmative. Many of those who did busk a few years ago will remember the Bag when the rostrum was a high, narrow stage.

Evans knows nearly all the musicians in London by sight. He told me: “We’ve had them all down here – from the top-notch band leaders to the humblest buskers. If a musician lasts a month at the Bag he’s good. Gerry Moore stayed here longer than any other musician”.

That fact had already dawned on me during my round of the after-dark swing spots, for there is hardly a band in clubland which has not had at least one member who has been with Gerry Moore at the

The Bag o’ Nails in more recent times.
Bag. I remember Gerry told me not so long ago that there was something about the atmosphere of the Bag that made a musician want to swing out. He couldn’t quite define it; he just told me to go there and I would understand.

**Unexpected Appearance**

I thought of this when I made my way through the narrow passage that leads from the street to the top of the narrow, carpeted stairway, at the bottom of which sits Miss Hoey. On the right is the cloakroom and on the left the ballroom.

It is a curious room at first sight. I had expected to see a tiny place, palm strewn, dimly lit, with a small dance floor and a large rostrum. I was all wrong.

The room is large, much longer than it is broad. At the top is the rostrum, raised about a foot above the dance floor, which is larger than any I have yet seen in a nighterie. The ceiling is low, and is made to seem still lower by the red, white and blue streamers that stretch across the breadth of the room from the ceiling.

Along the walls are various un-matching couches, and in front of them are tables covered with red or blue checked cloths. There are no palms, or any other cumbersome decorations, around the room. The walls are painted a dark shade of yellow, and the only things on them are electric fans and occasional hidden lights. The Bag is not elaborate but there is atmosphere about it all.

**Drummer-About-Town**

Phil Cozzi on drums is the leader. Phil has been in the business twelve years and has had so many jobs it would take a page in itself naming them. Phil is a Folkestone boy and had his first job there with Alan Green on the Victoria Pier.

When he came to London, he opened with Syd Wyner’s band at the Streatham Locarno. His next job was with Tommy de Rosa at Tottenham Court Road Palais, after which he took his own band to the Carlton, Tottenham Court Road. His last job was with Rudy Starita. Phil’s hobby is making money. (There was laughter on the rostrum, when this remark was made!)

*(Editor’s Note: Since this article was written Phil Cozzi has left the Bag to take a band to the Paramount Dance Salon, Tottenham Court Road.)*

Solly Reid is the clarinet-baritone man. Solly hails from Nottingham, where he began his professional career in a cinema pit band. He was with Teddy Joyce on Teddy’s African tour. Solly reported a good time especially in Madeira. He told me that the South Africans like lots of comedy with their dance music, and so long as they get it the music doesn’t matter.

Solly is all out for swing, his favourite hobby being to listen to Goodman records. “But,” he said, “I don’t copy his gobstick work”.

**He Knows the Dog-box**

Joe Boyd handles the bass. He was born in Mawldenstall, Yorkshire, and came to London very early in life. He has always been a bass player, starting out in London cinemas in “the good old silent days”. For eight years he played on the Continent with various swing outfits, returning in
1935 to join Rudy Starita and go to Africa with him.

It seems in Joe’s case it’s not, “Join the Army and see the world,” but “Play a bass and see it!” Joe has played in most London nighteries during the past few months, but says, “The Bag’s my home!” His hobby is fishing. In Africa he caught sharks; in London he catches tiddlers!

The last member of the quartet is Art Thompson, new to London. He is from Winnipeg, Canada, where he did many gigs. He is an eager boy, always striving to become a more proficient swing pianist, and despite a piano that had several keys “taking a holiday,” he gave quite a good showing.

Here’s Art’s story in his own words: “I saved up my dough and took a crack at London. I arrived with no connections. I hit Archer Street and found it tough to get work. Somebody tells me there’s a job at the Bag. I goes and gets it. This business is just what you make it yourself. The only ambition I got is to make a living”.

Then he hurried back to the piano. Dotted around the room the guests were drinking in the music. On the large floor some couples were appreciating the music and dancing. The practically bare walls seemed to be just right acoustically for the hot music. Perhaps that is the atmosphere that Gerry was speaking about.

I shall remember the Bag o’ Nails, for it is an interesting place. Somehow, I feel I have failed to give you its true atmosphere here, but, as Gerry Moore said, “It’s indefinable”. The best thing is for you to have a look at it yourself. You’ll find the red neon sign half-way down Kingly Street, off Regent Street.
“The Name’s Widmerpool, Ken Widmerpool”
The Unravelling of a Promising Espionage Career

by Julian Allason

“Short, you know Widmerpool. So you can take care of this”. The head of D Branch (Counter-intelligence) had nursed a dislike of Short ever since his arrival on secondment to MI5 from the Foreign Office, but he recognised the ability to handle human disaster unsentimentally when he saw it. With something approaching pleasure he dumped the Registry file onto a desk notable for its order, and proffered a receipt. Short scrawled his signature without looking up. He had been dreading this. Whitehall was abuzz with the affair. Or, rather, affairs plural. He gazed down with distaste at the expansion folder, its tabbed sections spilling out across the blotter: appendices from the Friends stamped “SIS – Secret”, a minute indicating Cabinet Office interest, and intercept transcripts from the GPO and Cheltenham. Someone had already been busy. Mercifully it included no pictures beyond Widmerpool’s service photograph: the gossip had been distasteful and the thought of Widmerpool naked with anyone made Short wince. As for his wife and half of London … He shook his head in recollection of the Szymanski business. An action box listed lines of enquiry thrown up by the card sort. Too many of them: the investigation could take months to pursue, and longer to resolve. If indeed the discreet resolution preferred by his masters could be achieved. Short polished his spectacles on the old school tie that so irritated the head of D Branch. Matters had been brought formally to the Security Service’s attention by a report from the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire on a visit by Widmerpool to Ferrand-Sénéschal. The latter, a nasty bit of work by any reckoning, was an asset of the French agency who traded protection from prosecution in return for betraying members of hard left factions inimicable to his current affiliations. Widmerpool’s return, via Paris, from what he described as a “friendship mission to the peace-loving peoples of Eastern Europe” had provided the DST with an opportunity to tweak MI5’s tail. After all it was not every day that a great English milord was found consorting with the Trotskyite diaspora, and with a femme fatale involved and hints of complaisance the tease became irresistible.

Left to themselves the Security Service might have continued to turn a blind eye to Widmerpool’s eastern amities, but who else had the French informed? After a sequence of embarrassing defections from London to Moscow the UKUSA intelligence-sharing agreement was already under strain and such a case as this might prove the last straw if left unresolved. Widmerpool’s arrest, on the other hand, would surely unleash a blizzard of press coverage. But what if he could be turned? Short reflected on the possibility. Kenneth was greedy for money and approbation – anyone’s it seemed – but was he stable enough to handle the pressure of becoming a double agent?

Traffic noise seeped up to the fourth floor of the nondescript building in Gower Street which housed the Security Service. A month had elapsed and Short had endured an interview with Farebrother that had produced hoary allegations of military mischief making but nothing to substantiate treason. Widmerpool’s former
colleagues on the Joint Intelligence Committee had confirmed Short’s own contemporary impression of a shrewd operator with a prodigious appetite for work, one untroubled by sentimentality about Polish suffering, or anyone else’s save his own. Beyond a Metropolitan Police arrest sheet for importuning during the blackout, later withdrawn at War Office request, and a bizarre signal from an unverified SOE source in Cairo, there was nothing suggestive of wartime malfeasance. The problems appeared to have begun later.

A trawl through the usual government filing systems produced little of interest. An application to the Colonial Office dated January 1946 set out Widmerpool’s biography, or at least a sanitised version thereof. The applicant was ideally qualified “to govern black men”, at least in his own eyes. Unfortunately there had been no shortage of senior officers with foreign experience to take up the dwindling number of gubernatorial posts at a time when the Labour government was signalling its intention of handing power back to the colonial peoples. Later references from other files suggested an abrupt change of direction leftward and then – presto! – membership of a society to promote friendship with a Soviet Bloc republic that was suspected of funding its operation via its London embassy. But who had talent-spotted Widmerpool for this? Despite MI5’s successful penetration of the Communist Party of Great Britain there was no hint from that direction. More likely a fellow-traveller, Short reasoned. There were candidates aplenty on the network chart he was constructing: Miss Gypsy Jones, Craggs, Quiggin, even that old fool St John Clark. Indeed one informant, whose codename BOOKS cloaked the identity of a PR man, nominated a nexus centred on the magazine Fission, which appeared to be receiving funds through another peer known as Erridge.

At “Prayers” one morning a senior case-officer had made the Chief blanch by recounting a conversation with a Tory backbencher named Cutts: the talk at Westminster was that it had been Widmerpool who had tipped off the Foreign Office spies Burgess and Maclean, prompting their flight to Moscow. With such allegations swirling about political circles the matter could not be allowed to languish. Widmerpool was forthwith summoned to interview at an anonymous office in Whitehall. For the occasion Short would be there to assist MI5’s chief interrogator Tony Henley. But Widmerpool never appeared. Instead Special Branch reported his departure on a flight to Venice. By now thoroughly alarmed the Director-General of the Security Service arranged to brief the Home Secretary and Prime Minister, while SIS’s Rome station was tasked to track the errant peer but without alerting the Italians.

At this juncture, though two days too late to be immediately useful, GCHQ decrypted a flash signal from the same London embassy to one Dr Belkin, a skilled agent handler high on the target list of western services for subornment. But as luck would have it – bad for Belkin and his protégé at least – a sudden alteration in the balance of power on the Politburo resulted in Belkin’s arrest on charges amounting to Stalinism. The by-now desperate Widmerpool had been cut adrift, and was shortly after named on their government’s radio station as a Western agent provocateur. By now SIS’s station
chief had tracked his prey to the Venetian palazzo of a known Communist sympathiser, Jacky Bragadin, and not without some difficulty, followed Widmerpool to the apartment in the Castello sestiere of a cut-out later identified as Daniel Tokenhouse. Henley and Short took the next available flight out armed with what amounted to a blank cheque and unlimited threats to effect the repatriation of their man.

Meanwhile SIS, who were rather enjoying the discomfiture of their sister service, without having thought through its likely political consequences, let it be known to the Soviets that Widmerpool had indeed been a provocation agent run from London. This at least reduced the likelihood of defection, for the best reception that might now be expected behind the Iron Curtain would be an unsympathetic interrogation followed by a spell – a long spell – in a labour camp. So when Short, sweltering in his pinstripes, contrived to corral Widmerpool into a hastily rented apartment near the Arsenale, he was met by a pitiful sight. Widmerpool was ready to confess to almost anything and would come home quietly. In Henley’s opinion he was more than half way to a nervous breakdown, an impression not undermined when his interviewee named his price. All Widmerpool wanted was to be made Chancellor of Oxford University, a demand to which Short agreed with a straight face.

There for the time being the matter rested despite a question in the House about Widmerpool’s activities in Eastern Europe. This was batted out to silly mid-off by the Prime Minister with an answer as reassuring as it was elliptical. Farebrother, whose enthusiasm for the case knew few bounds, came to believe that knowledge of Widmerpool’s treachery had been disclosed to the Security Service by an unnamed defector. Payments had, he vouchsafed, been received that at the very least would be of interest to the tax authorities. To this Odo Stevens, whose connections to the intelligence community had been rather maintained post-war, was later able to add that following MI5’s report it had been determined that the public interest would not be served by prosecution. Nor indeed that of the Government. No public statement appeared.

It was perhaps Bagshaw who approached most closely the question of motive which he attributed to Widmerpool’s taste for wholesale destruction: “Vicarious individual revenge against Society,” he mused. The secret world’s conclusion was not far removed from Pamela’s own. “He gave the show away as far as he dared,” she announced. “Unfortunately he gave it away to his old pals the Stalinists. The lot who are in now want to discredit his old pals”. In due course Belkin would undergo rehabilitation, although the same could not be said for Short’s temper. Shortly afterward his secondment to MI5 came to an end by mutual agreement and stately progress up the civil service ladder resumed, albeit a rung or two higher than might have been anticipated. The knighthood, when it came, never quite seemed adequate recompense for Sir Leonard’s Whitehall nickname, Widmerpool’s Nanny. It was a rôle he never entirely succeeded in shrugging off.

Further reading
Anthony Powell, Temporary Kings
Nigel West, A Matter of Trust: MI5 1945-72
Nigel West, GCHQ: The Secret Wireless War
JG Links, Venice for Pleasure
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

**Great Lakes Group**
Area: Chicago area, USA
Contact: Joanne Edmonds
Email: jedmonds@bsu.edu

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

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

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you wish to make contact with a group and don’t have email. If you wish to start a local group the Hon. Secretary can advise on the number of members in your area.

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that annual subscriptions are payable on 1 April and that rates remain unchanged this year (see back page for current rates).

Those whose membership has now expired will be removed from the membership list at the end of September.

Reminders are a drain on our resources, with each overseas reminder costing in excess of £1 – a significant sum when we send out anything up to fifty second and third reminders most years!

Members are also reminded that subscriptions, membership enquiries and merchandise requests should be sent to Graham & Dorothy Davie at:

**Anthony Powell Society Memberships**
**Beckhouse Cottage**
**Hellifield**
**Skipton**
North Yorkshire, BD23 4HS, UK
Email: membership@anthonypowell.org
Phone: +44 (0) 1729 851 836
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483

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

Copy Deadlines

**Newsletter #41, Winter 2010**
Copy Deadline: 12 November 2010
Publication Date: 3 December 2010

**Newsletter #42, Spring 2011**
Copy Deadline: 11 February 2011
Publication Date: 4 March 2011

**Secret Harmonies #4, 2010**
Copy Deadline: 10 September 2010
Publication Date: 22 October 2010
**Dates for Your Diary**

**AGM Day**

**Whitechapel Bell Foundry Tour**

Saturday 23 October 2010

Meet 0930 hrs prompt

Whitechapel Bell Foundry
32 Whitechapel Road, London E1

Cost: £10 per person

Whitechapel Bell Foundry is Britain’s oldest manufacturing company, having been established in 1570 and being in continuous business ever since.

A tour of this working bell foundry which is a quirky part of Britain’s cultural heritage.

All welcome.

A small number of tickets are still available. If interested please contact Hon. Secretary urgently.

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**Globe Theatre**

Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives of Windsor*

Tuesday 14 September 2010

Curtain 1930 hrs

Globe Theatre, London SE1

*Merry Wives of Windsor* was one of Powell’s favourite Shakespeare plays. We have arranged a block of seats to see the revival of Christopher Luscombe’s much acclaimed 2008 production.

At the time of going to press a very small number of tickets remain: one at £35 and two at £29.

Anyone interested please contact the Hon. Secretary urgently.

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**Annual General Meeting 2010**

Saturday 23 October 2010

1400 hrs

V&A Museum of Childhood
Cambridge Heath Road, London E2

Followed at 1500 hrs by a talk

AP’s *Edwardian Childhood*

by Noreen Marshall

Senior Curator, V&A Museum of Childhood and Society Hon. Archivist.

Full details in centre insert.
Dates for Your Diary

Anthony Powell Annual Lecture
in collaboration with
The Wallace Collection

The End of the Dance
To be given by The Earl of Gowrie
The Wallace Collection
Manchester Square, London W1

Friday 19 November 2010
1830 hrs
followed by drinks
Cost £12.50
(includes a glass of wine)

Booking essential
Tickets from the Hon. Secretary on
020 8864 4095 or
secretary@anthonypowell.org

Lord Gowrie will discuss the end of the Dance sequence, its relationship to contemporary experiences of the '60s and to the finale of Proust’s A la recherche du temps perdu.

Lord Gowrie has held several government posts, including a period as Minister for the Arts. He is also a former Chairman of the Arts Council and of Sotheby’s. His Third Day: New and Selected Poems was a Poetry Book Society recommendation in 2008. A friend of the Powells, he has long been a devotee of Dance.

The Wallace Collection’s restaurant will be open following the lecture for those who wish to dine. Table booking on 020 7563 9505.

London Group Annual Powell Birthday Lunch
Saturday 4 December 2010
Queen’s Head & Artichoke
30-32 Albany Street, London NW1
1200 for 1230 hrs
This year something different: we’re going to a central London gastro-pub, very close to Powell’s Chester Gate house. There will be a set menu (choice of 4 options per course) priced at £18.50 for 2 courses and £23 for 3 courses (excluding service and drinks). We should have the pub’s upstairs restaurant to ourselves. Advance booking advised.

Pub details at www.theartichoke.net.
Nearest tube: Great Portland Street or Regent’s Park, 3-4 minutes walk.
Non-members welcome.
Please book with the Hon. Secretary.

London Quarterly Pub Meets
*** Saturday 6 November 2010 ***
*** Note change of date ***

Saturday 12 February 2011
Saturday 14 May 2011
Saturday 13 August 2011
Saturday 5 November 2011
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.

Anthony Powell Annual Lecture
in collaboration with
The Wallace Collection

The End of the Dance
To be given by The Earl of Gowrie
The Wallace Collection
Manchester Square, London W1

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The Wallace Collection’s restaurant will be open following the lecture for those who wish to dine. Table booking on 020 7563 9505.
6th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference, 2011

Anthony Powell’s Literary London
Friday 2 to Sunday 4 September 2011

Naval & Military Club
4 St James’s Square, London SW1

We are delighted to have this opportunity to hold the conference in the elegant surroundings of one of London’s most prestigious gentlemen’s clubs.

Proposed Outline Programme
Plenary sessions: Friday & Saturday
Reception: Friday evening
Events: Friday afternoon, Saturday evening & Sunday morning

Proposals are now invited for papers to be given at the conference. Proposals should be no more than 300 words and where possible should reflect the conference theme: Anthony Powell’s Literary London. It is anticipated authors will have 20 minutes in which to present their paper. Final versions of papers for publication should be no more than 5000 words.

Paper proposals must be received by the Hon. Secretary no later than 7 January 2011.

Some accommodation has been reserved at the Club and will be bookable direct by delegates. Further details, pricing and outline programme will be announced Spring 2011. Provisional conference bookings may be made now with the Hon. Secretary.

The Quarterly Review
A classic journal of ideas and culture
www.quarterly-review.org

Founded by Walter Scott, Robert Southey and George Canning, the Quarterly Review (1809-1967) was one of the most influential journals in British history. Revived in 2007, the QR Mark II follows its great predecessor in providing uncensored political analysis and stimulating cultural critique – from abortion to Zimbabwe, via Nosferatu and Powell. Contributors include Rowan Williams, Richard Body, Ezra Mishan, Tito Perdue, Kirkpatrick Sale, Keith Waldrop, Rupert Sheldrake, Taki and many others.

Complimentary sample copies and subscriptions available by calling +44 (0) 1507 339 056 or email to editor@quarterly-review.org
BOOK REVIEW

**At the Chime of a City Clock: A Thriller**
by DJ Taylor
Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2010, £12.99

Reviewed by Jeffrey Manley

DJ Taylor’s latest novel is his third to be written in the style of a previous popular genre. This one is in the form of a pre-war mystery thriller. His next previous, *Ask Alice*, was a rags-to-riches adventure and the one before that, *Kept*, a Victorian mystery. *City Clock* takes place in 1931 at the time of the financial crisis and the end of the gold standard. As with *Ask Alice*, it contains copious allusions to other writers and their works. In *City Clock*, however, there are fewer references to the works of Anthony Powell than in some previous Taylor novels. (See, for example, Robin Bynoe, “Captain Beefheart and Lady Sophie Huntercombe”, *APS Newsletter* #37, Winter 2009, 10, and Jeffrey Manley, “Let the Dance Resume”, *Secret Harmonies* # 1, October 2006, 41.)

The story revolves around the planning and execution of a jewel heist in the City financial district. The hero, James Ross, is a struggling writer who must work at odd jobs to make ends meet, and in this case he becomes a door-to-door salesman peddling bottles of a patent carpet cleanser. The villain, Rasmussen, is a successful and fairly high-end thief and fraudster who has worked himself into the margins of English high society. The two of them become connected through Ross’s love interest in Rasmussen’s “secretary”. Ross becomes a police informer after seeing Rasmussen’s photo in a police magazine and sends what he intends to be an anonymous tip to the police in which his own identity and address are unintentionally revealed. He is then dragooned into becoming a police undercover agent by a rather seedy specimen of the police force who threatens him with prosecution for various fiddles in which he has engaged if he doesn’t cooperate. Always behind in his rent and looking for a little extra of the ready, Ross is willing, if not anxious, to go along.

The point of Taylor’s novels is not only the stories but how he uses them, as did Powell in his novels, to weave in literary, musical, social and historical references from the times in which they are set. In this novel, once again, Taylor doesn’t disappoint. The main character, James Ross, is obviously inspired by Julian Maclaren-Ross (“JMR”). As if Ross’s surname, his troubles with his landlady and his girl friends, and his job as a door-to-door salesman did not suffice to make the connection, Taylor has him frequent JMR’s favourite Fitzrovia pub, the Wheatsheaf. Moreover, Taylor formally recognises his debt to “J M-R” in his acknowledgments, no doubt meaning to include not only his life story but also his 1947 novel of door-to-door salesmanship, *Of Love and Hunger*. JMR is also well-known as the inspiration for Powell’s character X Trapnel. Powell covers that part of JMR’s life that began after the war when he had established himself as a writer and left door-to-door salesmanship behind. But JMR, like both Ross and Trapnel, never ceased to be in arrears on the rent or changing girl friends.

*City Clock*’s 1931 setting also coincides with the flowering of the Bright Young People (“BYP”) about whom Taylor wrote in his study of that title published in 2007. The BYP also populated a major subplot of Taylor’s last novel, *Ask Alice*. In this novel there is further development of some characters or other themes only briefly
mentioned in that previous novel. For example, there is a character named Maltravers who publishes a smart literary magazine known as the Blue Bugloss. These are given only a passing reference in Ask Alice (234), leaving one to think that this may be the same Maltravers who is a major character in Powell’s prewar novel Agents and Patients. But in City Clock it turns out that the Blue Bugloss is a rather lofty literary journal that is bankrolled by Maltravers and edited by a friend of Ross’s, Jimmie Carstairs. Although Powell’s Maltravers was a man about London at this same time, Taylor’s character of that name doesn’t sound much like Powell’s Maltravers who was more interested in motor cars and scraped a living from script writing for films in the early 1930s. He was hardly in a position to bankroll a literary magazine. The financial and editorial arrangement of Blue Bugloss is, however, reminiscent of Horizon (edited by Cyril Connolly and backed financially by Peter Watson), where some of JMR’s earliest works were published. That journal in turn inspired Powell’s Fission in Dance, where X Trapnel’s works were published. So both Fission and Bugloss appear to share the same source. Perhaps to underscore the connection to Horizon, Ross is told by Carstairs when he visits the Bugloss offices that he will not assign Ross to review a book Ross spots in a pile because it is promised to “Cyril”. Carstairs reverses his decision when he later recalls that Cyril is about to leave on a trip to Toulon.

Ross ends up at a high society country weekend by impersonating Carstairs, whose invitation he filches when he visits the Bugloss offices. He is asked by one of the BYP who is present, an alcoholic cum drug addict, why the magazine doesn’t publish more of the poetry written by “Brian”, apparently meaning Brian Howard. He dodges the question, either not wishing to commit himself while impersonating Carstairs or failing to make the connection with a poem by “Brian”, one of the “Oxford lot”, which Carstairs had read to him during the office visit and said he would, in fact, publish. The weekend guests also include several other fugitives from Ask Alice, including Mrs Antrobus (the hostess), Lady Llanstephen, Rev. Chatterley, Mrs Reginald Heber and Mr Burnage.

The party is also attended by Mr Rasmussen, which is why Ross himself wants to be there – both to report any suspicious activity by Rasmussen to the police and to meet with Rasmussen’s secretary who happens to be Ross’s present love interest. Indeed, it seems as if Rasmussen may be an alias for a rather shadowy character from Ask Alice, Mr Schmiegelow. The latter, like Rasmussen, is a foreigner who hangs around upper class and BYP social functions and, like Rasmussen, sets up a gramophone shop on High Holborn which turns out to be a business fraud. The shop closes in both books, leaving a large number of gramophone machines missing but unpaid for. And in both books, they each prowl around the country house to which they have been invited, looking closely at the paintings and other valuables. In City Clock, Rasmussen makes off with a few paintings (as well as his “secretary”) whereas Schmiegelow does not seem to have stooped quite that low. And at the end of both novels, these characters are each seen cruising down the Thames estuary on a liner accompanied by a “secretary”. In City Clock the liner flies the flag of one of the new Baltic states, so
Rasmussen’s destination may well be Venusberg.

In both of Taylor’s recent novels, CB Cochran, the West End revue impresario is mentioned. In Powell’s Dance, one of “Cochran’s young ladies” is taken on what turns out to be a disastrous date by Hugh Moreland, at least as recounted to Nick Jenkins by Ralph Barnby. Also in both of Taylor’s recent novels there are discussions by some of the characters of lower brow writers. In City Clock, Hastings, the supervisor at the carpet cleanser company, asks Ross what he thinks of JB Priestley and Ross responds that he “liked The Good Companions … but thought Angel Pavement went on a bit”. When they later discuss Warwick Deeping, Ross confesses to have read Sorrel and Son, “like everyone else” and Hastings responds that it was a “bit middlebrow for my taste”. This reviewer recalls no mentions of Priestley or Deeping in Powell’s novels, although Cedric Winterwade’s The Welsons of Omdurman Terrace in Wheel and certain of St John Clark’s works in Dance may be intended as exemplary of their oeuvre. Two reviews by Powell of Priestley’s novels during his tenure at the TLS were not exactly glowing, although nor were they condemnatory. In one he joined Ross in thinking Priestley went on a bit.

The name of Mrs Antrobus’s country house is Newcome Grange, an obvious allusion to Thackeray, whose biography Taylor wrote. In Dance, Nick Jenkins thought Sunny Farebrother reminded him of Colonel Newcome.

Rasmussen frequents something called the Pegasus Club in Soho which seems to attract a Bohemian membership. On the way to the club he gave “threepence to an accordion player with one eye and a row of medals”. That’s probably the same one-eyed street musician whom Moreland passed about ten years later on the way to meet Jenkins at the Café Royal in The Soldier’s Art. The Pegasus Club is distinguished by its interior decoration in the form of a surrealist painting which makes it sound a bit like the Gargoyle Club which was in the same neighbourhood and was decorated with paintings by Matisse. In his memoirs, Powell recalls being taken by Evelyn Waugh to the Gargoyle for lunch to celebrate the conclusion of the deal under which Duckworth (to which Waugh was introduced by Powell) would publish Waugh’s first book. On the way, they met Inez Holden who was invited by Waugh to join them. They lunched “under the large picture by Matisse that hung in the Gargoyle’s dining-room, lending an air of go-ahead culture to the club” (Messengers of Day, 23). Inez Holden went on to make a major contribution to the character of the beautiful Roberta Payne in What’s Become of Waring.

Taylor, unlike Powell, is a sports enthusiast, having written a book on sportsmanship – On the Corinthian Spirit: The Decline of Amateurism in Sport. Indeed, one of his earlier novels, English Settlement, is a comic description of the takeover of a no-hope football team as part of a business fraud, and Norwich City supporters play fairly prominent roles in another (Real Life). In City Clock there is at least one allusion to professional sport
(aside from racing). As Rasmussen leaves a warehouse he maintains for the instruments of his trade in “a remote and desolate part of Islington” on the afternoon before he commits his Saturday night break-in, he hears “a roar of human voices … and he realized that he was in earshot of Highbury football ground, where the Arsenal game would be coming to an end”.

If Powell had been a sports enthusiast, this is the sort of allusion we would no doubt find scattered throughout his novels.

Taylor, like Powell, keeps track of historical events occurring at the time his story is unfolding. In Powell’s case he used such events as the slump, the abdication crisis, the Spanish Civil War, the Munich Agreement and various WWII events to mark the time in his novels. Taylor’s story takes place in a much shorter time frame but he marks its progress by referring to increasingly gloomy press reports leading up to the end of the gold standard. This takes place just before Mrs Antrobus’s country-house party and many of the guests are quite distraught by the news, although it seems to have had nothing to do with the suicide of a BYP who more likely had overdosed on one of her multiple addictions.

City Clock is subtitled a “Thriller” just as Taylor’s earlier novel Kept was subtitled a “Victorian Mystery”. This seems to be intended to distinguish these books from Taylor’s more ambitious “Novels” such as Ask Alice. This is something like Graham Greene’s categorization of some of his lighter works as “Entertainments”. It is hard to think that Taylor’s thrillers are going to compete with the big names in that genre, however. This is not a book that keeps you on the edge of your seat, nor will your fingernails be at risk.

Indeed, the high point of suspense – the jewel heist – turns out, with something of the irony typical of Taylor’s novels, to be rather a damp squib. Rasmussen is more banal than he is evil and one does not feel particular disappointment at his escape. And James Ross is more of a writer than an amateur detective and has little real vocation as a police informer. He seems unlikely to spawn a new series of literary detective novels. City Clock would be a good book to read on a transatlantic plane flight or a wet weekend and offers more to Powell fans than a thriller by a less accomplished writer. But it is not (nor is it intended to be) a literary novel in the same sense that Ask Alice or some of Taylor’s earlier novels were.

Notes
1 One of the barflies in the Wheatsheaf (Old Parkinson) tells Ross’s girlfriend that he once made a living writing quota quickies down at Teddington, as indeed did Nick Jenkins and his creator.
2 It turns out both Hastings and Ross are public school old boys. The former went to Marlborough and the latter to St Pauls.
3 “Festive Mood” (review of Festival at Farbridge), TLS, 11 May 1951, 289. See also “Behind the Footlights” (review of Jenny Villiers), TLS, 13 December 1947, 641.
4 By the time he appears in SA, the one-eyed street musician has acquired a peg leg and is playing a fiddle. But when first recorded by Powell in his Writer’s Notebook (85) the accordion was his instrument of choice so Taylor seems to have taken him back to his roots. In both the Notebook and SA, Powell has him playing “Softly Awakes My Heart” by Saint-Saëns. Rasmussen probably does not care enough about music to have noticed the tune.
5 In Ask Alice Ramsey Macdonald is reported in a newspaper story to have met the Duchess of Westminster at the “43” and said to her “Up the Arsenal!” as a result of which Mrs Meyrick, owner of the “43”, was released from prison. The report is written in the form of various moves in a party game called Consequences.
Like James Tucker in his memoir of Nancy Cutbirth published in Newsletter 39, I also corresponded with her from time to time from 1982 through early 1987. Having heard from a mutual acquaintance that I was a Powell enthusiast, she sent me a copy of Anthony Powell Communication #16 in February 1982 with a short note written on the inside front cover inviting my membership in the organization. She ended with: “In any case, it’s good to know the identity of yet another Michigan fan; for a long time I thought I was the only one”. Her institution, Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, is a scant hour’s drive from mine; I regret not to have met her personally.

We corresponded frequently through 1982, exchanging information, opinions, ideas for Powell-related projects, and the then-emerging tendency for Dance to be reissued as four trilogies. Answering my request for any back issues of APC that might be available, she wrote: “Nos. 1-11 (before I knew about the newsletter) aren’t available; I don’t even have them all, and the ones I have (pale mimeograph copies) won’t reproduce”. One wonders who the original editor was and where the organization began, if not in Kalamazoo.

In late October 1982 she wrote:

The most recent problem has been the grant application that I’m struggling with, in an attempt to persuade Western to give me $3,000 to go to England next summer. I want to meet Powell, see if I can find any records that list (however informally or incompletely) the essays and reviews he has published, and to assemble a complete set of tapes of the BBC’s dramatization of the Dance. Converting all of this into “scholarly projects worthy of funding” hasn’t been easy – and still isn’t finished.

Her request, she informed me two months later, was turned down by the university as was a similar request she made the previous year.

In March 1983 she reported on her early attempt to organize an Anthony Powell
session for the Modern Language Association conference in 1984:

The all-Powell session has developed; in fact, I’ve just had to turn down a paper (which would have made the fifth – and even four are too many) that I really wanted. All that remains to do is to write a proposal that will impress & delight MLA. How I dread this.

Her letter in June 1984 gives the disappointing news: “No MLA session this year: an organizer was struck down by illness at the crucial time for submitting the proposal”. In this same letter she also wrote that she had to make two trips to Texas since that May to attend to her ill mother; a situation that resulted in the content of her statement on the first page of APC 22 (January 1987):

For “the wintry silence” between APComs 21 and 22, I’m truly sorry. My mother, who isn’t well, has been living with me since June, 1985; and

– well, you know the rest. I firmly expect, however, that from now on, APComs will appear more regularly.

James Tucker quoted a Nancy Cutbirth letter written in July 1983 in which she commented favourably on the recently published O, How the Wheel Becomes It! However, in her letter of August 1983 to me, she wrote:

Did manage to read Powell’s novella (got a signed copy – my first). There were some funny bits, but on the whole I didn’t like it much. Perhaps my expectations were too high, or my mood (when I read it) wrong. However, I seem to have liked the book better than some of the British reviewers did. They were quite savage.

In APC 22, under the heading “Other News,” Nancy Cutbirth, among other items, writes with obvious enthusiasm:

… after corresponding with Mr Powell for several years, I finally got to meet him this past summer [ie. 29 July 1986]. In England for a few weeks on a wildflower and garden tour – to get away from it all (my first trip to England in many years) – I paid a visit to The Chantry. Mr Powell and Lady Violet (and their cat Trelawney) were most welcoming and great fun.

In spite of her assurances in APC 22 that the publication would “appear more regularly,” that issue, to the best of my knowledge, was the last one published. Inside the front cover of my copy she had written, “A letter as soon as I get off #22”. But no further correspondence was received from her. To echo James Tucker’s verdict, she was a real enthusiast.
Member Hilary Green writes:

I went to the Hay Festival in May/June and [visiting] some ancient churches in Monmouthshire I saw a gravestone inscribed with Gwatkin. I looked the name up when I returned home and found it was not too unusual but it was a good choice of name AP made.

A hiking friend tells me that a lot of AP’s names are from real life. There is a Kendal mint cake called Quiggin’s and of course the painting of the Boyhood of Cicero in the Wallace Collection is by Foppa.

We approached Quiggin’s of Kendal unsuccessfully when seeking sponsorship for the Centenary Conference. The Foppa painting is currently titled The Young Cicero Reading although it may not have been so named in AP’s time – Hon. Sec.

The Times, 15 June 2010 carries an obituary for Teresa Jungman:

Teresa (“Baby”) Jungman was the very last of the original “Bright Young People”, a clique of restless debs and well-born swells with no pressing need for an occupation whose boisterous mischief proved a diversion for London society in the 1920s. She was also a heart-breaker and an early ardent but unrequited love of Evelyn Waugh’s.

There’s no mention of AP in the obituary and it is clear from Journals 1982-1986 that he didn’t meet Baby Jungman until the 1960s, so probably too late for her to appear in Dance.

The Times, 6 August 2010 reports that the “lair of The Great Beast” is for sale:

A derelict villa once used for drug-fuelled orgies and magical rites is for sale with a price tag of €1.5 million … but few Italians seem interested in buying the house on the coast of Sicily – or even going near it.

The villa was once the home of Aleister Crowley, the British occult artist, poet and libertine hedonist. When he rented it in the 1920s, it was an esoteric commune with an idyllic view of the bay and was surrounded by vineyards. But now it is crumbling and overgrown, and has mattresses, fridges and plastic bottles dumped in the garden. The red-tiled roof has partially collapsed and the wooden shutters are nailed up.

Its high price is justified by its “extraordinary historical associations”, according to the local estate agency, which says it needs “total restructuring” but could be made into a museum and tourist attraction.

Again there is no mention of AP although Crowley’s legal spat with Nina Hamnett has a walk-on part.

Zita and Teresa Jungman, photographed by Cecil Beaton in 1926
From Colin Donald

Greetings from the lovely town of Bayeux, where I am reading Anthony Beevor’s *D-Day – The Battle for Normandy* (2009) while visiting some of the landing beaches, and the memorial museum which is next to the beautifully kept UK war graves. Beevor describes the poignant death of the painter (and all round artist) Rex Whistler during the battle, which is described in the same way in his Wikipedia entry:

In July he [Whistler] was with the Guards Armoured Division in Normandy as the invasion force was poised to break out of the salient east of Caen. On the hot and stuffy 18 July his tank, after crossing a railway line, drove over some felled telegraph wires beside the railway, which became entangled in its tracks. He and the crew got out to free the tank from the wire when a German machine gunner opened fire on them, preventing them from getting back into their tank. Whistler dashed across an open space of 60 yards to another tank to instruct its commander, a Sergeant Lewis Sherlock, to return the fire. As he climbed down from Sherlock’s tank a mortar bomb exploded beside him and killed him instantly, throwing him into the air. He was the first fatality suffered by the Battalion in the Normandy Campaign. The two free tanks of his troop carried out their dead commander’s orders before returning to lay out his corpse beside a nearby hedge, after first having removed his personal belongings. Whistler’s neck had been broken, but there was not a mark on his body. The troop was then immediately called away to act as infantry support, so when that evening Sherlock obtained permission to locate and bury Rex Whistler, he found that this had already been done by an officer of the Green Jackets, a regiment in which Whistler’s younger brother, Laurence (an acclaimed glass engraver and poet) was serving.

I don’t have my Powell library with me, so can’t look up indexes, but I wonder if Powell makes any mention of his contemporary (born 1905) in any of his writings? He certainly sounds like someone Powell would have known! Could a case be made for him being added to Adrian Daintrey in the Barnby entry in Keith Marshall’s and Julian Allason’s excellent *Dance* character model section on the Society’s website?

From Jeff Manley

Powell mentions Whistler at some length in the first volume of his *Journals*. The occasion for the comments is his reading of the biography by Whistler’s brother (which I found rather painful to read, more because of the way it was written than the subject matter). He met Whistler in the 1920s at two of Tom Balston’s parties (and Violet says on a later occasion which Powell doesn’t recall) and found him rather a social climber. He didn’t like...
Whistler’s paintings at all but thought his set designs were good. From his reaction to Whistler’s bio, he launches into a 10-page essay (198-209) on artists and writers who aspire to the “smart life” including sections on Waugh, Betjeman, Beaton, and Daintrey (inter alia). When he gets to Daintrey he says that he contributed only slightly to the character of Barnby because of their different attitudes to women. But he doesn’t use the opportunity to suggest that Whistler made any contribution to Barnby’s character. He suspects that Daintrey had met Whistler but wouldn’t have liked his paintings. Whistler was rather prominently bisexual which hardly was the case of Barnby (so far as we can tell) and Barnby hardly seemed to be a social climber.

From Colin Donald
Googling a bit further confirms that Whistler is not at all the model for Barnby. The comparisons really only come down to undertaking a much-talked-about mural commission – Barnby for the Donners Brebner building, Whistler for the Tate Gallery restaurant, and the fact that they were both killed in the War. Now I read more I see he is a much closer model for Brideshead’s Charles Rider: bisexual aesthete in the Cecil Beaton camp, anti-avant-garde, pursuing social climbing affairs with married aristocrat’s daughter, doing a big mural decoration job on a Great House (in Angelsey in Whistler’s case). Modern criticism seems a bit disdainful of his work now, but can’t take his courageous death away from him!

Awfully chic to be killed ...

From Jim Scott
When I read the first message on this thread, I immediately thought of the American bandleader Glenn Miller – whose plane disappeared over the English Channel while he was en route to Paris to entertain the troops in December of 1944. It’s conceivable (although I don’t have any idea how likely it is) that Powell might have recalled Miller’s death while deciding how to dispose of Barnby.

From Rob Friedman
Miller’s plane was allegedly blown out of the sky over the English Channel by returning RAF planes dumping excess bombs. A death so dumb that the Jimmy Stewart bio-flick just has him kiss June Allyson goodbye, then cuts to despondent faces.

From Stephen Holden
I thought Powell might have had in mind the war artist Eric Ravilious, who disappeared on an air-sea rescue RAF plane near Iceland in 1942.

From Keith Marshall
I think Stephen’s suggestion of Eric Ravilious as the model for Barnby’s death is much more likely than Glenn Miller. But then losses like Barnby’s must have been quite a common occurrence and Powell was likely to have heard of any number of such instances.

From Eric Ravilious
**Powell on Betjeman**

*From Sandy Morrison*

One of the delights of reading the biographies of writers is to note how they interact with other contemporary writers. One example is the biography of John Betjeman by Bevis Hillier which contains several references to Anthony Powell.

Clearly there was a life-long lack of sympathy between the two. The first reference to AP is to their having met once at Oxford when they talked about bamboo furniture. I was not previously aware that AP had views on this specialist subject.

While AP was open in his praise of JB’s *Collected Poems* in saying that it would be difficult – in my opinion impossible – to point to a contemporary poet of greater originality or more genuine depth of feeling

his feelings about JB remained unreconciled. AP, in reflections on JB’s memorial service in June 1984, recorded that one could not help indulging in rather banal reflections about the seedy unkempt (but never in the least unambitious) Betjeman of early days, snobbish objections to him at Oxford, Chetwode’s opposition to the marriage, crowned at the last by all this boasted pomp and show. It was a remarkable feat.

Altogether an interesting summing up.

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**Rupert Wise**

*From Prue Raper*

On page 25 of *Newsletter 39*, re “The Suburban Question”, it was Rupert Wise who was being compared to Hampstead Garden Suburb, and Norman Chandler is quoted (*Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*, 142-3) as saying,

He may have a profile like Apollo, but he’s got a mind [not “face”] like Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Mrs Foxe had promised to give Rupert and his corps de ballet fiancée a refrigerator as a wedding present. “Not colder than Rupert’s heart” commented Norman.

This is Rupert’s only appearance in *Dance*, but a perfect example of Powell’s summing up of a minor character in a few sentences.
Hart-Davis and Eton

From Jeff Manley
Hart-Davis published a book in 1965 entitled *A Girl at Eton* which is the memoirs of a girl whose father was a master at Eton College. Has anyone in the Society read this? Does it mention John Heygate, Powell or any of their friends? I’m assuming it’s by John Heygate’s sister.

From Ellen Jordan
In slowly reading my way through the Lyttelton/Hart-Davis correspondence, I have come across this reference to an ancient Eton hoax which has some similarities to the Braddock alias Thorne incident in *A Question of Upbringing*.

Lyttelton, having made some remarks about Dr Crippen goes on:

> Did you know that when the search for him was on, and his picture was everywhere, some Etonians got hold of a photograph of Michael Bland [an Eton master] and sent it up to Scotland Yard? There was certainly a strong likeness.

Ruth Rendell

From Peter Kislinger
Imagine you are reading a whodunit and come across a sentence like the following:

> “What I can’t understand”, Burden said later, “is how he got all those women to marry him. Ugly little chap with that birthmark before he had it taken off, it’s beyond comprehension.”

How would you continue? How does Ruth Rendell and her well read (Chief) Inspector Wexford continue?

> “Anthony Powell”, said Wexford, the reader, “says somewhere that while women are choosy about whom they sleep with, they will marry anyone. Women are said to like power in a man and Targo exuded that way”.

(Ruth Rendell, *The Monster in the Box* (Arrow, 2010), 307)

Apologies if this, her latest, Wexford novel has come up before. I have a suspicion it has. I do remember earlier postings mentioning other Ruth Rendell/Barbara Vine novels referring to Powell; *A Judgement in Stone*, *The Chimney Sweeper’s Boy* and, I think, *A Dark-Adapted Eye*; it is usually the criminals who have one or two volumes of the series in their rooms – and their rooms would be well served by furnishing, though reading Powell has not made them into better people.
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