The Anthony Powell Society
Newsletter

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!!! NOW BOOKING !!!
6th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference
Friday 2 to Sunday 4 September 2011
Naval & Military Club, 4 St James’s Square, London SW1
Invited Speakers: Glenmore Treear-Harvey, Ferdinand Mount, Simon Vance
See accompanying leaflet, pages 18 & 19 for details

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Time to book for the Conference ...

Contribute to the auction, p18

... you don’t want to miss it!

Now with added auction
From the Secretary’s Desk

At long last I get the feeling the conference really is upon us. After months of planning and bursts of activity this is where the real work begins to make it all hang together on the day.

This is a time of hard work, cool heads and, even after all these years, lots of butterflies in the stomach. Will we get enough bookings? Will we cover our costs? Will anyone let us down at the last minute? Most importantly, will it be the success for the delegates (you!) the previous conferences have been?

All the Trustees are well aware the conference is more expensive than we would like. Everyone likes cheap. But we have to exist in a commercial world without sponsorship or, today, many negotiable discounts. Thanks to the good auspices of a couple of members we think we’ve got the best deal we can while providing a quality event at a quality venue. And in the world of AP, quality is important.

The first bookings have already landed on my desk. But we need many more. **We need YOUR booking!** Help us make this Conference another success story. You really don’t want to miss it!

You’ll see on page 18 we also need a volunteer to take over the merchandise part of Graham and Dorothy’s role. We are working on the launch of an online shop – to help drive up revenue and membership – but we need someone new to take on the merchandise before we can launch!

Graham and Dorothy manfully stepped in a few years ago to ease my workload. Now we need someone to develop the merchandising further. Why not you?

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The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No. 1096873

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

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All correspondence should be sent to:
Hon. Secretary, Anthony Powell Society
76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford Middlesex, UB6 0JW, UK
Phone: +44 (0) 20 8864 4095
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483
Email: secretary@anthonypowell.org

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Anthony Powell knew his way around Clubland as well as he did Soho, those two *quartiers* that appear on the legend of no official map. For they define a social topography rather than corresponding to the bureaucratic precision of borough or postal district. Clubland is invariably described by lazy gossip columnists as synonymous with St James’s. Yet several of the traditional gentlemen’s clubs in which Powell and some of his characters socialised were – still are – to be found well to the northwest and to the east of St James’s Street. The Garrick and the Cavalry & Guards are but two illustrious outposts, though they could hardly be more disparate in character. And full of disparate characters they are, the eccentricities of whom have inspired generations of gentlemen novelists.

For practical purposes let us take the geographical boundaries to be the Mall to the south. The Turf Club – its membership being comprised of owners not jockeys – commands the best view of royal weddings. One member is reputed to have lobbed a bread roll into an open carriage at the first wedding of the Prince of Wales (an honorary member here as at White’s). This sort of behaviour would probably attract an armed response today, but one can imagine Umfraville attempting it after a season bowling with the Newmarket second XI.

The eastern boundary we shall take as lower Regent Street, enclosing the clubs that slumber in St James’s Square. The Beefsteak falls outside it, but then Clubland proper has always been wary of its custom of taking the next vacant seat at the dining table. “Something to do with the wit-to-bore ratio,” I was warned before lunching as a guest there. However my amusing neighbour proved to be Eric Ponsonby, tenth Earl of Bessborough, surely the nephew of “that damned fellow Ponsonby” who trod on General Conyers’ gouty foot during Palace reception duty as a gentleman-at-arms. A characteristic Powellian tease, that.

Piccadilly forms the natural northern frontier, crossed to view the Royal Academy’s summer exhibition or perhaps *en route* to Sotheby’s salerooms to flog more of the family silver-gilt. Christie’s, characterised as gentlemen playing at being auctioneers, is better placed in King Street, epicentre of St James’s. Sotheby’s are held to be the opposite: auctioneers pretending to be gentlemen. Quite unjustly as the firm’s present and immediate past chairman are members of White’s, clubland’s senior institution in age – founded 1693 – and exclusivity. And by exclusivity one does mean literally that. The socialist firebrand Aneurin Bevan was famously kicked down the steps of White’s by a member of Brooks’s who was just enough of a gentleman to...
then fall upon his sword and resign. When the late gossip columnist Nigel Dempster invented the ‘White’s Shit of the Year Contest’ in *Private Eye* some members enquired how they could vote. The Aga Khan was the first notional – and entirely undeserving – winner, if memory serves: one suspects the unforgiving Dempster might previously have been on the sharp end of a letter from His Highness’s solicitors.

Occupying most of the north-western block at the top of St James’s Street, White’s was considered in Powell’s day to be the last stop before Gloucestershire for a Champagne cocktail. This was justified on the grounds that the Ritz Hotel, in a parallel position one street west, then lacked for a bar, and was, according to Randolph Churchill, full of hairdressers. In fact White’s, of which he was a member, had and has its own resident barber, Mr West, who for many years shared a surname with the club secretary (no relation): friends of Powell were thus inclined to offer suggestions for improvements to the menu – for which there was some scope – while having their hair cut under the impression that the Wests were one and the same. The suggestions were duly passed upwards and duly ignored.

Powell joined the Travellers’ Club in Pall Mall, a magnificent building on a scale that would have satisfied even Donners. If its marbled walls could speak they would surely whisper colonial secrets overheard from Palmerston, Disraeli and Churchill. Powell appears to have found the club’s eclectic mix of Foreign Office panjandra, gentleman spies and maharajahs amusing, whilst reputedly deprecating the former’s practice of lunching alone with secret telegrams propped up in special holders furnished by the steward. But then this was where so many rounds of the Great Game were rehearsed over brandy and soda.

For many years the Travellers’ *genus loci* was Monsignor Alfred Gilbey of the gin family, the last Roman Catholic priest to provide his own patrimony – upon which he lived as the sole resident member. Never a natural revolutionary the eminent monsignor had resigned as chaplain to Cambridge University after struggling to cope with the enthusiasm of female students for “the pill”. He wore a frock coat, gaiters and a shovel hat. This was stolen and Gilbey was distressed to see it being worn by a girl in the street. Insult was added to injury by its combination with miniskirt and boots.

Powell was well liked at Brooks’s up on the western side of St James’s, and by uncommon consent second
only to White’s in esteem. He found the erudite company agreeable. Altogether racier was the St James’s Club, later to merge with Brooks’s. Before and during the Second World War there had been the club bore to circumnavigate at the St James’s, Denis Capel-Dunn known as “Young Bloody”. One member, former ambassador John Colvin, recalled him as “a very fat, extremely boring, overwhelmingly ambitious arriviste. His conversations were hideously detailed and humourless”. Powell had the dubious pleasure of working for him for nine weeks in 1943 when Col Capel-Dunn was secretary to the Joint Intelligence Committee, and had his request to remain in post another fortnight so that his rank would become substantive refused. “Because my nerves wouldn’t stand it,” his boss averred. Capel-Dunn didn’t live to enjoy, or otherwise, his immortalisation as the inspiration for Widmerpool. It was the historian Desmond Seward, still an active member of Brooks’s, who, being friendly with Powell and knowing of Capel-Dunn’s reputation, deduced the latter’s contribution to the most memorable character in A Dance to the Music of Time.

While the number of scenes in the sequence of novels that are set in clubland was intentionally limited it could be argued that the milieu is influentially present throughout, almost as an offstage chorus for which Gilbert & Sullivan had provided a parodic precedent. The clubs were where the landed classes, otherwise scattered across the country on their estates, gathered to meet. And met with their urban counterparts, the bankers, lawyers, literateurs. There are lacunae however. Few musicians appear to be clubable, for example. One would have been more likely to encounter a Constant Lambert in Soho than St James’s. Others huddled together by profession and rank: Conservative politicians at the Carlton which housed ‘Cads’ Corner’; actors and the showier lawyers (thus more QCs than solicitors) at the Garrick; progressive clergy at the National Liberal Club; bishops and society dons of the Sillery stripe at the Athenaeum. The writer and adventurer Quentin Crewe recalled encountering two bishops descending the steps of the Athenaeum in icy weather, one saying to the other, “Have a care, Bath & Wells, have a care!”

It is tempting to guess at the clubs that Powell’s characters might have been elected to – or blackballed from. But that would, I think, be to put the brougham before the horse. What the novelist found in the clubs he visited as a guest were spectra of like-mindedness, but also individuals – the club characters – whose proclivities ran against the grain of the membership. Thirty years ago it was almost impossible to enter the bar of Boodle’s without being offered a drink by a Jimmy Brent character whose true role was to recruit the rich and moderately well-off into membership of the Lloyd’s of London insurance market. Almost all subsequently lost their shirts, and some their trousers too, many being obliged to resign from both Lloyd’s and Boodle’s.
Today the “no business” rule is strictly enforced at Boodle’s and the grander clubs.

Likewise the dress code. When Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, former editor of the Sunday Telegraph and dandy, recently arrived to lunch with a member of Boodle’s the porter was reluctant to admit him. “Send him up,” instructed the member. “But he is wearing red trousers, M’Lord”. Navy worsted, grey flannel, narrow pinstripes, cause less of a commotion. Morning dress if attending a memorial service, but never uniform in a civilian club. “Too many medals looks like showing off,” a committee member once explained to me. Cream linen suits are sometimes sighted in hot weather conveying a hint of Denholm Elliot raffishness. The few clubs like the Garrick that admit ladies have been wise enough not to rule on female attire.

Boodle’s and several other clubs maintain bedrooms that may be booked by country members and their wives, mistresses being frowned upon lest they prove to be the spouses of other members. An original function is the provision of chambers for the playing of bridge and billiards, though not poker, the prospect of one member bankrupting another now being considered beyond the pale, although that was not originally the case. But beyond the pale of what? Society as dramatised by Powell survives at its top end on country estates where house parties still gather to shoot, flirt and do pretty much what they have always done. The smarter regiments, despite amalgamation, preserve a concept of honour still found in certain corners of the City – think private banking, wealth management and personal client stockbroking – and in some law firms. Clubland is where such officers and gentlemen, even temporary officers, still congregate.

I fear I have made it sound more snobbish than it is, but clubland has been a meritocracy since the days of Beau Brummell, the grandson of a shopkeeper. Admission is on the whole by amusement value rather than birth, and certainly not riches. That is not to say that one does not find generations of the same families recurring in the rolls. Clubs also maintain reciprocal arrangements with counterparts in Rome, Paris, New York, San Francisco, and – heaven help us – Bogota. So the atmosphere is nothing if not cosmopolitan, though with shared interests peculiar to each. Game shooting, for example.

Occasionally these arrangements go entertainingly wrong, as when New York’s Century Association was
recently overcome by political correctness. A well-whipped majority voted to sever relations with the liberal London Garrick on the obscure grounds that lady members there need to be accompanied by a male member when joining the club table, although not to other tables. “Ah! Deliverance from the Manhattan feminists – actually quite a relief, old boy,” as one Garrick member put it to me, straightening that unforgettable salmon and cucumber tie.

Membership is about good conversation, a quiet hour with the Sporting Life, and the sort of dinner restaurants no longer serve but which Powell cherished: potted shrimps, kedgeree, gulls’ eggs, grouse, Welsh rarebit, roly-poly pudding, not necessarily served in that order. Reasonably priced too, since clubs like White’s own their own freeholds and merely aim to break even.

That said let us consider where Powell, his friends, and certain of his creations might have felt at home from home. Evelyn Waugh was thrilled to be elected to White’s: it still has more dukes in its roll than dentists. In fact the dental count hovers around zero. Not too many estate agents either, though a few of the grander Tory politicians are members. David Cameron quietly resigned before the last General Election: his father-in-law remains a popular figure. Perhaps Roddy Cutts would have joined after an apprenticeship served at the Carlton Club? Donners would certainly have fitted in. Nick Jenkins would, one assumes, have followed Powell to the Travellers and perhaps joined Brooks’s, enjoying its literary comforts in preparation for looking in upon whichever Soho club Umfraville was presently fronting. Mark Members one can see working his way sideways from the leftish Reform – sumptuous but oh, so gloomy – to the Garrick. I fear Leonard Short would not have risen above the pleasant anonymity of the Oxford & Cambridge: “Not clubbable enough, y’see”. As a guest there I once observed the late legal fixer, Lord Goodman enjoying solitude and his legendary two dinners.

As for Odo Stevens we can be reasonably certain he would have found his niche at the Special Forces Club at their covert location near Harrods, where the rules require “Side arms to be worn discreetly. Automatic weapons to be checked with the porter.” I noticed someone very much as one pictures Odo there on my last visit, also memorable from the sight of an old spy removing his wooden leg to show a youthful dining companion its secret compartment. Powell would surely have shaken his head at a real life scene too rich to be worked into the tapestry of his Dance. Bob Duport, I can confidently say, would have remained a member of the RAC Club to the day he died. As my ever-egalitarian wife remarked, “Nice swimming pool. Pity about the members”.

An expanded paper on this subject will be given at the Society’s Conference.

Travellers’ Club Coffee Room
Or, probably not. Two years ago, I visited a retired relative of my father’s generation to talk about matters of family history. I asked him if he could confirm stories I had heard that my great-grandmother, Jane Butler, had worked in some backstage capacity at the London Pavilion theatre in Piccadilly Circus around the time of the Great War. He did recognise the story. He told me it was said in the family that Jane had at one time worked there as the dresser for Alice Delysia, the great French star of London revue and musical comedy during the First World War and interwar period. At that time, he said, it was the practice for menial staff such as cleaners to be pressed into service as dressers for new or lesser-known artistes with no personal dresser of their own. Under such circumstances did Jane come to the assistance of the unknown Delysia, but so pleased was Alice with Jane that she always insisted on Jane’s help in subsequent stints at the Pavilion, long after she had established herself as a star of the London stage.

I heard the story with interest, although I had never come across the name Alice Delysia before. But, as is often the way with these things, a short time later – having embarked upon my second re-reading of Dance – I came across a mention of la Delysia in A Buyer’s Market within the fictional lyric of “Tess of Le Touquet”, as sung by Max Pilgrim at Mrs Andriadis’ party to the disgust of Mr Deacon:

I’m Tess of Le Touquet,  
My morals are flukey,  
Tossed on the foam, I couldn’t be busier;

Permanent waves  
Splash me into the caves;  
Everyone loves me as much as Delysia...

Although no more than a mention, the reference to Alice Delysia is worthy of note as it is another good example of how careful Anthony Powell was about deploying even the most passing cultural references in an accurate context. Chronologically, the reference is appropriate as Mrs Andriadis’ party took place in 1928 or 1929 at which time Alice was certainly amongst the topmost artistes of the London scene. In 1932 CB Cochran wrote:

There is no more popular artist in the English theatre than Delysia, and that this is no lightly-made judgment was borne out once more by the
demonstration which greeted her appearance [in The Cat and the Fiddle in 1932] on the first night at the Palace.¹

Moreover, the parallels noted by Dance scholars between Max Pilgrim and the real life theatrical star Douglas Byng are significant as Byng was a longtime friend of Alice; they co-starred together for the first time in 1925 in Noel Coward’s revue On With the Dance at the London Pavilion, in which Alice sang Coward’s first musical hit “Poor Little Rich Girl” in duet with Hermione Baddeley; and they would both go on to be active in ENSA, entertaining the troops during the Second World War.

The lyric of “Tess of Le Touquet” suggests that Alice Delysia’s popularity with the public was a matter of common consent and this also rings true: contemporary memoirs as well as obituary notices refer repeatedly to the affection in which the British public held her, an affection which seems to have sprung from the combination of her spirit-lifting wartime performances, an embodiment of the Entente Cordiale, tireless charity work, and an endearing public personality, which The Times described as combining an “inimitable sense of humour, a striking presence, a touch of diablerie and charming singing voice”.² In his first volume of memoirs published in 1925, CB Cochran wrote at some length in praise of Delysia’s generosity in the face of wartime hardships:

I doubt if any artist threw herself into the good work more than did Delysia. There was scarcely a war charity matinee at which she did not appear. Never a day passed, not even a Sunday, when she did not entertain the wounded soldiers. Her home was an asylum for French refugees, and on matinee days, going to her dressing room, one was always in danger of stepping on crawling babies. She adopted, temporarily, numerous children. Two she still maintains and educates.³

With due allowance made for the theatrical fraternity’s penchant for mutual admiration, it does seem that Alice was a more than usually good egg. Cochran also writes rather charmingly of her extravagance, noting that:

She was most extravagant, although she would never admit it ... Every Saturday afternoon there was a queue outside her dressing room waiting for instalments on rugs, furs, shawls, pictures, and all sorts of useful and useless articles which she had bought on the instalment plan.⁴

As for her popularity as a performer, it is possible to get an idea of her cheeky, endearing style from a voice recording of Alice singing “You’d Be Surprised”, from her 1920 appearance in Afgar, which can be found on the YouTube website.

Alice Delysia was born Alice Henriette Lapize in March 1889 in Paris. She made her first stage appearance as a chorus girl at the Moulin Rouge in 1903 before going to work in New York in 1905 as one of the Gibson girls in The Catch of the Season. After a period away from the stage, she was talent spotted by the theatrical impresario CB Cochran working in a small French theatre in 1913, and brought to London where she scored a great success in Cochran’s first West End revue, Odds and Ends, at the Ambassadors Theatre. Her rendition of the recruitment song “Oh, We Don’t Want to Lose You” in the show was said to be much copied but never paralleled. Odds and Ends ran for over 500 performances. (Sadly Alice’s connection to Dance does not extend to
another big wartime success, *The Maid of the Mountains* at Daly’s, at a performance of which Ted Jeavons got more than he bargained for from a flirtation with Mildred Blaides. Daly’s was the preserve of fellow-star Miss Jose Collins.) Further revue successes followed and in 1918, Cochran took over the London Pavilion, converting it from music hall to theatre in the process, because he needed to find a venue large enough to accommodate burgeoning audiences and the rising pay demands of stars like Alice. *As You Were*, his first revue at the Pavilion, was also a triumph, running for over a year.

Notable performances after the first war included *Afgar*, a musical comedy in which Delisia played to acclaim in both London and New York, *Mayfair and Montmartre* in 1922 which was blighted by Alice’s withdrawal through illness, and Noel Coward’s *On with the Dance* in 1925. She continued in revue through the later 1920s and was also cast in straight plays, the first of which – *Her Past*, a farce by Frederick Jackson – she took on in 1929. In 1928 she married, in London, Georges Denis, a newspaperman, and in 1933 came what the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* describes as “her last major theatrical success” with *Mother of Pearl*, a musical comedy adapted for the stage by AP Herbert. She continued, though, to be active on the London stage until the outbreak of war. She divorced in 1938. Upon the outbreak of the Second World War, Alice threw herself once again into troop entertainment, joining ENSA and embarking on extensive tours through Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. According to *The Times* “her [wartime] tour in the Middle East lasted 2 years and her salary was £10 a week” but she declined opportunities to return to the comparative comforts of the London stage. In 1944 she got married for a second time, to a Free French naval commander named Rene Kolb-Bernard, who became a diplomat in post-war France and with whom Alice therefore spent much of her later life in diplomatic posts overseas. She died in Brighton in 1979 at the age of 89.

By that time, my great-grandmother Jane was long gone, for she had died in 1953 at the ripe age of 84. So will I ever establish the truth about Jane’s connection with Alice Delisia? Probably not. These tales often contain a grain of truth, but it has to be admitted that Alice was already a big star when she first appeared at the London Pavilion in 1918 and would not by that stage have required a stand-in dresser to be found for her. Tantalisingly, in 1963 the publisher William Heinemann commissioned a writer, Alan Dent, to work with Alice on her memoirs and they solicited help from the public in providing reminiscences or anecdotes that might contribute to the work. Sadly though, the memoir never saw the light of day and a recent enquiry to the Heinemann archivist revealed that the manuscript had been returned to Mr Dent unused. Several weeks ago, however, I purchased online a first edition copy of CB Cochran’s 1925 memoir *The Secrets of a Showman* which I knew contained a print portrait of Alice, as well as references both to her and many other stars of the period. When I turned to the page containing her picture, a number of press cuttings from 1979 fluttered to the floor, all obituary notices recalling Alice’s life. I wonder what Mrs Erdleigh would have made of it.

1 CB Cochran, *I Had Almost Forgotten*, Hutchinson, 1932
2 *The Times*, 19 February 1963
3 CB Cochran, *The Secrets of a Showman*, Heinemann, 1925
4 Ibid.
5 *The Times*, 16 November 1979
Craig Brown is probably England’s most popular contemporary parodist. He has been publishing parodies since the 1980s in several newspapers and literary journals, but most notably in *Private Eye*, where he wrote a “Diary” column purporting to be snippets from the diaries, memoirs, letters, etc., of various writers and celebrities, including Anthony Powell, who became one of his favourite targets. He has published over a dozen collections under various names. One of his earliest was *The Marsh-Marlowe Letters*, first published in 1984. In an introduction to the 2001 Prion Humour Classics edition, he explains that he began it as something of a lark after being given a set of *The Lyttleton/Hart-Davis Letters* by Hugh Massingberd. These contained a correspondence between George Lyttleton, a retired Eton classics master, and Rupert Hart-Davis, a publisher who had been his pupil. The collection appeared in several volumes and spanned the years 1955-1962. Brown found the letters “distinctive and parodiable” and couldn’t stop writing until he had amassed his own collection. Unlike much of his other work, these “letters” apparently did not appear in periodicals before being published in book form. Brown describes them as a sort of novel. This description would be based primarily on the narrative told in the letters of the marital difficulties of the two correspondents, which actually become intertwined at one point.

Powell is mentioned frequently by both Marsh and Marlowe. The correspondence dates from the 1980s, after *Dance* had been completed, and mentions of Powell usually begin with a reference to his writing followed by what becomes a catch phrase: “(still read today, I wonder?)”. One comic context in which Powell features is Gerald Marsh’s interest in notable middle lines of novels, as opposed to the usual fascination with famous first and last lines. Gerald (the retired school master) proposes a sentence of Powell’s taken from the exact centre of the middle novel in the *Dance* series, here identified by Gerald as *A Spot of Varnish*:

Hogwash entered the room, and, having entered, decided, upon entry, having viewed all there was, and some of what was not, to be seen, to remove himself, once more, from the room by the same route through which he had, so recently, entered.

Harvey Marlowe (the publisher and former pupil) responds that, although that is splendid as a middle sentence, he prefers

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*Satirist and critic Craig Brown*
other books in Powell’s cycle such as The Problem with Boaters or The Upright Art which he finds to be “drier”. He also identifies his favourite middle sentence to be that from Norman Mailer’s The Executioner’s Song:

“Yes, I guess I did’ which, in context, carries the same kind of punch as the celebrated fifth paragraph in chapter two of Northanger Abbey. [19-22]

At another point Harvey offers a rambling circumlocution, as if written by Powell, trailing over half a page and described as how Powell would have put “the tired old proverb ‘It never rains but it pours’” [35-6]. The two of them agree [105] that Powell’s spelling is admirable and responsible for such a dedicated league of readers as was commanded by “A Dance to the Music of Tim” (sic).

Harvey, the publisher, mentions that he was trying to help one of his authors find a phrase from Shakespeare to use as a book title. Chancing upon a phrase

which, while not first or even second class, at least had the quality of having [been thought to have had] No Previous Owners … we are caught short by none other than Tony Powell (still read today, I wonder?) who bags the blessed quote – O, How the Wheel Becomes It! – for his new yarn.

Powell’s book by that name (surely his worst title) was published in June 1983 although Harvey’s letter is dated in April of that year. Indeed, Harvey had quoted the same line in another context in an earlier letter, not mentioning Powell [36]. Brown has something of a field day with fictitious book titles in much the same way Powell had done in his own books. Harvey received admiration for his editing of Roy Hattersley’s Love Poems and Gerald quotes a reference to aging taken from the twelfth volume of Malcolm Muggeridge’s autobiography, My Infernal Egotism. Perhaps the best of these is the working title given by Harvey to a memoir by Mother Teresa, Nun Too Good, or that proposed by Gerald for his life’s work Pass the Fruitcake, Iris: A Collection of Catchphrases and Gaffes from the Golden Age of Music Hall Assembled by Gerald Marsh, Esq.

This short book is well worth reading on a wet afternoon or moderately long train journey. It can easily be read at one rather long sitting. Although it was published during Powell’s lifetime, when he was still writing his Journals, there is no reference to his having read it, although he must have been told about it. If he did read it, he must surely have enjoyed it.

More recently, Brown has published a collection of his parody diary columns written for Private Eye and other periodicals. These are purportedly written by various authors, politicians, and celebrities from the worlds of show business, journalism or other lesser fields of endeavour. The premise of the title of the collection, The Lost Diaries, seems to be that they were entries which had been
left out of the published versions of the writers’ diaries, letters, memoirs, etc., but, if so, the opportunity is missed for some further satire when no effort is made to explain how the “editor” managed to “find” these entries. Brown says that these were written over a period of 21 years which would date them from having first begun to appear in about 1989. They are arranged by month and day but the year of their publication is omitted. In many cases they contain information relating to the month and day under which they are collected (e.g. 9/11, Christmas etc.), but it is often necessary to know what year they appeared to understand fully the context of the humour. For example, there are references to the “Prime Minister” in some entries but, without knowing the year in which they were published, the identity of the particular holder of that office cannot be known. In another instance, there is an entry from the “diary” of VS Naipaul on 28 March in which he says he has heard of the death of Anthony Powell. This was not an easy entry for me to write. I was the man’s friend for many years. But now that he is dead I find he has nothing more to say to me.

Powell died on 28 March 2000, but it seems unlikely that this entry was published in that year as it would have been somewhat tasteless in that context. More likely, it was written and published after 2007, the year in which Naipaul’s memoirs (A Writer’s People) appeared. These included his dismissive opinion of the writings of Powell, among many others.

There are several entries from Powell’s “diaries” as well. These seem to be intended as a send up of Powell’s Journals which were being published during the period Brown’s cod diaries were appearing. The first volume of Powell’s Journals was issued in 1995 and it would be interesting to know whether Brown’s parodies of Powell appeared only on or after that date. One suspects that they did, but Brown may also have taken aim at Powell’s memoirs. Since the writing in the Journals often sailed recklessly close to self-parody, they would have been easy targets for Brown. Most of the Powell entries relate to his assessments of a writer’s work after he has reread it. Perhaps the best of these is the entry for 2 July:

Reread Hamlet by Shakespeare, a competent but unreliable author, though now rather dated and always prone to wordiness. Never to my mind managed a novel. Hamlet is a not uninteresting play, but the plot is flawed. The Danes are really extremely minor royalty, even by Scandinavian standards, scarcely worth a lengthy play … Prince Hamlet wouldn’t have lasted long in Pratt’s where Danish royalty is taken with a fairly hefty pinch of salt. ‘Hamlet,’ a peculiar name – any relation one wonders to the Fotherington-Hamlets of Much Hadham? … I would guess Shakespeare stole many of his more notable lines from the immortal titles in my own ‘Dance to the Music of Time’ sequence. But I should hate to pass judgement.

This manages to press several buttons in Powell’s Journal entries – literature, genealogy, clubland snobbishness, assuredness of his own stature in relation to others. A similar swipe is taken at Graham Greene:

Pretty thin stuff. Deeply unpleasant fellow … highly conceited: he loathed handing out praise to his
contemporaries, retaining all his warmest approval for his own works.
In this case, however, Brown’s parody is so close to Powell’s own assessment of Greene and his work as to risk merging into it. The entry continues, however, in a manner that rescues its identity as a send up:
Later reread various fan letters confirming that I am the leading novelist of my generation. Why is it, one wonders, that my fans are so unusually percipient? Or is it the other way round, and do the unusually percipient tend to be my fans? One of life’s deeper questions. Must explore further.
There are also several Powell one-line literary reassessments: *Huckleberry Finn* is “very American”; Yeats’ poetry is “very Irish”; Dostoyevsky has “no light touch”. There are also recollections of a dinner party and a Buckingham Palace reception that ring very true to descriptions of such events in the *Journals*.
Powell’s friend VS Naipaul is one of Brown’s most frequent targets. His entries (one of which is quoted above) usually begin with a reference to the anniversary of the death of another artist or historic figure followed by Naipaul’s usually clueless dismissiveness of that that person’s accomplishments in contrast to Naipaul’s own. Joan of Arc was ruthlessly ambitious. She would do anything for immortality. It was she who built that bonfire, climbed up on it and set it to light. A typical attention-seeker, with nothing to show for it.
Perhaps the best is Jane Austen:
What small success she had didn’t last. She never married, whereas I have been married twice. She is little read except by sodomites.
Brown also particularly enjoys sending up Powell’s niece Antonia Fraser and her husband Harold Pinter. Their entries are among the most numerous as well as the funniest in the book. Fraser is usually in a position of explaining away some example of Pinter’s bad behaviour. On a trip to Cuba, Pinter complains to Castro that the American press has refused to publish his poem “Crap” and cites that as an example of the American suppression of free speech. Antonia joins in,
I adore free speech, don’t you? … So much better than expensive speech, especially at a time when things are so pricy! My new Jean Muir culottes cost me £600 – and that was in the sale.
Pinter is usually given a slow build in a poem or speech or even, in the December entries, a Christmas carol, in which he ends with some inflammatorily profane denunciation of US policy. Here is a typical example:
*The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea*  
*In a beautiful pea-green boat.  
They took some honey, and plenty of money  
Because they were fucking Yanks  
Sucking the shit out of the arse of the poor.*
Other diaries that may be of interest to Powell fans are those of James Lees-Milne (particularly the ones in which he describes his arrival in heaven as though he was inspecting a property for the National Trust) and Cecil Beaton (who finds almost every place and person he visits below his standards). The diaries of Martin Amis, Clive James and Christopher Hitchens (all of whom happen to be admirers of Powell) are also worth a look.
And don’t miss the diaries of the royal family and its hangers-on, as well as the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. George Lytton and Rupert Hart-Davis also get another mention similar to their satirisation in *The Marsh-Marlowe Letters*. Finally, Brown’s versions of Isaiah Berlin’s correspondence brilliantly send up his pious duplicity.

These “diaries” are enjoyable to read, especially if one is familiar with the works of the target. There are, however, many diaries for “celebrities” who are not primarily writers but TV, film or political personalities. Many of these will be unfamiliar to North American readers (such as this reviewer). Who, for example, are Gyles Brandreth (is he related, one wonders, to the Eton-educated Dr. Brandreth?), Max Clifford, Katie Price, Liz Jones, Nicholas Haslam, and Janet Street-Porter? Without knowing more about their personalities or why they are celebrated, the parodies of their writing fall rather flat. At nearly 400 pages, this is not a page-turner in the same sense as *The Marsh-Marlowe Letters*. On the other hand, browsing is not facilitated by the way the book is organized. One cannot, for example, easily read all the Powell or Naipaul or Fraser-Pinter entries together. An index might have helped, but there is none. Still, the parodies are no less funny for all that and will produce their intended laughter from most readers.

Another take on parody is in the recent collection of John Crace’s digested classic columns from the *Guardian*. These are published as *Brideshead Abbreviated*, although Waugh’s novel is only one among the 100 that are included. Crace set out to digest the 100 “classic reads” of the 20th Century as well as to parody them. In many cases his offerings are more digest than parody. But even in those where he does not parody the style of the writer in question, he offers satirical comments on that style or the characters and plot of the novel in question. He selects ten classics for each decade of the century, and they all seem to fall into an acceptable canon except for the last 15 years where canonization is perhaps a bit premature. Oddly missing from the list is anything by Graham Greene, David Lodge, Norman Mailer or Gunter Grass.

Crace offers a digest of Powell’s *A Question of Upbringing* as one of his 10 classics of the 1950s. He manages to include a decent summary of the book in three pages (the usual length for most entries). But this is one where he doesn’t attempt to parody the novelist’s prose;
instead he offers wry comments on the work. He pokes fun at Powell’s conceit in not naming his school (“there is only one so I need not be so vulgar as to name it”) and university (“there are only two”). He also satirizes Powell’s narrator as lacking any character of his own:

it might have been better if I had learned the value of having an emotional exterior world or anything approaching a personality … I had no thoughts of my own on the subject but continued my impression of a parasitic tabula rasa … to someone of my great sensitivities – not to mention lack of charisma – this was a major life event.

In summarizing the France chapter, the narrator concludes that “I – like you, I suspect – had long since tired of such a dull episode”. And he offers an ironic comment on Sillery’s tea parties, “Quite why I was considered interesting enough to be invited was never entirely clear”. A similar approach is taken to the digests of The Great Gatsby, Brideshead Revisited and Lucky Jim.

Perhaps the best entries are those where the summarization is itself a parody. In Henry James’ A Golden Bowl he describes sentences of breathtakingly meaningless construction, a construction given over to a detailed deconstruction of every nuance in each regard, a regard to which anyone else in their right mind would not have devoted more than a second.

That is a comment on James as if written by James himself. Crace takes the mickey out of John Buchan’s The Thirty Nine Steps by emphasizing improbable coincidences (an approach he might have artfully applied to later novels in Powell’s Dance cycle):

I had unwittingly stumbled on to the enemy’s lair. I quickly found some explosives, blew a hole in a wall and hid in a dovecote before running 20 miles to the derelict cottage of a roadman I had befriended earlier … I could sense my exploits would already have stretched the credulity of a 9-year-old.

Sometimes he seems to morph into a writer for BBC TV comedienne Catherine Tate as in his digests of The Catcher in the Rye (“I wasn’t that bovvered what I did …”) and A Quartet in Autumn (“What a fucking liberty,” repeated by one of the elderly women characters).

As with Brown’s Lost Diaries, Crace’s collection is not something to be read cover-to-cover. But it is easier to browse than Brown’s collection because it has a table of contents that facilitates selective reading. I recommend starting with the books you’ve read, then moving to the ones familiar from having read another work by the same writer or through dramatization and then, if you’re still enjoying it, you can proceed with those about which you know relatively little. Of the three collections under review, the one most rewarding for Powell fans is likely to be The Marsh-Marlowe Letters, which is also a good place to start if you’ve read nothing else by Craig Brown. ■
Retracing Braddock-alias-Thorne

by Jeff Manley

The Society is pleased to announce an important research expedition into literary archeology. On the day following the conference (Monday, 5 September 2011 at 1030 am) Jeff Manley will lead an expedition to discover the trail taken by the schoolboy characters in A Question of Upbringing, including (hopefully) the sites of the arrest of their housemaster Lawrence Langton Le Bas and the garage-cum-refreshments-shack.

The expedition will note other places of interest mentioned in Powell’s novels such as the Eton Police Station, Walpole House (where AP lived as a student) and the “Widmerpool wall” from BDFR. There will be a trek of about 2½-3 miles, mostly along public footpaths. Estimated duration 2-3 hours. Photographic evidence will be collected for the Society’s archives. Comfortable walking shoes should be worn. Anoraks optional.

At the end of the tour the group will adjourn to an appropriate venue for lunch. Those interested may wish to join an optional one-hour guided tour provided by Eton College covering the older parts of the college and the Chapel after lunch (1400 and 1515) at a cost of £6.50 (£5.50 seniors). If there is sufficient interest, a longer more specialized tour may be arranged.

Participation is limited to 14. Please contact Jeff Manley before 1st August to reserve a space: manleyjm@msn.com or 5900 Osceola Road, Bethesda, MD 20816, USA. A donation of £2.00 for the Society will be collected. Name, address/ email and number of persons participating should be provided in advance. Required reading: QU, Chapter 1 and “Follow the Eton Wick Road”, Newsletter, No 42, Spring 2011, p10.

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Annual General Meeting 2011

Notice is hereby given that the 11th Annual General Meeting of The Anthony Powell Society will be held on Saturday 22 October 2011 at 1400 hrs in the Meeting Room of St James’s Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1

Nominations for the three Executive Officers (Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer) and up to six Executive Committee Members must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 1 August 2011. Candidates must be proposed by two members, indicate their willingness to stand and provide a short biographical statement. Nominations will be accepted by email, post or fax.

Motions for discussion at the AGM must also reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 1 August 2011. They must be clearly worded, proposed by at least two members and contain a statement in support of the motion which will be published to members.

The AGM agenda and voting papers will be included with the Autumn Newsletter in early September. Proxy votes must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 17 October 2011.

The AGM will be followed by a talk

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

As an additional attraction at the Conference in September we plan to hold a charity auction, with all the proceeds going towards the Society’s plans to have a commemorative plaque to AP erected in London.

It is most likely that the auction will be held during the Buffet Reception on the Friday evening of the conference.

The Hon. Secretary would like to hear from anyone willing to donate items of Powellian interest to be auctioned.

WANTED URGENT

Merchandise Officer

With the impending implementation of the Society’s online shop, Graham & Dorothy need to hand over their merchandise role to another volunteer.

Are you that volunteer? Are you organised, able to use email and the internet, able to store the merchandise and based in the UK?

The Society needs you NOW!

Without a volunteer we will not be able to open the online shop and increase Society revenue.

Please contact the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible.

Bound Newsletter

Want a bound copy of the first 10 years of this Newsletter? Now you can!

We are planning to print a limited number of case-bound sets of Newsletter issues 1 to 41. Each set (almost 1200 pages) will consist of four volumes.

Sets will be available to members at cost by advance subscription only.

The final price will depend on how many sets are ordered but is expected to be around £80-£90 per set (plus p&p). This would compare favourably with the cost of unbound back numbers were they all available. Only the number of sets ordered in advance will be printed.

If you wish to reserve a set of case-bound Newsletters please contact the Hon. Secretary enclosing a £10 deposit, as soon as possible. The appropriate number of sets will be ordered for delivery (and final payment) later in 2011.

Recurring Credit Card Transactions

Due to the current banking regulations we are no longer able to process automatically recurring payments or store full credit card authorisation details.

Hence we are no longer permitted to process instructions such as “Please charge the card number you have on file” unless at least the (correct) 3-digit card security code (CVC) is provided.
Dates for Your Diary

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London Quarterly Pub Meets
Saturday 13 August 2011
Saturday 5 November 2011
The Audley, Mount Street, London W1
1230 to 1530 hrs
Good beer, good pub 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.

Annual General Meeting 2011
Saturday 22 October 2011
1400 hrs
Meeting Room, St James’s Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1
The AGM will be followed by a talk. Non-members are welcome at the talk.
Further details on page 17.
There’s also a rather good arts & crafts market in St James’s Churchyard, so you can solve those Christmas present problems early!

London Group Annual Powell Birthday Lunch
Saturday 3 December 2011
1230 for 1300 hrs
Queen’s Head & Artichoke
30-32 Albany Street, London NW1
The same venue and arrangements as last year. Bookings now open. Non-members welcome. More details to follow or from the Hon. Secretary.
Non-members welcome. Further details when available from the Hon. Secretary.

!!! NOW BOOKING !!!

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 the opportunity to hold the conference in the elegant surroundings of one of London’s most prestigious gentlemen’s clubs.

Invited Speakers
Glenmore Trenear-Harvey
Ferdinand Mount, Simon Vance
We have a stunning selection of papers: everything from Powell’s relations with other writers, through an enquiry into the Planchette episode to costume in Dance.
A Booking Leaflet is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Outline Programme
Plenary sessions: Friday & Saturday
Reception: Friday evening
Events: Charity Auction, Fitzrovia Pub Crawl, Coach Tour of AP’s London, Sunday Lunch
Some accommodation has been reserved at the Club and is bookable direct by delegates.
Society Notices

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 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 50 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, Kendal Road
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

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.

Copy Deadlines

Newsletter #44, Autumn 2011
Copy Deadline: 12 August 2011
Publication Date: 2 September 2011

Newsletter #45, Winter 2011
Copy Deadline: 11 November 2011
Publication Date: 2 December 2011

Secret Harmonies, 2011
Copy Deadline: 9 September 2011
Publication Date: 21 October 2011
Over the years I have become aware that many people don’t fully appreciate why merchandise, events, etc. cost what they do – it is one of those things that for most people is shrouded in fog. Indeed a few years ago I wouldn’t have known either. But then I got a lot of practice building project costings at work and translated that into pricing for the Society. So I thought it might be instructive for members to have an idea of how I go about it. (This is all self-taught, so it is my personal method and may not be technically the best way to do things, but it works.)

There are two very important lessons right here at the outset. Firstly this is all about realism, not dreams or wishes. Second is that although this realism is largely common sense it does involve rather more than is always obvious. It isn’t as simple as Joe buys a box of 50 lemons from Fred for £10 and sells them on at 20p each. That leads to bankruptcy for Joe.

I’ll use a conference type event as the framework here as it contains both fixed and variable costs, but the principles apply to pricing anything from conferences to lemons, aircraft carriers to socks.

The first things you need are some basic assumptions. The most important of these is how many tickets you are going to sell. Because how many you sell will massively affect the price you charge. The problem is that you often have to do this calculation before you know what the real costs will be (more assumptions) and certainly before you can sell any tickets.

In the case of this year’s conference in September, we had to finalise the delegate pricing in March (six months in advance of the event) before we could print the booking leaflets, before any money changed hands and long before we know what the actual costs will be.

So write down all the costs as best you know them. The venue will generally charge a per person cost for each attendee, which should be agreed and fixed in a contract of some form – you probably negotiated this, and got committed to a minimum number, months ago! Multiply this per head cost by the number of people attending – which will be more than the number of tickets you will sell because there will always be guests who don’t pay but for whom you are charged (eg. invited speakers). Do the same with any other per capita costs you have. And keep a running total.

Now add in all your fixed costs. The cost of room hire. The cost of hiring AV equipment. How much is printing flyers going to cost? And mailing flyers to people. Printing and mailing tickets. Don’t forget the cost of envelopes, postage, phone calls … and anything else relevant you can think of! These latter sound like silly amounts but they soon add up and can make a big difference. (Alternatively you have to know that the cost of items like postage will be paid from central funds – effectively a subsidy.)

Most important is not to forget you will be paying VAT (tax) on much of this; ensure you include the VAT too. I did forget the VAT once. It made a big dent in the balance sheet. And did I get a rocket!

Now for some extra realism! How certain are you that these costs are correct and there’ll be no increases or surprise bills?
Do you need to add some contingency in case of cost overruns? What would happen if the government suddenly increased VAT from 20% to 30%? As a general rule most people add 10% to the running total of costs to cover contingency. In the case of the 2011 conference we haven’t done this as the Trustees have agreed to underwrite any cost increases/overruns from the Society’s reserve funds. That’s one reason we have reserve funds.

If you are very lucky you might have some sponsorship, or a subsidy from the Treasurer, or some advertising revenue. If so deduct this amount from your running total.

Now you have your gross cost, which if you divide it by the number of tickets you’re going to sell, gives you the base break-even price. You do, of course, know accurately how many tickets you’ll sell don’t you? No? Neither do I. That’s part of the black art and another reason for adding that contingency.

Now comes the nice bit, for the Treasurer anyway … Profit! Do you want to make a profit? How much – 10% – 50% – 100%? Or are you aiming just to break even? If you’re planning for profit add that percentage to your break-even ticket price. Again in the case of the 2011 conference we are aiming purely to break even.

And we’re almost there. Some people, but not all, will pay by credit card, for which we pay a fee based on the transaction amount (ie. what the ticket sells for). So finally you need to add a small amount (say 1-2%) to the break-even price to cover this. (The alternative is to surcharge those paying by credit card, which no-one likes.)

At last you have the ticket price, except that it will be a silly amount like £27.39. Generally we now round this up, so the cost of the ticket becomes £28 or £30, so everyone gets to deal in round numbers (much easier for all) and you get a tiny bit extra contingency.

Now sell your tickets! If you sell more tickets than expected you start making some extra profit as your fixed costs get spread more thinly over more tickets. But if you don’t sell enough tickets you make a loss.

Remember … You will get this wrong sometimes! The more you do it the better you get. You get a feel for how many tickets you will actually sell – rather than what your wildest dreams tell you. You get better too by keeping a note of the actual costs incurred and value of sales made – a balance sheet for the event! Then you can see where you lost money or more hopefully how much profit you made, and why. You will also get a feel for whether you habitually over- or under-price things. I know I tend to over-price, so I try to compensate for this by not being too conservative when putting the costs together.

So, yes, it is an art, but hopefully one which is now slightly less shrouded in fog.
From Andrew Clarke

One of the two influences admitted by E Bosworth Deacon – “Bosie” to his friends – was the mid-19th century French painter Puvis de Chavannes.

From what I can gather on the web, this extraordinary artist was wildly popular during his life, and is claimed to have influenced many aspiring artists, just as the catalogue of the Deacon retrospective would claim that this neglected artist was a major influence on Patrick Proctor, Francis Bacon and David Hockney, for example. Puvis was also renowned for his murals, although like Deacon he would no doubt have rejected a commission for a fish-restaurant in Brighton or similar purlieus. And Picasso is said to have been fascinated by Puvis’ “Poor Fisherman”, just as Whistler found something to say about Deacon.

What strikes me about Puvis is that:

a. This is the man who put the morte into nature morte. The landscape in which his wraith-like figures find themselves is moribund.

b. The people within these waste lands seem curiously detached from one another.

c. While the females tend to be pale and almost lifeless, the men and boys have plenty of life in them.

All in all a mixture of emotional morbidity and homoeroticism that’s just right for Bosworth.

From Elizabeth Babcock

Puvis de Chavannes wasn’t trying for any kind of realism, not even the kind of hyper-romantic realism of the Pre-Raphaelites. Deacon might have enjoyed the male figures and obscure symbolism in his paintings, but I picture Deacon’s works as being more highly coloured, for one thing, and certainly less graceful – if you can’t portray the human body with conviction, better settle for symbolic form – Powell makes it clear that Deacon’s figures sometimes had “something wrong” with them.
From Andrew Clarke

I also see Puvis as a symbolist, very much so. It’s what he seems to be symbolising that I’m concerned about, as well as why Deacon regarded him so highly.

And if Deacon’s canvases were more colourful, he might owe that to the painter whom he regarded as his master, Simeon Solomon ...

It’s hard to know how “-symbolist” Deacon was; I’ve always had the impression that he preferred genre paintings of classical subjects, a theme that ties in well with De Tabley’s poetry and Le Bas’ taste for Victorian Hellenism. I wonder if the Le Bas poems which their author thought were awfully good but someone else thought awfully bad were also in the style of Andrew Young or Lord De Tabley? I wouldn’t be surprised if they were.

It would be easy to oversimplify these influences upon Deacon by lumping them all together as homosexual painters. That’s implied, certainly, but what Nick observes in *A Buyer’s Market* is that Deacon should have been another fair-to-average Nineties painter, but that he had somehow lost his way.

—

From Andrew Clarke

Here is what Powell wrote:

In fact Puvis de Chavannes and Simeon Solomon, the last of whom I think he regarded as his master, were the only painters I ever heard him speak of with unqualified approval. Nature had no doubt intended him to be in some manner an adjunct to the art movement of the Eighteen-Nineties; but somehow Mr Deacon had missed that spirit in his youth, a moral separateness that perhaps accounted for a later lack of integration.

[BM (Penguin), 9]

What on earth is “moral separateness” here? It doesn’t seem to be “moral” in the usual sense. Perhaps Powell means something more like “a refined sensibility together with the capability to discern and discriminate”, as someone like FR Leavis would talk about the moral sense of Henry James.

The “lack of integration” is partly explained a little later, although, characteristically, Powell does not give us any too-simple explanations:

I could not help pondering once again the discrepancy that existed between a style of painting that must have been unfashionable, and at best aridly academic, even in his early days; and its contrast with the revolutionary principles that he preached and – in spheres other than aesthetic – so some considerable extent practiced. I wondered once again whether this apparent inconsistency of approach, that had once disconcerted me, symbolised antipathetic sides of his
nature; or whether his life and work and judgement at some point coalesced with each other, resulting in a standpoint that was really all of a piece – as he himself certainly would have said – that made a work of art. [BM, 12-13]

Puvis de Chavannes and Simeon Solomon may have been many things, but it’s difficult to regard either of them as “aridly academic”. Something has gone badly wrong with the Bosworthian sensibility and I find myself more in agreement with the first of Nick’s alternatives. Whatever it was, it has certainly killed his imagination [BM, 13].

But here is another extraordinary comment:

I suppose it could be argued that upon such debris of classical imagery the foundations of at least certain specific elements of twentieth century art came to be built.

Who is Nick thinking of here? Braque? Cocteau?

It would be easy to describe Deacon as one of those bohemian artists who are 100% bohemian and 0% artist, to be found in large quantities in the bars of Soho and Dublin, and there’s an element of that too, but Nick, in prose of almost Proustian complexity, is trying to focus on something else ...

Any suggestions? ■

From Michael Henle
Here are my interpretations:

“Moral separateness”: The “separateness” is easy. Deacon is one of a number of Powell’s characters, most notably Widmerpool, who seem at odds with their community, who do not quite fit in.

Powell portrays Deacon’s vegetarianism and other unusual beliefs and activities as isolating him from normal society (particularly during his Parisian period), a separateness of which he is more or less proud, even defiant (in contrast with Widmerpool who wants very much to belong). The “moral” quality of Deacon’s separateness refers to the fact that the issues that Deacon has with society all have a moral aspect: the leftist politics, the pacifism, his art belonging to an earlier era (and having a homoerotic quality), even the vegetarianism. Deacon portrays himself and, in fact, is at odds morally with the mainstream. In the US these kind of issues are referred to somewhat obliquely as “social issues” but they are also moral issues.

“Lack of integration” refers to the fact not only that Deacon held beliefs and preferences at odds with each other and not well reconciled within his personality. The most glaring example is Deacon’s fevered interest in high society and royalty despite his professed distain for them. These warring aspects of his nature are
brought out strongly at Milly Andriadis’ party.

Puvis de Chavannes and Simeon Solomon as “arid academics”? Arid, I think, because of the pale colours, stiff, awkwardly posed figures, and anaemic compositions; academic because of their interest in portraying antiquity.

I have no idea what Powell was thinking, but to my own eyes Picasso’s Blue and Rose Periods paintings have a strong affinity with the works of Puvis de Chavannes at least. ■

From Nick Birns
I address a similar quote in A Buyer’s Market on page 99 of Understanding Anthony Powell:

In a key passage in chapter 3, Jenkins reflects on Barnby’s paintings possessing ‘a rather deceptive air of emancipation that seemed in those years a kind of neo-classicism, suggesting essentially that same impact brought home to me by Paris in the days when we had met Mr Deacon in the Louvre: an atmosphere I can still think of as excitingly peculiar to that time’. ■

From Bobb Menk
My own take on this is that “aridly academic at best” is a description of Deacon’s own style with “even in HIS early days” pointing back to Deacon & not those by whom he was influenced. ■

From Andrew Clarke
The moral separateness is not from his “community” – and what is Deacon’s community? – but from “the spirit of the eighteen-nineties”. That’s quite a different thing. Actually socialism, of a somewhat Fabian variety, seems to have been part of “the spirit of the Nineties”, as was Catholicism – it’s hard to imagine Aubrey Beardsley finding consolation in the writings of the austere St Alphonsus Liguori, but he did.

[“Puvis de Chavannes and Simeon Solomon as ‘arid academics’? Arid, I think, because of the pale colours, stiff, awkwardly posed figures, and anaemic compositions; academic because of their interest in portraying antiquity”. – from Michael Henle’s comment above.]

Puvis, perhaps, although an interest in antiquity doesn’t necessarily lead to academic art. Besides, I think the awkwardness may have other psychological causes – a sense of social breakdown, perhaps. Solomon, I disagree, because he has the brilliant colouring of the Pre-Raphaelites and I don’t find his compositions stilted at all. ■

From James Doyle
Interesting the affection that Nick feels for everyone and anyone who attempts to achieve – however grotesque he finds the results – some degree of integration through the arts. The catalogue of indefensible artistic endeavours that nevertheless seem to generate a wry tip of the hat is pretty extensive: Tokenhouse, Duport’s collecting, Conyers’ ’cello, Stringham’s caricatures, Odo’s verse. Appreciators also, like anyone who has “done his bit” in the war, seem to enjoy a degree of leniency. Maclintick for example, is a wreck, and a disobliging one, but seems to me to get marks for sincerity, almost an added measure of empathy because his failure is so complete. Duport’s opera-loving counts for him. When Templer, who had boasted of never
reading a book for pleasure in his life quotes a snatch of verse it momentarily suggests to Nick a whole new window on someone he thought he knew pretty well.

From Michael Henle
You absolutely are right about Simeon Solomon. His work does not lack colour.

And in A Buyer’s Market, Nick’s reference to “moral separateness” does refer immediately back to the eighteen-nineties. But “later lack of integration” broadens the reference, I think, to include subsequent times up to the present of the novel.

From Andrew Clarke
Looking at Puvis, the women tend to look like the ghost of Virginia Woolf while some of the men look like Tom of Finland. Looking at Solomon, the faces are largely epicene in the Pre-Raphaelite manner, but none the less sensuous for that.

The really big issue, I suppose, is what Nick meant by “the spirit of the eighteen-nineties”, and it would be easy to dismiss that as The Yellow Book and poor dear Oscar.

One useful starting point, or lowest common denominator, might be to consider the period as one seeking quite consciously to “make things new”, to be the antithesis of the great Victorians who immediately preceded them.

Hence the arts and craftiness, the socialism, the cultivation of an irreverent pose, as did PDO and the incomparable Max, the slightly self conscious savouring of the Sweets of Sin. Not to mention the influence of Verlaine, those delicate little poems about the streets of London, for example. Even converting to Catholicism was seen as something quite shocking, almost treasonable at that time.

Then of course, and most appropriately for Dance, there was the continuation of Victorian Hellenism, but in a more consciously sensuous way, and the locus classicus is probably “Cynara” which today sounds almost like parody, but there you are. This Greek manner may or may not have been accompanied by Greek Love, as Mr Deacon calls it.

Poor dear Edgar seems to have some nebulous sense of “making things new” – the vegetarianism, the socialism, the contempt for the Royal Academy, even the Greek Love. But he didn’t have the creative force to produce Beardsley “The Ascension of St Rose of Lima” so he finished up with “The Boyhood of Cyrus” and flogging probably homoerotic sketches of Grecian youths to Big Iron Men from the provinces.

I have the feeling that buried deep in Dance, Nick is feeling his way towards a theory of psychological types, without ever quite getting there, to avoid a pièce à thèse.
The Guardian asked 45 writers what book they would choose to give to a friend on World Book Night (the occasion of the giveaway of 1 million books under some sort of scheme to distribute 25 selected titles). Ian Rankin would give a copy of Dance (or the first 2 volumes):

When I was a student, a friend gave me the first two volumes of Anthony Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time (Arrow) for my birthday. I started reading the first book, thinking: not sure I’m going to like this. All snobby privilege and a world I won’t be interested in. By volume two, I was hooked. Widmerpool and the others were such good company, and the writing was elegant and concise, so I bought the rest of the books in the series.

From an article by Brian Turner, “Drinking in the Words”, about bookshop-cafes, in the Sydney Morning Herald, 20 March 2011:

Barter Books is a grand second-hand bookshop housed in the former Victorian-era railway station at Alnwick, Britain, an hour’s drive north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Behind the cash desk – in the former parcels room – hangs an iconic WWII framed poster, “Keep calm and carry on”, discovered in a box of books bought at auction. This aptly describes the no-fuss atmosphere of the self-serve tea and coffee parlour (20 pence in the honesty box, please) in the former station waiting room, replete with free newspapers, plush armchairs and sofa.

Savour its English quaintness and select a book from the Bizarre Books section (alongside the model railway) – say Coins of the British Empire, Tea Bag Folding or Secrets of Lock Picking, or even the 2010 winner of the British Bad Sex in Fiction Prize, Rowan Somerville’s The Shape of Her.

Prepare a cup of tea for yourself, settle down into a sofa beneath the painted ceiling mural of 33 life-size writers, who beam down upon you approvingly.

Time your visit for an author talk held in the ladies’ waiting room (blazing fireplace during winter) and stay overnight at a B&B to spend time trawling the bookshelves of one of Britain’s largest, yet one of its most curious, bookshops.

Suggested bedside reading: Anthony Powell’s Books Do Furnish a Room.
From an article by John Walsh in *The Independent*, 5 April 2011 “Can Journalists Ever Be Heroes?”:

Starting from the proposition that, if someone writes for a living he or she must aspire to write the finest possible prose about the most worthwhile subjects, authors in the past have dealt with the ethical chasm that separates the out-and-out hack from the fine and subtle poet he or she could become.

The dichotomy appeared most vividly in print 120 years ago, with the publication of *New Grub Street* by George Gissing. Ranged against each other, in Gissing’s 1891 work, are the figures of Edward Riordan and Jasper Milvain. The former is a high-minded chap determined to make his reputation as a serious novelist and refuse to compromise with the world of “commercial” fiction or newspapers (Gissing was just the same). The latter is a shameless, money-grabbing opportunist, who knocks off articles as though on a production line. “Your successful man of letters is your skilful tradesman,” he tells his sisters. “He thinks first and foremost of the markets; when one kind of goods begins to go off slackly, he is ready with something new and appetising”. It’s a battle of the hack versus the heavyweight. When Reardon, on the brink of financial ruin, tries his hand at a schlockly novel, he is too “good” to make it work, his fortunes dwindle further and his wife Amy leaves him. Milvain gets a job on *The Current* and marries Amy. In the struggle between Art and Hackery the latter triumphs, to loud boos from the reader.

A direct descendant of Milvain is “Books” Bagshaw in *Books Do Furnish a Room*, the 10th book in Anthony Powell’s 12-volume roman-fleuve, *A Dance to the Music of Time*. Bagshaw is the apotheosis of the hack journalist, omni-competent in mediocrity of all kinds: “He possessed that opportune facility for turning out several thousand words on any subject whatever at the shortest possible notice: politics; sport; books; finance; science; art; fashion – as he himself said, ‘War, Famine, Pestilence or Death on a Pale Horse’. All were equal when it came to Bagshaw’s typewriter. He could take on anything, and – to be fair – what he produced, even off the cuff, was no worse than was to be read most of the time. You never wondered how on earth the stuff had ever managed to be printed”.

Here we see Powell expressing his Gissing-like distaste for the kind of writing that comes too easily. Without mental struggle, and time set aside for mature reflection, he implies, writing can’t be any good. The good stuff should be left to the novelists. Journalists are just too damn free (or rather “facile”) with words.

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Men who talked or slept with her were often found frozen to death.

Anthony Powell
*A Writer’s Notebook*

The nearest some women get to being faithful to their husband is making it unpleasant for their lover.

Anthony Powell
*The Valley of Bones*
From a review by Jacob Heilbrunn of Charles Cumming’s novel *The Trinity Six* in the New York Times, 18 March 2011:

The five spies from Trinity College, Cambridge, may have betrayed their country during the cold war, but they performed an indisputable service for British literature. A number of works have either been inspired or enlivened by the misdeeds of Kim Philby, John Cairncross, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean and Anthony Blunt. In Anthony Powell’s panoramic *A Dance to the Music of Time*, for example, Lord Widmerpool gets into political hot water for what his wife derisively calls ‘his little under-the-counter Communist games’.

From Bonhams sale Papers and Portraits: The Roy Davids Collection Part II on 29 March 2011:

Lot No. 184
POWELL, ANTHONY (1905-2000, novelist)

PORTRAIT BY LUCINDA DOUGLAS-MENZIES (b. 1956), vintage photograph, silver print, half-length, in the background his Georgian house, The Chantry, near Frome, Somerset, photographer’s stamp, and her signature and name of sitter and date 11 April 1988 in pencil on verso, framed and glazed, size of image 11 x 11 inches (27 x 27 cm), overall size 19 x 18½ inches (48 x 47 cm), 11 April 1988

Sold for £384 inclusive of Buyer’s Premium

Footnote:
This portrait was taken on 11 April 1988 at The Chantry, Near Frome, Somerset, and was exhibited at Lucinda Douglas-Menzies’s exhibition *Portraits of Luminaries* at the Stephen Bartley Gallery, London, in 1988. An example of it is in the National Portrait Gallery.

Grolier Club

Several members pointed out that the illustration on page 18 of Newsletter 42 was in fact of the old premises of the Grolier Club, New York. The new Grolier Club building is shown on the left. We apologise for the error.
Evelyn Waugh Conference
Downside School and Abbey
Somerset, UK
16-19 August 2011

Each day there will be at least one session for the presentation of papers and discussion. Evelyn Waugh’s grandson Alexander Waugh, a distinguished author in his own right, will preside.

There will be at least two excursions, one to Combe Florey, Evelyn Waugh’s last house and the site of his grave. Other possibilities are Bath and Mells Manor, near Frome, where Waugh was often a guest of the Asquiths.

Registration is $100 for members and $150 for nonmembers; limited accommodation (room and board) is available at Downside School for $75 per day for members and $90 per day for nonmembers. Non-US registrants may pay equivalent amounts in local currencies in the UK, EU, Japan, Canada, India and Australia and New Zealand.

For information see http://www.evelynwaughssociety.org and click on membership

To register and for more information, please contact:

Dr John H Wilson
Department of English
Lock Haven University
Lock Haven
PA 17745, USA
Email: jwilson3@lhup.edu

Anthony Powell
Books Do Furnish a Room

War left, on the one hand, a passionate desire to tackle a lot of work; on the other, never to do any work again. It was a state of mind Robert Burton ... would have well understood. Irresolution appealed to him as one of the myriad forms of Melancholy, although he was, of course, concerned in the main with no mere temporary depression or fidgetiness, but a “chronic or continued disease, a settled humour”. Still, post-war melancholy might have rated a short subsection in the great work: The Anatomy of Melancholy.

Anthony Powell

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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Letters to the Editor

From Andrew Clarke

“Oh, he has not changed,” said Mr Amartinth. “That is so wonderful. He never develops at all. He alone understands the beauty of rigidity, the exquisite severity of the statuesque nature. Men always fall into the absurdity of endeavouring to develop the mind, to push it violently forward in this direction or in that. The mind should be receptive, a harp waiting to catch the winds, a pool ready to be ruffled, not a bustling busybody, forever trotting about on the pavement looking for a new bun shop. It should not deliberately run to seek sensations, but it should never avoid one; it should never put one aside from an absurd sense of right and wrong. Every sensation is valuable. Sensations are the details that build up the stories of our lives”.


Here is the Wikipedia stub:

The Green Carnation, first published anonymously in 1894, was a scandalous novel by Robert Hichens whose lead characters are closely based on Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas – also known as ‘Bosie’, whom the author personally knew. It was an instant succès de scandale on both sides of the Atlantic.

The reviewer for The London Observer wrote, “The Green Carnation will be read and discussed by everyone ... nothing so impudent, so bold, or so delicious has been printed these many years”.

The book features the characters of Esmé Amarinth (Wilde), and Lord Reginald “Reggie” Hastings (Douglas). The words put in the mouths of the hero and his young friend in the story are mostly gathered from the sayings of their originals. Robert Hichens spent nearly a year “in the company of the men” and was able to accurately recreate the atmosphere and relationship between Oscar and Bosie.

The book was withdrawn from circulation in 1895, but by that time the damage had been done. Wilde soon stood three consecutive trials for Gross Indecency and was sentenced to two years at hard labour. The Green Carnation was one of the works used against him by the prosecution.

Was “the Decadence” in Powell’s mind when he named St John Clarke’s novel? Was Fields of Amarinth also a succès de scandale in its day, that being why Le Bas was so sniffty about Nick’s reading it? We remember Le Bas’s pained reaction to Stringham’s quoting a villanelle by the original of Esmé Amarinth. Is there also the faintest of suggestions that St John Clarke may still have a whiff of the Nineties about him?

Anthony Powell’s A Dance to The Music of Time ... “a sort of up market Mrs Dales Diary”

[Robert Robinson; BBC Radio 4; “Brain of Britain”; unknown date]
From Robert Beasecker
I’ve just come across Blackwell’s A Catalogue of Books from the Library of Dennis Wheatley (Oxford, 1979). It contains 2274 priced items, from Harold Acton to Stefan Zweig. Among these are 15 Powell first editions, including all 12 Dance titles, Afternoon Men, Two Plays, and Infants of the Spring. All are inscribed by Powell to “Dennis Wheatley” or later to “Dennis”. The earliest inscriptions are from the autumn of 1970 and continue up to the time of Wheatley’s death in late 1977.

One of them, Books Do Furnish a Room, also includes a 21 January 1972 Powell letter to Wheatley in which the former asks for assistance:

Briefly, the situation is this; the new book opens with Widmerpool involved in trouble with his East/ West commercial/cultural activities, in which he has given something serious away to a Communist power ... Ideally, I would like something then to happen that gets him out of the bag ... but it did occur to me that you might have a suggestion.

A copy of Wheatley’s subsequent reply to Powell is also included, but unfortunately Blackwell’s is content only to give the tantalizing statement, “Wheatley reply of January 26 lists several suggestions for the development of the plot”. It would be interesting to know if Powell used one of Wheatley’s ideas. Wheatley’s name does not appear in the indexes of Powell’s memoirs.

The 1979 prices: most expensive was the copy of Afternoon Men (£150); Books Do Furnish a Room with the Powell letter was £100; the rest of the Dance series was priced from £45 to £60.

From Terry Empson
Apropos Colin Donald’s noticing Freddy Mercury’s reference to the last volume of Dance, do we exclude the possibility that it was in fact Burton that Mercury had in mind? Thousand year rages, flames burning one’s insides and so on seem more likely to derive from Burton than from Powell. Burton himself writes kindly of Mercury, claiming that “Mercurialists are solitary, much in contemplation, subtle, poets, philosophers ...” Queen fans will know the truth or otherwise of this.

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
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American High School student essays from John’s teaching of Dance at Philips Academy. Perceptive insights.
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Collected papers from the 2005 centenary conference at The Wallace Collection, London.
UK: £11 Overseas: £15

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Collected papers from the 2003 conference at Balliol College, Oxford.
UK: £7 Overseas: £11

Eton Conference Proceedings
Papers from the 2001 conference. Copies signed by the Society’s Patron.
UK: £6.50 Overseas: £9.50

Writing about Anthony Powell
The talks given at the 2004 AGM by George Lilley, Michael Barber and Nick Birns; introduced by Christine Berberich.
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The Master and The Congressman
A 40-page monograph by John Monagan describing his meetings with Powell.
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All issues available.
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Centenary Newsletter
120-page celebratory Centenary Newsletter (issue 21; December 2005).
UK: £5 Overseas: £7.50

BBC Radio Dramatisation of Dance
Originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4 between 1979-82. 26 one-hour episodes. Single CD containing 26 MP3 files. For copyright reasons available to Society members only.
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Simon Callow reading (abridged) volumes of Dance:
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Michael Bakewell, Fitzrovia: London’s Bohemia
Published in the National Portrait Gallery “Character Sketches” series. Snapshot biographies of Fitzrovian characters including Powell and many of his friends.
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Wallace Collection Poussin Postcard
The Wallace Collection’s postcard of Poussin’s A Dance to the Music of Time. Pack of 5. Picture page 22.
UK: £2.50 Overseas: £4

Wallace Collection Poussin Poster
UK: £7 Overseas: £9

Newsletter Back Numbers
Back numbers of Newsletter issues 9 to 19, 22 to 29 and 31 onwards are available.
UK: £2 each Overseas: £3.50 each
Society Merchandise

**Pricing Notes.** The prices shown are the Society members’ prices as of April 2011 and are inclusive of postage and packing.

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