Season’s Greetings
and a
Prosperous New Year
to all our
members & friends

Don’t forget to buy your
2013 calendar
See page 18

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2013 Society Calendar
The 2013 calendar is still available
See on page 18

Membership Office
It is with regret that, for personal and family reasons, Graham & Dorothy Davie are having to give up being our Membership Officers. In the absence of another willing volunteer, and to allow some development work on the membership database system, the role is being fulfilled, short-term, by the Hon. Secretary. Please send all subscriptions and membership enquiries to the Society’s main address.

Online shop
The long-promised online shop is now live on our website, www.anthonypowell.org. Visiting the site will allow you not only to order merchandise, but also pay subscriptions, pay for events and make donations.

Raise Money for the Society
See the article on page 21 about a new way to raise money for the Society via easyfundraising.org.uk. Members in the UK can now raise money for us just by buying from over 2,000 online retailers through this site.

Conference Reminder
Monday 7 January 2013
is the deadline for submitting proposals for papers to be given at the 2013 Conference. Details on page 18.

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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From the Secretary’s Desk

The Society Needs Your Help!

Volunteers Urgently Required

I make no apology for repeating what I’ve said here before and which Chairman Paul Nutley and I reiterated strongly at the recent AGM … We need more people to help run the Society. Without them the Society will wither and die. We have far more work than the current officers can do. This has been emphasised again recently as, for personal reasons, Graham and Dorothy Davie must give up as our Membership Officers, a role they’ve done for the last few years and which has been greatly appreciated – many thanks!! So we now need to fill the following roles urgently.

Membership Secretary
This is a critical role for the Society! Liaise with members, manage the membership list, send out subscription reminders, etc. You will need to be organised, have a PC, email & web access, be comfortable with money transactions and be based in the UK.

Merchandise Officer
We now have the online shop live and need someone to process the steady trickle of orders. You will need to be organised, able to respond to orders within a few days, have email, web access & some storage space and be based in the UK.

Events Organiser
Someone is needed to organise Society events (excluding the conference, AGM and Annual Lecture) in the UK, majoring on London and the South East where the bulk of members reside. You will organise events, book venues and speakers, learn the art of setting ticket prices and manage bookings.

Webmaster
This is where the Society started and it is still our major shop window. We need someone to regularly update the website and develop new content. PC literacy, ability to write good text and basic web authoring skills essential. This does not need to be a UK-based role.

Conference Organiser
The 2013 conference will be the last which I organise. By then I will have done six out of seven conferences and it’s time for someone else to have a go. So we need someone to take this on starting with the 2015 conference (for which work will need to start in 2013). This is a major role suited to someone with professional or management skills.

In all cases you will have the backup, experience and materials of the existing team to call on. And it all counts as “community give-back” on your CV!

Without volunteers to take on these roles, they are being neglected.
You will already have noticed we’re arranging fewer events.
This neglect means that eventually the Society will die.

We’ve all invested too much to allow that to happen, haven’t we?
Misha Black, Influential Designer

By Keith Marshall

Book jacket designers tend, in general, to be overlooked unless they are already quite famous characters like Osbert Lancaster or Mark Boxer. One such, who is important to Anthony Powell is Misha Black, designer of the original dust jackets for Powell’s first four novels: Afternoon Men, Venusberg, From a View to a Death and Agents & Patients.

Misha Black was born in Azerbaijan (then part of Russia) in 1910 and emigrated to Britain at the age of two when his family was forced to flee Jewish persecution. Black was one of four children who all made their mark on British society in different ways. His older brother Max became a Cambridge Professor of Philosophy; younger brother Sam an optician and latterly influential PR specialist; and his kid sister Rivka was a left-wing activist, active in the theatre and held a Senior Lecturership in Art at Goldsmith’s College.

In 1931 when Afternoon Men was being published Misha Black was a very young designer. He was barely 21 and had little formal training: some evening classes at Central School of Arts and Crafts – where Powell learnt the printing trade and Evelyn Waugh learnt carpentry – and a few months study in Paris. Nevertheless he had been designing posters for several years and was beginning to make his way as a designer.

In the early ‘30s Black was apparently touting his wares to anyone who would employ him, which took him to Duckworth’s where he was interviewed by Powell:

In the course of several years spent interviewing a steady stream of diversified callers at Henrietta Street, I had been impressed by the portfolio of a rather tousled young man, looking like an art student and even younger than myself, whose designs for book-jackets included several schematized through the medium of photography; then rarely used except in a straightforwardly representational way. He was called Misha Black (in due course knighted, architect and industrial designer of some fame), to whom I unfolded the theme I had in mind for the jacket of my novel. This was an artist’s wooden-jointed lay-figure (which I still possess), posed drinking a cocktail against a plain background. Black executed this subject to perfection. He was to carry out
similar designs for my next three novels. [Messengers, 184]

Although book jacket designs would, individually, have been small, relatively insignificant pieces of work, at least it was work in the era of the Great Depression and it all served to get Black’s name known. Moreover the designs captured the ethos of both the era and Powell’s novels.

While engaged with Powell’s book jackets, in 1934 Black joined the Bassett-Gray design consultancy, which was later renamed the Industrial Design Partnership (IDP). At this time Black does seem to have had something of a speciality for exhibition design. At the age of just 18 he had designed the stand for the Rio Tinto Company at the Seville Exhibition in Spain, and exhibition design continued during his work at IDP and included the interior for the British Pavilion at the 1939 New York World’s Fair. Later he was to make an important contribution to the 1951 Festival of Britain.

On the outbreak of WW2 Black joined the Ministry of Information and was given the job of principal exhibitions designer.

While still at the Ministry of Information, in 1943, he was one of the founders (with the Managing Director of Stuart’s Advertising Agency, Marcus Brumwell, and Milner Gray) of the Design Research Unit (DRU). This was one of the first generation of British design consultancies combining expertise in architecture, graphics and industrial design.

They anticipated a post-war demand for technical expertise and a need for “reconditioning and re-designing public utility services” and recommended “contact ... with the railway companies, motor coach lines and so on”.

Under the leadership of Black and Gray, DRU made important post-war contributions to the “Britain Can Make It” exhibition of 1946 and the aforementioned Festival of Britain. Indeed it is that involvement with the Festival of Britain that makes one begin to realise just how influential Black was and how iconic some of his designs have become.

DRU did indeed secure work for Britain’s public utilities. For example, in September 1956, the British Transport Commission had appointed a design panel
to advise on the best means of attaining a high standard of appearance and amenity in equipment design. DRU were responsible for the design of BR Southern Region Class 71 electric locomotives in 1958. And Milner Gray, Black’s partner at DRU, is credited with the design of the “lion, wheel and crown” emblem carried by the electric locomotives Black designed for BR’s London Midland Region.

When it came to the external design for the new Type 4 diesel-hydraulic locomotives for BR’s Western Region the panel again decided to commission Black and the DRU, then the foremost industrial design team in Britain. The Type 4s, now known as Class 52 “Westerns” after their naming convention, were outshopped between 1961 and 1964 with exterior design by Misha Black, although as with all great designers much of the work was done by his chief draughtsman, John Beresford-Evans.

Black was not just responsible for the body design but also the cab interiors and the cast metal number plates and crests. He was also heavily involved in the design of various liveries for the locos. Having been told to steer away from blue and yellow, Black proposed four livery schemes, recommending a turquoise blue as the most agreeable, for it indicated the “authority and dignity that these locomotives deserve”. This was, however, rejected and the initial loco, D1000 was outshopped in a warm fawn grey called “desert sand”. Other locos were released in maroon (which Black hated as he thought it “camouflaged” the design and made an “unimpressive” nose to the train) and green. But maroon won the day at BR with just one loco being retained in a golden ochre livery.

Despite losing the battle over the maroon livery, Black continued to do work for various transport authorities. He was involved in British Rail’s 1965 influential corporate identity project which included the new “double arrow” logo, the shortened name British Rail, and the network-wide adoption of Rail Alphabet for all signage.

Black was also responsible for the design of the famous black/brown/orange/yellow moquette originally used by London Transport and also the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive from the late 1970s. Personally I think that moquette is revolting and much prefer the green/red plaid-like designs of the 1930s.
and 1940s. But at least one can’t say the design wasn’t influential!

DRU was also responsible for the design of London Underground’s Victoria Line (opened in stages between 1968 and 1971) especially the stations with their light grey tiling and tiled pictorial panels. In this Black saw the opportunity to revive the design philosophy of Frank Pick, head of London Transport in the 1930s, who promoted a consistent corporate identity (at a time when this wasn’t thought important) along with high standards of visual style. Black also did work for the Hong Kong underground system.

Away from public transport Black was responsible for, inter alia, the 1967 Small Mammal House at London Zoo, the Time Life Building in London’s New Bond Street and (as early as the mid-1930s) the Kardomah Café in Piccadilly as well as numerous exhibitions and building interiors. In another piece of work Black was responsible in the 1960s for designing Westminster’s iconic street name signs (to which the London Borough of Westminster now owns the copyright) which have been widely influential across the UK.

Black wasn’t just a working designer; his influence stretched further into the profession. From 1959 to 1975 he was a professor of industrial design at the Royal College of Art, and President of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design from 1959-1961. He was knighted in 1972; between 1974 and 1976 Black was President of the Design and Industries Association; and he was active in the work of UNESCO.

Black was arguably the most influential design teacher of his generation, a gifted speaker and writer on design whose international standing was an inspiration to many students. A lifelong heavy smoker – you scarcely see a picture of him without a cigarette – he died on 11 October 1977 at age of just 67.

Sources
Adrian Curtis, “Western Revelation”, Railway Magazine, December 2012, 49-51

When in the spring of 1986 I read somewhere in the press that there were plans to televise the Dance, I thought immediately of something that had always bothered me. This was the awkwardness of the dialogue given to the Welsh other-ranks in The Valley of Bones. In any production aiming at realism these exchanges would surely stand out as unnatural. What I had in mind could be exemplified by the conversation between Sergeant Pendry and Corporal Gwylt on the quayside when the brigade lands in Northern Ireland. This includes the phrases ‘Ask not that of me’ and ‘Do not yourself wish’. This sounded to me more like poor literary translations than natural speech, and I could guarantee that no Welshman in ordinary conversation could ever have said anything quite as tortuous. It was not as if AP was deaf to the nuances of all Anglo-Welsh discourse. This lapse, as I considered it, contrasted, for instance, with his sureness of touch in the depiction of Lt Bithell, whose preoccupations and turns of phrase he had managed to make utterly convincing. With his Welsh other-ranks, however, he had, I felt, been less successful. This stood in marked contrast to the complete convincinglyness of the dialogue of Albert, Billson and Sgt Bracey in The Kindly Ones, all characters from similar social strata to the Welsh soldiers.

With all this in mind, greatly daring and without giving myself the opportunity for second thoughts, I wrote to AP (whom I had never met) outlining my anxieties and offering to suggest amendments, if he thought that might be useful. He would have been justified in ignoring such importunity, but in a very short time I received a carefully considered reply:

[9 April 1986]

Many thanks for your letter, the subject of which has already raised some interesting questions. When The Valley of Bones appeared there was a good deal of unfavourable criticism in the Welsh press as to the dialogue, so much so, that I wrote to Alun Owen, dramatist and impeccably Welsh, to ask if I should make substantial alterations when the book was reprinted.

I had never met Alun Owen, but he had early praised some book of mine, I rather think one of the pre-war novels, and I thought he would give an independent and intelligent opinion. He wrote back that he would reread The V of B, and report on it.

Alun Owen’s answer seemed to me of quite exceptional interest. He said: ‘No, this is not the speech you would get if you used a tape, but it is what you heard’. This seems to me an extraordinarily interesting comment, and gets to the root of all dialogue-writing in novels, in my opinion.

For example, if you took a Welsh miner to a London literary party, would it be correct for him to report back some completely accurate exchange between two intellectuals about, say, Structuralism? Would it not be nearer the mark for him to bring back sentences that were a parody of structuralist jargon, but not
the thing itself? I do not lay this down as a rule, but it seems to me to have great force as a possibility.

In other words, would it have been correct for the Narrator to have known exactly how Welsh miners speak to each other, rather than reporting bits, perhaps sometimes correct (some of The V of B dialogue being remembered verbatim), some undoubtedly inaccurate?

Quite separately, I asked another very authentic Welshman, Alan Watkins, whose journalism you may know in The Observer, who made a not dissimilar reply, saying that the irony and inversions seemed to him to be roughly right.

I am not really defending myself, but setting out some of the difficulties of the situation, and I would certainly be interested in your specific illustrations.

All this was extremely interesting. I had not been aware that the subject had been brought up before, but I was not entirely surprised, given the sensitivity of some of my fellow countrymen on all questions of our public portrayal. On this I had no anxieties: AP’s Welsh other-ranks are treated seriously and sympathetically, and there could be no suggestion that he was trying to turn them into pantomime characters, which is usually the burden of such objections.

AP’s defence – that the dialogue is as the Narrator remembered it, and so need not correspond exactly to what was said – had some validity. Must quotation always have exact verisimilitude? Perhaps not: to take a musical analogy, Delius or Vaughan Williams does not have to quote actual folk-songs for them to evoke Englishness: it is a question of their having absorbed the idiom. AP / Nicholas Jenkins had clearly not done so. This might have been in accordance with Jenkins’s character and so able to be justified on the printed page. But I was not convinced that what applied there could apply equally to dramatic representation, where one is inevitably less conscious of the presence of a Narrator, through whom what one is witnessing is being mediated. In drama, such aberrations from what would sound normal would tend to distance some characters from the rest of the action, which I was sure AP did not intend. I was also aware of an irrational feeling – no doubt born of my nationality – that these characters deserved to be represented as accurately as possible. So I went ahead, and on 23 April sent AP my suggestions, with an occasional note of justification (the page and line numbers refer to the Fontana edition, third impression 1977):

p 9, line 12
I’m telling you rather than Am I telling you.
Simple reversal of subject and verb isn’t very common.

p 14, lines 18-19
wanted to look at rather than did want to look at.
Uses of do and did: (1) for habitual action, in present tense only, eg. He do go there every week; (2) in a separate following phrase, to give emphasis, eg. Clean it, he did.

p 48, line 21
Perhaps Duw [dew] that’s a funny way to talk rather than So that’s a funny way..., which does not sound convincing.
Conversations are likely to be peppered with Duw (God), and also aye [ahee], used as if answering an
unspoken question, or as a kind of Amen to a statement.

p 48, line 28
Don’t go asking me that rather than Ask not that of me.

p 49, line 8-9
Don’t you wish … yourself rather than Do not yourself wish …

p 59, line 29
There’s a lot he do talk rather than What a lot he do talk, which sounds too ‘English’.

p 59, lines 32-33
It’s a funny way to talk, for sure rather than … speak, to be sure.

p 60, line 29
But have we got time rather than But have we time. Got is deeply ingrained in South Wales speech patterns.

p 60, line 30
We won’t have rather than We shall not have. The English shall and will are another difficulty.

p 61, line 3
Well, Gareth you talk about tarts rather than Why, Gareth …, which sounds very unlikely.

p 73, line 14
Captain do know rather than Captain does know. Do for does would be almost universal.

p 73, line 15
There’s excellent he would have been rather than very excellent …

[26 April 1986]
I really am most grateful for your emendations of dialogue in The Valley of Bones. They shall all go in when the next impression is printed. P.59 I altered to: ‘Bloody certain he is Germany will win the war. Why does he call it like that – Chairmany – it’s a funny way to speak, for sure’, in order to avoid two ‘sures’.

Dialogue causes endless trouble, and in the case of American speech Americans have been in complete disagreement with each other when I have consulted them. Of course one knows oneself when asked off the cuff what some semi-specialized expression would be, one is uncertain.

Anyway, thanks very much.

This was an extraordinarily generous response, and I found it not a little flattering that my suggestions had been accepted so readily by a writer of AP's stature.

However, as it turned out, the problem I had feared never arose, for when the televised version finally appeared some years later, none of the Welsh soldiers’ scenes was included in the production. Nor, to my knowledge, have any of my emendations ever appeared.

The letters quoted above have been deposited in the National Library of Wales.

What are the English like?
Worse answers might be given than ‘Read Aubrey’s Brief Lives and you will see’.

Anthony Powell
John Aubrey and His Friends
BOOK REVIEW

John Sutherland, *Lives of the Novelists: A History of Fiction in 294 Lives*
Yale University Press, New Haven, 2012, $39.95, 818 pages
Profile Books, London, 2011, £30.00, 816 pages

Reviewed by Jeffrey Manley

John Sutherland (b. 1938) is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at UCL and has published extensively on his subject. His specialty is the Victorian period. This rather daunting book (comparable in heft to a phone directory for a decent-sized city) is his attempt not at a “comprehensive” history of the English novel (a task he wisely deems impossible) but an effort to distill the lives and works of those novelists who have interested him. It is based on the premise (not universally accepted by novelists themselves or by his academic peers) that “the literary life and work are inseparable and mutually illuminating”. Without offering examples, he admits to including entries for some novelists who do not usually find themselves in the Eng. Lit. canon as well as excluding some who do. The choices are admittedly idiosyncratic but even so, with 294 having been included, some degree of comprehensiveness can be expected to have been achieved.

The entries are arranged by date of birth and extend from John Bunyan (1628) to Rana Dasgupta (1971). Some numbered entries include more than one novelist so that the total number of novelists considered slightly exceeds 294. Sutherland tries to avoid quibbling about his choices by insisting that they are personal. But as a teacher of English Literature, one wonders how he establishes a personal canon that includes Jacqueline Susann, Harold Robbins and Jeffrey Archer but excludes Ford Madox Ford, Ivy Compton-Burnet and John Galsworthy. This sort of selection process seems to have migrated from the idiosyncratic over into the eccentric. The cut of Ford is perhaps the unkindest of all since Sutherland includes an entry for Ford’s mistress Violet Hunt, with whom he later fell out. Sutherland mentions (perhaps with some irony) that Hunt “is best remembered to posterity as the original of Florence in Ford’s masterwork, *The Good Soldier*”. On the other hand, he concedes that her 12 or so novels are largely forgotten [251]. Sutherland also mentions Ford’s importance in advancing the careers of other writers included in this book such as DH Lawrence and Joseph Conrad (and, he might have added, Violet Hunt).
In the *New York Review of Books* (11 October 2012) Sutherland answered criticism by reviewer Robert Gottlieb of inclusion of too many second or third class novelists at the expense of those obviously of the first class:

> In any history of fiction, however angled, there will be ten thousand novelists excluded for every one included. Those excluded will, most of them, be what Mr Gottlieb calls them: “second- and third-raters”. But not, for that reason, wholly unmemorable. The first-raters get attention enough. Having taught, for forty years, in strict curricular confines, I know well enough who the first-raters are. The book was an attempt to give some tiny sense of what lies outside those confines. I would ask Mr Gottlieb to understand that the idiosyncratic selection he complains of was (however unsuccessfully carried out) principled, not the product of perverted judgment.

Fair enough, and in any event, it seems obvious that Sutherland doesn’t want his personal list of non-canonical writers to be taken too seriously. For example, he includes an entry for Lillian Hellman as a postscript to his entry for Dashiell Hammett with whom she lived during the declining years of his life. After conceding that Hellman wrote plays and memoirs, not novels or stories, he justifies her inclusion because one of her memoirs (*Pentimento*) notoriously contained a work of fiction, although not labeled as such. This was her story that she had been instrumental, at some personal risk to herself, in the attempted but unsuccessful rescue of a heroic member of the anti-Nazi resistance who was tragically murdered. It turned out Hellman had never (contrary to her memoir) met this woman nor passed any money to her nor placed herself at any risk. The woman was in fact inconveniently alive and well when Hellman’s memoir was published and turned into a popular film (*Julia*). Although Hellman’s lie was revealed and much written and talked about, she went to her grave a few years later without having offered any written apology or explanation.

By arranging the book as he has (by authors’ dates of birth) a few surprising things become clear. One is how few notable practitioners of the trade were born in the century and a half between its founders (Defoe, Fielding, Richardson and Sterne) and its masters (Thackeray, Dickens and Trollope). Aside from Walter Scott and Jane Austen there aren’t many worth considering. Moreover, it is also surprising how many masters of the trade are born in bunches. Thackeray, Dickens and Trollope were born within four years of each other as were George Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Henry Green and Anthony Powell. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in both cases, the bunched writers came of age just after the conclusion of major wars.

In most cases Sutherland provides a summary of the life and important works of the novelist, based on a primary source that is identified at the end of each article. He also recommends a “Must Read Text” or “MRT” for each author. The works discussed and recommended are presumably those that have been read by Sutherland over the years, and the number of the works considered varies widely from writer to writer depending on Sutherland’s own reading. In some cases, rather than summarize a writer’s entire
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life, Sutherland focuses on a salient event that may have been reflected in only one or a few works. For example, in the case of William Faulkner, the discussion is largely limited to his falsification of his military career in WWI, in that of Ernest Hemingway, his rivalry with F Scott Fitzgerald, and in that of Virginia Woolf, her obsession with sexual abuse in her childhood. Thomas Hardy’s entry is limited to a discussion of the hanging of women (with reference to the final scene in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*). Along with other single-themed entries, such as those for Norman Mailer, Iris Murdoch and Mark Twain, these are the most effective (or, at least, memorable) articles in the book.

For a British academic, Sutherland writes extensively and well about North American writers. His knowledge of America is probably attributable to his years of teaching at California Institute of Technology. He writes about many American genre writers not normally discussed by Professors of English Literature. These include Michael Avallone, Austin M Wright and Charles Willeford (mysteries) and Vernor Vinge (science fiction). One of his most eccentric selections (and one of the funniest) is that of William L Pierce, a former post-graduate student at CalTech, who is described as a Neo-Nazi. His MRT, *The Turner Diaries* (written as “Andrew Macdonald”), was labelled by the FBI as “the Bible of the Racist Right”.

Of most interest to readers of this newsletter is Sutherland’s entry on Anthony Powell. At 2½ pages, it is of about average length. The “Must Read Text” is *The Acceptance World* and the biography referenced is that by Michael Barber. Sutherland begins by quoting the opening scene of *Dance* and drawing the conclusion that, “No writer in England is more the master of the slow tempos of life than Powell”. The pre-war novels are wittily dispirited versions of the way we live now – or more precisely, how Powell’s class lived … What was unstoppably coming, of course – and one feels the imminence gathering through the *Dance* sequence – was another ‘Great War’, even more cataclysmic than the last.

That’s about all Sutherland has to say about the work. He doesn’t explain why he chooses *The Acceptance World* over the other novels as the MRT. But at least we are spared the usual charges of snobbery in Powell’s novels that tend to crop up in these thumbnail summaries.

As noted, Sutherland relies on Michael Barber’s biography for the life of the novelist. But as in other cases (eg. the entry for Evelyn Waugh) he gets several
details wrong. In discussing Powell’s early work in publishing, Sutherland notes that “One of his early signings was Evelyn Waugh, whose Decline and Fall would influence his own work”. Both parts of that sentence are correct, but taken together, they imply that Decline and Fall was published under the deal put together by Powell. Barber’s text makes it quite clear [59-60] that Waugh’s fictional writings were an opportunity lost by Powell’s employer, Duckworth, which demanded changes in Waugh’s first novel unacceptable to the author and were left with his travel books. In mentioning Powell’s marriage, Sutherland describes Lady Violet Pakenham as “an offspring of the English Catholic aristocracy” whereas her family were in fact land-owning Anglo-Irish aristocrats and, as such, formed part of the Protestant Ascendancy that dominated Ireland prior to its independence. I’ve seen that error before, probably based on the fact that Lady Violet’s brother Frank Pakenham was a Roman Catholic convert. But it’s not an error made in Barber’s text, which is the source cited by Sutherland. In referring to Powell’s scriptwriting, Sutherland infers that there was a short but remunerative spell of such work in Los Angeles. In fact, there was a relatively well-paid job at Warner Brothers UK studios in Teddington, Middlesex, but the later search for even better paid work in Los Angeles turned up nothing.

Malcolm Muggeridge is described as Powell’s “closest friend in later life” but, as Barber explains [245-48], this friendship was interrupted when Muggeridge published The Valley of Bones in an Evening Standard review in 1964, a point in time when Powell’s life had 36 more years to run. Sutherland’s descriptions of some of Powell’s other friendships are also a bit wet. He says that Powell “fell in with Henry Green and Cyril Connolly at Eton” and that [460] he was Green’s “closest friend”. Powell was never a friend of Connolly at Eton and Oxford but got to know him later in London. He had, indeed, known Green since before Eton at prep school and they remained friends throughout their school and university years, living in adjacent rooms in digs outside their separate colleges at Oxford where they jointly entertained at dinners. Michael Barber describes [56] Green as Powell’s “oldest friend”. To say that Powell was Green’s closest friend, however, seems a bit over the top. Powell summarized his friendship with Green in a 1992 interview with Green’s biographer as follows:

He was a very very complicated and tricky person. And although we knew each other so well, of all the people I’ve ever known I really never got to the bottom of him.

[Jeremy Treglown, Romancing (New York, 2000), 72 (emphasis in original)]

In his Journals, this is how Powell summed up their relationship:

My final judgement on Henry, my oldest intimate friend, who meant a great deal to me when we were both growing up, is that he was really rather a shit. His behaviour to his friends, stinginess, inordinate snobberies, treatment of Dig, vanity about his supreme importance as a writer, combined with no very keen intelligence, all emerge again in rereading Waugh’s Letters, which I am now doing.

[25 February 1991; J90-92, 95]
Sutherland’s description of this friendship appears in the article on Henry Green, and it may be a more accurate description of the friendship from the perspective of the prickly and relatively friendless Green to say that Powell was Green’s “closest” friend. But the reverse would be a stretch.

Sutherland also oversimplifies and confuses Powell’s friendship with Evelyn Waugh by writing that at Balliol College, Oxford, Powell “fell in” with Waugh. Sutherland is well aware that Waugh attended Hertford, not Balliol College and makes rather a meal of this in his entry for Waugh [437]. He should have simply referred to Oxford as the place where Powell and Waugh met without adding the additional detail of Powell’s college. This tendency to include gratuitous but questionable details also trips Sutherland up in other entries. For example, he describes JD Salinger’s father as being an importer of “kosher cheese and ham” [556] in what may have been an effort to add an ironic twist to the job description while displaying a bit of clever insider knowledge of kosher dietary law. His source for biographical detail, however, carefully avoids any reference to the cheese on offer as being kosher (describing it instead as “European”), while both the biography and Salinger’s New York Times obituary are satisfied to note the irony of a Jew selling these foods in combination, and leave it at that, without labeling the cheese as “kosher”. Except for getting Lady Violet’s religion wrong, most of these faulty factual references are due to careless drafting and lack of editorial attention. Sutherland’s judgment of Powell’s work and standing as a novelist are sound as these things go. His overall conclusion is that Powell’s works left a “literary sequence to rival Balzac’s”. He might have made a better job of Powell’s life if he had paid more attention to the details or simply left unnecessary details out, but on the whole, his description is a fair and balanced one.

Sutherland’s book is meant more for entertainment and enjoyment than it is as a reference text. As the former it succeeds, although with its considerable heft, it looks and feels more like a reference book than a lightweight bedtime read. The entries are well written and informative, especially about writers to whom one might not have given much thought before reading it. It may help a reader to decide whether to try a book by one of these lesser-known novelists and perhaps which book to choose. Or it may make one want to know more about the life of one of the novelists and where to look for that.

The book does, however, at least purport to have been based on existing biographies, and the number and types of problematic references that appear in the
Powell entry are really not acceptable. This reviewer makes no claim to possess the knowledge needed to have subjected other entries to the same scrutiny as that applied to Powell, although the entry for Evelyn Waugh also contains a number of similarly faulty details. Based on these errors one would be well advised to proceed with a certain degree of caution in accepting the factual premises underlying Sutherland’s “lives”. No doubt the same caution should be exercised with respect to factual assertions in Dr Johnson’s or Sir Walter Scott’s volumes that inspired the present work, although the biographical references available to those predecessors were a good bit less extensive than those available to Sutherland. In addition, based on a substantial number of the novelists’ lives Sutherland writes about, anyone considering taking up that profession would be well advised to stay away from alcoholic beverages and avoid any vicinity in which the tuberculosis bacillus might be lurking.

Finally, although Sutherland, as noted previously, is knowledgeable about American literature, there are several problematic references in his articles that are those of a non-native and should be considered as candidates for modification in future editions:

- It is more than a bit misleading to describe TS Eliot as “a Southerner by birth” [611]. He was born into a transplanted New England family in St. Louis, Missouri (a border state – slavery was legal but it remained in the Union). His grandfather, a Unitarian minister, emigrated from Boston in 1834. He was an abolitionist who supported the North in the War Between the States and actively opposed Missouri’s secession. Eliot’s mother grew up in Massachusetts. He was educated in a school (the Smith Academy) founded by his grandfather and went to prep school and college in New England, where he also spent his childhood holidays. The recordings of his voice do not exhibit any tinge of a southern US accent.
- F Scott Fitzgerald’s father worked for Procter & Gamble; that was not, however, in the period of his employment, a “pharmaceutical company” [396] but a soap company.
- It is not American usage to say that a dead body was found “at Long Island” [430]. It could be found “on”, “in” or “near” but not “at”. Pennsylvania, unlike New York, does not have an “upstate” region [431], but is customarily divided into an east (Philadelphia, Bethlehem and Scranton), west (Pittsburgh) and middle (everything else). It was once described as two major eastern US cities with the state of Alabama in between. John O’Hara’s birthplace in Pottsville would be in the middle.
- Donald Barthelme did not attend the “University of Texas at Houston” [651] but the University of Houston, and the “Ivy League Pennsylvania University” [651] is more properly called the University of Pennsylvania or “Penn” [cf. 790] to distinguish it from the more humble Pennsylvania State University or “Penn State”.
- It is Prince Edward Island in Canada, not “St Edward’s Island” [658], an error that should have been caught since it is correctly named in another entry [715].
- And, while not an American reference, the Nazi takeover in Germany was in 1933, not 1923 [786].
Dates for Your Diary

Radio Programme

The Man Who was X Trapnel

Thursday 13 December
1100 hrs
BBC Radio 4

A programme celebrating the centenary earlier this year of Julian Maclaren-Ross, acknowledged model for X Trapnel.

Narrated by DJ Taylor it includes contributions from Tristram Powell, Anthony Thwaite and Maclaren-Ross’s biographer Paul Willetts.

It should be well worth hearing. Hopefully the BBC will put the programme on their “listen again” facility for those who can’t catch it live.

Don’t forget to order your 2013 calendars!
(see page 18)

Hon. Secretary’s New Year Brunch

Saturday 12 January 2013
1000 hrs
Le Truc Vert
42 North Audley Street, London W1

Want a late New Year celebration? Or just something to enliven the dull days of winter? Whichever it is why not join the Hon. Secretary for Saturday brunch in the heart of Mayfair?

North Audley Street is a just short walk from Marble Arch tube station and convenient for Oxford Street shopping as well as exploring Powell territory around Hill Street, Berkeley Square and Shepherd Market

This is a pay on the day event, but please book with the Hon. Secretary (contact details on page 2) so we ensure we have a large enough table!

Non-members will be welcome

London Quarterly Pub Meets

Saturday 9 February 2013
Saturday 11 May 2013
Saturday 10 August 2013
Saturday 2 November 2013

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?

Non-members always welcome

Further details from the Hon. Secretary
2013 Calendar
Anthony Powell’s London

We are pleased to announce availability of the Society’s 2013 calendar featuring thirteen specially commissioned photographs by the Hon. Secretary, Keith Marshall, showing aspects of Anthony Powell’s London as it is today. Includes: Albert Memorial, Hill Street, Maida Vale Canal, Ashley Gardens and Chester Gate.

One month to a page, printed on card and designed to be hung on the wall. A4 size (210 x 298 mm). Shrink wrapped and mailed in a stiffened envelope.

Members’ Price: UK: £7, Overseas: £11 (inc. p&p). Copies may be ordered from the Hon. Secretary.

Members’ Price: UK: £7, Overseas: £11 (inc. p&p). Copies may be ordered from the Hon. Secretary.

7th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference 2013

Anthony Powell
in the ‘20s & ‘30s

Friday 27 to Sunday 29
September 2013

Eton College
Eton, Windsor, UK

We are delighted to announce that the 7th Biennial Conference is to be held at Eton College, Powell’s alma mater

Proposed Outline Programme
Plenary Sessions: Friday afternoon and Saturday
Reception or Dinner: Friday evening
Events: Friday morning, 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 in the ‘20s and ‘30s.
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 Monday 7 January 2013.

Further details in the enclosed flyer

Provisional conference bookings may be made now with the Hon. Secretary.
**Society Notices**

**Local Group Contacts**

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

**NY & NE USA Group**
Area: New York & NE USA  
Contacts: Nick Birns  
Email: nicbirns@aol.com

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

**Nordic 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.

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**Subscriptions**

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due annually on 1st April and that rates remain unchanged this year (see back page). Reminder letters are sent during March to those whose membership is about to expire.

Anyone whose membership is expired will be removed from the membership list at the end of June.

Printed reminders are a drain on our resources as they cost, on average, over £1 each. Consequently we will be using email wherever possible, so please keep a look-out for emails from the Society.

Subscriptions and membership enquiries should be sent to the Hon. Secretary at:

**Anthony Powell Society Memberships**  
76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, UB6 0JW, UK  
Email: membership@anthonypowell.org  
Phone: +44 (0) 20 8864 4095  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483

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**Contributions to the Newsletter and journal Secret Harmonies** 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

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**Newsletter Copy Deadlines**

*Newsletter #50, Spring 2013*  
Copy Deadline: 8 February 2013  
Publication Date: 1 March 2013

*Newsletter #51, Summer 2013*  
Copy Deadline: 17 May 2013  
Publication Date: 7 June 2013
Society Notices

Welcome to New Members
We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following who have joined the Society in recent months:
- Senator Robert Carr, Foreign Minister of Australia
- Ian Colquhoun, Norwich, UK
- Warwick Cowan, Speen, UK
- Ashley Herum, Seattle, USA
- Florian Lottmann, London, UK
- Mary McDermott & Bill Jongeward, Waynesboro, USA
- Paul Milliken, Woking, UK
- Garbriel Pretus, Barcelona, Spain
- Paul Schlitz, Baltimore, USA
- Thomas Siedell, Cockeysville, USA
- Ronald Wiber, Hamilton, Australia

Sad to Report
We regret that over recent months we have been informed of the deaths of the following Society members:
- Elizabeth Dix, Australia
- Terry Empson, Kew, London
- Hans Johansson, Sweden

Our condolences are extended to all their families and friends.

A low melancholy wailing ... notes of a hidden orchestra, mysterious, even a shade unearthly, as if somewhere in the vicinity gnomes were thumbing strange instruments in a cave.

At Lady Molly’s

Terry Empson Bequest
Terry Empson (below) was a Powell enthusiast and a longstanding member of the Society who made many thoughtful contributions to the APLIST.

Following Terry’s death earlier this year, his daughter, Prof. Laura Empson, and son, Nicholas Empson, have graciously donated his collection of some 53 Anthony Powell books to the Society in memory of their father.

The volumes, which were very much a cherished working collection, have formed the Terry Empson Bequest and are now housed in the Society’s archive.

The Society is deeply grateful to Laura and Nicholas, and the other members of Terry’s family, for this thoughtful gesture.
Thanks to Vice-President Julian Allason we now have a new, improved way for UK members with online access to raise money for the Society without it costing a penny more than normal.

**easyfundraising.org.uk** helps charities, schools, sports clubs, community groups, and other good causes to raise money when their supporters shop online. It works in a similar way to many other loyalty shopping sites, but instead of earning points when you shop, you raise a donation for your cause instead. You can shop with over 2,000 well known stores and each will donate a percentage of what you spend. For example, John Lewis will donate 1%, Amazon 2.5% and Body Shop 6%. It’s as simple as that!

Other retailers include M&S, Argos, Virgin, eBay, Debenhams, Tesco, GAP, Boots and Majestic Wine.

The Society is already registered as a recipient, so all you have to do is visit **easyfundraising.org.uk**, sign up and choose the Society as your chosen charity.

Then whenever you shop online you access your chosen retailer through the **easyfundraising.org.uk** site. The resulting sale will automatically generate a donation from the retailer to the Society via **easyfundraising.org.uk** – and you will get to see how much each transaction generates.

In a four week trial I have raised almost £20 for the Society just by doing what I would normally do. Now that has to be worthwhile and knocks spots off what we currently earn in commission from Amazon UK sales.

What is even better is that if you are a UK taxpayer you can also Gift Aid the donation you generate. We get told every quarter how much your donations amount to and we claim the tax back from HMRC. (We do not get to see where the money was spent or on what!)

Yes, it really is as simple as it sounds!

You can also raise extra pennies by using **easysearch.org.uk**. This free search engine raises funds for your good cause whenever you use it. For regular internet users those pennies will soon accumulate into pounds for the Society.

Raising this sort of income for the Society will all help in the battle to stave off increases in membership subscriptions.

By the time you read this there should be a link to **easyfundraising.org.uk** on our website – so there’s no excuse for not buying those last minute Christmas presents this way!

Regrettably this appears to work only for UK retailers. If anyone knows of other such non-UK schemes (especially a US one) please let me know!

For more information on how the scheme works see [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/how-it-works/].
AGM Report

By Paul Nutley, Chairman

As last year, the Society held its Annual General Meeting in one of the meeting rooms at St James’s Church, Piccadilly; the Borage & Hellebore talk by Nick Birns was also held there earlier in the year. This time we had a soundtrack, and company. The meeting coincided with the anti-austerity march in London, and the marchers’ chants and drumbeats percolated into the room at several points. The company was provided by the TUC, who had hired the other meeting room as their headquarters for the day. Sadly, no member could be persuaded to dress up as St John Clarke and be pushed along Piccadilly in a wheelchair calling for the abolition of the means test.

The formal business of the meeting was not contentious; as usual, the minutes will be included with the Spring Newsletter. The Annual Report and Accounts were presented to the meeting, and accepted unanimously. The three retiring trustees (Stephen Holden, Keith Marshall and Tony Robinson) were re-appointed unopposed, for the normal three year term. As dealt with in the revised constitution approved last year, there was no election for officers; these will be appointed from amongst the trustees at their next meeting.

A number of points were then raised and discussed. The annual lecture held in collaboration with the Wallace Collection is sold out. This has been a very successful event for some years, and it would surely be possible to sell more tickets if they were available, but it was agreed without question that the lecture theatre at the Wallace is its natural home. Arrangements for the 2013 conference at Eton were discussed. New developments in the shape of the online shop and the 2013 calendar were aired, as was the old but increasingly significant question of the cost of postage.

Again, both Keith and I stressed that ways must be found to spread some of his workload amongst others of us. If this is not done, it is likely to threaten not just the wellbeing of the Society, but its existence.
Following the meeting, John Blaxter gave a talk on Anthony Powell’s roots in the former county of Radnorshire, copiously illustrated by slides taken by him on an admirably energetic walking tour. Powell covers this background in the early pages of *Infants of the Spring*, and John had tracked down, photographed and researched many of the places he refers to in this largely remote and unspoilt region. The village of Leintwardine presumably provided Ada with her surname; whether the Gwatkin cider John had found being produced in the area was known to Powell when he named Rowland I don’t know, but apparently the product was excellent. We are looking at how to make John’s text and delightful photographs available to a wider audience.

We left St James’s just before five; the march had passed by, and Piccadilly was back to normal.

By chance I came across a reference to St James’s a few weeks later, in the late Dominic Hibberd’s book about Wilfred Owen’s last year. In January 1918 Owen was a guest at Robert Graves’ wedding, which took place at St James’s. Other guests were Oscar Wilde’s champion Robert Ross, and Charles Scott Moncrieff, later to translate Proust. A tenuous Powell link is that “Graves’ publisher Heinemann” was also invited, though it is not made clear whether or not he attended. Heinemann (the company) of course later published Dance, beginning with *A Question of Upbringing* in 1951 some 32 years later.

The church of St Michael, Clyro, Radnorshire in the heart of Powell ancestral lands was featured in John Blaxter’s talk at the AGM. Francis Kilvert, Victorian diarist, was curate here between 1865 and 1872. More of John’s superb photographs on pages 31-33.
From Elizabeth Babcock
Sorry to be so dumb; it has recently occurred to me that I can’t remember the Nazi death camps mentioned in Dance, though I have read the third movement three times. Am I just suffering amnesia or what?

From John Gould
The “death camp” story from the third movement – and it’s not precisely a death camp – that I recall is the Katyn atrocity, which of course was not a Nazi event, but a Russian one.

From Colin Donald
Elizabeth, You are right, there is no mention of Holocaust, an odd omission in such a wonderfully inclusive work. There was some debate about this some years ago on APLIST, after the late Christopher Hitchens raised it in a brilliant piece (mainly) in praise of Dance. I agreed it was a weakness, but plenty made the point that AP was not obliged to include everything major in 20th century.

From James Doyle
Curiously the closest thing to a mention is Kenneth’s pre-war prediction that anti-Semitism will be dropped from Hitler’s program. That moment seems to me to indicate that certain historic events (such as the horrible falsification of Kenneth’s prophecy) are so enormous that readers can be counted on to have registered them. Hiroshima isn’t mentioned either.

From Prue Raper
Famous non-mention: Jane Austen never mentioned the Napoleonic wars.

From Jim Scott
So far as I can recall, it is true that Jane Austen never mentions the Napoleonic wars by name. At the same time . . .
In *Persuasion*, Captain Frank Wentworth makes a fortune in prize money during an unnamed war. In *Mansfield Park*, we learn that Fanny Price’s brother William, a midshipman, sees service in the wartime navy. And I’ve always taken it for granted (perhaps incorrectly) that, in *Pride and Prejudice*, the movements of the militia regiment to which George Wickham attaches himself suggest that a war is taking place somewhere in the background.

Given that Austen wrote all of her novels during or shortly after the Napoleonic wars, maybe she assumed that there was no reason to mention those wars by name – her audience would have known which war she was talking about.

From John Gilks
You are absolutely correct. Militia regiments would only be called out (or embodied as Captain Widmerpool insists) in time of war or impending war.

From Andy Goss
My parents never said much about the war years. While I believe they were well aware of manifest evil across the Channel, they had more immediate matters to attend to.

Growing up in the UK in the Fifties, what was then referred to as Hitler’s “Final Solution” was just one facet of a war still looming over the landscape like a huge, persistent toxic cloud. While by then aware that the Nazis had committed almost unbelievable atrocities, people were more interested in the conduct of the war, events, and memories that they could relate to.

AP set his focus to close-up, a Jenkins-eye view of the times. Clouds gather, rain falls, the sky clears, we furl our umbrellas and move on.

From Elizabeth Babcock
It still seems odd to me. I mean, hearing of the Nazi death camps, piled high with corpses and crammed with skeletal survivors … unless put in the context of a phenomenon when something occurs so out of our ken that we cannot take it in. Recently reading Bill Bryson’s *In a Sunburned Country* (a fabulous read by the way): apparently when the white settlers/prisoners arrived, aborigines there went on with their activities entirely ignoring the foreigners coming ashore, as if they were invisible. This phenomenon is also described in *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*.

Jenkins is closely involved in the discovery of the Katyn massacre, and also perhaps AP felt that Katyn was an event comparatively little noticed, and needed to be better known. That’s the best I can do to explain this omission.

From Jeffrey Manley
AP was right about Katyn being ignored even today. I just watched a BBC4 series on WWII made in the 1990s in which one entire episode was devoted to how the Germans organized Poland during the war and set up the whole chain of death camps. If Katyn was mentioned, I missed it.

From Noreen Marshall
But why? As both Keith Marshall and Andy Goss have pointed out (and I’ll add my four pennyworth too), the Holocaust was not that much dwelt on in post-war
Britain. It really wasn’t. Even people who had fled Nazi-occupied Europe, and even those who had miraculously survived the death camps there, Did Not Talk About It. In some cases they had been too badly damaged by it, in others it had been just one facet of a horrendous time in everybody’s lives.

There is now so much discussion of the Holocaust that this may seem difficult to believe, but there it is. No use looking at it from today’s standpoint – that was on another planet and in another century, as it were.

From Jim Scott
This discussion has led me to wonder what purpose would have been served by Powell choosing to mention the Holocaust in Dance.

In bringing up the Katyn massacre, Powell brought to our attention something that most of us were ignorant of at the time.

And the reaction of Tompsitt and Widmerpool to the massacre (or, more precisely, their reaction to the Poles’ reaction to the massacre) tells us something about Tompsitt and Widmerpool. But what could Powell have done with the Holocaust? Is there any reason to believe that Powell was blessed with any special insights that he could share with us that would enhance our understanding of that event? If not, what would be the point in his bringing up the subject?

Although I can’t think of any offhand, I would imagine that there were other distinguished authors writing in the 1960s who set novels in wartime England and failed to mention the Holocaust. Are those authors routinely criticized for this omission?

From Jeffrey Manley
Evelyn Waugh inserted a story about the Nazi persecution of (and British Army indifference to) Jewish refugees in Yugoslavia into the final volume of his war trilogy. Christopher Hitchens, otherwise a great admirer of Waugh and staunch defender of human rights wherever they may be threatened, condemned that story as one of the worst things Waugh ever wrote. So, you can’t win.

From Rob Friedman
Is this “Compassion”? If so, what was the nature of Hitchens’ critique?

From James Doyle
Mention of the Holocaust would have served no artistic purpose; mention of the failure to mention served Hitchens’ purposes. Moral superiority was part of his stock in trade. Positioning himself as the Orwell of his era (even if through Hitchens’ lens, Orwell had a few weak points too) he had a pretty good run. The point, I think, was that while Hitchens himself was over-committed and simply did not have the time to write a superb 12 volume work of art, he was not so morally compromised as to have omitted the Holocaust if he had. Nor would he have omitted mention of Fascist elements in the British upper-classes, or a stern admonishment of Franco.

Powell was the son of a regular infantry officer who could have had no illusions about the life expectancy of a junior
infantry officer in the coming war, but moved heaven and earth to get a commission in a line infantry regiment nonetheless. I don’t think he has to answer to Hitchens on this. Admittedly, my reaction may be coloured by a couple of encounters with Hitchens early in his Stendahlian career, although I’ve found his writing entertaining since.

From Jeffrey Manley
In reply to Rob Friedman, Waugh’s story of the Jewish refugees started out as the short story “Compassion” but then was incorporated largely unchanged into Unconditional Surrender. Hitchens found Waugh’s descriptions of the Jews as lacking any colour or life or dignity of their own, included in the novel as makeweights or “extras”. He questioned whether their inclusion may have been a clumsy atonement written years later for Waugh’s actual views at the time (ie. during the war). “The passage is one of the most bogus and leaden things [Waugh] ever wrote, fully materializing Orwell’s earlier misgivings”. All this is from Hitchens essay “The Permanent Adolescent” reprinted in Hitchens’ final collection Arguably.

From Elizabeth Babcock
It could be argued that mentioning the Holocaust in Dance would have served no artistic purpose, maybe even created some imbalance. However, I still think it is an interesting question, and not one to be boldly dismissed as being unfair to Powell. “What other writers have been criticized for not including the Holocaust ...” If as one poster says, people in England didn’t talk about the camps, it is interesting that they did not. True, they wanted to leave the war behind them. But I can’t help but speculate that the entrenched anti-Semitism in British society played a role. I am not Jewish, or a partisan of Israel, but that does not mean that I am willing to downplay the role of anti-Semitism in society. I am not attacking Powell as an anti-Semite, and is unfortunate that I even need to say this. Such choices (including mention, or not) are just part of the whole soup of twentieth century life, and Hitchens’s complaint is another facet of that. I am American, and liberal politically, yet my favourite writers are/were, many of them, conservative. That is an artistic choice.

The traditional, classic, restraint of conservative writers pleases me in contrast to the emotional wallowing in so much late twentieth century authors, particularly

From Rob Friedman
Thanks for this. I found the story odd – on one hand the British major is portrayed as naive (particularly about the brutality of the Communists and the after effects of his efforts to assist the Jews); on the other hand the Jews are depicted as partisans with tart tongues rather than as survivors of the most brutal crime in modern history. What were Orwell’s misgivings?
American ones. This site is for admirers of Powell, of which I am certainly one. Does that mean no questions that could be seen as critical of Powell must be thrown out of court?

———

**From James Doyle**
The question hasn’t been thrown out of court; it’s being debated in court.

———

**From Jeffrey Manley**
I have scanned the index of volumes 3 and 4 of Orwell’s *Collected Essays etc.* which cover the years from 1945 until his death in 1950. While he writes extensively about anti-Semitism, the defeat and occupation of Germany, the treatment of refugees *etc.* he does not seem to mention the death camps as such (or if so it is not specifically indexed). This despite the fact that he visited Germany as war correspondent for the *Observer* in the spring of 1945. Not sure whether he visited any of the concentration camps – there is mention of his being in Cologne and Stuttgart but I think most of the camps were further east. But it seems to me that if a writer such as Orwell who was heavily invested in socialism and political journalism does not discuss the death camps, it’s a bit harsh to criticize a non-political writer such as Powell for failing to do so in his fiction. Since AP’s journalism has not been indexed by subject matter, it’s hard to know whether he may have addressed the Holocaust somewhere outside his fiction.

———

**From Bernard Stacey**
Oh dear – whilst following this thread I did wonder when the phrase ‘anti-Semitism’ would shuffle shamefacedly onto the scene. Powell not mentioning the Holocaust in a fictional work tells us nothing about him or his views. He was, after all, not writing a chronology of the 20th century.

Absence of proof is not the same as proof of absence. Let’s keep it real!

———

**From Noreen Marshall**
Whether or not there is, or was in the post-war period, “entrenched anti-Semitism in British society”, I can think of a much more likely factor: most people in the UK and mainline Europe had had a fairly hellish time between 1939 and 1945, and life continued to be grim for years afterwards. The mother-in-law of one friend of ours has only very recently been able to speak of her experiences as a teenage girl in Nazi-occupied Holland, for example; some, like a colleague, lost their homes and every member of their immediate family. The only thing to do was to try and put it all behind one and go forward, hoping that life would gradually improve, and it was a very slow process.

Yes, many American lives were lost during WWII, and some rationing was introduced, but I think I’m right in saying that no USA citizen was bombed out of their own home, for example. Nor was there the almost crushing sense of greyness and dysfunction afterwards.

To quote Bill Bryson again:

I can’t imagine there has ever been a more gratifying time or place to be alive than America in the 1950s. No country had ever known such prosperity. When the war ended the United States had $26 billion worth of factories that hadn’t existed before the war, $140 billion in savings and
war bonds just waiting to be spent, no bomb damage and no competition. All that American companies had to do was stop making tanks and battleships and start making Buicks and Frigidaires – and boy did they. [Bill Bryson, The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid]

Perhaps Bryson is seeing this with the benefit of being a child – his parents may not have felt things were quite so rosy. But I think the miserable state of life in wartime and post-war Britain and Europe is more than enough to account for a disinclination to talk of the concentration camps and other horrors. If there was an animus against anyone in the UK during my childhood, it was for the Germans and Japanese, not the Jewish people.

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From Elizabeth Babcock
Yeah, it is an over-used term – but not one referring to an imaginary entity, especially in the relevant period. Did I accuse Powell of anti-Semitism? I don’t think so.

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From Jeffrey Manley
I did find an essay (“Revenge is Sour”) by Orwell mentioning a visit to a former camp near Nürnberg that, after the war, was used to hold German prisoners. That was probably not a death camp and would in any event by then have been cleaned up to serve as an Allied prison. Orwell uses the visit to illustrate the irony of a Jewish camp functionary in the employ of the Allied forces who was harassing a German prisoner reputed to have been in the SS.

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From Ellen Jordan
At some point in this discussion the question was raised of other writers criticised for not mentioning the holocaust. I seem to remember reading a debate some years ago where this criticism was made of TS Eliot – and the author said he regarded Ezra Pound’s explicit anti-Semitism as morally preferable. The strangest I have encountered, though, was a criticism of the sociologist Norbert Elias for making no mention of the holocaust in the post-war edition of his book The Civilising Process. Since Elias was a Jewish refugee from pre-war Germany whose mother vanished in Auschwitz, it seems to me here was someone uniquely qualified to make a decision about when it was ethically appropriate and when inappropriate to discuss this issue, and that there was something rather holier-than-thou about someone who had not suffered as Elias had taking him to task for this omission. On the other side, one occasionally encounters
people who, speaking on behalf of gypsies
and homosexuals, resent what they regard
as the prioritising of the Jewish sufferings.

I would also like to comment on the
statements made by some posters that the
death camps did not feature much in the
consciousness of the post-war British. I
was a schoolchild in Australia in the 1940s
and 1950s, and was certainly aware of
what happened in the German camps as
well as in the Japanese POW ones.
Admittedly in Australia we had a fairly
high proportion of survivors of the
German camps among our post-war
European migrants and anecdotes about
what they had suffered were in circulation.
Nevertheless I don’t think the British were
as unaware as some posters have implied.
I have recently read in someone’s memoirs
(and I don’t think she was Jewish) that she
and her sister were taken by their father
several times to the newsreel cinema
showing the first reports of Auschwitz,
and told they must never forget this.

I also remember in the early 1960s, when I
was teaching in a school in East London, a
staffroom discussion on the extent to
which the ordinary German population
could be held accountable for the
holocaust. Everyone was aware of what
was being discussed.

From Andrew Clarke

It’s noteworthy that Nick – involved as he
was with governments-in-exile – is always
far more concerned with Stalinist
expansion in Eastern Europe than any of
Hitler’s efforts. Katyn is one example, the
abandonment of the Yugoslav royalists is
another, and Widmerpool is involved in
both, one way or another.

This was not a fashionable attitude to take
in the 1950s when, I believe, Comrade
Stalin was still seen as a socialist hero and
liberator by the many fellow travellers and
“useful idiots” like Gypsy Jones and
Quiggin. One exception to the rule was
that old friend of the Powells, JFC Fuller,
who regarded the Allied insistence on the
unconditional surrender of Germany as an
unmitigated disaster, precisely because it
gave Stalin a free hand in the East.

Anthony Powell once maintained
that humanity’s crucial division was
between “agents” and “patients” –
that is, between the comparatively
small group of people who do
things, and the rather larger body to
whom things are done. My own
view – that humankind is essentially
split into highbrows and lowbrows ...

DJ Taylor; Independent;
28/10/2012
More of John Blaxter’s photographs from his talk at the AGM.
Top: Sunday lunch growing on Offa’s Dyke.
Bottom: Bridge over the River Teme at Leintwardine.
More of John Blaxter’s photographs from his talk at the AGM.
Top: Cwmmau Farmhouse, built in 1620 as a hunting lodge.
Bottom: Tyncoed, Disserth.
More of John Blaxter’s photographs from his talk at the AGM.
Top: Neighbouring Powell and Gwatkin headstones at Kilpeck.
Bottom: Vowchurch: the river by the church. Charles Dodgson’s (Lewis Carroll) brother Skeffington was rector here.
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