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From the Secretary’s Desk

There is a lot in this Newsletter to which I want to draw your attention:

2013 Conference. There is still time to book your place. Details in the enclosed flyer.

AGM. Saturday 19 October. If you can’t attend, please use your proxy vote. The formal business will be followed by Georgia Powell in conversation with Harry Mount about the life and work of Lady Violet Powell.

Annual Lecture. Friday 6 December. To be given by Alastair Laing on AP and Sculpture. Tickets now available.

Added to which we have two new publications available: Violet Powell, A Stone in the Shade. The fourth and final volume of Lady Violet’s autobiography.

Proceedings of 2011 Conference. Yes, we’ve finally published papers from the last conference.

And please don’t forget the other events: London Group Birthday Lunch on Saturday 7 December.

Hon. Secretary’s New Year Brunch on Saturday 18 January.

Details of all events on pages 16 & 17.

Finally a word about this issue, which contains a lot of book reviews. This is partly because some are topical, but also because that is what is available. The Editor and I want to provide you with a diverse and interesting Newsletter, but to do so we need your help. Yes, your help by writing articles for us. So if you have an idea please put (metaphorical) pen to paper for us.

PS. There is a major acquisition to the Archive too! ■
BOOK REVIEW

Schooled to Unpompousness
The Final Instalment of Lady Violet Powell’s Memoirs

Violet Powell
A Stone In The Shade: Last Memoirs

Reviewed by Nicholas Birns

The fourth and last volume of Lady Violet Powell’s (1912-2002) autobiography, published and handsomely produced, by George Ramsden’s Stone Trough Press, is in a sense the fifth literary version of the same set of experiences: the Powells’ life in the 1950s and after. We have the fictionalized version in Dance, two different renditions in Anthony Powell’s memoirs, To Keep The Ball Rolling, and his Journals, a sampling of letters in John Saumarez Smith & Jonathan Kooperstein’s The Acceptance of Absurdity, and now, here, Lady Violet’s account in A Stone In The Shade. That so much can be gotten out of such seemingly undramatic events speaks to the skill, in both Powells, of conveying nuance and tone, of making us care about the people they care about even though, to most of us, the real-life figures chronicled here are as beyond actually meeting – now for reasons of time as much as circumstance – as Ada Leintwardine or Gibson Delavacquerie.

The previous volume of Lady Violet’s memoirs, The Departure Platform (1998), contained some seriously meaty nuggets about the sources and genesis of Dance characters. There is admittedly less here – aside from a lucid account of Moreland as character and his relationship to the obvious model, Constant Lambert – immediately pertinent to her husband’s great literary achievement. Lady Violet reveals that the title of The Soldier’s Art was gleaned from a Browning volume Anthony Powell took with him to Morocco, and there are accounts of early American responses to Dance, particularly an interview by Ved Mehta in The New Yorker. We also gain insight into the dramatization of Afternoon Men and the staging of The Garden God, as well as on Malcolm Muggeridge’s friendship-shattering review of The Valley of Bones, which Lady Violet attributes to Powell making no comment when Muggeridge had attacked the Royal Family for being unexciting. This sense that “restraint” [63]
provoked Muggeridge into severing a formerly close and intellectually productive friendship reveals the nonpareil verbal weapon shared by both the Powells: tact. The years largely covered here, the early- to mid-1960s, saw the development of Dance from the most rigorous extant chronicle of the Bright Young Things to a sequence spanning the tumultuous twentieth century and constituting one of the more profound artistic responses to it. The sixth and seventh books registered the extension of the work into the war and, thereby, expanded its resonance, an amplification (as Pennistone might put it) missed, alas, by Muggeridge’s snide response. To this, Lady Violet’s narrative supplies unobtrusive yet crucial background.

A Stone In The Shade commences with an event mentioned but undetailed in To Keep The Ball Rolling, the death of Anthony’s father, Philip Lionel Powell. The senior Powell had been a widower for over half a decade, and his death left the Powells free to spend holidays on a series of Swan’s Hellenic Cruises which provided much of the travel – to Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Italy, as well as non-cruise visits to the US – that takes up the book. The description of the funeral of Powell père also expands into a general description of the situation of The Chantry, its remoteness and vulnerability to snow and winter, and the Powells’ periodic sojourn to London as well as trips elsewhere. (In retrospect, it is truly impressive how quickly and assuredly Dance was written considering what a peripatetic life its author led). There is also a long, interesting description of the Pakenham estate – now called Tullynally – in Ireland, which occasions some sprightly satiric poetry on the part of Lady Violet.

Lady Violet mentions having the run of the London apartment of her sister, Lady Mary Clive, and had Violet seen her own centenary as Mary did, this book might have been even longer. As it stands, its energy is concentrated in the 1960s, although there are references to the 1970s and the book is clearly written in the late 1990s or even early 2000s (as seen in the use of phrases such as “gap year”). Most of the book is straightforward description of people and places, often laced with a barb or wry observation, as when the Carthaginian goddess Tanit is described as snobbish for only accepting the sacrifice of well-born children – an observation Flaubert would have loved.

Characters familiar from the memoirs and Journals – the d’Avigdor-Goldsmids, the Bruces, the Mizeners, Bill Davis, Sir Maurice Bowra (captured in an Anglican moment), Sir Mortimer Wheeler and John Betjeman – are seen anew from Lady Violet’s slightly different vantage point. Lady Violet points out the physical resemblance between herself and Valerie Eliot, providing a new point of contact between Old Possum and (to use Hugh
Massingberd’s term) the Sage of The Chantry. There are also cameos of interesting people unmentioned in Anthony Powell’s oeuvre, such as, from the present, Dorothy Sayers, and, from the past, Louisa May Alcott. Though always as kind as she can be about people and places, there are moments where Lady Violet’s opinions are beyond dispute: in thinking John Profumo was over-punished, for instance, or in condemning the barbarism that succeeded Haile Selassie’s overthrow as Emperor of Ethiopia. There are also some very funny moments, as when “hanging about round the Pakenham” [4] is not a characterization of social climbing among Anglo-Irish aristocrats but of homosexual pickups around the Knightsbridge Barracks.

The book is accompanied by copious selections of Lady Violet’s sketches, mostly of the Powells’ Hellenic Cruise travels. The sketches are both childlike and acerbic, innocently open to the world and laced with an ironic registering of its follies, that also characterize her handwriting – large, readable, but self-aware. Lady Violet also shows off her French skills, which the reader of the Journals will remember were exercised brilliantly when a crank caller, pretending to be from France and ringing up in the middle of the night announcing there was a call for Anthony Powell, was met with Lady Violet’s adamant and utterly apt riposte, “De la part de qui?”

The volume is well presented and edited, with only a few errors: “Tushihama”, on page 78, should be “Tsushima”.

“Relapsed” on page 65 should be “lapsed”. “University of Yale” in the index should be “Yale University”; similarly Williamstown in Massachusetts has a college in it, but not a university. These last two, of course, are inevitable British-American misunderstandings which are just part of the Transatlantic game.

There remains the question of Lady Violet’s style as a writer. Though she told (the late) Cassandra Jardine of the Telegraph, in a September 1998 interview, that she had no serious literary aspirations herself, not only did she produce eleven full-length books but, I would argue, she also achieved the most indisputable trait of a serious writer, her own style. This can be seen in the way she will add an extra word just in order to secure an extra shade of meaning: for instance, she reveals that the famous description of Anthony Powell’s visit to the US as consisting of “informal talks to Ivy League colleges” was elicited by a young woman “overschooled to approach her work unpompously” [38]. This throws off the
reader at first: why not “schooled to approach her work pompously”? This, though, would indicate deliberate intent on the part of the schooling, whereas in fact she had been over-schooled for other reasons, the result of which, though, was to make her unable to be unpompous. The difference in tone between “pompous” and “unable to be unpompous” is rich enough to be worth the extra work for author and reader. The extra “over” and “un” are in turn compensated for by the loss of a few expected words, such as ‘and thereby unable’. Fluidity is sacrificed in order to convey just what the author means at that given moment. Now, this is similar to some of her husband’s sentences, but Anthony Powell’s style had an opulence and a melody to it which his wife’s renounces. Her style is plainer, rougher, but it is still a style. One can canvass this by recourse to the styles of writers Lady Violet wrote about: the unprovincial provincialism of EM Delafield, the acerbity of the Irish duo of Somerville and Ross, Jane Austen of course, all of whom wrote in, for their time, a plain style with a lot of kick in it when needed. The one exception is Compton-Burnett, and when the style of this book gets elliptical, adding and omitting words we do not expect, it is most likely Compton-Burnett whose style is informing it. Or perhaps we could look to Charlotte Yonge, to whom Lady Violet never devoted a book but who she clearly admired, as another ‘fancier’ stylist in her canon.

If Lady Violet’s style lacks the epic dimension of her husband’s, whose great achievement is its ability to juxtapose epic and nuance, it is a truth inarguable of aesthetics that nuance alone is better than epic alone (try this out on any example of your choice), and her style provides this refined pleasure repeatedly.

Like her fictional equivalent, Lady Isobel Tolland, Lady Violet was a Pisces and has, as a writer, this astrological sign’s characteristic combination of serenity and bite. In her preface, Lady Antonia Fraser sums up this aspect of her aunt from deep personal knowledge, revealing Lady Violet’s characteristic response to news conveyed to her as “I do see”. Conveying both openness and observance, that this memoirist indeed did see is apparent on every page, and in both the words in the book and the extra gift of its vibrant and colourful sketches.

*Unfortunately our monochrome reproduction does not do justice to Lady Violet’s coloured sketches – Ed.*

*A Stone in the Shade* was also reviewed by DJ Taylor in the *Spectator* dated 10 August 2013 and mentioned in the *TLS* issues of 12 and 19 July.
Anthony Powell Society Newsletter #52

Local Group News

In the Footsteps of X Trapnel

By Stephen Walker

Why were a dozen people including five men in jackets and ties walking round Maida Vale on one of the hottest days of the year? Stopping now and again to listen to a bearded man in a jacket and tie read from a paperback and walking past not into the Warwick Castle pub where jacketless men and women sipped pints of Pimms. Were these people lost?

On Tuesday 9 July Ivan Hutnik led a group of twelve AP followers on an hour’s meander around Maida Vale to follow in the footsteps of X Trapnel, the predominant character in Books Do Furnish A Room. Nick Jenkins concludes that Trapnel is “a very good writer”.

Where did the group think that the footsteps would lead and what did we hope to find by making the journey? As with the quarterly lunches in the Audley we were seeking good drink, good pub food, good company and Powell chat.

Did we find it?

AP met Maclaren-Ross through Bobbie Roberts another career drinker who can be seen in Lushington in Afternoon Men and intriguingly in Bagshaw in BDFR. So how much of AP is in Maclaren-Ross who was 6 years his junior but died 36 years sooner? AP certainly took him under his wing by inviting him to dine regularly at Chester Gate and procuring work for him on the TLS and Punch. He even appeared as a character witness for him at Bow Street Magistrates’ Court and saved him from bankruptcy. Malcolm Muggeridge recalls discussing with AP a writer named Maclaren-Ross at whose hands Tony suffers a good deal of boredom ... Everyman, I said, gets the bores that he deserves, and types like Maclaren-Ross are his specialty.

Was there more to it than good manners towards a fellow writer or a refined taste for boredom?

To find out we met in the Prince Alfred an elegant Victorian pub built in 1863 in Formosa Street near Warwick Avenue tube station. It is famous for its spectacular bowed etched plate glass and its intriguing, if inconvenient, interior: five self-contained bar areas each with its own door to the street but separated from each other by a wooden partition that has a waist high access hatch which you have to bend double to get through – a challenge for most of the group.

Our superlative Secretary, Keith Marshall, briefed us in his usual crisp fashion but sat
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out the walk and guarded our bags in the pub. It was a very, very hot day and the famous Marshall knees were playing up. We were grateful for his sacrifice, as bags as well as the oppressive heat might have been just too much especially for those in suits, ties and panamas. Sensibly Ivan and Keith were not so attired.

Still resolute in our possibly misguided mission of keeping up Maclaren-Ross standards of dress we set off for an hour’s walk along the Union Canal, through Little Venice, under the Westway and back to the Prince Alfred. Ivan proved he has an alternative career as a guide of high-end cultural tours of the Martin Randall variety if he wishes by providing a diverse, lively and informative commentary. He was hugely assisted by Stephen Holden, who dressed in character, gave splendid readings from BDFR at appropriate points; the first being a description of Trapnel who AP described in a brilliant formulation of the immature, narcissistic personality we remember encountering when undergraduates as wanting,

among other things, to be a writer, a dandy, a lover, a comrade, an eccentric, a sage, a virtuoso, a good chap, a man of honour, a hard case, a spendthrift, an opportunist, a raiusienne; to be very rich, to be very poor, to possess a thousand mistresses, to win the heart of one love to whom he was ever faithful, to be on the best terms with all men, to avenge savagely the lightest affront, to live to a hundred full of years and honour, to die young and unknown but recognized the following day as the most neglected genius of the age.

Later we stopped by the Canal. AP described the setting in BDFR:

The evening was warm, stuffy, full of strange smells. For once Trapnel seemed suitably dressed in his tropical suit.

That much had not changed. But it was in moonlight rather than brilliant sunlight that Trapnel discovers the sodden remains of the manuscript of his inevitably unfinished work of genius, Profiles in String, that Pamela has thrown into the water. He has of course no copy. His response is to add to his loss by throwing his death’s-head sword-stick into the Canal. Stephen Holden’s reading was, even in the warm stuffy evening, moving.

Maclaren-Ross had indeed once deflected an insistent publisher clamouring for a long overdue manuscript, by claiming that his girlfriend, Diana Bromley had thrown it into the Regent’s Canal.

Pausing to examine the exterior of 19 Park Place Villas where Maclaren-Ross lived we passed John Masefield’s house and made our way back to the Prince Alfred.

Ah, sadness! We had dallied too long, full of literary reverie and arrived back 10 minutes after 1930. The much-advertised fixed price evening menu had finished at 1930. The kitchen would not budge. We ate à la carte … typical North London gastro pub fare – the lamb cutlets were overpriced and over cooked. They do them much better at The Boundary in Shoreditch, which if Trapnel and Maclaren-Ross were around today would surely be where they would be wasting their lives.

We had achieved good drink and good company but not sadly not the best pub grub.

So why do people visit the actual sites of places and settings they have read about in novels?
One reason is to experience the source of literary creation. Novelists are always being asked at literary festivals where they get their ideas from and whether they base their characters on real people.

The resemblances between Maclaren-Ross and X Trapnel are obvious: they are talented writers who have not yet been able to exploit their ability to the extent they wish or even perhaps deserve, they wear dark glasses, and carry a walking stick. Trapnel writes for *Fission*; Maclaren-Ross wrote for *Horizon*. Both spend most of their time in pubs and clubs talking about writing instead of writing. They have unstable social lives; often no particularly fixed abode. In *BDFR* Trapnel tells Nick

> people can’t very well reach me. I’m always moving about. I hate staying in the same place for long.

Maclaren-Ross was the same: moving from boarding house to boarding house when he could afford them and crashing with friends when he could not.

Both had powerful and destructive relationships with powerful and destructive women: Trapnel with Pamela Widermerpool and Maclaren-Ross with “the art tart” Sonia Orwell and Diana Bromley (Virginia Woolf’s niece) with whom he had a son.

Another reason is perhaps to intensify the experience of character and place gained from reading. Does being in the actual place make the reader more sensitive and alert to the nuances of the descriptions? Are there vibes to be picked up? Possibly; many of us do like to read a novel when in a country or city where it is based. Certainly Stephen Holden’s rendition *in situ* of the water borne disappearance of Trapnel’s masterpiece intensified that passage for me.

Was it the summer heat that caused the thought that perhaps AP was drawn to the self-indulgent, talented, exotic, woman chasing, drug taking, alcoholic fantasist that was Julian Maclaren-Ross who caught terminal Sohoitis and died forgotten at 52 with an unmarked grave? Was he a fantasy figure that AP wished he had been more like, instead of the well-organized, productive, oenophile who lived in orderly, rural splendour and died at 94, a Companion of Honour and a Commander of the British Empire? To even have such thoughts is a tribute to Ivan, Stephen and Keith for a thoroughly entertaining and stimulating evening.

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Available now from the Society’s shop …

Violet Powell
A Stone in the Shade

Stone Trough Books, 2013, hardback
180 pages with over 30 colour sketches

UK Members: £24
Overseas Members: £29
UK Non-Members: £27
Overseas Non-Members: £32
(prices include shipping)

From the book jacket …

Violet Powell (1912-2002) completed fifteen chapters of this final volume of autobiography which, like ... Anthony Powell’s memoirs, ran to four volumes. Though her publications tended to follow his at a respectful distance, A Stone in the Shade confirms her as an accomplished writer and humourist in her own right.

Born into the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and in some ways an out-and-out elitist, she chronicles the Powell/Pakenham families, her forays into London’s higher Bohemia, various junketings in Somerset and County Westmeath, and the amenities, both cultural and social, of Swan’s Hellenic Cruises.

Violet Powell seemed to ‘know everyone’. Osbert Lancaster inspired her to take up her long-neglected box of paints and thereafter she never travelled without a sketchbook-diary, filling its pages with talented illustration and amusing commentary. It also provides some unedited aperçus of the great novelist on holiday.

Ordering details on page 31
After the stress of trying to read a modern book(!) and not liking the prose at all, it was a great relief to return to Anthony Powell and his beautiful writing, strong characterisations and wonderful plot! *At Lady Molly’s* is the fourth in the *Dance to the Music of Time* sequence and therefore my April read, which I approached with delight!

As I’ve now come to expect with Powell, the start of a new book means a whole new raft of characters and a setting that has moved on from the end of the previous novel. We are now into that difficult decade, the 1930s, and our narrator Nick Jenkins is 28 or 29 and working in the film industry knocking up scripts to meet the Quota (by which there had to be the same amount of films made in the UK shown in cinemas as were US produced ones). His affair with Jean Templer is over, and as we meet him again he is being taken to the eponymous residence by Chips Lovell, a co-worker at the studio.

Lady Molly’s house is a gathering place for a number of disparate characters, including the ubiquitous Widmerpool (who is now engaged to a rather formidable older woman, Mildred Haycock), Alfred Tolland, General and Mrs Conyers who are old friends of Nick’s (plus Mildred is the General’s sister-in-law), and later on Mark Members. There are references to many past alumni in the books, like Sillery and Bob Duport, and in many ways although Nick will continue to meet new people, they all somehow seem to be connected to the old acquaintances who recur in his life.

The wonderful Quiggin also reappears, rather delightfully and randomly in a cinema queue, and invites Nick for the weekend to his cottage in the country. Quiggin and Mona are still together (just) and during the visit Lord Warminster, head of the Tolland family and known variously as just Warminster, Erridge, Erry or Alf(!), appears and invites them to dinner at his crumbling stately home Thrubworth. The dinner is disrupted by the arrival of two Tolland sisters, and Nick decides instantly that he is going to marry one of them, Isobel! There are cracks appearing in the Quiggin/Mona relationship and it is somehow not a surprise to learn later on that Erry and Mona have run off to China to ‘observe conditions’ out there.

Meanwhile, Nick bumps into Ted Jeavons, Molly’s husband, in a pub and ends up visiting a nightclub run by Umfraville. Mildred, Widmerpool and Templer materialise and there is drinking and merriment, particularly when Mildred realises that she had a brief liaison with Ted during the war.

Back at Lady Molly’s once more, to celebrate his engagement to Isobel, Nick finds out that Widmerpool’s forthcoming marriage has been called off. There are differing stories as to why, although the version told by General Conyers in a long, man-to-man session implies that poor Kenneth had fallen down somewhat in the bedroom department! (This is after a very
funny section where Widmerpool asks Nick’s advice, in an almost aggressive way, about whether he should be sleeping with Mildred before they are married, etc.) However, Widmerpool appears briefly at the end, bouncing back as always, and seems rather unconcerned by the whole thing, actually feeling that he is able to give Nick advice on getting married!

Once again, there are so many joys in this book that it’s hard to know where to begin. Powell’s style continues to be slightly looser than initially, and is very readable and lovely: there are brilliant pen portraits of lively characters; atmospheric descriptions of place and setting; sharp, crackling dialogue and Powell’s trademark dry wit:

*It was impossible to tell from Smith’s vacant, irascible stare whether he had never before been asked for sherry since his first employment at Thrubworth, or whether he had himself, quite simply, drunk all the sherry that remained.*

The stitching together of the various plot elements leaves the reader gasping slightly with admiration, and AP loves to pop in unexpected appearances by his cast!

And the book is full of such wonderful scenes and vignettes that it’s hard to pick the standouts. One wonderful moment is when Nick is faced with Mildred’s intended for the first time, without any warning – his response is priceless:

*Life is full of internal dramas, instantaneous and sensational, played to an audience of one. This was just such a performance. The fiancé was Widmerpool.*

And the first appearance of the wonderfully eccentric decaying nobleman, Erridge, is brilliantly handled as he shuffles into Quiggin’s cottage looking more like a tramp! His description of this character, whom he had been aware of at school, sums up amazingly well the effects of age:

*Now that his name was revealed, the features of the preoccupied, sallow, bony schoolboy, with books tumbling from under his arm, could be traced like a footpath lost in the brambles and weeds of an unattended garden: an overgrown crazy pavement.*

It was a joy to have the re-emergence of those two constants, Widmerpool and Quiggin. I’m particularly fond of the latter as he has such an irritant effect on the story, being such an opposite to some of the more upper-class characters, and demonstrating so much how the world of the early books has changed. As for the former, it’s obvious he’s going to be with us in the stories for some time:

*Widmerpool was a recurring milestone on the road; perhaps it would be more apt to say that his course, as one jogged round the track, was run from time to time, however different the pace, in common with my own. As an aspect of my past he was an element to be treated with interest, if not affection, like some unattractive building or natural feature of the landscape which brought back the irrational nostalgia of childhood.*

But there is so much packed into what is a relatively short novel. Despite once again taking place over a limited number of gatherings or events, as the story continues the connections Powell is so fond of drawing out of life are revealed. The revelation of Widmerpool’s part in getting Duport and Jean back together and therefore ending her affair with Nick is
quite stunning, and revealed in an almost off-hand way during conversation. There is the usual focus on people, not events, though the political background of the decade, with its rumblings from Hitler and hints of war, is discreetly mentioned and colours the behaviour of the cast of this tale. Powell is often very subtle, and I wondered whether having his characters discuss Orlando by Virginia Woolf was trying to hint of the type of relationship between Norah and Eleanor? And the conversation between Nick and General Conyers about Widmerpool’s failings, scattered with psychoanalysis and discussion of complexes etc. is screamingly funny, and very unexpected!

My one disappointment with the book is the fact that Nick gives away absolutely nothing about his courtship of Isobel. Literally, they meet, he decides they will marry and then they are engaged! We learn little about her, only seeing her directly very briefly and I found this a little frustrating, particularly as Nick had begun to open up a little bit in the last volume. But I suppose we have become used to mostly seeing him against a background of social gatherings, very rarely at work and never in a domestic setting.

I always find Nick’s/Powell’s meditations on the dance of life, and the small, everyday coincidences we experience, very thought-provoking. He has the gift of putting into words emotions we all feel but cannot articulate.

Everyone knows the manner in which some specific name will recur several times in quick succession from different quarters; part of that inexplicable magic throughout life that makes us suddenly think of someone before turning a street corner and meeting him, or her, face to face. In the same way, you may be struck, reading a book, by some obscure passage or line of verse, quoted again, quite unexpectedly, twenty four hours later.

This is an excellent novel, and I’m once more looking forward to next month!

I’m cutting it a little fine with this review, but just managing to scrape together some thoughts on May’s *Dance to the Music of Time* volume before the end of the month! I’m now onto the fifth book of my reading, *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*, and I feel very much as if I’m getting into my stride with Powell. I think Keith Marshall from the AP Society really nailed it when he commented that the books should read like anecdotes round a dinner table. [The comment was originally AP’s – Ed.] I’ve stopped expecting a straightforward narrative or conventional character development and I’m just going with the flow!

The story opens with Nick observing a bombed-out public house so we are obviously starting off during the Second World War. However, Powell instantly wrong-foots us as Nick flashes back several years and introduces us to one of the main characters in the book, the composer Moreland. Although we have not come across him before (I think!), he turns out to be one of Nick’s good friends, and is also associated with old crony Mr Deacon and also Barnby. We also meet some other new characters, notably Maclintick, Gossage and Carolo, who will all feature prominently in the story. The first long chapter culminates with them dining and discussing in the Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant of the title, and Powell will have his characters recall the significance of this meeting later in the book.

As the story moves on through the 1930s, Nick marries Isobel, although little is told about this marriage. The Tollands are much in evidence, including the wonderful Erridge who jaunts off to take part in the Spanish Civil War. There is much discussion of the politics of the time, although this is never boring. Both Isobel and Moreland’s wife Matilda become pregnant, but Isobel miscarries and Matilda’s baby does not live very long. Widmerpool makes a fleeting appearance, Stringham a longer one, there are marital issues, deaths and then an engagement.

It’s difficult as always to summarise the plot of one of these books because they are strands and events from a life. It’s now clear that Nick is going to tell his story as a series of vignettes, glimpses of particular experiences and people in his life that, put together, make up the whole. No-one can recall their life in a linear, sequential way and so the books are very true to life in that way. In each one, Powell focuses tightly on a specific group of characters – they overlap with others in Jenkins’ life, but each book chooses to relate a series of events with one particular central group/set of people.

And at the heart of this story are two marriages – that of the Maclinticks and of Moreland to Matilda. There is a third marriage mentioned in passing, that of Nick to Isobel, but Powell has his narrator state his position quite plainly in a paragraph that makes it clear that he believes it is not possible to write about a marriage whilst in the middle of it; and therefore we know that we will have no deep study of the Jenkins’ relationship. However, the contrasting pairings of the Maclinticks and the Morelands are covered in some detail, and there is considerable anguish involved for both couples. Maclintick, who is a music critic, seems to
be in a permanent state of war with his wife Audrey, who comes across as a harridan initially, but develops depth as the story goes on. In contrast, Moreland is an indecisive man, but falls deeply in love with Matilda (who has connections to characters in earlier books) and marries her just before Nick and Isobel’s ceremony. However, despite what seems to be an ideal match, Moreland strays after their baby dies and it takes a dramatic event to send him back home to his wife. Strangely enough, it is the warring Maclinticks who seem to have a stronger bond, at least on his side, so that when Audrey Maclintick leaves him, the critic is devastated and unable to cope.

Powell in fact sets the scene early for the kind of environment Maclintick lives in, which in retrospect makes his fate quite inevitable:

_We took a bus to Victoria, then passed on foot into a vast, desolate region of stucco streets and squares upon which a doom seemed to have fallen. The gloom was cosmic. We traversed these pavements for some distance, proceeding from haunts of seedy, grudging gentility into an area of indeterminate, but on the whole increasingly unsavoury, complexion._

As always, I marvel at Powell’s skill in interweaving his materials with previous volumes; although these new characters are acquaintances of Nick’s we haven’t met before, Powell blends them into his milieu perfectly. And it’s interesting to note how Nick in many ways thinks of his friends in particular groups or compartments, only to be surprised when they escape and intermingle when he least expects it. There are plenty of old favourites making reappearances, most notably that of Stringham in a long sequence at Mrs Foxe’s party; and thinking about it, the relationship between Stringham and Miss Weedon (“Tuffy”) is another intriguing one. It has sinister undertones, as Stringham is almost being kept prisoner by his family, deprived of money and doted over by the old governess in an attempt to control his drinking.

I have started eagerly awaiting each book’s Unexpected Appearance of Widmerpool and I was not let down in “Casanova” as he turns up rather wonderfully where you really wouldn’t think he would be! He is still as appalling as ever, though peripheral in this book because he is not closely connected with the people whose tale Nick is relating. The wonderful eccentric that is Erridge only appears off-camera too, as do Quiggin, Mona and several other well-loved characters, but they are present enough to ensure continuity.

I seem to be enjoying these books more and more as I read on through the series. Powell’s prose is as lovely as ever, eminently readable and he has the skill to capture the strangeness, the unexpectedness and the interconnectedness of life beautifully. Roll on June’s book!

_In the end most things in life – perhaps all things – turn out to be appropriate._

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Annual General Meeting 2013
Notice is hereby given that the 13th Annual General Meeting of the Anthony Powell Society will be held on Saturday 19 October 2013 at 1400 hrs in the Conference Room of St James’s Church, Piccadilly, London W1

The formal AGM business will be followed by refreshments and then Georgia Powell in conversation with Harry Mount about the life and work of Lady Violet Powell.

Members only at the formal AGM; all welcome for the talk at about 1500 hrs

The AGM agenda and voting papers are included with this Newsletter. If you cannot attend the meeting, please use your proxy vote, which must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 14 October 2013.

London Quarterly Pub Meets
Saturday 2 November 2013
Saturday 8 February 2014
Saturday 10 May 2014
Saturday 9 August 2014
Saturday 1 November 2014

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.

7th Biennial Anthony Powell Conference 2013

Anthony Powell in the 20s & 30s
Friday 27 to Sunday 29 September 2013
Eton College
Eton, Windsor, UK

The 7th Biennial Conference will be held at Eton College, Powell’s alma mater.

Outline Programme
Plenary Sessions: Friday afternoon and Saturday
Reception & Recital: Friday evening
Dinner: Saturday evening
Historic House Tour: Sunday morning

The plenary sessions will include three invited keynote speakers – DJ Taylor, Peter Berthoud and Patric Dickinson – an address from Society President Lord Gowrie, and nine delegate papers.

A champagne reception and recital by Paul Guinery is planned for the Friday evening and a conference dinner for the Saturday evening. On Sunday morning there is an opportunity to visit the Tudor-period Dorney Court. There will also be opportunities to visit the Eton College Library and tour the College.

During Saturday’s plenary sessions there will be a “Bring and Buy” Book Sale.

Booking is now open. Details in the enclosed Booking Leaflet, on the Society’s website, or contact the Hon. Secretary.
**Anthony Powell Lecture**

in collaboration with

**The Wallace Collection**

**Anthony Powell and Sculpture**

to be given by

**Alastair Laing**

**The Wallace Collection**
Manchester Square, London W1

**Friday 6 December 2013**
**1830 hrs**

**Tickets £14**
includes a glass of wine
following the lecture

**Tickets from the Hon. Secretary**
on 020 8864 4095
secretary@anthonypowell.org
or the usual address on page 2

Art historian Alastair Laing recently retired as Curator of Pictures & Sculpture at the National Trust, having for almost 27 years looked after the many works of art in the Trust’s care. He was responsible for organising the 1995 centenary exhibition *In Trust for the Nation* at the National Gallery. His particular interest is François Boucher, exhibitions of whose work he helped mount in America and France. He is currently preparing a catalogue raisonné of Boucher’s drawings. In his lecture he will take stock of Anthony Powell’s interest in sculpture as revealed in the pages of *Dance*, in his memoirs and in his writings on the visual arts.

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

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**London Group**

**Anthony Powell Birthday Lunch**

**Saturday 7 December 2013**
**1200 for 1230 hrs**

**Da Corradi**
20-22 Shepherd Market, London, W1

Join us at a small, friendly Italian restaurant which is just round the corner from Powell’s 1920s lodgings.

Afterwards visit the boutiques of Shepherd Market or Heywood Hill bookshop for those Christmas presents.

This is a pay on the day event, but please book with the Hon. Secretary so we ensure we have a large enough table!
Non-members will be welcome.

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**New York & NE USA Group**

**Anthony Powell Birthday Lunch**

**Friday 13 December 2013**

Details from Ed Bock, eabock@syr.edu

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**Secretary’s New Year Brunch**

**Saturday 18 January 2014**
**1000 to 1200 hrs**

**Da Corradi**
20-22 Shepherd Market, 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 just round the corner from Powell’s 1920s lodgings.

This is a pay on the day event, but please book with the Hon. Secretary so we ensure we have a large enough table.
Non-members will be welcome.
Umfraville Award in New York

The hosts of the annual New York Grolier Club AP Birthday Luncheon are inviting UMFRAVILLE ADDRESS texts “For seven minutes of Witty Perception and/or Devil’s Advocacy about Anything, Real or Fictional, in the 20th Century World of Anthony Powell”.

The winner will deliver the address at the next AP Birthday Luncheon at the Grolier Club in New York on 13 December and will be proclaimed ‘Temporary King/Queen’ of the luncheon festivities. The winner and her/his consort will be guests of the hosts and the Address will be printed as a keepsake. Deadline for entries is 15 October. For more information and a page of FAQs contact Ed Bock at eabock@syr.edu.

Welcome to New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following who have joined the Society in recent months:
Geoffrey Brown, London
Hugh Duncan, Twickenham
Giles & Helen Elgood, London
Miriam Holt, Los Angeles, USA
David Massa, London
George Ramsden, York
David Roberts, London
Paul Whiteside, Enfield

Local Group Contacts

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

New York & 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.

Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due annually on 1 April (for rates see back page). Reminders 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.

As we will be using email wherever possible, please keep a look-out for emails from the Society.

Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, address on page 2.
Major Acquisition: Nancy Cutbirth Small Archive

By Noreen Marshall, Hon Archivist

Recently the Society has made an interesting and important acquisition for its Archives. After a long journey from Kalamazoo via Washington, DC and Castle Donington, a large box full of Powell-related material assembled by Dr Nancy Cutbirth Small has arrived in Greenford.

Nancy died in 2009, and her widower, Tom Small, very generously offered the items when he wrote to Keith Marshall a few months ago saying that he was looking for a suitable home for them. They include 28 letters from Powell to Nancy (plus a few from Arthur Schlesinger and Roy Fuller), a couple of books, copies of papers, articles, Nancy’s own research notes and a number of copies of issues 12-22 of Anthony Powell Communication (the newsletter of the Anthony Powell Society of Kalamazoo). The material has been checked and repacked in storage crates and will be assessed to see how it fits with the rest of the Society’s material, how best to document it and how best to make it accessible for research and publication.

As members may recall, Nancy was one of those most closely involved in running the first Anthony Powell Society, based in the Department of English at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA (where both she and Tom taught). For anyone whose memory needs refreshing, James Tucker’s article on the group appeared in the Spring 2004 issue of our own Newsletter (also available on the Society’s website). Anthony Powell Communication 22 (January 1987) hints at some of the problems the Kalamazoo Society was facing by then: in her editorial, Nancy apologised for the almost two year “wintry silence” since the previous APComs, and also wrote about the Society’s repeated failure to achieve a second session at the annual Convention of the Modern Language Association. She felt that the only solution was for the AP Society of Kalamazoo to be recognised as an Allied Organisation of the MLA, and had scheduled the next number of the newsletter for outlining the procedures involved. She also talks of being in touch with Ken McAnulty who was trying to organise a Powell group in England and had begun with a group dinner at a London restaurant the previous September. Were any of our current members present, I wonder?

This acquisition is quite a coup for the Society and is exactly the kind of material that we need to build the archives and make sure that AP-related material is available to scholars and researchers. It also shows the dangers of over-reliance on a very small number of people to organise things!

The Society wishes to thank Tom Small for this most generous gift.

Newsletter Copy Deadlines

Newsletter #53, Winter 2013
Copy Deadline: 11 November 2013
Publication Date: 6 December 2013

Newsletter #54, Spring 2014
Copy Deadline: 14 February 2014
Publication Date: 7 March 2014
Rex Whistler was a painter, decorator and stage designer who was Anthony Powell’s almost exact contemporary. Powell says in his Journals 1985-86 that he had met Whistler a few times in the 1930s and thought him something of a social climber: “probably quite a nice chap but his overwhelming smoothness was more than I could bear at that age” [J85-86, 199].

Whistler, son of a building contractor, attended public school (Haileybury) and the Slade School of Art. At the latter, he became acquainted with upper class friends, such as Stephen Tennant, and promoted his career, at least to some extent, by using these acquaintanceships to secure commissions for artistic projects. Powell became more interested in Whistler’s career when he read the 1985 biography by his brother Laurence, The Laughter and the Urn, which Lady Violet had borrowed from some neighbors. He then used it as a springboard into a discussion of other social climbing artists he had known such as Evelyn Waugh, John Betjeman, Cecil Beaton (a close friend of Whistler), Peter Quennell and Adrian Daintrey [J85-86, 200-210].

After reading the 1985 biography, Powell seems to have softened his earlier assessment of Whistler in some respects. Because of the company Whistler kept (Stephen Tennant, Cecil Beaton, William Walton, Osbert Sitwell, etc.) Powell had thought him a homosexual, an assumption his brother’s book is at great pains to disprove. Powell was impressed by the string of heterosexual love affairs detailed in the book, many unsuccessful but including one notably consummated with actress Tallulah Bankhead, with whom Powell himself once had a brief connection. This took place at the Blue Lantern, a nightclub near the Piccadilly end of Shaftesbury Avenue, when Ms Bankhead happened to be sitting at an adjacent table to Powell. When she leaned over Powell to talk to someone at the table on his other side, he asked her if she would like to dance [Messengers, 95-96]:

“Do you dance well?” [she asked].
“Very badly”.
“In that case I will.”
She moved with incredible lightness, holding her was like holding nothing at all, a contact with thistledown, which at the same time controlled my own steps, as she glided across the floor. The story, I’m afraid ends there. It was not the start of a great romance. We never met again, but the impression remained of much fun and charm, as well as a very decided toughness.

Powell was also impressed by Whistler’s military career:

he went into the Welsh Guards, remaining a subaltern in the Guards Armoured Division until killed in 1944 aged thirty-nine. He must have been a reasonably good soldier to have been allowed to carry on in that rank on active service when so old.
Powell does, however, question how Whistler managed to continue his artistic output even while on active duty, a feat Powell himself never managed. The new biography contains reproductions of a fairly impressive selection of Whistler’s wartime output, including portraits, drawings and stage designs.

Powell remained unimpressed, however, by most of Whistler’s artistic accomplishments even after seeing a comprehensive selection in the 1985 biography:

> his painting, in spite of its facility, [was] arch and awful (an opinion I still hold), tho’ a capable stage designer, eg. The Rake’s Progress ballet.

Powell thinks that the photo showing Whistler posing in an extremely tidy Fitzroy Street studio demonstrates that he had little contact with other artists in that quarter (whose studios, apparently when visited by Powell, were hopelessly messy and chaotic).

Whistler is now the subject of this new biography that also includes lavish and detailed illustrations of his works in diverse fields. Tastes may have changed since Powell rejected his painting, which now seems to be coming into style (shades of Edgar Deacon, perhaps). For example, Whistler’s works have recently been exhibited at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton (2006), the Colefax and Fowler Gallery, London (2012) and the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum (May-September 2013). The new biographers agree with Powell that Whistler’s design for the 1935 Vic-Wells Ballet production of The Rake’s Progress, with choreography by Ninette de Valois, was the pinnacle of Whistler’s achievement in the field of theatrical design. Powell was quite familiar with that company’s productions because Constant Lambert and others known to Powell through him were active in their direction and performance. The biographers mention at least one production for which Whistler was the stage designer and Lambert the conductor: The Wise Virgins by William Walton (1940).

Although Powell is dismissive of Whistler’s paintings, the biographers make rather a meal of them. From a review of the paintings on display in the book, it is obvious that Whistler’s greatest contribution was the decorative panels he painted in various buildings throughout England and Wales. Except for those in the Tate Gallery restaurant (which were one of his first efforts in this line of work), it is not clear what other examples of his painting Powell may have seen. The reproductions in the 1985 biography certainly do not do them justice. The best
of the house decorations are at Plas Newydd, Port Lympne, Dorneywood, and two private houses on Hill Street, Mayfair, and these were probably not readily open to the public during Powell’s lifetime (or at least in the years during which he was capable of searching out such things).

Powell recognized Whistler’s facility in painting but not all of his portraits and landscapes are arch and awful. The painting of the two Dudley Ward sisters is perhaps a bit mannered but his later work, including portraits of the Paget sisters and some of the wartime portraits of himself and others are worth a look. Indeed, his 1940 self-portrait in uniform has as its background Powell’s neighborhood in Regent’s Park and would be of interest to Powell fans for that if for no other reason. (Several of these are included in the current exhibit in Salisbury discussed below.) Most of the paintings, both murals and canvases, contain amusing and informative details that contribute to the subject matter and remind one in a way of Powell’s similar use in his novels of background details to add additional layers of meaning to the characters or action in the scenes where they appear. Whistler also frequently puts himself into a picture in some form just as Powell did in Dance in the character of Nick Jenkins.

Powell does not mention Whistler’s painting and drawing for advertising, book illustration and dust jackets. But these efforts also produced interesting and original results. Whistler would seem to rank with John Piper, Paul Nash, and Eric Ravilious in this particular and specialized field. One of Whistler’s best illustrated books is a two-volume folio edition of Gulliver’s Travels published by the Cresset Press in 1930. This publishing company was owned by Dennis Cohen, who appears as “C” in Messengers during one of Powell’s visits to the South of France. Powell had the misfortune of meeting Cohen just as he arrived in Toulon to find out that his fiancée (Irene Hodges) had jilted him [158]. Powell’s edition of John Aubrey’s Brief Lives was also published by Cresset Press in 1949.

So far as concerns the narrative of Whistler’s life, the new biographers add little to what has already been written by his brother. But they write it more succinctly and with greater objectivity and better organization, and it seems to go down much more easily than does the earlier book. Indeed, Powell describes the earlier narrative “as written in rather a soggy style … except Rex Whistler on active service, his death which is well done”. I would have to agree that in his brother’s book it seems as if the war portion had been written by someone other than the narrator of the earlier years. The newer book does an equally satisfactory job of both the pre-war and wartime lives.
Moreover, because of the larger page format and technological improvements in integration of text and illustrations, the newer version does a much better job of illustrating the works of art under discussion in the text.

The newer book also suggests that Whistler was not so much snobbish (as Powell seems to have found him) but purposefully limited himself for sound business reasons to his circle of friends in what Powell describes as the beau monde of his day. He simply did not have much use for the Bohemian artists known to Powell because they weren’t going to help him get the work that produced most of his income – decoration of country and London houses and portraits of their inhabitants. Nor were they likely to throw much theatrical or book illustration work his way. Just as it is unfair for left-wing literary critics to downgrade Powell for failing to include working class characters in his books, it seems a bit unfair of Powell to criticize Whistler for not painting abstract or other non-representational works at a time when they were all the rage among the Bohemian artists who were Powell’s friends.

The new biographers suggest that, if anything, Whistler was guilty of undercharging for most of his work based on the time and effort it required. This was at least partly due to the fact that he was often working for his friends or their acquaintances. He made a decent living but hardly grew rich in the way that Cecil Beaton was able to do with similar talent but a greater ability to promote himself. Powell for his part thought Whistler did “quite well for a single man in the 1930s (ie. earning £1200 or more per year)” [J85-86, 202]. That would be about £60,000 pounds today based on retail price inflation, a tidy, but hardly princely sum.

Moreover, Whistler’s closest friend and confidante was Edith Olivier, a woman old enough to be his mother. She was the spinster daughter of a country clergyman and had some connections with the family that owned Wilton House (the Earl of Pembroke) that were sufficient for them to lease her a house on their estate. She was introduced to Whistler by Stephen Tennant’s mother. She can hardly be considered a member of the beau monde as Powell defined it – more like Tuffy Weedon than Mrs Foxe. And despite his own rather humble family origins, Whistler never kept his family in the background but went out of his way to provide them with living accommodations sufficient for their needs and social expectations, especially after his father was unable to continue his building trade business in later years. Powell recognizes Whistler’s solicitude for his parents and says (probably based on the earlier biography) that, in addition, he paid his brother’s fees at Oxford. Those expenditures should have been easily affordable for Whistler, if Powell is right about his income, without too much sacrifice in life style. As Powell notes, Whistler was not paying to house a family of his own but lived in his Fitzroy Street studio and otherwise parked himself with Edith Olivier or one of his other friends when not in London. Indeed, Whistler’s life style was hardly extravagant. He was not a major participant in the Bright Young People nor was he one of those who felt obliged to sponsor lavish entertainments. If he contributed anything to their parties, it was his costume designs, decorations and charm, none of which would have left him much out of pocket.
The newer biography raises another point about Whistler that Powell also discusses. The biographers remark that Whistler’s career has been said to have inspired Evelyn Waugh’s characterization of Charles Ryder in *Brideshead Revisited* but reject those suggestions. Powell writes, however, that Lady Violet

made a good point that Charles Ryder (with whom Waugh ‘identified’ himself in *Brideshead*, even if Waugh said in his *Letters* that he looked on Ryder as a ‘bad artist’) would have in real life been very like Rex Whistler. At ease in the beau monde, but not a highbrow. [J85-86, 208]

Both Ryder and Whistler made a successful career painting and decorating country houses and both fell in love with a daughter of one of those houses only to be rejected. But the comparison cannot be pushed too far. While Plas Newydd (which Whistler painted) was the home of Lady Caroline Paget, the greatest (but unrequited) love of his life, there was no Sebastian at that house.

If there was a Sebastian in Whistler’s life, it was probably Stephen Tennant whom he met at the Slade. Tennant lived at Wilsford Manor in Wiltshire (not to be confused with nearby Wilton House, where Edith Olivier’s cottage was located) which Whistler visited frequently. But Wilsford Manor was hardly as grand as Brideshead nor was Tennant’s family as grand as the Flytes (most of their money came from manufacturing) nor did Whistler develop any romantic interest with a woman living there.

Whistler was, moreover, no more romantically attached to Wilsford Manor itself than he was to other houses where he had worked extensively and visited such as Port Lympne. The authors conclude [166] that “there was no connection between the fiction [of *Brideshead*] and the reality,” and it is hard to quarrel with that, although they don’t offer much by way of explanation. On the other hand, broadly speaking, Charles Ryder and Rex Whistler share many characteristics as artists, which is the point Lady Violet was making, not that Waugh had based Ryder’s personal life on Whistler’s life and loves.

Powell doesn’t tell us whether Whistler or his career contributed to any of his own fictional characters. He certainly bears little resemblance to Ralph Barnby who

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Anthony Powell Resides Here

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

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was notably more successful with the ladies, both upper and lower class. There is little discussion of Barnby’s paintings but it seems unlikely that he spent much time decorating country houses (although he did decorate the Donners-Brebner Building, on the South Bank of the Thames, roughly opposite the Tate Gallery). Nor does Barnby (or any of the other painters who are Nick Jenkins’ contemporaries) spend much time sucking up to the aristocracy. Norman Chandler seems a more likely candidate, particularly since Powell, before he read the 1985 biography, had assumed that Whistler had been homosexual. Norman certainly was a smoothy and knew how to butter up his betters to his own advantage.

Whether Powell, if presented with this more objective narrative of Whistler’s life as well as the more complete selection of his oeuvre in this latest book, would be prepared to change his assessment of either the man or his work is of course impossible to say. But those of us who respect Powell’s opinions (and have formed judgments as to their limitations) can read this book with enjoyment and speculate.

**Exhibition**
The Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum is holding an exhibition of Rex Whistler’s works until Sunday 29 September: *Rex Whistler – A Career Cut Short.* It will still be open in the days before the Society’s conference at Eton. This exhibition, described as embracing Whistler’s whole career and artistic development, has a special emphasis on his Wiltshire connections. The show includes around 75 items, some exhibited in public for the first time. The museum is open Monday to Saturday (including Bank Holidays) 1000-1700, Sunday 1200-1700, and is located at The Kings House, 65 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EN; phone 01722 332 151.

This reviewer enjoyed a recent visit. Although the exhibit is relatively small (covering one small and two larger galleries), it contains some works not included in the larger exhibition at Brighton a few years ago. It also has rather more of his WWII paintings than were on exhibit in that earlier show. There is also a short video (approx. 15 minutes) by Whistler’s grand-nephew describing his life and works, with an emphasis on the murals. Whether the exhibit is worth a trip to Salisbury may depend on whether one has some other interest to explore in the area, such as the cathedral or various archeological sites, *eg.* Stonehenge and Avebury.
One of the letters from AP to Nancy Cutbirth (dated 8 May 1985) recently acquired for the Archive (see page 19). The content is mostly about cats and shows AP’s Trelawney in front of the poetry shelves.

“I reciprocate with a picture of Trelawney ... His extreme wickedness is only too evident in his face. He is a Cornish Rex, one-eighth Siamese, to give him his blue eyes ... Their coat is in ripples, and can be stroked either way.”
Modernity Britain: Opening the Box, 1957-59 by David Kynaston, who gave the 2009 Annual Lecture, was published in June and reviewers have commented on the series’ debt to Dance.

This from Roger Morgan in THES, August 2013:

This first part of Modernity Britain and its successor will see the story through to 1962 – the halfway mark in Kynaston’s planned 34-year-long saga – so we may expect a final total of 12 volumes. Some have compared it to The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon, and it certainly has affinities with Anthony Powell’s series of novels, A Dance to the Music of Time.

And this from Richard Davenport-Hines in the Guardian, 15 June 2013:

Kynaston’s work is avowedly indebted to Anthony Powell’s sequence of 12 novels, A Dance to the Music of Time, with their interplay of the personal and the public, their juxtaposition of intimate domesticity with national destiny, and their stress on the significance of life’s banalities.

There is a new weblog on the Powell scene! Pictures in Powell (http://picturesinpowell.com) links scenes in Powell’s work with various works of art. So far the author has concentrated on QU and naturally starts with the opening scene and Poussin’s painting. Other contributions include: Stringham’s likeness to Alexander in Veronese’s painting Alexander receiving the Children of Darius after the Battle of Issus; the large Regency bookcases in Mrs Foxe’s London house; and Isbister’s painting of Peter Templer’s father.

Prominently (below a drawing in a centre box on page 3) in the 12 July 2013 issue of TLS:

12.07.2013 London E1
At a time of turmoil in Egypt a reminder arrives at the TLS of balmier days for British tourists on the Nile, the final volume of the autobiography of Violet Powell, A Stone in the Shade, and her illustrated journal of a cruise in 1964 with her husband, the author of A Dance to the Music of Time. Travails include an ‘unsatisfactory bottle of white Ptolemy’ on February 25. By March 2 ‘Tony is wandering round like a dog who has lost his basket’. But while her husband is in the shower she finds a friend to update her on ‘the sex scandals on board’. The historian Antonia Fraser shared some of her aunt’s nautical travels and gives an elegant introduction to a vanished world.

Spotted by Jeanne Reed.
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, UB6 0JW, UK  
Fax: +44 (0)20 8020 1483  
Email: editor@anthonypowell.org

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... Cuttings ... Cuttings ... Cuttings ... Cuttings ... Cuttings ...

Blogging your way through a reading of Dance seems to have become all the rage this year. We’ve happened across two other bloggers who have taken the plunge, in addition to our very own Karen Langley.

So far Adam Roberts, who blogs at Sibilant Fricative (http://sibilantfricative.blogspot.co.uk) has written about QU in May and BM, AW and LM in June of this year.

Meanwhile, Mercer Island Books of Mercer Island, Washington State, USA, who write at http://mercerislandbooks.tumblr.com, started on Dance at the beginning of the year and have got as far as VB.

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Here’s another snippet from Richard Davenport-Hines, this time in the Literary Review of May 2013. He is reviewing Tarantula’s Web: John Hayward, TS Eliot and their Circle by John Smart:

Hayward’s Sunday evening salon in his flat in Bina Gardens was the resort of discriminating literary Londoners as well as foreign visitors as varied as the Marx Brothers and Paul Valéry, who told Cyril Connolly: ‘Je n’oublierai jamais Bina Gardens’. Hayward prospered as a journeyman reviewer, but failed to complete his novel Beechingstoke, a satire of prewar London of a type that was perfected by Anthony Powell in The Acceptance World and At Lady Molly’s.

Spotted by Ivan Hutnik.
The *Independent* on 14 June 2013 carried a piece by Michael Glover about Henry Walton’s 1786 painting of *Sir Robert and Lady Buxton with their Daughter Anne*, which is in the Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Norwich (below):

The way the arms reach out, touching or intertwining and interlocking, seems to suggest a kind of circling, dance-like motion – and this in spite of the fact that only the child is on her feet …

The entire scene puts us somewhat in mind of a great painting by Poussin called *A Dance to the Music of Time*, which was in England during these years because it was owned by an Englishman. It now hangs in the Wallace Collection in London. Poussin’s figures – there are four of them – circle slightly awkwardly. His is a dance of the seasons, and the music is provided by a greybeard of a lyre-player. It is possible that Walton could have known this painting – after all, he was a dealer in Old Master paintings, too.

Following up on the *Country Life* (see Newsletter #51) interview with Owen Paterson, UK Environment Secretary, he is interviewed by Andrew Gimson on the Conservative Home website (*http://conservativehome.blogs.com*) which champions the interests of grassroots Conservative Party Members. Gimson and Paterson attended the same prep school and the interview ends with the following exchange:

*ConHome*: I read your interview with *Country Life* and saw that *A Dance to the Music of Time* by Anthony Powell is your favourite book.

*Paterson*: Well it is extraordinary. This interview is straight out of it. I have a clear image of you hitting that tree stump at the bottom of the Inkpot [a steep bank at our school with a pond at its foot]. You went down the Inkpot out of control, your toboggan hit a rut, the back of it flipped up and you went absolutely head first, like somebody fired out of a cannon, head first into the tree, and then you yowled. So this is an Anthony Powell moment.

*ConHome*: So who’s Widmerpool? …

*Paterson*: That’s a very dangerous game.

*ConHome*: It’s a very dangerous game, yes …

*Paterson*: I think on the record we’ll say that’s a very dangerous question. But we’ve definitely got some Widmerpools. Why doesn’t ConservativeHome run a competition? Name your Widmerpool. But he’s gloriously true. I can name several people who’ve got real Widmerpoolian attributes. That would be a very jolly exercise, wouldn’t it?
SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

UK: £8, Overseas: £14

Jeff Manley et al.; Dance Music. 150-page guide to the musical references in Dance; compiled in the style of Spurling’s Handbook. 
UK: £7, Overseas: £10.50

UK: £11, Overseas: £17

UK: £7, Overseas: £13

UK: £6.50, Overseas: £10.50

Writing about Anthony Powell. Talks given at the 2004 AGM by George Lilley, Michael Barber and Nick Birns; introduced by Christine Berberich. 
UK: £4, Overseas: £7

The Master and The Congressman. 40-page monograph by John Monagan describing his meetings with Powell. 
UK: £4, Overseas: £7

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Violet Powell; A Stone in the Shade. Fourth & final volume of Lady Violet’s autobiography covering mostly the 1960s. Includes many of Lady Violet’s coloured travel sketches. Hardback. 
UK: £24, Overseas: £29

Paperback: UK £16, Overseas £19.50
Hardback: UK £26, Overseas £32

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