Contents

From the Secretary’s Desk … 2
Lady Widmerpool’s Purse – 1 … 3-7
   Poussin’s Rhythms … 8-10
Kaggsy’s Ramblings – SA … 11-13
Kaggsy’s Ramblings – MP … 14-16
   Christmas Quiz Answers … 17
   Dates for Your Diary … 18-19
   Society Notices … 20
   Local Group News … 21-23
   More Talking About Books … 24-25
2014 Literary Anniversaries … 26-27
   Letters to the Editor … 28
   Cuttings … 29-33
Merchandise & Membership … 34-36
2013 AGM Minutes … centre insert

** Don’t forget to renew your subscription! **
From the Secretary’s Desk

Venice. Yes, what you’ve all been asking for is going to happen … we’re going to Venice! After two years incredibly hard work by Elwin & Susan Taylor, John Roe, Jeff Manley, Julian Allason and others it has been possible to organise a conference weekend in Venice, staying at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (whose support is greatly appreciated), the backdrop to Temporary Kings.

Elwin’s team have put together a programme of five talks, all by renowned academics, and as the pièce de résistance a visit to the normally closed Palazzo Labia to see the influential Tiepolo frescoes. The weekend will also include a reception and a dinner.

Pricing is not yet fully nailed down, so booking will not open until 1 April, but there are more details on page 19.

Trustees. Unfortunately Paul Nutley and Stephen Holden have both had to stand down as Society Trustees because of health problems. Both are thanked for their tremendous contributions to the Society over the years – in Stephen’s case since the Society’s inception – which have been greatly appreciated. This Newsletter’s success is thanks to Stephen.

For the time being this leaves the Society without two Trustees and an Editor. While I can fill the Editor’s chair as a stop-gap measure, I cannot do so long-term. So we need volunteers to join the Society’s Executive as Trustees, and someone to step forward to fill the Editor’s comfy armchair. If you are one of those people, please get in touch.

Meanwhile we wish both Paul and Stephen a speedy and successful recovery.
O Engländer! Seid ihr nicht Toren
Ihr lasst euern Weibern den Willen.
Wie is man geplagt und geschoren
Wenn solch eine Zucht man erhält...

Oh Englishmen what fools you are
To let your women have their way.
What a bother and nuisance it is
To be landed with such a creature…

[Mozart, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*]

After his mother’s death, Commissario of Police Brunetti moved a number of cartons from her retirement home into his apartment in San Polo. Paola was constantly urging him to sort through these boxes as they were cluttering up the limited storage area in the apartment, always a problem for Venetians. The lower areas of Venetian buildings (usually used for storage in other cities) were subject to flooding during periods of acqua alta. This forced Venetians to find storage space in areas that were in competition for use as living spaces.

One Sunday morning, he reluctantly dragged out a dusty box that had begun its life as a case of wine from an obscure vineyard in the Alto Adige region (which had been one of his father’s favorites). He pulled open the top, releasing a cloud of dust that was probably a health hazard given the damp Venetian climate that encouraged the growth of dangerous varieties of mold. He was confident that Lt Vianello could tell him what a serious risk he was taking by probing into such a musty box without wearing some form of protective clothing or mask.

After removing some crumpled pages of the *Gazzettino* from the late 1950s that had been used as packing material (in his opinion, probably the highest and best use to which that publication could be put), he found among other assorted objects a woman’s leather purse with what looked like a gold chain and clasp. The crocodile skin was now a bit powdery but the metal parts were in good condition, and he was able to open its clasp.

As he peered inside it, he recalled how, as a young boy, he had found it in a narrow canal near San Marco. This was before he started school. He had just learned to swim, and it was a very hot day at the end of the summer. Brunetti and his mates were not allowed to swim in the canals, but this one was quiet and not used by motor launches. It was also relatively shallow which made it easy to find a large object such as the purse lying on the bottom. It had not been there very long when they found it as it was still lying on top of the mud. The boys thought the purse might contain money since it looked as if it was expensive. Rather than risk trouble if they rifled through its contents and had to explain where any new-found...
wealth came from, they decided Brunetti should give it to his mother. After rebuking him for swimming in the canal, she took the purse without any apparent curiosity or further comment. How it then found its way into this box of miscellaneous items was impossible to say.

The contents included a small change purse with a few moldy oversized lire notes, some keys and various items of feminine grooming such as combs, clippers, nail files and dried make-up and lipstick. In addition, there was, in a side pocket that had been zipped up, an envelope. He could see that it was addressed to Sir Kenneth Widmerpool at the Palazzo Bragadin, Cannareggio 3230 and marked Attesa per l’arrivo, the Italian for “Hold for arrival”. It appeared to have been opened. In it was a handwritten letter on the stationery of the Italian Railroad (the sort of thing they still made available to international passengers in those days); he could make out the message because it was written in ball-point ink. It read as follows:

I am not able to meet you at conference due unforeseen circumstances. Have left message containing your instructions from superiors at home of artist D Tokenhouse at Castello 4348. I placed it behind painting I bought from him called “Any Complaints?: An Army Scene”. He is not aware that I concealed message. I left it with the artist, telling him to wrap it properly, and said I would have unnamed person collect it to hand over to me at conference. You should tell him that you are this person. You may dispose of the painting how you like. Is rubbish. But please do not to try to contact me. Yours, B.

There was no date on the letter. The only other document in the side pocket was an airline ticket. This was issued to a Lady Pamela Widmerpool for a trip on British European Airways from Venice to London. He noticed that it was a First Class ticket for the midnight departure.

He set the rest of the contents aside and took the purse and the letter to show Paola. She had no interest in the purse itself but looked with interest at the envelope and the letter. He held them in front of her while she stirred the risotto. It smelled like one of his favorites, probably porcini cooked in veal stock.

“What did this come from, Guido?”

After explaining its progeny, Brunetti asked her what she made of it.

“Guido, are you involved in some sort of treasure hunt game? This letter is addressed to a character in an English novel by a writer named Anthony Powell. He’s not one of my favorites, but I have read some of his novels including the one that was set in Venice. It’s been a while since I read it, but I think the character named Widmerpool was involved in some sort of espionage mission. “B” is probably Dr Belkin who was supposed to be his contact. I also remember a scene in which his wife (who was a very nasty piece of work) threw her purse into a canal. Her name was Pamela, as on the airline ticket, so the purse probably belonged to her. The Widmerpools were both rather larger than life, even grotesque, nothing like the characters in Henry James who are much more to my liking. And there was something about a Tiepolo painting. I’m sure this is some kind of joke, perhaps a prank by some of the English Literature students. It might even be a publicity stunt to promote a
conference on the novelist Powell this Fall at the Cini Foundation that I recently saw advertised in a flyer on the English Department’s notice board.”

“I don’t see how that’s possible,” he replied, “as it was in a box at my mother’s since about 1958 or ’59. When was the novel about Venice published?”

“It was one of the later ones in a series … probably in the 1970s. I read it in my student days”.

“Well, maybe there’s another dimension at work here. After all, we’re also characters in a series of novels. Why shouldn’t we have contact with other fictional characters and plots, particularly as this one seems to involve what may be an unsolved mystery.”

“Oh, Guido. Don’t be silly. You’ll just complicate your own life (not to mention that of our creator) if you insist on intervening in a story by another writer.”

He let the matter rest until the next day when he put the letter into his pocket as he left for the Questura. He took the No. 2 vaporetto from the San Toma dock. He still bemoaned the renumbering of that route from what used to be the 82 since it rather dated all the references in the earlier novels where he appeared and probably confused readers who did not read the books in chronological order. He got out as usual at San Zaccaria and walked through the campo, past the ornate white church (one of his favorites because it was so extravagantly Venetian).

He stopped at the caffè by the Greek Church to have his coffee, knowing the pastries would be fresh on a Monday morning. He specially liked the one that was shaped like a lobster and filled with ricotta cream. It was the type they make in Naples (probably the only good thing that ever came from that benighted region). Lt Vianello was standing at the counter, just finishing his coffee, when Brunetti arrived. As they walked up the fondamenta to the Questura, Brunetti mentioned the purse and the letter as well as Paola’s reaction.
“I think Paola’s right,” said Vianello. “You don’t really have authority as a character in one set of novels to investigate possibly unsolved mysteries from another, even if there is a gap in the plot. No telling where that might lead”.

“You both may be correct,” replied Brunetti, without much conviction. He began to see how he could become a more complex, more nuanced character, one of greater interest to literary critics and scholars, if he could solve a mystery from a literary novel such as Paola had described.

When he got to his desk there was the usual pile of inconsequential paperwork. There was nothing much going on. It was not easy making oneself interesting as a police Commissario in a city where there was no serious crime to speak of. After moving papers around for a few minutes, he decided to show the letter to Signorina Elettra to see what she could find out about it.

Her office was next to that of their boss, Vice-Questore Patta. After exchanging greetings, he showed her the letter and asked her to see what she could find out on her computer about Kenneth Widmerpool, D Tokenhouse and the mysterious “B”, without giving her the information he already had received from Paola.

He didn’t see her again until the next day when she came to him full of information based on her computer searches. She explained who the characters Kenneth Widmerpool, Daniel Tokenhouse and Dr Belkin were and what they were doing in Venice. She also filled him in about Pamela (or Lady) Widmerpool, her purse (a gift from a rich American) and how it found its way into the canal. But she could find no mention of the letter that he had found in the purse.

She continued: “Commissario, I have never had to do this kind of research before. This information was not in the secure files of government agencies, banks or individuals. It was on the computer as an e-book. I was able to use my computer skills to hack into it without paying, but it did not pose the usual challenge of finding a way through a security wall. These people are all characters in a novel written in English. They are no more real than you or I. When I looked for an Italian translation, I found that, while a few novels in that series have been published in translation, not this one. My English language is more limited than my computer skills and the Google translation was rubbish. Why are you so interested in these people and what do you expect to find?”

“It’s hard to say at this point, but I am sufficiently interested to look a bit deeper. Let me see what I can find out on my own.”

“Well, Commissario, I should perhaps warn you. When I searched for these people, I came up with hundreds, perhaps thousands of hits from e-mail messages between people on a blog called APList. These messages go on and on about who
these people were in ‘real life’. There seems to be no end to the ridiculous lengths these bloggers will go in their character identity speculations. Are you sure you want to get involved in this sort of thing? It may even risk opening us up to similar speculation as to who we may ‘really’ be.

He smiled and responded, somewhat patronizingly, “Thanks for your research. I think I can take it over from here”.

“Well, perhaps I should also tell you that after I finished the easy research, I was sufficiently curious to resort to my usual, more secure sources. I broke through the security wall of the CIA archives and found the file of Kenneth Widmerpool. They have digitized all their files that are more than 40 years old to save storage costs but their security system was not very challenging, for me at least. I must confess, that I have a contact at that agency (as I have in most places) who helped me a bit. The file contained a memo by a Russell Gwinnett, one of their agents who, as his cover, taught English Literature. He was assigned to attend a conference in Venice in 1958 to make contact with “Agent Squirrel 2”. This was probably the mysterious Dr Belkin whose name means squirrel in several Slavic languages. Long story short, he discovered that Squirrel 2 was working both sides and was also the contact of Kenneth Widmerpool who was supplying information from Western sources to his bosses in the East. Gwinnett ingratiated himself with Mrs Widmerpool, who exposed Squirrel 2 and prevented her husband from meeting him. Later files also report that, as a result of her actions, Squirrel 2 (now identified as Belkin) was exterminated. There are also some references in another document that suggest that this Gwinnett was implicated in the death of Mrs Widmerpool in London about a year later. The agency did what was needed to cover that up. They also kept a careful watch on Kenneth Widmerpool during his period as Professor of Political Economics at Brigham Young University. But I assume you have no interest in that.”

“Well, Signorina, as usual, you have given me a lot to go on with. For now, you don’t need to delve any deeper into Widmerpool’s activities in the US but remember how to find them again should that be necessary. Grazie molto.”

“One more thing, Commissario. I don’t know whether it’s relevant or not, but this Gwinnett in his report on his Venice activities said that he had met an Englishman named Nicholas Jenkins who was also attending the conference. Gwinnett reported that Jenkins was a well-informed gossip who seemed to know everything about everyone of any importance in English cultural and political circles. He recommended that London Station might want to contact him to see if he could be of any use to them.”

“I’ll try to remember that if this name comes up again.”

[To be continued]

**Jeff Manley writes:** Donna Leon’s Commissario Brunetti novels are published in the UK by William Heinemann and in the US by Atlantic Monthly Press. The next is due for release in April 2014 in both countries; By Its Cover, number 23 in the series, will involve the antiquarian book trade. The best in my opinion are the first, Death at La Fenice and number five, Acqua Alta, but it is not necessary to read them in order.
These Rhythms of Life are Calm

By Willard Spiegelman

Nicolas Poussin has always been a hard sell. One learned friend of mine told me unashamedly: “In the entire history of art there is only one artist I have no time for: Poussin. Cold, empty, overintellectualized”.

Without Poussin, the course of French – indeed modern – painting would be utterly different. He spent his adult life in Rome. Along with his countryman Claude Lorrain, who also lived in Italy, he effected the transition between the high Renaissance and modernity. In Poussin (1594-1665), the Baroque gives way to the Neoclassical. History, religion, myth and landscape all blend in his pictures.

Painters in Rome in the early 19th century followed “la promenade de Poussin”, literally walking in the master’s tracks: JMW Turner and John Constable as well as Théodore Géricault did this. Paul Cézanne, above all, worshipped him: “Like Poussin”, he said, “I would like to put reason in the grass, and tears in the sky”. This assessment hardly refers to a cold and overintellectualized painter, although our contemporary tastes usually look askance at Poussin’s kind of formal perfection.

Poussin had it all. At London’s Wallace Collection – a sumptuous house museum chock-a-block with art, china, armour and furniture – you’ll find one of his great early pictures, “A Dance to the Music of Time” (c.1634-36), whose title the British novelist Anthony Powell borrowed for his own 12-volume masterpiece (1951-1975). Currently the painting hangs on a damask-covered side wall in a corner of the smoking room, bereft of good light. (Late next year [2014], it will return to its usual position when the museum’s Great Gallery is renovated.)

All paintings demand to be appreciated, and analyzed for form, color and technique. Poussin’s pictures also demand to be “read”: With few exceptions, his pictures tell stories. At the start of the “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” John Keats asks: “What men or gods are these?” It’s what every child will say: What is going on here? Who are these people?

Poussin’s scenes from the Bible, ancient history and classical mythology require little explanation to well-educated people. “Dance” – at 32½ inches by 41 inches, a small picture by comparison to some of the master’s greatest, especially late canvases – is a tougher nut to crack. What do we see?

Four figures, holding hands and moving clockwise in a circle, are flanked by a two-headed column (Janus, the Roman god of doors and boundaries) on the picture’s left, and by an old winged man playing a lyre, on the right. The attractive quartet is dancing to the music of Time. Two small boys in the foreground represent another aspect of temporality. On the left, one blows soap bubbles; on the right, the second watches, somewhat suspiciously, sands going through an hourglass. And above the terrestrial scene, Apollo, god of the sun, led by Aurora, goddess of dawn, and followed by the Hours, steers his chariot across the heavens for the daily round. Time is, so to speak, everywhere.

It’s the central foursome that commands our attention, and provokes questions not
easy to answer. Who are these people? How are they different, and – an equally important question – how are they the same?

The picture is clear and mysterious at once. Even its title is troublesome. It had earlier been called *La Danse des saisons, ou l’image de la vie humaine*. Poussin was involved, in his early years in Rome, in literary circles that would have found such allegorical tours de force meaningful and engaging. He received a commission for the picture from Giulio Rospigliosi (who later became Pope Clement IX), and who probably dictated the terms of its iconography. But “seasons” and “human life” are pretty broadly conceived terms. An older interpretation held the single male dancer to be Bacchus, the god of wine crowned with grape leaves, and representing Autumn, who was usually pictured as female. Now, scholars think that the four figures are not the seasons but stages in human fortune: poverty, labour, wealth and pleasure.

Which is which? By one reckoning, the man is the figure of poverty, and he is holding the hands of labour and pleasure. But if he is (also) a god of the harvest, he can hardly be thought impoverished.

Today, a viewer is more likely to be as moved by the elegant sameness of the four figures as by their subtle distinctions. Two are sandaled, two barefooted. The first woman, on the left, garlanded with flowers, casts a come-hither smile. The third figure (Labour?) has the plainest headdress, and the fourth, in front (Wealth?), the one we see most clearly,
with pearls in her hair, leans back smiling. She, too, wears sandals.

Regardless of sameness and difference, all four project a stately, classic calm. All are youthful, pink-cheeked and beautiful. If this were a different kind of depiction of the seasons of human life, surely “winter” or poverty would mean “old age” or ugliness, and be depicted appropriately. The four make a frieze: motion caught in stillness. And even Time, the ancient musician, has gay, glittering eyes and a body like that of a muscular youth, not an old man.

Poussin’s mastery of color is evident. The palette of salmon, white and blue used for the dancers is repeated in the sky, the drapery of the putti, and the wings of Father Time. Harmony prevails.

The details of the picture, in other words, complicate or positively undo any strict allegorical readings we might project upon it. Just as you can’t really demarcate one season from another, or one period of human life from the next, so here in “Dance,” it’s the constant process, not the individual chapters of life, that stand out.

At the start of Powell’s novel, Nick Jenkins the narrator thinks about these figures and human mortality:

... human beings, facing outward like the Seasons, moving hand in hand in intricate measure: stepping slowly, methodically, sometimes a trifle awkwardly, in evolutions that take recognisable shape: or breaking into seemingly meaningless gyrations, while partners disappear only to reappear again, once more giving pattern to the spectacle: unable to control the melody, unable, perhaps, to control the steps of the dance.

This fanciful thinking says more about Jenkins than about Poussin’s painting, in which we find no “meaningless gyrations,” only the inexorable sadness – however beautiful – of human movement occurring under the watchful eye and command of Time.

Willard Spiegelman is the Hughes Professor of English at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

This article first appeared in the Wall Street Journal on 22 November 2013 and is reprinted with kind permission.
I confess I am very behind with August’s episode of Dance to the Music of Time – life and other books got in the way – but I’m going to try to read two of the books in one month. In the meantime, here are my thoughts (belatedly) about book 8 in the sequence.

Actually, episodic is the right word to describe Powell’s novels, as it’s become clear by now that each chapter relates the story of an event, or series of events, that have made up an episode of Nick’s life. And how like real life this is, because very few of us remember our lives sequentially; instead, particular times, places and happenings stand out in our memories, and so Powell is adept at capturing what the real experience of remembering is.

*The Soldier’s Art* continues from *The Valley of Bones* with Nick now working for Widmerpool at Divisional HQ. It is 1941 and so the War is taking hold. Being employed by the wonderful Kenneth is not the most scintillating of jobs, and Nick obviously craves something more. A fluke conversation with General Liddament leads to a recommendation for a position with the Free French forces, and Nick is due for an interview during his forthcoming leave. Meanwhile, Widmerpool is heavily involved in army politics, jockeying for position with a colleague, Colonel Hogbourne-Johnson. And in the Mess, a shock is in store, as an unexpected Mess Waiter turns out to be an old friend of Nick’s, and unfortunately draws the wrath of Biggs, an unpleasant Captain.

There are only three long chapters in this book and the second covers Nick’s leave in London. The interview for the Free French does not go well, as Nick’s language is not up to the job. However, he manages to meet up with old friends, having a drink with Chips Lovell, and dinner with Moreland and, most unexpectedly, Audrey Maclintick. Emotions are running high as Priscilla Lovell, Nick’s sister-in-law, has been having an affair with Odo Stevens, and turns up at the same restaurant with him as he is off on a posting. Chips, meanwhile, wants a reconciliation and has gone off to a gathering where he thinks she will be. Nick goes home with Moreland and Audrey, where they encounter Max Pilgrim with some dramatic news...
The third chapter sees us and Nick back at HQ where there are all sorts of upheavals going on. The Mess Waiter has been transferred to the mobile laundry; Bithel, who is in charge of that unit, is caught drunk by Widmerpool (despite Nick and the waiter’s attempts to cover up) and our Kenneth has him dismissed from the army. Widmerpool’s behind the scenes manipulations go a little too far and despite his promotion, there is a hint things may not go well for him. And Nick, previously unsure of what would happen to him on Widmerpool’s promotion, is summoned to the War Office!

This is one of the shorter books of the sequence, but my goodness it delivers quite a punch! I’ve worded my comments as carefully as I can above because I don’t want to give out any spoilers, but there is plenty of drama in this book and I was really gripped from beginning to end.

The War starts to hit home in a particularly hard way, and what is surprising is that much of the dramatic action happens when Nick is on leave in London. The first deaths that really affect us take place amongst civilians, in the blitz, and so are more powerful because we are not necessarily expecting them. One character seems to have some kind of premonition of what is happening and their leavetaking is touching and poignant. There is much Widmerpool in this book, and it’s fascinating to look back to the first volume, A Question of Upbringing, and recall his appearance at the start, his dogged running reflecting his stubborn, determined nature.

There are unexpected reappearances, as there usually are, and some losses referred to almost casually – which makes the event even more shocking. Powell is always adept at delivering these, but never so much as here – I came out of this book feeling quite emotionally wrung out!

The portrait of army life is of course excellent – the petty everyday brutalities, the boredom, the relentless procedures, the caste system of the ranks – but it is the despair caused by the war that is shown so well here. The norms go out of the window and people take unexpected actions: a suicide by a solid army man thrown into sudden anguish; the union of Moreland and Audrey, who previously very much disliked each other; and the breakdown of marriages and normal relationships as a kind of recklessness takes over.

It’s become clear that one of the most important elements in these books is friendship and Nick/Powell reflects on this complex relationship:

Friendship, popularly represented as something simple and straightforward – in contrast with love – is perhaps no less complicated, requiring equally mysterious nourishment; like love, too, bearing also within its embryo inherent seeds of dissolution, something more fundamentally destructive, perhaps, than the mere passing of time, the all-obliterating march of events which had, for example, come between [X] and myself.

It’s going to be hard to pick a favourite of these books when I’ve finally read the whole sequence – if, indeed, that turns out to be something relevant to do – but I have to say that this has been one of the most gripping I’ve read so far. There’s a poignancy to it, a combination of ageing and changing and loss. One character quotes Browning from “Childe Roland” (the title comes from this poem):
I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draught of earlier,
    happier sights
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards – the soldier’s art;
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

There is a sense that more losses are to come before the world is set to rights – I can’t wait to get into the next book, but in many ways I don’t want to! Excellent writing as always by Powell; a remarkably good book!


Charlotte Street, as it stretches northward towards Fitzroy Square, retains a certain unprincipled integrity of character, though its tributaries reach out to the east, where, in Tottenham Court Road, structural anomalies pass all bounds of reason, and west, into a nondescript ocean of bricks and mortar from which hospitals, tenements and warehouses gloomily manifest themselves in shapeless bulk above mean shops. Mr Deacon’s ‘place’ was situated in a narrow by-street ... of modest eighteenth-century – perhaps even late seventeenth-century – houses, of a kind still to be seen in London, though growing rarer, the fronts of some turned to commercial purposes, others bearing the brass plate of dentist or midwife ... Mr Deacon’s premises stood between a French polisher’s and the offices of the Vox Populi Press. It was a sordid spot, though one from which a certain implication of expectancy was to be derived. Indeed, the façade was not unlike that row of shops that form a back-cloth for the harlequinade ...

[A Buyer’s Market]
Yes, I’m still a month behind with my Powell reads, but I have just managed to squeeze book 9 in before the end of October so that I don’t get even further in arrears! *The Military Philosophers* is the third in the ‘war trilogy’ and contains a lot of events, emotions, changes and losses.

As we start the book, Nick is now working in military liaison, looking after a varied bunch of foreign attachés and dealing with the pettiness and politics of military life. He is based in London, looking after the Polish contingent, working under Pennistone and Finn. Needless to say, he crosses paths with the dreaded Widmerpool, as well as a number of old acquaintances such as Sunny Farebrother and Templer. He also encounters old haunts, and in a chilling reminder of how things are changed goes off on a visit to the Polish HQ in London, which turns out to be Uncle Giles’ erstwhile home, the Ufford Hotel.

We are memorably introduced to Stringham’s niece, the notorious Pamela Flitton, who is working as a driver for the army; she reveals that Stringham was captured when Singapore fell. The war rumbles on, Nick is promoted to supervising Belgians and Czechs, and then during an air raid he runs into Pamela and her current man, who turns out to be Odo Stevens. Her temperament is rather violently displayed here as they row dramatically. Also present is Mrs Erdleigh who is in full soothsaying mood.

Then Nick finally makes Major and is assigned to accompany a group of assorted foreign attachés round Normandy and Belgium, through war zones, devastation and some very moving Proustian scenery. The book ends with peace at last arriving and a thanksgiving service at St Paul’s Cathedral. The war is over and Nick, like so many others, has to return to civilian life.

Reading *MP* is something of an emotional rollercoaster, as we follow the ups and downs of the ending of the war and the corresponding ups and downs of the various characters. Indeed, in the war trilogy Powell paints a brilliant and moving picture of wartime Britain and the effects of the long conflict on people and places. There are so many losses, so many lives turned inside out, and this is really brought home in these books. His somewhat laconic style doesn’t hide up the pain and hurt which is going on around him and I think I’ve come to realise that the books are just not really about Nick, but those around him – he is simply the carrier, the method of telling the tale, so
Until you have dealings with Blackhead, the word “bureaucrat” will have conveyed no meaning to you. He is the super-tchenovnik of the classical Russian novel. Even this building can boast no one else quite like him.

And later:

‘Blackhead is a man apart’, said Pennistone. ‘Even his colleagues are aware of that. His minutes have the abstract quality of pure intention.’

Powell captures him beautifully, as always – he really is a master at nailing character with words! And his writing is just exquisite – for example, this wonderful description of Donners:

In the seven years or so that had passed since I had last seen him, Sir Magnus Donners had grown not so much older in appearances, as less like a human being. He now resembled an animated tailor’s dummy, one designed to recommend second-hand, though immensely discreet, clothes (if the suit he was wearing could be regarded as a sample) adapted to the taste of distinguished men no longer young. Jerky movements, like those of a marionette – perhaps indicating all was not absolutely well with his physical system – added to the impression of an outsize puppet that had somehow escaped from its box and begun to mix with real people, who were momentarily taken in by the extraordinary conviction of its mechanism.

So many of our old favourites reappear, with in many cases a certain amount of poignancy, and of course the dreadful
Kenneth has a prominent part in the events that take place in the book. Widmerpool’s behaviour and quest for power attains monstrous proportions in MP; but then he is a completely self-serving egotist, so it is no surprise when he hooks up with Pamela Flitton who seems to be driven by nothing but anger and her own desires. And Widmerpool has been a man driven from the opening pages of the first book, our first encounter with the man where his personality was already on display, and here his nature is fully displayed. His actions, if what is alleged about him is true, are shocking and appalling. Truly, he and Pamela deserve each other.

It’s fascinating seeing Nick moving in the higher echelons of power, and his description of a visit to a secure meeting in a bunker-style room is very telling:

In this brightly lit dungeon lurked a sense that no one could spare a word, not a syllable, far less gesture, not of direct value in implementing the matter in hand. The power principle could almost be felt here, humming and vibrating like the drumming of the teleprinter. The sensation that resulted was oppressive, even a shade alarming.

The military attachés, with their various temperaments and peculiarities, are an engaging bunch and the interplay between them is a joy. And then there is a very unexpected reunion at the end …

Saying much more will risk spoilers so I won’t; all I *will* say is that the more I read of Powell, the more convinced I become of his mastery as a writer – the blurb on the back of my edition calling the sequence “the greatest modern novel since Ulysses” and “one of English fiction’s few twentieth century masterpieces” doesn’t exaggerate!


Poet John Clare (left) and Alexander Pope. See “Literary Anniversaries”, page 26.
Christmas Books Quiz
1. *The Arabian Nights* (8th-13th centuries); Sir Magnus Donners
2. Samuel Pepys
3. St Nicholas in the poem ‘The Night Before Christmas’ by Clement Clarke Moore (1823)
4. Mr Pickwick, *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens (1837)
5. Not washing, and wearing his hair and nails long and dirty
6. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1865)
7. Tom Brown in *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes (1857)
8. Ebenezer Scrooge, in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens (1843)
9. Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy March in *Little Women* by Louisa M Alcott (1868)
10. Katy and Clover Carr in *What Katy Did at School* by Susan Coolidge (Sarah Chauncey Woolsey) (1872)
11. MR James (his first book of these was published in 1904)
13. *Puck of Pook’s Hill* by Rudyard Kipling (1906)
14. *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (1908)
15. Lord Peter Wimsey in *The Nine Tailors* by Dorothy L Sayers (1934)
16. Tin Tin by Hergé (1930s/40s)
17. *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats* by TS Eliot (1939)
18. The Starkadders in *Christmas at Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons (1940)
19. Minka Varda, the daughter of (Dorothy) Varda and Jean Varda (1944)
20. In the Australian bush, in the books by SA Wakefield (1967-1989)
21. Dylan Thomas in *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* (various versions, mostly 1940s)
22. Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by CS Lewis (1950)
23. Her sister (née Lady Mary Pakenham)

Anagrammatic Acrostic Quiz
1. Edward VII
2. Nina Hamnett
3. Noddy
4. Edgar Deacon
5. Ufford
6. Eton College
7. Farinelli
8. Dotheboys Hall
9. Achilles
10. Kingsley Amis
11. Engelbert Humperdinck
12. Henry Yorke
13. Mr Norris
14. Benjamin Britten
15. Charles Ives
16. Richard III
17. WE Johns
18. Horace Isbister
19. Sultan
20. Arthur Sullivan
21. Radnorshire
22. Susan Nunnery
23. George Orwell
Which gives the letters for John Aubrey and His Friends.

Christmas Crossword Solution

```
S T R E A M L E T   L O O T
L I D A R A C
H A N D C L A P   E M M O T T
D D E S A P A
P E D L A R   A L D R E D G E
E N W R O
F L O R E S   G R E E N I N G
E N L A
T R U S C O T T   L O V E L L
M T W O I
P O W E R F U L   B U S T E R
N V L L R I A
S T R E G A   A M E S B U R Y
O N K N E L L
I V E S   E N D A N G E R S
```
Summer Saturday Stroll
In the Footsteps of Milly Andriadis and Charles Stringham

Saturday 14 June 2014
1030 for 1100 hrs

Meet: Angel & Crown Pub
58 St Martin’s Lane, London WC2
(very close to Leicester Square Underground)

The walk will depart from the Angel & Crown at 1100 hrs sharp.
The route, which is about 2 miles, will meander along Gerrard Street in Soho, through St James’s and Mayfair towards Hyde Park and the Achilles statue, ending in Shepherd Market.

Once in Shepherd Market we will lunch at Da Corradi, a small, friendly, family-run Italian restaurant. Lunch is booked for 1300 hrs.

No need to book for the walk, but if you wish to join the lunch party please let us know so we can book a group table.

There is no charge for the walk itself (although donations in the Secretary’s top hat will be welcomed) and lunch will be pay on the day.

Non members will be welcome. For further details and booking please contact Ivan Hutnik, ivanhutnik@gmail.com, or the Hon. Secretary (address, page 2).

London Quarterly Pub Meets
Saturday 10 May 2014
Saturday 9 August 2014
Saturday 1 November 2014

The Audley
41–43 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.

Venice Conference
9-11 October 2014
See page 19

Annual General Meeting
Saturday 25 October 2014
1400 hrs

London venue tbc
Further details when available from the Hon. Secretary.

London AP Birthday Lunch
Saturday 6 December 2014
1200 for 1230 hrs

London venue tbc
Further details when available from the Hon. Secretary.
Venice Conference Announcement

Arrangements are now being finalised for the Venice event and bookings will be taken from 1 April 2014

Thursday 9 – Saturday 11 October 2014

Fondazione Giorgio Cini
Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore

Full details and confirmed pricing will be announced on 1 April 2014

Programme - Friday and Saturday

★ Two mornings of conference sessions with internationally recognized experts on Anthony Powell and his period.
★ Tour of Fondazione Giorgio Cini, including the re-creation of Veronese’s Wedding at Cana.
★ Visit to Palazzo Labia to see the Tiepolo frescoes, and the setting for the ‘Gyges and Candaules’ scene in Temporary Kings.
★ Prosecco reception at Palazzo Labia.
★ Conference dinner at Do Forni Restaurant.
★ Two or three nights accommodation at Vittore Branca Study Centre, attached to and part of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini.

Pricing – all above included

• Members approx. €325 per person for 2 nights (approx. £270 / $445).
• Members approx. €395 per person for 3 nights (approx. £325 / $540).
• Extra nights accommodation may be arranged directly with the Study Centre (subject to availability) at €70 euros per person per night (single) or €60 euros per person per night (double).
• Please note: delegates are responsible for their travel costs to, from and in Venice.

Availability and Reservation

• Bookings are limited to 50 people. Double rooms subject to availability.
• To reserve places in advance, subject to confirmation by submission of booking form and payment after 1 April but before 18 April, please email or phone the Hon. Secretary, Keith Marshall (address on page 2) with your name and number of places required.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND MONEY NOW as prices are still to be fully confirmed

We are looking forward to seeing you in Venice!
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.

Newsletter Copy Deadlines

Newsletter #55, Summer 2014
Copy Deadline: 16 May 2014
Publication Date: 6 June 2014

Newsletter #56, Autumn 2014
Copy Deadline: 11 August 2014
Publication Date: 5 September 2014

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.

Welcome to New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following who have joined the Society in recent months:
Gerard Connors, Kenmore, USA
Philippa Fawcett, London
Bruce Fleming, London
Allan Lloyd, Herefordshire
Kathleen McCook, Ruskin, USA
Matthew Nimetz, New York, USA
Thomas Paul, London
Meredith Ramsbotham, London
J Steer, Pont-Rouge, Canada

Society Notices
Local Group News

New York Powell Birthday Lunch

Reporter Ed Bock

On three occasions the timbers of the Grolier Club vibrated to loud expressions of approbation during the December 13 annual AP Birthday Luncheon in New York.

The first followed the announcement that John Gould and Gerald Ruderman had been named joint winners of the Umfraville Award for their 7 minute addresses of “wit and/or devil’s advocacy”. Cheers and smiles continued as Ruderman and Gould were escorted to laureled chairs by Herald Cheryl Hurley.

Applause came also with the award of the Noel-Poel 2013 Theophrastus Prize “for Literary Artistry in Witty Character Delineation & for his Unique Contribution to the Canon of 20th Century English Fiction” to Dr Bernard Stacey. Dr Stacey was also made a Lifetime Honorary Member of the Noel-Poel Players Company. A signed copy of his book, Portrait in String by X Trapnel, published by Quiggin and Craggs, was placed in the Grolier Club Library.

After desert came a performance of “An Aria for Pam”.

Making smashing debut performances were Beth Williams as Polly Duport, Gerald Ruderman as Louis Glober, and Cheryl Hurley as Isobel Jenkins. Established Noel-Poel stars created new roles: Eileen Kaufman as Ada Leintwardine, Nick Birns as Quiggin, John Gould as Nick Jenkins, and Arete Warren as Pamela Widmerpool. Tom Wallace was available for the first time as understudy.

Wild applause released audience shock at Arete Warren’s fierce delivery of Pam’s closing laugh.

Cheryl and Gerald explained their conceptions of their roles as Isobel and Glober in post-performance interviews with this correspondent.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (left) and Lewis Carroll. See “Literary Anniversaries”, page 26.
Over the last few months, Society members in the UK have had several opportunities to meet and chat over food and drink: Anthony Powell’s Birthday Lunch on 7 December, the Hon. Secretary’s New Year Brunch on 18 January and the Pub Meet on 8 February.

Most recently, twelve of us (including some new faces) convened at The Audley on the corner of Mount Street for the pub meet, and lost no time in tucking into fish and chips etc. while discussing various topics, notably this year’s forthcoming Society events. Uppermost were the London Summer Walk which Ivan Hutnik is planning for mid-June (see page 18) and the Venice Extravaganza which will take place in October (see page 19). Literary matters also had a good airing, and included Dance as social history, the work of Stella Gibbons, the publishing and re-publishing of various works (including Powell’s), and last but not least ‘Which characters in Dance are most and least likely to be willing to have a go on a bouncy castle?’

Variety was added in the shape of Blue Plaques, eating places, the current iniquitous rates of UK postage, the Army, Society merchandise, Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy, American football and the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Hon. Secretary posed the question as to whether the group are happy continuing to meet at the Audley. The consensus was that although a private room might be agreeable we did not want to move pub to achieve this – indeed everyone was quite content with the Audley, especially give its appropriate location. The group was also against having a required theme for discussion other than perhaps very occasionally.

The lunch and brunch both took place at Da Corradi, a friendly family-run Italian restaurant near the location of the flat AP once had in Shepherd Market, and some of those present took the opportunity to go and look at the site afterwards.

Among other topics, members talked about television adaptations of literature (notably the most recent takes on Father Brown and Sherlock Holmes), food, art, cricket, Australia, legal matters, AP’s literary criticism and London.

And, of course, discussion often turns to how to get Powell’s pre-war novels back in print. Generally few useful conclusions are arrived at, although suggestions for possible niche publishers etc. do surface and are relayed to the Powell family who continue to control the publishing rights.

Pat Chambers has very kindly offered the Society’s Archives a collection of copies of the Daily Telegraph containing Powell book reviews. This has been gratefully accepted and we are in the process of arranging the transfer.


Christmas Limerick Competition

Regrettably there were very few entries for this year’s prize competition. The Hon. Archivist, who was judging the competition, has therefore decided not to nominate a winner. Those few who entered are thanked for their interest and enthusiasm.

---

The text also includes a local group news section, which discusses various events and topics of interest to the members of the Anthony Powell Society. It mentions the location of Da Corradi and includes a note from Patric Dickinson about a cabaret performance by John Standing, along with the website address for more information.

---

**Local Group News**

The lunch and brunch both took place at Da Corradi, a friendly family-run Italian restaurant near the location of the flat AP once had in Shepherd Market, and some of those present took the opportunity to go and look at the site afterwards.

Among other topics, members talked about television adaptations of literature (notably the most recent takes on Father Brown and Sherlock Holmes), food, art, cricket, Australia, legal matters, AP’s literary criticism and London.

And, of course, discussion often turns to how to get Powell’s pre-war novels back in print. Generally few useful conclusions are arrived at, although suggestions for possible niche publishers etc. do surface and are relayed to the Powell family who continue to control the publishing rights.

Pat Chambers has very kindly offered the Society’s Archives a collection of copies of the Daily Telegraph containing Powell book reviews. This has been gratefully accepted and we are in the process of arranging the transfer.


---

John Standing

*Patric Dickinson writes:*

Last week [3 February] I went to see John Standing (who played the older Nicholas Jenkins in the TV version of Dance) in cabaret and it was a thoroughly entertaining evening. The Crazy Coq is a pleasant little cabaret bar attached to Brasserie Zedel, a rather spectacular (and good-value) restaurant in what was the Grill Room of the old Regent Palace Hotel. John Standing performs there on the first Monday of each month. I would certainly recommend it. More details can be found at http://www.brasseriezedel.com/crazy-coqs/john-standing/8285661.

---

**Christmas Limerick Competition**

Regrettably there were very few entries for this year’s prize competition. The Hon. Archivist, who was judging the competition, has therefore decided not to nominate a winner. Those few who entered are thanked for their interest and enthusiasm.

---

*Da Corradi is situated in the passage between Curzon Street and Shepherd Market which is almost opposite Heywood Hill Bookshop.*
More Talking About Books

By Robin Bynoe

At the end of November 2013 something significant happened for lovers of the novels of Anthony Powell: particularly the mean ones.

His great work *A Dance to the Music of Time* comprises twelve volumes. These were originally published in hardback between 1951 and 1975 and then separately in paperback. The paperback publishing programme changed when Powell fell out in mid-series with Penguin, so that there is an incomplete set of Penguin paperbacks and then complete sets published later by other publishing houses. In due course they published the novel in four volumes – three each – which was a good idea, and entitled them *Spring, Summer, Autumn* and *Winter*, which was a bad idea. Nick Jenkins, the narrator, spends *Autumn* fighting the Second World War: it was a melancholy business but he was only in his thirties, as indeed he is at the onset of *Winter*. The Folio Society apparently published the four-volume version in hardback, no doubt with their customarily winsome artwork, but I have never seen it.

There are also American equivalents as well as translations into other languages.

Then the individual volumes became available on Kindle. And what happened at the end of November was that that the four-volume version also became available on Kindle, occasioning a small saving.

I immediately bought it. As in life, I am now embarking on *Winter*.

All this gives rise to musings about what books, and Kindle files, are for. Coincidently, having just moved house, I am trying to assemble a library. For the first time in my life I have a room so designated, and I have spent the last few days shoehorning a vast pile of books, acquired over decades, onto appropriate shelves. Some will make it, others will not. Some important and indeed loved works are going on the Oxfam pile, on the grounds that they will always be available and probably better taken electronically than in the form of a dilapidated paperback. On the other hand my enormous collection of Michael Moorcock, never found in hardback, never to be reread and probably too frail to be subjected to real life any more, has pride of place.

At the other extreme there are authors where one is attempting to assemble a collection of first editions. Alice Thomas Ellis is complete. Penelope Fitzgerald is halfway there. With Anthony Powell himself I have made a creditable start, but will never be able to complete the set as the early novels are far too expensive. The later Powells I already have as first editions, simply because I bought them on the day they came out, but in those days I didn’t realise about first editions and so they have been, like my childhood teddy bear, loved to death and have needed to be replaced with sensible copies with Near Fine dust jackets.

There have been false starts. I read all the novels of Elizabeth Taylor in Virago paperback decades ago and loved them. Recently I thought that I would build up a collection of her first editions: they weren’t that expensive. I bought *At Mrs Lippincote’s*, and reread it. I thought that it was good but not that good: so it is my only Elizabeth Taylor first edition and I have moved capriciously on.
Of course a library is also a bit of personal PR: I will admit to Jane Austen in garish 1970s paperback, but it is on Moorcock and Penelope Fitzgerald that I want to be judged.

It is a truism that soon we will have our books only either electronically or in a form that we treasure as objects: because of beauty or rarity or funkiness. People say that this will mean the end of the paperback and they are probably right, although I would except my Moorcocks – on all three grounds – and I imagine that in years to come bibliophiles, meeting together, will want to dig out their copies of Morrissey’s Autobiography, an instant Penguin Modern Classic forsooth, and agree, over a companionable single malt: ‘What a tit’.

What is the point of buying a first edition? Partly it is rarity: the same impulse that leads people to collect postage stamps or unique ‘states’ of etchings. That is rather dull.

Partly they are beautiful: although not as beautiful as a good reproduction, and probably less smelly, given the effects over the years of damp, cats and cigarettes.

I think that mainly it is because the first edition is the novel shorn of its reception. No one knew then if it was going to be a classic. The back cover features quotations from reviewers, not of course of the novel itself but the author’s earlier works. We can marvel how they got it wrong; we can wonder yet again, ‘What exactly was the point of Peter Quennell?’.

Less prestigious publications, with no reviews available, may have instead advertisements for Woodbines or the like. The artwork will be contemporary: it will strike as dated or quaint – or funky, like the Moorcocks.

It will probably, compared with today, be built to last: bound not glued, a nice weight to it.

And Kindles – apart from the obvious advantages of instant ordering and Tube-compatibility?

One thing I have noticed while putting the library together is that omnibus editions tend to be no longer legible to my rheumy old eyes. With the Kindle, you can have the words as large as you like – and you get a choice of typeface.

You can’t browse through a Kindle file as well as a printed book but you can word-search. This is a boon for Powellites:

Was Uncle Giles really disturbed picking up a hooker in Shepherd Market? Simple to check. (I don’t think so.)

Even the Handbook can’t help us with these important questions.

And how am I planning to embark on Winter? Book in bed and Kindle on the Tube: a judicious combination; but more book, I hope, as Christmas comes.

This article was first published on the À la blague weblog at http://alablague.wordpress.com/2013/12/22/more-talking-about-books/ on 23 December 2013 and is reprinted with kind permission.
A Miscellany of 2014 Literary Anniversaries

By Keith Marshall

There are a few big literary anniversaries this year, but let’s start with the Powell related ones first. Perhaps the biggest is that this year is the 80th anniversary of the private publication of Caledonia, in 1934 and the Powells’ 80th wedding anniversary: they were married at All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, SW7 on 1 December 1934. This year also sees 75 years of What’s Become of Waring, 65 years of Powell’s edition of John Aubrey’s Brief Lives and the 50 years of The Valley of Bones.

All this pales into insignificance, however, compared with this year’s big anniversary: the 450th anniversary of the birth of both William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. We don’t actually know the exact date of Shakespeare’s birth – in Tudor times these things were just not recorded; his birth is always given as 23 April, but this appears to be based on little or no evidence. What we do know is that the infant Shakespeare was baptised in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon on 26 April 1564, for such is recorded in the parish register. Shakespeare’s anniversary should be especially meaningful for AP aficionados, given the prevalence of Powell’s Shakespearean references and to his regular rereading of the plays – referenced in the three volumes of Journals.

If we know little about Shakespeare’s birth, we know equally little about that of Christopher Marlowe. We know he was born in Canterbury and baptised at St George the Martyr on 26 February 1564, but again his actual date of birth is unknown. Shakespeare died on 23 April 1616 at the age of 52, whereas Marlowe was murdered in Deptford in May 1593.

Moving forward 50 years, 1614 saw the first performance of Webster’s The Duchess of Malfi at London’s Globe Theatre (in Dance, Matilda Wilson appears in the play shortly before her marriage to Moreland). 1614 also saw a new edition of the King James Bible set in a new user-friendly Roman typeface.

1714 saw the publication of Alexander Pope’s The Rape of the Lock, and 1764 brought the publication of Horace Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto.

Moving forward another 50 years to 1814, 3 October saw the birth of Mikhail Lermontov – who AP certainly enjoyed reading – and on 2 December the death of Marquis de Sade.

1864 brought the deaths of Nathaniel Hawthorne and the poet John Clare plus publication of Charles Dickens’ Our Mutual Friend and Jules Verne’s Journey to the Centre of the Earth.

Just 125 years ago in 1889 we have the births of Jean Cocteau, Conrad Aitken and CK Scott-Moncrieff, translator of Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu. The year also saw the deaths of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Wilkie Collins and Robert Browning – the latter dying on 12 December the same day his Asolando was
published. Also in 1889 were published Jerome K Jerome’s *Three Men in a Boat*, Tennyson’s complete *Idylls of the King* and Lewis Carroll’s little known *Sylvie and Bruno*.

The start of WWI – and the start of the stories in *Dance* – in 1914, brings us anniversaries of a number of well-known names. Births that year include Laurie Lee, Hammond Innes, Gavin Maxwell, Tove Jansson, John Berryman and Dylan Thomas. It was probably in early 1914 that Ambrose Bierce mysteriously disappeared in Mexico – although to this day no-one really knows what happened. Cartoonist and illustrator John Tenniel died in February 1914; he is now remembered mainly for his seminal drawings for Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books – which brought us the Frog Footman – although he was a renowned cartoonist for *Punch* long before that.

Publications in 1914 included *The Dubliners* by James Joyce, Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *Tarzan of the Apes* and Baroness Orczy’s *The Laughing Cavalier* as well as the first (of only two) issues of *BLAST*, a vorticist literary magazine edited by Wyndham Lewis.

With the advent of 1939 and WWII we have the arrival of many contemporary literary figures including Alan Ayckbourn, Seamus Heaney, Margaret Drabble, Clive James, Auberon Waugh and Powell’s nephew Ferdinand Mount.

Amongst the deaths in 1939 were Sigmund Freud, WB Yeats, Ford Maddox Ford, Arthur Rackham and Zane Grey. In addition to *What’s Become of Waring* publications included Berthold Brecht’s play *Life of Galileo* (which starred Simon Russell Beale when staged at the National Theatre a few years ago), and one of my favourites, TS Eliot’s *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats* – the basis for the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *Cats*.

Eeeek! Is 1964 really 50 years ago? As already mentioned *The Valley of Bones* was published this year as were Roald Dahl’s *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Ian Fleming’s *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *You Only Live Twice* and Evelyn Waugh’s *A Little Learning*.

Deaths in 1964 included the aforementioned Ian Fleming, Edith Sitwell, Flannery O’Connor, Brendan Behan, TH White and Grace Metallious (author of *Peyton Place*, which I read as a teenager around 1964 because it was supposedly titillating but like *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* was actually rather tedious).

The 1964 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Jean-Paul Satre. ■
Re.: Edward St Aubyn

From Mr Jeffrey Manley

In my review of Edward St Aubyn’s “Patrick Melrose” novels in APS Newsletter #47 (Summer 2012), I noted that Mother’s Milk (the fourth novel in the series of five) had been made into a film. At the time of writing, the film had not been released for general distribution. It has now been released on DVD (Region 2) and is available for sale, at least in the UK (Mother’s Milk, Guerilla Films UK, 2013, 2:09 hrs including extra features, £9.25 on Amazon.co.uk). I am not aware whether it ever had a theatrical release.

What has been filmed is about 80% of the novel. It is missing the USA interlude (Chapters 13-15). What is left is the part dealing with the decline of Patrick’s mother (Eleanor Melrose played by Margaret Tyzack) and her signing over what is left of her fortune (after Patrick’s father frittered much of it away) to Seamus Dourke, thus disinheriting Patrick and his young sons. Dourke (played to perfection by Adrian Dunbar who even looks the part) is an Irish fraudster who runs a New Age consciousness expansion centre in the South of France. This is housed in the seaside villa belonging to Patrick’s mother. It is Patrick’s loss of this property that is the focus of the story.

Patrick is played by Jack Davenport and his wife Mary by Annabel Mullion (known in this parish for her performance as Mona in the C4 TV film of Dance). Diana Quick (Julia Flyte in Granada TV’s Brideshead) appears as Mary’s mother, “Kettle”. The script was co-written by St Aubyn and the film’s director, Gerry Fox.

Much of the satiric dialogue survives (in particular, the breakfast confrontation between Dourke and Patrick over further erosion of Patrick’s guest privileges). But overall the film’s plot is doomed by the unrelievedly depressing story. Indeed, what it needs is the comic relief that was provided in the novel by the USA holiday. But the time frame has been truncated to put all of the action into one summer holiday rather than spreading it over four summers as in the novel. So, there is no room for the USA trip.

The film is worth watching if you liked the books. The acting and script are well done but cannot compensate for a story that doesn’t work on film. Indeed, to do the story justice, it should probably be filmed from the beginning to the end, including all five novels. This would allow dramatization of the set piece scenes such as parties and funerals that St Aubyn uses much the same way as did Powell. It would also enable the truly comic characters such as Aunt Nancy, Nicholas Pratt, Victor Eisen, and Johnny Hall to lighten up the story.

Letters to the Editor

The Guardian’s “Book Blog” on 17 January 2014 in “Pen portraits: fine art in fiction” observes:

*The Goldfinch*, the painting Donna Tartt’s new novel is built around, is just one of many real-life works of art reworked into literature.

Of Dance and Poussin it says:

**Poussin, A Dance to the Music of Time**

Viewable at London’s Wallace Collection, Poussin’s neo-classical painting shows women representing the seasons dancing in a circle to a lyre. It informs the texture as well as the title of Anthony Powell’s Proustian novel sequence, in which characters “disappear only to reappear” and no dancer can control the dance.

In Standpoint, January/February 2014, Alasdair Palmer introduces edited extracts from *One Hundred Letters from Hugh Trevor-Roper* edited by Richard Davenport-Hines and Adam Sisman (OUP, January 2014). In an April 1985 letter Trevor-Roper writes to Nöel Annan:

*But seriously, do you think that our dear PM has gone bananas? I was rather shaken by some of the things she said at that curious dinner party... Her Toryism seems to be rather that of Charles I than of Edmund Burke... What do you think lay behind that party? Did someone say, we must improve your public image, especially in universities and places where they brain-wash the young! Get some dons and writers to dinner? But what an odd collection! Who, for instance, can have recommended Theodore Zeldin? And the idea that Tony Powell and VS Naipaul and Iris Murdoch would be her literary paladins is very comic. As for the Lord Quinton, no one could have done more harm to her cause than he did by his ridiculous flippant speech in Congregation at Oxford...*
In a Guardian (7 February 2014) comment on Hanif Kureishi’s latest novel, The Last Word, DJ Taylor writes about Kingsley Amis’s accusation that Powell was unable to be inventive:

The Letters of Kingsley Amis contains a bravura passage in which Amis, writing to Philip Larkin sometime in 1982, complains about the theory of novel-writing espoused by their mutual friend Anthony Powell. “It did suddenly strike me how fed up I was about all those real people and real incidents he’d put in his books,” Amis insists. “I thought you were meant to make things up, you know, like a novelist.” The prime source of Amis’s irritation turns out to be Powell’s forthcoming novella, O, How the Wheel Becomes It! The subject is a famous writer who, like Powell, has just had a TV programme made about him. “Couldn’t he at least make it a famous art historian?” Amis continues. “Can’t he make anything up?”

Had these strictures ever got back to him, Powell would doubtless have replied that there are ways of making things up, and that nearly all of them have some kind of grounding in reality. He would probably also have comforted himself with the thought that accusations about novelists taking their material directly from life have been going strong almost since novels first came to be written ...

In fact, most of the great English novels of the 20th century come crammed with supercharged versions of real people. Never mind Powell’s 12-volume A Dance to the Music of Time ... with its lightly veneered portraits of the musician Constant Lambert and the rackety Soho literary man Julian Maclaren-Ross; Evelyn Waugh’s Vile Bodies ... draws lavishly on the collection of Bright Young People whose antics Waugh had observed in late 1920s Mayfair; and Amis himself, for all his snootiness about “not making things up”, makes hay with his much-disliked father-in-law in Lucky Jim ...

More often, the novelist projects certain aspects of the original – “elaborating the scope a little” was Powell’s account of how Maclaren-Ross metamorphosed into the saturnine dandy-novelist “X Trapnel” of Books do Furnish a Room ... leaving less picturesque details behind on the cutting-room floor to create something that is not a mirror image of its subject but, equally, could not have existed without the subject’s authenticating stare. Powell’s Erridge, Lord Warminster, who wanders diffidently through the early volumes of Dance is a cunning demonstration of this process at work. Tall, cadaverous, ascetic, mingling leftist politics with a weakness for bound copies of Chums and the Boy’s Own Paper, “Erry” bears a passing resemblance to George Orwell, but the final portrait leaves Orwell far behind.

James Tucker also points out two mentions of Powell in a scorching review in Private Eye (24 January 2014) of The Last Word; the first is a reference to the Journals; the second a dismissive rating of Powell (along with Bertrand Russell, Graham Greene and Orwell) by the novelist ‘hero’ of the book.

Spotted by James Tucker & Mike Jay.
From the *Observer*, 8 December 2013:

**Dinner with Margaret Thatcher: the story of a secret supper**

In 1982, London’s leading literary lights gathered for a secret dinner party. The guest of honour? Margaret Thatcher. Nigel Farndale interviews the survivors.

On a clear autumn night in 1982, a government Daimler pulled out of Downing Street and began its glide across London to a house in Ladbroke Grove. In the passenger seat was a personal protection officer … In the back was Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister …

The guest list read like a who’s who of literary London including, as it did, the poets Stephen Spender and Philip Larkin, the novelists Anthony Powell and Dan Jacobson, the writer and critic Sir VS Pritchett, and the Peruvian novelist (and, later, presidential candidate) Mario Vargas Llosa (described by one guest as “some Panamanian novelist”) …

Amis replied on 17 December 1982: “Jolly vivid a/c of the Mrs T gathering. Funny that H-F D (you are a shit) was down at the Jewish end of the table. Might have known that Al, lately as lefty as they come, would get his foot in there. It’ll be Lord Alvarez before we know it”.

H-F D stood for Horse-Faced Dwarf, Larkin and Amis’s unkind private nickname for the author of *A Dance to the Music of Time*. When the Larkin letters were posthumously published in 1992, Anthony Powell wrote in his diary: “Larkin’s unfriendly comments on myself are all but insane. They are absolutely inspired by jealousy” …


Anthony Powell’s Journals 1982-1986 has an amusing account of the day in September 1985 when the Powells entertained Richard Hoggart to lunch. The host, forewarned by his friend Kingsley Amis to expect a “lefty, all the same not at all bad”, was favourably impressed – “I liked him. He has some idea of a joke” – but puzzled by his guest’s table manners: “He somewhat defiantly tucked his napkin into his waistcoat”. This, Powell thought, “suggested old-fashioned French bourgeois life rather than the modes of today’s lower income brackets”. ■
Writing in the *Catholic Herald*, 10 February 2014, Fr Alexander Lucie-Smith asks “Was Anthony Powell right about John Galsworthy?”

It is widely accepted that the novelist St John Clarke in Anthony Powell’s *A Dance to the Music of Time*, is a lightly disguised portrait of Galsworthy. I love *Dance* more than any other work of fiction; St John Clarke and his works are touchstones of bad middlebrow taste in the novel sequence. Various characters admit to liking his works, and that is never, one feels, a good thing. *The Clarke* oeuvre – he is credited with writing *Match Me Such Marvel* and *Fields of Amaranth*, among others – is held up as just the wrong sort of fiction. Moreover, Clarke is a snob and an armchair Marxist. If there is one theme running through *Dance* it is the hatred that Anthony Powell has for armchair Marxists. Powell clearly loathes Clarke, though, being Powell, this is subtly conveyed. In reading Galsworthy, who is supposedly Clarke, one wants to find out the answer to the question: was St John Clarke as ghastly as Powell seems to indicate?

Purists will no doubt shudder at the way I have blended fact and fiction here. I am aware that Powell is not Nick Jenkins, the protagonist of *Dance*, just as Galsworthy is not Clarke. But it is nice to have a bit of fun when reading, so purists can step back for the moment.

And the answer? How good or bad is Galsworthy? Was Powell right?

The truth is Powell was right. Galsworthy is not much good. One can see by reading one volume that Galsworthy must have exerted a fascination for a certain type of reader, but I am not that reader. I have been formed in my tastes by Woolf, I suppose. I have read one volume of the [Forsyte] Saga, and will, perhaps go back to it. In order to cleanse my palate, though, ironically, I turned back to *Dance*, and am now on volume ten of twelve. After Powell, it will be Galsworthy. How that would have annoyed the Nobel Laureate, to think that he is now really just a footnote to Powell!

This seems so typical of a lot of criticism that one wonders whether it does not derive from what is basically a dislike for reading novels at all ... A moment’s thought never seems to be spared for what the author is trying to do.

Anthony Powell writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, 11 November 1971
The **The Novel Cure** by Susan Elderkin and Ella Berthoud is the recent handbook of the fictional branch of bibliotherapy – the prescription of appropriate novels for the treatment of ailments.

Bibliotherapy is not new, as Gavin Francis, reviewing the book in the *Guardian*, 18 September 2013 observes:

> Seneca wrote his Consolation to Marcia almost two thousand years ago, but it is still powerful advice for a mother mourning the death of her son. Robert Burton’s sprawling Anatomy of Melancholy is an intermittently helpful, but always involving, series of meditations on sadness and its alleviations …

At the outset Berthoud and Elderkin make it clear that they are not going to make any distinction between emotional and physical pain; they are as interested in literature that will help you heal a broken leg (Cleave by Nikki Gemmell) as much as a broken heart (*Jane Eyre*). Opening almost randomly in the “L”s, I find “... libido, loss of” (Mario Vargas Llosa’s *In Praise of the Stepmother*).

For some unfathomable reason *Dance* is prescribed as a treatment for pregnancies.

Spotted by, *inter alia*, Jeff Manley.

---

The *Daily Telegraph* in an obituary notes the passing of yet another Powell connection, Tom Rosenthal who died on 3 January 2014, aged 79. Although the obituary doesn’t mention AP, Rosenthal was Chairman of Heinemann for several years in the early 1980s at the time when *O, How the Wheel Becomes It!* was published.

Spotted by Nick Birns.

---

The *Daily Telegraph*, 11 February 2014, proffers a list of the Top Ten Vicious Literary Hatchet Jobs, including at number six:

6. **Auberon Waugh on Anthony Powell (1990)**

   This piece for *The Telegraph* left Auberon Waugh with blood on his hands. On reading the article, Anthony Powell offered his immediate resignation after 54 years service to the newspaper:

   “... in a long career he appears to have known practically no-one ...”

   Waugh suggests: “Perhaps Powell should have stayed in the Intelligence Corps officers’ mess. That, I feel, is where his heart belongs.”

   Editor at the time Max Hastings sought to make amends and commissioned a bust of Powell that still stands in the offices today.

Spotted by Julian Allason.
SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Collected papers from sixth biennial conference at the Naval & Military Club, London.
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

Centenary Conference Proceedings.
Collected papers from the (third, 2005) centenary conference at The Wallace Collection, London.
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

Fascinating letters between Powell and his friend and first American publisher Robert Vanderbilt.
Paperback: UK £16, Overseas £19.50
Hardback: UK £26, Overseas £32

Anthony Powell, Caledonia, A Fragment.
The 2011 Greville Press reprint of this rare Powell spoof. Now publicly available in its own right for the first time.
UK: £8, Overseas: £10.50

John Gould; Dance Class.
American High School student essays from John’s two teachings of Dance at Philips Academy. Many fresh and perceptive insights.
UK: £12, Overseas: £17

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

UK: £5.50, Overseas: £9 each

Newsletter Centenary Issue. 120-page celebratory Centenary Newsletter (issue 21; December 2005).
UK: £5.50, Overseas: £9
Society Merchandise

AUDIO

BBC Radio Dramatisation of Dance. Originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4 between 1979-82. 26 one-hour episodes. Single CD containing 26 MP3 files. For copyright reasons available to Society members only.

UK & Overseas: £10 (£5 + minimum £5 Donation)

POSTCARDS & POSTERS

Anthony Powell’s Ancestral Lands Postcards.
Set of four colour postcards from photos by John Blaxter of the Powell ancestral lands on the Welsh borders.

UK: £2.50, Overseas: £3.50

Society Postcard.

UK: £2, Overseas: £3.50

Wallace Collection Poussin Postcard.

UK: £3, Overseas: £4

ORDERING

The prices shown are the Society members’ prices as of October 2013 and are inclusive of postage and packing. Please note the different UK and overseas prices which reflect the additional cost of overseas postage. Non-members will be charged the appropriate member’s price shown plus postage & packing at cost.

Please send your order to:

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

Payment may be by cheque, Visa, Mastercard or PayPal. If paying by credit card please include the card number, expiry date, 3-digit secure code, and the billing name & address. Cheques must be payable to the Anthony Powell Society, for UK funds and drawn on a UK bank. PayPal payment should be sent to secretary@anthonypowell.org.

You may also order through the Society’s online shop at www.anthonypowell.org.
## Membership Form

### Member Information

- **Type of membership** (please tick):
  - Individual Members
    - [ ] £22
    - [ ] £28
  - Joint Members
    - [ ] £33
    - [ ] £39
  - Student Members
    - [ ] £13
    - [ ] £19
  - Organisation
    - [ ] £100 minimum

- [ ] **Buy 5 years membership for the price of 4**
  (any grade)

Subscriptions are due on 1 April annually. If joining on or after 1 January, membership includes following full subscription year.

- **Full Name:**
- **Address:**
- **Postcode/Zip:**
- **Country:**
- **Email:**

Gift membership is also available; please contact us for details.

### Payment Information

- **Number of years membership being paid:**
  - [ ] 1
  - [ ] 2
  - [ ] 3
  - [ ] 5 years for price of 4

- **Total amount payable:** £ ___
  (No. of years x membership rate)

- [ ] I enclose a sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank. Please make cheques payable to *The Anthony Powell Society*.
- [ ] Please debit my Visa / MasterCard
  - Card No.:
  - Card Expiry:
  - 3-Digit Security Code:
    (Please give name & address of cardholder if different from the above.)

**GIFT AID** (delete if not applicable)

*I am a UK taxpayer and I want all donations I’ve made since 6 April 2000 and all donations in the future to be Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.*

*You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the Society will reclaim on your donations for that tax year.*

By completing this form I agree to the Society holding my information on computer.

Signed:  
Date:

---

Please send the completed form and payment to:

**Anthony Powell Society Memberships, 76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, UB6 0JW, UK**

Phone: +44 (0) 20 8864 4095  Fax: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483  
**Email:** membership@anthonypowell.org