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EDITOR’S LETTER

First: Congratulations to Harry Mount, one of your Trustees, on being made editor of The Oldie. A magazine well worth reading and particularly congenial for Powellites.

Secondly, congratulations also to Bernard Stacey for winning the W.G Grace Citation at the Grolier Club New York (see John Gould’s report).

Thirdly, many thanks to our Patron, John Powell, for hosting a visit to the Chantry for your Chairman, Editor and Publisher and for giving us a splendid lunch of sausages and baked apple.

AP’s interest in the visual arts is well known. What is not, is his enthusiasm for collage. His piece de resistance is the boiler room, housing an industrial size oil-fired boiler. State of the art when installed in the early 1950’s but now in need of replacement. The walls are smothered with colour magazine cut-outs, to wonderful kaleidoscopic effect. But the collage is now in danger. Your Trustees commissioned specialist photographer, Hugh Gilbert, to photograph them so that the images are not lost. Watch this space for exciting news.

In this issue we have pieces on AP and Criticism. As Nick Birns reminds us, AP reviewed books long after he needed to for financial or professional reasons. Steve Hoare and Michael Jay return to writers that AP reviewed and record their reactions.

Also at long last your Secretary discloses how he first came to read Dance. And Mrs Widmerpool, thankfully, has recovered.

Stephen Walker
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FROM THE SECRETARY’S DESK

It’s mid-February. It should be Winter. But in London we’ve had very few cold, frosty days. Nevertheless I’m struggling, as always at this time. As some know, I had a knee replacement operation in late December, so I’ve had to focus fully on recovery. And I’ve recovered very well; surgeon and physiotherapist are delighted. Now I just have to rebuild muscle strength etc. A bout of flu has not helped.

But there is good news. At long last, the proceedings of the Eton Conference in October 2013 are available. Lots of good things to read from: Peter Berthoud, Bernard Stacey, DJ Taylor, Constantine Sandis, Robin Bynoe, Ivan Hutnik, Jeffrey Manley, Nicholas Birns, Jonathan Black and Frank Peterson. Copies have been mailed to all delegates. You can buy it through the usual channels (See the merchandise pages at the back of this issue).

Ivan Hutnik is reprising the Regent’s Canal-Profiles in String walk on Saturday 1 July 2017. See Dates for Your Diary.

John Blaxter is arranging a weekend visit to AP’s Radnorshire in September. See Dates for Your Diary.

AND the days are getting longer and warmer; the snowdrops and crocuses are flowering; and Spring and Summer are on the way. What more do we need?

Keith Marshall
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It would be easy to assume from the three books of his criticism published so far, *Miscellaneous Verdicts, Under Review*, and *Some Poets, Artists, and ‘a Reference for Mellors’*, (there are more book reviews still unpublished) that Anthony Powell preferred to write short, biographically oriented reviews of memoirs of authors’ letters, often ending with a rebuke of a miscue made by the author being discussed.

I would riposte this is something he could do, as a reviewer for over fifty years for the *Times Literary Supplement, Punch* (where Powell was Literary Editor) and then for many years for *The Daily Telegraph*. But it would not be the only thing he could do. The author of the scholarly *John Aubrey and His Friends* could surely write an academic journal article, or, as his genealogical researches show, unearth an odd bit of literary arcana in the archive, or write something more, as we would say today, “long form.” That he wrote the reviews he did was simply the format of the publications that employed him, and the form followed the format.

Criticism for Powell was always a sideline, unlike his contemporary Cyril Connolly, whose reviews in *The Sunday Times* were, in the last decades of Connolly’s life, his claim to fame. Partially for this reason, and partially because Connolly wrote for a Sunday paper, not a daily (Powell’s reviews appeared most frequently on Thursdays) Connolly received much more exposure as a critic. But that Powell kept on writing for the *Telegraph* long after he did not need to for any immediate career reason, shows his dedication to the act, the gesture, of criticism. Powell remarked in the *Journals* that getting books for review kept him intellectually stimulated when he was increasingly housebound and separated from the hubbub of the literary world. His relationships with his successive editors at the *Telegraph*, H.D. Ziman and David Holloway, were replete with this continuing interest. Even though the reader of the *Journals* knows
Powell’s relationship with his last Telegraph editor, Nicholas Shakespeare, was not ideal, there is still something moving about a great writer in his eighties being assigned books by a man young enough (and more) to be his son, something which bespeaks an intrinsic dedication to books and a desire to keep reading and writing about them as long as possible.

The Telegraph was where Powell reached a general educated public who were not necessarily fans or aficionados of his work. On my first visit to London in 1979 at the age of fourteen, my family stayed in Chelsea with a friend of my father, a businessman who subscribed to the Spectator and the Economist, and had the complete Bodley Head editions of Joseph Conrad and Henry James on his bookshelves. I wondered if he was a Powell fan (I had started reading Powell by then) but was too timorous to ask him. Over thirty years later, this gentleman showed up at an Anthony Powell Society event in central London. Here, he stated explicitly that, although he was a Tory and an Oxonian, he, for whatever reason, had never been a Powell enthusiast. It is roughly this sort of reader that Powell reached in the Telegraph. He did so diligently and responsibly, always keeping his eye on the subject at hand, rarely mentioning his own works and never his status as a famous author, making biographical asides only when strictly pertinent. It is rare that a working novelist of the stature of Powell writes a regular review column. The closest equivalent in his era would have been John Updike’s reviews for the New Yorker, both were instances of esteemed authors writing reviews for general-interest publications long after the need for money or fame had passed. Here again we see that, for Powell, format fathered form: Updike, permitted to write at considerably ampler length, produced charming causeries that, though colored in a rhetorical sense by his purplish style, were honest attempts to give the reader a sense of the book under review. Powell, writing in a more austere compass, was a bit more stylistically neutral as a critic, though perhaps with a greater sense of literary personality. In addition, whereas Updike mostly reviewed fiction, Powell, especially after the Punch years, reviewed mainly nonfiction.

Powell’s newspaper reviews make clear his priorities: his fascination for Proust above all other writers, his respect for James and Conrad, his interest in the visual arts, his amused discernment of what Ziman called, in that newspaper’s obituary of Powell, “phases of art and taste.” (I was mistaken in Understanding Anthony Powell in ascribing this phrase to Hugh Massingberd, who revised the obituary, originally drafted by Ziman.) Powell is always cosmopolitan and often Europhile, for instance remarking of Rilke, in 1985, that he is a poet who is “perhaps still not sufficiently known in this country” (Under Review 445). Powell has a superb gift for putting difficult cultural cruxes in a nutshell, as when he says of the painter Degas’s friendship with Daniel Halévy, that Degas “became a furious anti-Dreyfusard, which inevitably shook the Halévy relationship.” (Some Poets, Painters, and ‘a Reference for Mellors’, 237)
Pieces in an explicitly critical genre are not the only place where criticism happens in Powell's oeuvre. All of Powell's major 'conduits' of writing—his fiction, memoirs, and journals—are substantially concerned with literary criticism. In his *Memoirs*, appraisals of contemporaries such as Waugh, Green, and Greene, elders such as Hugh Kingsmill and Osbert Sitwell, and younger friends like Kingsley Amis, Alison Lurie and V S Naipaul are abundant. Moreover, the “Set Books” chapter, the seventh in Powell's second volume of memoirs, *Messengers of Day*, is an outstanding autobiographical reading history, a limpid and coruscating account not just of his favourite books but of the books which defined him as a writer. By lauding the work of e. e. cummings and Ernest Hemingway, Powell defines himself as a modernist, rejecting “Edwardian literary debris” (*Messengers of Day* 110) and “putting out of date the style of authors like Norman Douglas and Aldous Huxley” (109). Powell gives the reader his own, highly original and personal sense of what is preferable in great writers’ admiring the “naturalistic passages” (111) in James Joyce more than his stylistic innovation, but then saying, with respect to Balzac, “‘Human beings are very rarely ‘naturalistic’” (116). Powell is telling us what kind of reader he is and is not, and warning us that for a truly adept reader this is always a very complex exercise. This is the spirit in which we perhaps should read the most famous critical excursus in Powell's fiction, Nick Jenkins's demurral with respect to General Liddament's enthusiasm for Trollope, thinking instead, before he offers the more (he thinks!) meat-and-potatoes answer of Balzac, of such writers as Lermontov, Svevo, Choderlos de Laclos. Jenkins is communicating something to his Commanding Officer about his reading tastes, but Powell is also alerting his reader not to see *Dance* as just another English social chronicle, that these writers of severity, irony, and nuance yield the kind of prose our chronicler admires. Pertinent here is Powell's comment, in “Set Books,” that critics have made too much of the difference betweenand the prewar novels.

“Set Books” includes Powell's final and most surprising addition to his list of favorites, Dostoyevsky. Dostoyevsky's religious commitment, burden of sin and guilt, and love of the melodramatic and grotesque have few parallels in Powell's oeuvre (though one should not forget Pamela Flitton, Scorpio Murtlock, and The Rest I’ll Whistle.) But Powell nonetheless puts Dostoyevsky “top of the league” (116). One might understand this better by resorting to the perennial alternative put so challengingly by George Steiner, “Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky.” In this light, one can see that Powell would prefer Dostoyevsky’s eye for the bizarre, his unfettered gaze at the human carnival, is preferable to a writer like Tolstoy who tells us how to live and what we should be. One might add that, precisely because of the acerbic nature of this perspective, Powell is always very funny on Tolstoy, his review of A N Wilson’s Tolstoy biography being a small masterpiece of archness, which has beneath it a reservoir of empathy that even the most stringent critic can allow himself. This range of temperament combines with Powell's learning and insight to make him a critic well worth reading.
You Don’t Find Trollope Easy To Read?

Stephen Hoare

It is widely held that Anthony Powell’s depiction of General Liddament in The Soldier’s Art was inspired by General Montgomery with whom he served in the later part of the war as a liaison officer between the British Army and the Free Polish forces. A clue to Liddament’s true identity is to be found in the comic exchange between a flustered Lieutenant Jenkins and the eccentric and pedantic Liddament who famously lectures him on Trollope while they take shelter from a German air raid beneath the mess table.

“Book reader, aren’t you?”
“Yes, sir.”
“What do you think of Trollope?”
“Never found him easy to read sir.”
Liddament appears momentarily lost for words.

“You’ve never found Trollope easy to read?” …”Why not?” he asked at length.

The clue is not so much in Liddament’s eccentricity, his short temper and intolerance of other opinions than his own, though of course these are traits he shares with the real-life “Monty”. The real giveaway is in the clerical subject matter of many of Trollope’s best known works. Trollope famously satirised the Church of England establishment in his Chronicles of Barsetshire, in particular Barchester Towers.

As the son of the Revd. Henry Montgomery, bishop of Tasmania and subsequently secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Monty came from a family of soldiers and clergymen. It requires no great leap of imagination to see that Montgomery could well have made an equally successful career in the Church. The fictionalised
Liddament/Montgomery is portrayed by Powell as a walking caricature straight from the world of Trollope!

This “Pythonesque” sketch from *The Soldier’s Art* is one of my favourite passages from *Dance* and is incredibly surreal. It shows up the absurdity of war. The dialogue has *Dance*’s narrator Jenkins in the role of a nervous and ill-prepared undergraduate who has forgotten to read a set text and is forced to bluff his way in front of his tutor’s seminar group.

There is a further layer of literary referencing going on. As AP would have known, Trollope enjoyed something of a renaissance during World War Two as war weary readers saw in the antics of Barchester’s embattled clergymen an escape from present reality and an antidote to the rather more menacing politics of the Third Reich! In a *New Statesman* article published in June 1946 VS Pritchett wrote: “Trollope has been one of the Great Air Raid Shelters. He presides over the eternal Munich of the heart and Barsetshire has become one of the great never-never lands of our times.”

But to return to Jenkins’s encounter with Liddament. His fumbling literary exegesis is truly embarrassing. Powell’s character is forced on the defensive. I quote - “the style…certain repetitive tricks of phrasing,… psychology often unconvincing,…sometimes downright dishonest in treating of individual relationships…” and so on. To which Liddament, by now at his wit’s end, barks out, “Rubbish.”

On a first reading, I accepted Jenkins’s dismissal of Trollope as quaint and unreadable. But inspired by Liddament/Montgomery I decided to rectify this gap in my literary knowledge by ordering and then devouring the full set of Trollope’s Barsetshire novels in Penguin English Classics. The “full Monty”, as it were!

My reading of Trollope revealed to me a genius I had mistakenly turned my back on over the years. And it began to dawn on me that AP owes a great and unacknowledged debt to Trollope in just about all of the areas picked out by Lieutenant Jenkins for criticism!

Contrary to Jenkins’s hasty judgement on Trollope’s style, his psychology, his unrealistic representation of women, he is wrong on all counts. Trollope’s lightness of touch, the way in which he can handle a multi-plot novel, and the way he balances human tragedy or emotional conflict with some of the greatest comic prose ever written mark him out as one of the literary greats of the nineteenth century. I can only conclude that AP’s Liddament/Trollope passage is a clumsy attempt on the part of the author to divert his readers’ attention from too close an examination of parallels between *Dance* and the *Chronicles of Barsetshire.*
Whereas Dance is a roman-fleuve, a series of interconnected novels that stretch over time, cataloguing recurring patterns of behaviour and intended by the author to be read sequentially, Trollope’s Barsetshire novels are complete in themselves. The focus is not on the development of the individual, but on the exploration of themes. Trollope’s characters are subordinate to a strong plot.

In The Warden, the first of the series, for example, the main character Septimus Harding is bullied by his brother-in-law, Archdeacon Grantly, into giving up the lucrative incumbency of a charitable alms house institution in the gift of the bishop of Barchester. In Barchester Towers the appointment of a new incumbent Bishop Proudie shows us a weak man completely dominated by his overbearing wife and her private chaplain the ambitious “Widmerpudlian”, Obadiah Slope.

Like AP’s portrayal of life in the officers’ mess, the poisonous intrigues of Barchester Cathedral Close descend into low comedy and high farce. Rather than getting tied into knots with the complexities of his characters with whom I think AP identifies overmuch, Trollope leaves himself free to explore contemporary social issues as well as experimenting with style. There is a campaigning strand to Trollope who uses the Barsetshire novels to satirise the Church of England then in the midst of a conflict between the forces of reform and conservatism – the “high and dry” church versus the Oxford movement and Anglo-Catholicism.

The next in the series, Doctor Thorne embarks on a Hardyesque theme of rural love triangle, charting desperate poverty, the evils of drink and culminating in a melodramatic conclusion where the unacknowledged and secret love child brought up by the unmarried Dr Thorne finally inherits both her disreputable late father’s considerable fortune but gets to marry her childhood sweetheart Frank Gresham, heir to impoverished and improvident Squire Gresham.

The last books in the Barsetshire series are markedly more mature and confident in their handling of plot. Like Virginia Woolf’s To the Lighthouse it is a physical location that is the focus of the novel Small House at Allington. And in this novel and its successor, the Last Chronicle of Barsetshire, the “small house”, Mrs Dale’s cottage, acts as dumb witness to the unrequited love of the talented and deserving civil servant Johnny Eames for his childhood sweetheart, the beautiful but unattainable Lily Dale who obstinately remains constant to the man who had seduced her, the amoral mercenary, Adolphus Crosbie.

For anyone who thinks AP has the monopoly on memorable characters, larger than life villains and social climbers, Trollope has them in spades! Compare Widmerpool with the egregious and calculating Reverend Obadiah Slope, a protégé of the bishop’s
You Don’t Find Trollope Easy to Read?

overbearing wife Mrs Proudie, who with scrape-kneed determination begins a meteoric rise at Barchester and is within hailing distance of being appointed dean, until falling foul of his erstwhile sponsor, he is sent packing – literally! Trollope clearly preferred to kill off his Widmerpool, realising he had created a monster!

AP’s eye for louche and dangerous misfits is well known. in Dance these are the habitues of Milly Andriadis’ famous parties where the artist Deacon, his muse Gypsy Jones, artists and like. But Trollope was there first with an equally convincing set of badass characters including the wily prebend Dr Vesey Stanhope who spends his time with his family at his villa on Lake Como (shades of George Clooney!) while paying others to carry out his duties. Or Stanhope’s dilettante son Bertie, an aspiring sculptor and aesthete, or his sister the crippled but self-dramatizing “Signora Neroni” whose ample bust and bare shoulders attract clergymen as moths to a flame.

Trollope’s women reveal for me at any rate a far deeper and more realistic portrayal of women than, say, Charles Dickens whose one dimensional heroines range from the goody-two-shoes Esther Summerson to the demonic French lady’s maid Hortense Jaboulet in Bleak House. Trollope’s women are complex and self-determining like Martha Dunstable, the feisty heiress to a two million pound fortune based on her late father’s Liver Pills who all of the nobility of Barsetshire try to marry off to wayward and impecunious sons. They are comic too like the scheming Mrs Proudie and Archdeacon Grantly’s daughter Griselda who succeeds in marrying to the scion of one of the noblest families in the land (and one of the stupidest!) Lord Dumbello.

Unlike AP who looks back with nostalgia to the old certainties of Eton, the London season and its round of debutante balls, AT’s novels are set in the present, dating from the late 1850s (the Warden) and continuing on until the end of the 1860s with ever more ambitious works Dr Thorne, Framley Parsonage and The Small House at Allington.

Unlike Dickens (the Steven Spielberg of Victorian fiction) Trollope is altogether a more challenging read, interjecting his own voice throughout his novels to provide a running commentary on the action. In The Warden, Trollope cannot resist poking fun at Dickens who he refers to as “Mr Popular Sentiment”, for his improbable plotlines and insipid heroines (see above!). An early exponent of realism, there are distinct echoes of Trollope’s muscular and modernist style to be found in the works of Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and Powell himself.

But to return to Liddament and divisional HQ. Here in the administrative heart of Britain’s war machine Powell’s plotline revolves around the irresistiblible rise of the “coming man” and the slide into oblivion of the old order as represented by Charles Stringham by now a gentleman ranker content to serve as mess waiter. Meanwhile
Stringham’s nemesis, the indefatigable parvenu Kenneth Widmerpool has been jockeying for political advantage and is now a major and deputy assistant adjutant general (DAAG).

Trollope’s novels on the other hand, demonstrate the strength of public and political opinion turning against the archaic and arbitrary nature of appointments and the corruption within the established church. They also chart the impact of an increasingly moneyed and confident middle class on a rural squirearchy and an impoverished aristocracy – the same questions of class and identity that obsess AP four generations later.

**The Leopard, another favourite of Anthony Powell**

*Michael Jay*

My wife and I visited Sicily last summer and took an excursion to the South of the island. We left Taormina bus station at a ridiculously early time and snuggled down into our seats hoping for a few extra minutes of sleep. But once the final group of passengers had been collected from yet another hotel precariously perched on yet another hairpin bend our guide, a scruffy Dutch woman, began to advise us via the tannoy of our trip’s sights and delights. We were to visit this town, visit that cathedral, lunch at a fishing village and visit the castle of Donnafugata.
The Leopard

Donnafugata? My ears pricked up. The guide elaborated; the castle is featured in Lampedusa’s novel *The Ocelot*. Surely the novel is called *The Leopard* I said to my wife, only to notice she was asleep like most of the other passengers. We left the motorway and crept along winding undulating single roads into the island’s rural interior behind obstinate freight wagons. I remembered how I had tried many years ago to read *The Leopard* but had never finished it. I wondered how AP had reacted to the novel (this is my automatic response to literary matters) and made a note to check and to make another attempt to read the book. On arrival at the Donnafugata castle the sun was at its hottest. We were not able to enter the castle due to time pressure but saw the exterior of a two-storey light beige stone building with arched windows and crenellated roof. The castle is now used as the mafia boss’s house in the Montalbano TV series. Then, briskly off to the next location.

The last article in *Under Review*, the second collection of AP’s book reviews, concerns *Two Stories and a Memoir* by Giuseppe Di Lampedusa. *Two Stories* was published in 1962 in the UK presumably to cash in on the somewhat surprising commercial success of *The Leopard*. As AP says in his *Journals* “few post-war novels, enthusiastically received, hold up on later reading, one exception being Lampedusa’s *The Leopard*.” He refers to *The Leopard* as follows: “It certainly looks as if Lampedusa contributed a minor classic to Italian writing ……This has not caused universal satisfaction…………In Italy, as elsewhere, the literary establishment, the fashionable taste of critic-mandarins, is leftist. It is bad enough that a rich prince, even if now deceased, should have written a good book; adding insult to injury that the public should clamour to buy such decadent stuff.”

*The Leopard* follows the impact of Garibaldi’s invasion of Sicily in 1860, the subsequent unification of Italy and the effect on a proud and aristocratic family devoted to the Bourbon kings. It is also a personal portrayal of a civilisation and an aristocratic Sicilian family in decline.

In 1943, Lampedusa’s palazzo in Palermo was destroyed by American bombs. Lampedusa may have written the book after encouragement from his wife as a way to combat his depression partly a result of the effects of the bombing.

*The Leopard* is the crude English translation of *Il Gattopardo* perhaps better translated as *The Serval* (a smaller cat than a leopard) which in the novel provides the fictitious Salina family emblem. At the novel’s beginning the
Prince still sees himself as a leopard. The book is loosely described as a novel but is a fragmented work of episodes, rather like Lermontov’s *Hero* (another AP favourite).

Unusually, as AP noted, this post-war work is written from a sympathetic standpoint by and about a member of the landed gentry. Lampedusa’s portrayal of Sicilian peasantry has been criticised. The themes and character types have strong links to Lampedusa’s own family and experiences (like AP’s in *Dance*). The fictional hero - His Excellency Don Fabrizio Corberà, Prince of Salina, Duke of Querceta, Marquis of Donnafugata etc. is based on Lampedusa’s paternal great-grandfather Giulio, who lived during the Risorgimento. Fabrizio has Germanic blood from his mother, Princess Caroline, but is Sicilian to his finger-tips and the last of his line despite the survival of a male grandchild and his nephew, Tancredi.

There are eight chapters or episodes. Firstly we are introduced to the Prince Fabrizio. He is married to the intensely Catholic Princess Maria Stella whose naked body has never been revealed to him despite her having borne his seven children! He takes his fleshy pleasures in Palermo with his lover, Mariannina. None of his children are as close to him as his nephew Tancredi (offspring of the Prince’s sister and her spendthrift husband). Fabrizio has personal allegiance to King Ferdinand in Naples who required Fabrizio to bring up Tancredi as if his own son. Tancredi shows far more life and vigour than all the Salinas together but is forever pragmatic and joins Garibaldi’s invaders. In doing so he guarantees his own political future while protecting his uncle’s family despite Fabrizio’s brother’s cowardly escape to a British warship off the Palermo coast. Tancredi has the best lines in the book “…if we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change”.

Fabrizio asks one of his officials what may happen to his family and is assured of personal security. This was all Salina wanted to hear. This enables him to recognise and accept the huge changes in Italy and to decline in peace. He is not politically inclined, refuses offers of office and fails to address modernity. This dilatory stance means his once considerable wealth and estates have been much reduced and frittered away. He is comforted by remembering that Sicilians will always be Sicilians who have been oblivious to the succession of invaders through the centuries.

Episode two takes us to the Prince’s favourite country retreat for the summer. Lampedusa uses the Castello di Donnafugata as the fictional home but the chapter is really based at his own country estate. At ‘Donnafugata’ Fabrizio is at his most comfortable. He is free from Palermo’s intensity and able to exercise his passion for shooting with the church organist. The local mayor, Calogero Sedàra is a modernising, nouveau riche businessman who has bought some of Fabrizio’s lands. He hides his coarse wife but is about to launch his young daughter, Angelica, into society. Initially Fabrizio loathes Calogero’s crudity and lack of manners but learns to appreciate his cleverness.

At Donnafugata, we are introduced to Tancredi and his brothers in arms from Garibaldi’s rabble army. Tancredi had been earmarked for Fabrizio’s daughter Concetta
but her haughtiness contrasts with the vivacious local beauty Angelica. Even Fabrizio has pangs of interest in this siren. Tancredi and Angelica’s relationship develops into love as they furtively explore the many remote rooms of the country palace. Concetta has to realise that her best chance of marriage has gone. Summer elapses and the party return to Palermo.

Lampedusa then treats us to a quite different chapter. The Salina family priest, the Jesuit Father Pirrone, is allowed to take a week’s break to visit his family in the Sicilian hinterland. While there he tries to explain to Don Pietrino, an old herbalist, the place and meaning and differences of the aristocracy to ordinary folk. This is quite beyond Don Pietrino who falls asleep. Having explained the position and purpose of the aristocracy Pirrone finds time to intercede in a family problem. A girl has been made pregnant by a boy from a rival family. Pirrone elegantly solves the long family feud and organises a wedding and a land transfer. The boy gets land and ‘a slave’ while the girl and her family avoid ignominy.

Lampedusa then gifts us the chapter ‘A Ball’. Should we ever think that AP wrings the last drop of moment from a wedding or funeral, here are twenty pages with exquisite detail and pace on a ball and supper in stifling 1862 Palermo, sixty years before Jenkins’s exertions in A Buyer’s Market. Fabrizio has his moment in the sun as he waltzes with the young and lovely Angelica but there is an overall feeling of ennui and tiredness in the Prince’s/Leopard’s spirit and limbs.

The ‘story’ skips twenty years to 1883 with the death of Fabrizio. He returns to Palermo from Naples but he is so weakened by the exertions of the long transport he can’t complete the journey to his palace and has to be put up in a hotel. This somewhat sordid location is his final resting place.

Finally in ‘Relics’ we jump another twenty-five years to 1910. We are back in the Villa Salina whose remaining residents are the now crotchety old trio of Salina sisters, Concetta, Carolina and Caterina. They are living a pious quiet Catholic life, worshipping in their family chapel with its own ‘Madonna’ and a large collection of relics. The modernised Church requires all private chapels to be officially inspected to ensure religious rites and artefacts are officially approved for authenticity. Inevitably the Church’s judgement dismisses the claims of the ‘Madonna’ and most of the relics. The ladies of Salina, although offended have to accept the official decision with grace. A different Madonna will have to be placed above their altar and the chapel must be re-consecrated. And suddenly, in this vacuum, the ‘novel’ ends.

A quite unique and stunning volume has ended. Like all good books the meanings and the themes will live in the memory and another reading will be necessary in a year or two.

All the characters rely heavily on Lampedusa’s real family. The fictional Fabrizio is closely based on Giulio, Lampedusa’s great grandfather. They even share the hobby of astronomy! Tancredi is based on Gio Lanza, Lampedusa’s adopted son. The text is illumined by the sometimes desolate landscape of Sicily. We are constantly reminded
of the quality, intensity and the magic of the breathless and unforgiving sun and light. We are shown the stony hills, yellow fields and red earth which in 1860 was so difficult to traverse that 22 miles took 4 hours by horse and carriage. We are left to ruminate on the effect of climate and landscape on literature.

Death is a major theme of *The Leopard*. From the first paragraph to the last we are constantly reminded of the death of individuals (such as Fabrizio), pets (the faithful Bendico, Fabrizio’s dog) and the ancient accepted ways of virtues and graces. We are left to fear and to accept death as priority. Specifically, the aristocracy and the church are both under threat from the Liberals. Perhaps the major theme is the idle objectless life of the Sicilian aristocracy. None are men of energy and none enjoy public confidence.

Sicily itself is presented as an island which is a victim of its size and position. Too small to defend but too large to be ignored by the legions of invaders. Yet the island remains a backwater where its people are backward and ultimately hopeless.

*The Leopard* was Lampedusa’s only novel and is fragmented and unfinished. One reason the novel was never published in Lampedusa’s lifetime was because he never wanted to say it was finished. On his death at least two publishers rejected *The Leopard*. They found it very serious, rather old fashioned, essayish and unbalanced. However, Feltrinelli eventually published it. Success was immediate and prolonged. Within a year there had been 52 editions. There have now been at least 23 translations and 121 editions. Much of the ‘original’ content was found in various manuscripts and typescripts. Bassani (for Feltrinelli) edited much of the work before publication despite Lampedusa’s wife disputing the revisions.

While *The Leopard* eventually became the biggest seller in Italian Literary history, as AP wrote, there were some savage critics. These mainly left-leaning thinkers found the book too pessimistic with spiritual emptiness. There was outrage at the portrayal of Sicily and ordinary Sicilians. Lampedusa demonstrated a ‘bad view of history’. Worse, the work was ‘not committed literature’ or intellectual but boring, without literary merit. Not all the critics agreed. Of course the book is right wing and expresses the ideas, life and views of the ruling classes. Louis Aragon, the French communist, thought the characters well defined and that this was one of the great novels of all time. Ultimately we are left with a perfectly just idea of the social state of Sicily and the relations between the classes in 1860. *The Leopard* has the density, breadth, and gravity expected of a major and solitary work.

Giuseppe Lampedusa, the last prince of Lampedusa was born in Palermo, Sicily in 1896. Although of aristocratic lineage he did not have the wealth of properties and possessions one might expect. Lampedusa’s great-grandfather, Prince Giulio, died intestate in 1885. Eventually property and possessions were divided evenly among children and our Lampedusa was left to live in relative penury. One is reminded of the familial difficulties of Aubrey! Various uncles argued about the inheritances and ‘our’ Lampedusa’s father relied on his wife’s income. She was also of aristocratic stock with the name Beatrice Mastrogiovanni Tasca Filangeri di Cuto. Beatrice held her son in an
excessively close relationship, which extended into and perhaps damaged his marriage.

As a boy Lampedusa is reported to have loved solitude. He played best with his dog and was happiest with a book. He fought in the First World War, was wounded in battle and a prisoner of war with the Austrians before escaping. He was demobbed in February 1920 but continued to live with the dreadful memories of war. Lampedusa’s father wanted him to study either law or diplomacy and did not allow him to study literature which was his preference. Avoiding a university education Lampedusa learned to read French, German and English to add to his Italian and acquired a great knowledge of Europe’s main literary influences. He had a deep interest in Keats, Chesterton, Shakespeare and Stendhal. He was also interested in Art and Architecture but not Religion, Economics or modern Politics. He viewed Politics with aristocratic contempt. As we have seen, Italian politicians found Sicily impossible to understand. Lampedusa only saw the incompetence of ‘democratic’ governments. His opinion of Mussolini seems ambivalent at best.

As a young man in the 1920’s Lampedusa visited London where his uncle Pietro was the Italian ambassador. It is therefore possible that AP could have met Lampedusa at an ambassadorial party!

Lampedusa married Alessandra (Licy) Wolff, a member of a Baltic aristocratic family. They had no children but adopted Gioacchino (Gio) Lanza. Licy did not get on with Lampedusa’s mother and spent long periods in the Baltic but lost her home at Stomersee to the Bolsheviks. She was a practising psychoanalyst and a huge positive influence on Lampedusa working on The Leopard.

Lampedusa suffered from lung cancer and was treated in various hospitals in Rome over a long period. Licy stayed with him during these last months which coincided with yet more rejections for The Leopard. He died in his sleep in July 1957 aged 60 unable to experience the success of his novel.

Kevin McMahon on James Stourton’s life of Kenneth Clark (reviewed on p. 16)

It’s a delicious moment, but books about interwar Britain always run the risk of becoming anthologies of aristocratic howlers. The task of the biographer wading into this terrain consists largely of scaling the Himalayan mountain range of memoirs, diaries, and letters of interwar literati like Harold Acton, Cecil Beaton, Lord Berners, Cyril Connolly, the Mitfords, Harold Nicolson, Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf, the Bloomsbury Set, not to mention the novels of Anthony Powell and Evelyn Waugh, et al. These have covered the ground so articulately, with such nuance and malice-fueled acuity, that later writers struggle to be heard. Stourton succeeds in making himself audible above this chatter by spinning adventure yarns out of Clark the administrator and indefatigable committee-joiner.

Los Angeles Review of Books 7 January 2017
Kenneth Clark (1903-1983) looked and sounded snooty. Yet no one since Ruskin tried harder to forge a bond between the artist and the man in the street.

In his own words, ‘art is not the prerogative of nob's and snob's, but the right of every man.’ So how perverse that the publication of this fascinating biography should coincide with the news that A Level art history has been ditched. But as Clark himself told me, when I interviewed him in 1974, ‘the average man doesn’t give a blow about art.’ Paradoxically, he benefitted from this, ‘because when people meet someone like me who can speak with confidence and enthusiasm about works of art they are prepared to accept it - to save themselves trouble.’

Clark, ‘K’ for short, said his ‘freak aptitude’ for responding to works of art was ‘like a comfortable account in a Swiss bank.’ Since in addition to this gift he inherited pots of money, he was twice blessed; but privilege cost him dear in a different currency. The only child of a raffish Edwardian playboy and his prim, undemonstrative wife, he was brought up, said his mentor, Maurice Bowra, ‘with a callousness which only the rich dare to show to their children.’ He was not exactly ill-treated, except perhaps during his first year at Winchester, but at an early age developed what Henry Moore called ‘a glass screen’ that people found daunting.

Unlike most of his peers at Oxford, where he went in 1922, Clark was bored by masculine society, and as Bowra noted, ‘cultivated young women at a time when there were few about.’ Women would always mean more to him than men. No sooner did he join a London club like The Travellers than he resigned from it, because he was ‘too embarrassed to speak to any of the members’ - which may explain why AP, a member there, thought him stand-offish. And as you might infer from Bowra’s comment, his liking for women later led to numerous ‘silly fits’, his code for adultery.

Clark said Bowra was the strongest influence on his life. Bowra’s ‘outrageous cannon … blew my priggish fears and inhibitions to smithereens’. But he also acknowledged a heavy debt to Charles Bell and Bernard Berenson. Bell, the Keeper of Fine Art at the

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**London: William Collins, 2016, £30.**

*Michael Barber*
Ashmolean, made him study the museum’s trove of drawings by Michelangelo and Raphael, the beginning of his education in art ‘as opposed to looking at pictures in a diletanti-ish way.’ From Berenson, under whom he worked for two years in Italy, he gained a European perspective, saying that he and Berenson’s other proteges, ‘were educated as few young men since the Renaissance.’

Clark’s aesthetic credentials were established with *The Gothic Revival*, which appeared in 1928. But instead of devoting himself to writing, which he described to me as ‘the one wholly satisfying activity I have ever undertaken,’ he bounded up the ladder of preferment as an administrator, replacing Bell at the Ashmolean in 1930 and then three years later becoming Director of the National Gallery at the tender age of 30. So began the Great Clark Boom, during which he and his stylish and vivacious wife Jane became the hottest tickets in town. ’Jane and the K in all around I see’, quipped Bowra, who disdained the beau monde. Years later, when the Clarks were installed at Saltwood Castle, he told them that however many castles they owned they would ‘always remain bourgeois.’

Unlike as it seems Clark was a socialist, albeit one who approved of elites. It is one of the virtues of Stourton’s biography that he gives full credit to Clark’s appetite for public service, which included stints at the Arts Council, of which he was a founder board member, the Royal Opera House, Independent Television and the National Theatre. This appetite was quickened by the war, which as Michael Levey said, opened Clark’s eyes ‘to the power of art, in its widest sense, over supposedly ordinary people.’ On his watch, and despite being emptied of its treasures, the National Gallery, thanks to innovations like the Picture of the Month and Dame Myra Hess’s lunchtime concerts, became what Herbert Read called ‘a defiant outpost of culture right in the middle of a bombed and shattered metropolis.’

Another achievement of Clark’s that Stourton highlights is his early patronage of contemporary English artists like Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, David Piper and Victor Pasmore, none of whom were either well-connected or fashionable, for which read Cubists or Surrealists. All were indebted to his support, which was vindicated in the Forties when representational and narrative art - the authentic voice of England, so Clark thought - enjoyed a revival.

Unlike their predecessors, the postwar Labour Government thought the arts, like education, health and social security, were universal goods which ought to be generally available regardless of the ability to pay. Clark supported this, while admitting that his first task would be to confound the widespread idea that art was ‘sissy’. In 1946, having resigned from the National Gallery, he became Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, a post formerly held by Ruskin. Although he remained a committee man it was now that he began to establish himself as one of the greatest lecturers on art we have ever had. James Lees-Milne paid this early tribute: ‘superhuman learning worn with ease … he makes me feel like a nurserymaid addressed by royalty.’

The war put a strain on many marriages, the Clarks’ among them. Jane was stuck
in the country looking after three children, a job for which she was ill-equipped: ‘a terrible lip-curler’ was how her son Alan described her. She suspected, correctly, that her husband, based in London, was seeing other women, and took a lover herself, the composer William Walton. But subject to nervous headaches and tantrums, she was too fragile for an open marriage. Already dependent upon a cocaine solution prescribed for sinusitis, she began to drink heavily, starting the day with two or three martinis. Since she was nicer drunk than sober, Clark did not discourage this. Later, when she took to keeling over in public, he would excuse her on medical grounds and patiently put her to rights. Michael Levey compared their marriage to that between T.S. Eliot and his first wife, Vivienne.

Presumably guilt helps to explain what Stourton calls Clark’s ’gallantry’ towards Jane’s lapses, for he was as addicted to love affairs as she was to her ‘cough mixture’. His daughter Colette described him as a ‘compulsive charmer [who] was very put out if women did not fall in love with him.’ A pity then that Stourton does not include more snaps of his conquests.

What did women see in Clark? Well, he was certainly no Adonis; indeed modern audiences of Civilisation have been struck by how poor his teeth were. But I think a clue lies in the confiding tone of his letters to his girlfriends. Trying to explain the appeal of Cyril Connolly, an even more ill-favoured Lothario, Peter Quennell, who had form himself, said he possessed ‘what the French call “the dangerous gift of intimacy”’. I believe that was also true of Clark.

For the cognoscenti Clark’s reputation as an art historian rests upon books like The Nude (1956), but it was news to me that before he became a household name with Civilisation, he had already made or contributed to more than sixty television programmes. From the start he realised that television was here to stay, so why not try and exploit it? Booed at the Athenaeum - so he said - for becoming chairman of the newly established Independent Television Authority, he later confessed to enjoying the company of ‘monsters’ like Lew Grade, finding them more congenial than most of his colleagues in the art world.

In his autobiography Clark described his life as ‘one long, harmless confidence trick’. Today there would be many, particularly on the highbrow Left, who would cite Civilisation, and the dead white males it celebrated, as evidence of this. But in 1969, as Stourton says, it was still acceptable for a scholarly patrician to ‘hand down tablets of culture’ like a second Moses. Deference had yet to become a dirty word.

Clark claimed to be embarrassed at the applause he received from the Establishment, consoling himself with the thought that ‘a lot of nice humble people’ had enjoyed it as well. (How fraudulent this must have seemed to his belligerent son Alan, once described by his father as a ’fascist’.) In a rare moment of sobriety Jane recognised that Civilisation would be an impossible act to follow. As they were crossing Regent Street after a lunch in his honour at the Cafe Royal, she turned to her husband and said, ’Wouldn’t it be a
good thing if we could be run over by a bus.’ Not long after she had a massive stroke from which she never really recovered, dying three years later in 1976.

Stourton says that Clark had grown used to having his cake and eating it, particularly with regard to women. His closest extra-marital attachment was to Janet Stone, the wife of the engraver Reynolds Stone, who must have hoped that one day they would settle down together. But a year after Jane’s death Clark shocked her, and his children, by marrying a well born French widow called Nolwen Rice. To everyone’s dismay she took over his life, alienating his children and severing relations with Janet and his other old flames. But that was not all. Clark had also taken a fancy to an American journalist called Meryle Secrest who enlisted his help in her book about Bernard Berenson. When she asked if she could also write his biography, he agreed, a decision he later described as an ‘inexcusable folly’ once it became apparent that it would be a record of his adulteries as well as his achievements. No wonder Alan described his elderly father as a ‘nuisance’, albeit a nuisance he had to humour ‘for inheritance purposes’.

In *The Other Half* Clark recounted how, in the Florentine Church of San Lorenzo, he believed he had been touched ‘by the finger of God’. It was not a Damascene experience because he was ‘too deeply embedded in the world to change course’, but some reviewers concluded that he was more religious than he was prepared to let on. Stourton says he was ‘never predictable’, and none more so than on his deathbed, when he received communion from a Catholic priest. Was it, as Stourton suggests, ‘a remarkable example of Pascal’s wager’? Myself, I think there may have been an aesthetic explanation. As Gibbon acknowledged in his *Memoirs*, ‘the Catholic superstition, which is always the enemy of reason, is often the parent of taste’.

Kenneth Clark believed that ‘those of us who try to make works of art more accessible are not wasting our time.’ James Stourton has not been wasting his time either. His book is a fitting memorial to a most remarkable man and I commend it to readers of this newsletter.

**Postscript:** When I mentioned to one or two people that I was reviewing a life of Kenneth Clark they all assumed I meant the politician, Ken Clarke. Ah well, as the page boy says about De Gaulle in *The Military Philosophers*: ‘Give me news, not history.’

From AP’s *Journal* 16 September 1984

on having Sunday lunch with David Cecil

"We talked of the K. Clark biography, which has aroused strong feelings. (When I reviewed it a furious former secretary of Clark’s wrote saying that he wasn’t a ‘pouncer’ on women. He may well not have pounced on her; in any case I pointed out-as so often to correspondents—it was not me but the author to whom complaint should be made)."

"David (himself no Brummell) remarked that he had never regarded Clark as well dressed. Clark was very neat, but I agree something also looked radically wrong for some reason."


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**MY FIRST TIME**

*Keith Marshall*

A child of intellectually bohemian parents in the 1950s I was always encouraged to read. We went to the local library every week and I was allowed to read anything in the house: dipping into my father’s Penguin *Lady Chatterley* shortly after publication; reading *Peyton Place* (how?) under the bedcovers; plodding through *Ulysses* in my mid-teens. But being a boy and a scientist reading fell by the wayside, not helped by my reading very slowly and finding the classics taught at school tedious beyond belief.
I rediscovered reading for pleasure as a post-graduate student, when I devoured chunks of Evelyn Waugh, Clochenerle, Laurie Lee, Gormenghast, Martin Gardner’s Annotated Alice, plus the likes of John Gower and Piers Ploughman.

After Noreen and I married and moved into the house, Noreen’s best school friend, Jilly, was staying one weekend in early 1983. Jilly trained as a librarian; both she and Noreen read far more than me; talk naturally turned to books. Jilly, knowing I enjoyed (some) Waugh, suggested I might like AP.

Thus began my encounter with Dance, naturally at the beginning. I found A Question of Upbringing very slow; I really didn’t see the point, but I persevered. I decided to try the next book – try everything twice, to see if first impressions were right. Lo, by the end of A Buyer’s Market I was hooked.

This was the summer I had off work with glandular fever. On good days I picked our soft fruit and made jam. On bad days I read and watched cricket on TV. In between I had an affair with Jilly! (It’s OK, it was an open secret even at the time!)

So that summer I read Dance, with some gaps between volumes as the next of the (first) Marc Boxer Fontana paperbacks was sourced. The war trilogy especially captivated me; Temporary Kings was strange but powerful; the finale, weak.

By then AP had become one of my “heroes”. In the early 90s, I wrote my first webpages and it was natural to include a little about my “heroes”. Whereupon I realised there was almost nothing about AP on the internet: my AP page expanded and become a separate website.

In 1997, at the time of the Channel 4 films of Dance, I started getting emails from around the world; this stimulated me to set up the APLIST. Then when, in March 2000, AP died Julian Allason rang me: “We must celebrate the man,” he said, “we must have a conference”. Recovering my composure we arranged for half a dozen of us to meet in Julian’s Chelsea rooms, when it became evident we needed an organisation on which to hang the conference. Thus was the Society born. The rest is history.

Since that first reading I’ve reread Dance in sequence only once; however I dip into it continually – so continually that I’m not sure I could now read it straight through again. But I’m keeping that option for next time I’m laid up for a while.
If you have been paying attention you’ll recall that it is permissible in the Country to wear a jersey beneath your coat (although never after tea) and then your tie may be dispensed with. The jersey should be of a single wholesome colour, possibly done in cable stitch.

Recently, pursuing a commercial opportunity, I travelled down to Aviemore in Scotland. The ‘opportunity’ invited me to drinks after he and his party had spent a day skiing. Imagine my horror on entering his lodge. Some eight people were relaxing with their whisky, all sporting brightly-coloured knitwear. One jersey even bore a saying. Two men were wearing kilts. On the hatstand were eight cheerful woolly hats - with bobbles.

My horror must have been evident. At any rate, the deal was not brought off. It did however enable me to formulate some rules for you:

1. Skiing happens in the Country, where Tweeds are compulsory. They should be worn both for ‘après ski’ and the Slopes. When skiing, tuck your tie into your shirt to avoid an ‘Isadora Duncan-style outcome.’
2. A sober jersey may be worn beneath the coat.
3. Except with Norwegians, for whom it is a necessary antidote to their natural gloom, there is never an excuse for bright knitwear.
4. Especially in Town.
5. Kilts are a linked issue. They may be worn but:
6. Only by Americans,
7. Never south of Perth, and
8. Never on the Slopes unless weighted to preserve decency.
Entertaining Lady Redesdale! September 15 1941 Rose Cottage, Adlestrop near Stourwater, Glos.

Two weeks ago my dear friend Janet (Walpole-Wilson) introduced me to her neighbour Lady Redesdale. Oh the condescension with which her Ladyship received your humble diarist. The Mitford-Freeman country seat Swinbrook is most charming. I am informed the carved marble chimney-piece alone is worth £3,000. Her Ladyship likes a good blaze! Apart from this, the furnishings comprise old brown furniture, and distressed sofas and chairs. Large dogs wander about the house at will.

Lady R is the wife of a baronet and they have six daughters (and one son). There is a possibility that an unmarried Mitford girl might be just the ticket for my dear Kenneth. After the fiasco with Mildred Blades (Mrs Haycock) and the slut Gypsy Jones I would dearly love to see him betrothed.

Quite unexpectedly, Lady Redesdale suggested paying me a social call and would it be all right if she could bring Tom her son and daughters Debo and Unity who I gather is quite unattached. “You do me a great honour. But I haven’t a scrap in my larder,” I protest. “Oh don’t worry about that. Debo will bring over a box of eggs. We supply all the top London restaurants so I’m sure we could spare you a dozen. And Tom could bring over a sausage”, said her ladyship airily.

September 21 1941 Rose Cottage
The big day arrives. And this is what I cooked.

Cheese Pudding (serves six)
Wartime recipes advise cooks to use reconstituted egg powder. I normally hold one level tablespoon of egg powder mixed to a firm consistency with water to be the equivalent of one egg. Keep your egg powder in a tin with a tight fitting lid and store in a cool place. You will recall that under rationing, households are restricted to one packet of egg powder (making 12 eggs) every 4 weeks.

6 eggs (courtesy of Lady Redesdale’s hens!)
1 pint of milk
8 oz grated cheese – four weeks’ ration
2 teacups of breadcrumbs
Salt, pepper and generous spoonful of Colman’s double super fine (DSF) Mustard
Method
Beat the eggs and set aside. Boil the milk and stir in the crumbs. Remove from the fire and add cheese, salt and pepper, mustard and the beaten eggs. Pour into a dish and bake until brown. Serve warm!

The Redesdales arrive in style driven by Tom in an open topped Sunbeam. Lady Redesdale has her short hair permed in a Marcel wave and is wearing a tweed twin set and pearls. Debo who might easily pass for a land army girl is sporting boots, gaiters, tight fitting jodhpurs, and a check tweed hacking jacket. Unity is a big boned girl with a vacant expression. Tom with hair en brosse is smoking a pipe. He hands me a parcel. “Here Mrs W. I’ve brought you a sausage. It comes all the way from Der Vaterland. I’ve been saving it for a special occasion.”

The Mitfords argue amongst themselves. “Well I’m still jolly well going to send Honks and Sir Ogre a food parcel from our estate. It can’t be much fun cooped up in Holloway prison for the duration. After all what has old Moseley done to make himself so unpopular, I’d like to know. Cable Street is such a dump anyway!” “Oh come orf it Hen. Dree Boodle, doodle.” “Shut up, Bobo!” “Now girls, girls! Stop squabbling this instant. “All right, Muv!” they sigh.

I am expecting my son Kenneth to turn up. I explain: “He’s on the General Staff. He tells me that if America comes into the war then Hitler is as good as finished. “O-o-o-h does he?” drawls Lady Redesdale. “Well that’s not what I’ve heard from Dr Goebels. Isn’t that right, Bobo?” Unity launches into an impassioned monologue. “Joseph says that Churchill is a deluded, war mongering old drunkard and that the British Empire is as good as finished. He was telling me so over a candlelit dinner following the Parteitag at Munich two years ago. And he gave Tom his sausage as a parting gift.”

We are sharing out the “grosse wurst” just as Kenneth bursts in full regimental fig clutching a briefcase. “Is that off ration meat? Here. Let me.” He takes up his knife and fork and cuts himself a large portion. “This is really tasty.” And turning to address Unity he says: “Tell me, young lady, where did you find such delicious charcuterie? It reminds me of a little place in the West End. We might go there if you are not otherwise engaged…..” Unity remains silent.

“And now let me propose a loyal toast.” “No, Kenneth!” I plead. He continues: “To victory!” Unity suddenly leaps to her feet, arm outstretched. “Heil Hitler!” Debo blushes as red as Kenneth’s epaulettes and hat band. “No Bobo, no!”

To be continued!
The challenge was to give a title to Pamela Widmerpool's memoirs. Of course to the members of the Acrostyle Tendency within our Society that is a meaningless question: Pamela ‘is’ Barbara Skelton, and Skelton actually wrote two volumes of autobiography. They were entitled Tears Before Bedtime and Weep No More. I am glad that none of those who entered the competition volunteered either.

Actually the facetiousness of Skelton’s titles perfectly encapsulates why she ‘was’ not Pamela at all. In the two books a heavy-handed skittishness fails to conceal the monstrosity beneath; Pamela never bothered to resort to skittishness.

Some of the entries display a taste for the obscene unexpected in the Society’s membership. I should say at this point that I was given the titles without their authors’ identities. Some indeed presuppose that Pamela’s only characteristic of note was her round heels, which in turn suggests that some of the subtleties painstakingly noted by AP over four volumes have not hit their mark. The funniest was VIDI, VICI MA NON VENI -by Paul Milliken (‘I saw, I conquered but did not come’). This encapsulates the lady’s predicament with a succinctness that Julius Caesar would have envied, but she wouldn’t have entitled her own autobiography in that way, would she, and shouldn’t it be ‘sed’ rather than ‘ma’?

I like GIVE ME YOUR SWORDSTICK AND I’LL RETURN DEATH- by Goody Gray. I suspect that there is a quotation there which I am not spotting - Keats & Shelley or Beaumont & Fletcher or someone - so it makes me feel insecure, but it has a good ring to it.

Finally, there is A WALK AT NIGHT IN THE BLITZ. That has a very good rhythm to it and does suggest not only Pamela’s character as AP saw it but as she saw it too. Although less scabrous than some of the other titles, it has the advantage of being non beau-specific – so important in memoirs.

And the winner is: A WALK AT NIGHT IN THE BLITZ.- by Michelle Butler Hallett. Many congratulations.
Powell’s Last Lines
1. Temporary Kings
2. The Kindly Ones
3. Hearing Secret Harmonies
4. The Military Philosophers
5. A Buyer’s Market
6. At Lady Molly’s
8. How The Wheel Becomes It!
9. Venusberg
10. Afternoon Men
11. Infants
12. Messengers
13. Agents And Patients
14. Strangers
15. Fisher King
16. The Acceptance World
17. A Question Of Upbringing
18. The Valley Of Bones
19. Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant
20. From A View To A Death
21. What’s Become Of Waring
22. Soldier’s Art
23. Faces
26. Books do Furnish a Room

Who Are They?

Pen Name         Real Name
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Acton Bell        Anne Brontë
Alberto Moravia   Alberto Pincherle
Alice Addertongue Benjamin Franklin
Ayn Rand          Alisa Rosenbaum
Bill James        James Tucker
Boz               Charles Dickens
CS Forester       Cecil Smith

Dr Seuss          Theodor Geisel
Elia              Charles Lamb
Ellis Peters      Edith Pargeter
Elsie J Oxenham   Elsie Dunkerley
Flann O’Brien     Brian O’Nolan
Ford Madox Ford   Ford Hueffer
George Eliot      Mary Ann Evans
George Orwell     Eric Arthur Blair
Gerald Wiley      Ronnie Barker
Guillaume Apollinaire Wilhelm Kostrowicki
Hergé             Georges Remi
Jean Plaidy       Eleanor Hibbert
John le Carré      David Cornwell
Joseph Conrad     Józef Korzeniowski
Lewis Carroll     Charles Dodgson
Michael Arlen     Dikran Kuyumjian
Michael Innes     JIM Stewart
Molière           Jean Baptiste Poquelin
O Henry           William Porter
Saki              Hector Munro
Stendhal          Marie-Henri Beyle
Voltaire          François-Marie Arouet

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NEWSLETTER 66

CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS
Birthday Lunch 3 December 2016

24 members lunched at the Malabar Junction in Great Russell Street to celebrate AP’s birthday. This was a return visit by popular demand.

AP of course was a devotee of curries. His recipe for what his son John recently described as the monster curry is on the Society’s website. AP would have liked the Malabar Junction specialising as it does in southern Indian food. Spicy but not overwhelming, varied and well thought out. Much like the conversation in fact. This as always was of high quality. Mother Christmas’s benison of free bottles of wine did nothing to impede this. Who is Mother Christmas? My lips are sealed. She is the Greta Garbo of the Society.

Unusually for a lunch party in London at that time the conversation was not dominated by the Trump Phenomenon. Instead another figure of fun, Frank Pakenham, was the subject of much witty anecdotal. When AP telephoned him to ask him if he would like to come to dinner to celebrate AP’s wedding anniversary FP asked him what date. AP said it was 1 December the date that he and Lady Violet had married. FP said he was quite wrong. That was not the right date. He knew this because he, FP, had been there. AP felt emboldened to tell FP that he was sure that he was right because he, AP, had also been there.

Lunchers exchanged tips about how to start your novel. And more tips were anxiously sought on how to actually finish your novel. We anticipate that by December 2017 at least one new Society author will be being serenaded at the Birthday lunch. Your Chairman drew erudite parallels between AP, Proust and Philip Pullman when exploring why authors run out of steam.

Your Secretary was thrilled with the sales of the new Tote Bags. New projects, mentioned elsewhere in this issue, including John Blaxter’s trip to Radnorshire and Bernard Stacey’s new book were eagerly discussed.

Tie count. Very poor - 24 people only four ties. The glitziest gold chain was worn by one of your Trustees - all of whom are male - no prizes for guessing which one.

Several lunchers asked if we could return to the Oxford & Cambridge Club next year. I am happy to arrange this but sadly there is a limit of 16 people. Above that we have to hire a separate room which of course pushes up the costs. Any suggestions for the 2017 Birthday Lunch venue would be gratefully received.

Stephen Walker
Secretary’s New Year Brunch

The 2017 Brunch saw a change of venue. Patisserie Valerie was superseded by Maxwell’s Bar and Grill, a short step from Covent Garden tube. The choice of venue, partly on accessibility grounds, looked sensible, not least to your Secretary celebrating his first outing since his knee replacement and accompanied by two crutches and the everpatient Noreen.

Maxwell’s, spacious and, at that hour, relatively empty, was voted a success, with obliging staff (who made no difficulty about turning down the muzak) and a shortish, but reasonable menu enhanced by your Secretary’s generous round of prosecco, Buck’s Fizz, or Bloody Marys.

The unavoidable topic was of course the newly inaugurated President. Stephen Eggins summed things up nicely by finding, as ever, an appropriate quote from AP. Lord Vowchurch (Bertha Conyers’s father) speaking with King Edward VII: “The King is supposed to have said: ‘Well, Vowchurch, I hear you are marrying your eldest daughter to one of my generals’, and Bertha’s father is said to have replied: “By Gad, I am, sir, and I trust he’ll teach the girl to lead out trumps, for they’ll have little enough to live on’.” (At Lady Molly’s, p.87, emphasis added)

Several conversations started with Didier Girard, who had followed up his tour de force at York with an equally entertaining report in the last Newsletter. One such led on to AP as voyeur and thence to the value, or danger, of identifying author with narrator. Your correspondent recklessly suggested the Sonnets as an example of the latter, but was outgunned by the Professor of Renaissance Literature who argued that the Dark Lady sequence could hardly have been made up.

John Blaxter explained his plans for a Society outing to explore AP’s roots in Radnorshire. Hay-on-Wye is the likely jumping-off point. Not unrelatedly, the inflated prices of second-hand books were deplored.

Other topics included nicknames at school, opening the question of nicknames in Dance, which seem few and far between. ‘Books Do Furnish a Room’ Bagshaw being the only one that comes to mind, and even that fails to trip off the tongue. Is this a Powellian oversight or a ‘class thing’?

A cheering occasion, with many thanks to your Secretary, and an opportunity to forget he who must not be named.
On December 4th 2016 the German Anthony Powell Gesellschaft e.V. held a colloquium about Powell & Proust under the subtitle “Delights and Troubles of Translating”. Main speakers were the translators of Marcel Proust’s *Recherche* and Anthony Powell’s *Dance*, Bernd-Jürgen Fischer from Berlin and Heinz Feldmann from Münster. The venue was the Bibliotheca Proustiana where Prof. Dr. Reiner Speck, president of the German Marcel Proust Society, holds his meetings and keeps his considerable collection of manuscripts, first editions and autographs of Marcel Proust and Francesco Petrarca.

The president of the German Anthony Powell Society, at the same time the author of this report, welcomed an audience of about 100 and spoke briefly about the relation between Anthony Powell and Marcel Proust, pointing out that Powell wrote at length about Proust over the years between 1950 and 1985 and that Proust is the only author to whom a special part was dedicated in *Miscellaneous Verdicts – Writings on Writers*. Powell referred numerous times to Proust regarding what he called the “perfection of literature” and said that a lot of French authors had contradicted Shakespeare who in his genius could do what he liked and was not obliged to observe rules. These French voices, so Powell said, should be contradicted by one of their own, “their greatest writer and their greatest rulebreaker”, Marcel Proust.

Furthermore, Powell learned a lot from Marcel Proust regarding the “fabrication” of characters and he pointed out that Marcel Proust’s true championship came not from overdrawing certain characters from “real life” but from reducing certain aspects (of Anatole France for instance) and so gained not a caricature of real life characters but was able to create new characters on their own. The traces of Proust and the *Recherche* in *Dance* were demonstrated and there were quotes from the articles of Nicholas Birns and Michael Henle in the last newsletter from the Anthony Powell Society. In the end it was shown that Anthony Powell read Marcel Proust not only in the English translation of Scott Moncrieff and Sidney Schiff (as Stephen Hudson) but in the American translation of Frederick Blossom and must have read Marcel Proust in the French original (since otherwise he would not have been able to show mistakes that at least the American translator has made regarding certain remarks of Marcel Proust about the Légion d’Honneur and the Croix de Guerre).

After a short luncheon (English sandwiches and French wine) Joachim Kalka, a publisher and author from Leipzig, introduced the two translators. Bernd-Jürgen Fischer took to Proust as a young man and reading the original he knew that the acknowledged...
German translation of Ms Rechel-Mertens “somehow sounded wrong”.

After ending his professional career it took him almost ten years working ten hours per day (except January and February when he went abroad with his wife) to translate the whole Recherche which published by the Reclam Verlag in Stuttgart.

Heinz Feldmann, a lector from Münster University, has already translated Anthony Powell's Dance in the 80s for Ehrenwirth Verlag and he met Anthony Powell personally and is mentioned twice in his memoirs. Unfortunately, in those days Germany was not ready for Anthony Powell and his efforts had to be stopped after the third volume The Acceptance World. Curiously the fourth volume At Lady Molly's had already been translated in the early 1960s by Dr. Katharina Focke who later became Minister for Education under Willy Brandt (and despite being interviewed extensively as to why she had started with the fourth volume instead of the first one couldn't say so and referred to the decision made by the publishing house, at that time Klett Cotta). However, when the German Anthony Powell Society started its life in 2012, Heinz Feldmann became a member and rediscovered his appetite for the translation of Dance. The small publishing house Elfenbein Verlag in Berlin purchased the rights for a German edition and in the meanwhile the seventh volume The Valley of Bones was published in German (Das Tal der Gebeine).

Both translators gave an account of their interest in “their” authors and their works (see above) and discussed intensively the questions of “correct” translating. The auditorium understood that there are two antipodes of translating, the one aiming for real accuracy at the cost of brilliance and the other aiming for brilliance at the cost of accuracy. Neither Fischer nor Feldmann confessed to following one theory consistently but agreed that sometimes accuracy is very important while at other times some brilliance can be added on top of accuracy, at least when there is a proverb that is not translatable and therefore grants a certain freedom of creativity.

Theo Langheid

Anthony Powell Gesellschaft e.V
Lindenburger Allee 9
50931 Köln

www.anthonypowell.de
The New York-New England chapter of the AP Society presented its annual Birthday Luncheon at the Grolier Club in New York City on December 16. Arete Warren was our hostess, with co-hostess Cheryl Hurley by her side. Thirty-seven guests were seated at tables in the club’s main exhibition hall.

The W.R. Grace Citation was presented in absentia to Bernard Stacey for his cricket-themed brief opposing plaintiff Louis Glober’s claim in the tribunal described below. The Glober Award was tentatively granted to the unknown author of a pro-Glober brief submitted by one “A. Fisher Boatman” on behalf of an artificial intelligence machine named “Watkins.”

The highlight of the day was the Noel-Poel Players production of “The Glober Tribunal,” a one-act by Ed Bock, which starred Arete, Cheryl, and Michael Leahy as Judges and Gerald Ruderman as Glober. Director Eileen Kaufman as Clerk introduced Ed’s concept of a tribunal for mistreated fictional characters. The dramatic premise is that Glober, is upset by his lack of status in Dance as a “single-novel character,” especially by his dismissive exit from Dance in a barely-mentioned auto crash. Comparing his treatment to the lavish departure given to X. Trapnel, a similar “single-novel character,” Glober demands “compensation,” including some paragraphs inserted in Hearing Secret Harmonies, essentially explaining what an important character he is.

“The Glober Tribunal” was one of the most interesting bits of drama I’ve seen in a long time. The seated characters reading their “briefs” worked a lot like Burney’s Love Letters, and the actors were terrific. It really set me to thinking of the “single-novel characters,” rarae aves in Dance, except for The Valley of Bones, I guess (where they abound), and any new characters appearing in Secret Harmonies. Would Scorpio Murtlock have a case for compensation?

A rousing good time was had by all. I sat next to a lady of uncertain age who had never read Dance, and who was quite uncertain of why she had come. By the end of the play, she was delighted. I felt like Jenkins sitting next to the Donners-Brebner’s director’s wife at the Magnus Donners Prize Dinner, perhaps just before the Quiggins twins livened things up. Amanda and Belinda fortunately did not appear at the luncheon.

The text of “The Glober Tribunal” will appear later this year in volume 8 of Secret Harmonies.
Above: Michael Leahy, the Chief Judge; Cheryl Hurley, the Kind Judge; Gerald Ruderman, Louis Glober; Arete Warren, the Stern Judge; and Eileen Kaufman, Director, in role of Clerk.

Gerald is displaying his “Ecstasy Cushions”, which he was required to surrender to the Tribunal.
Peter Kislinger choreographed a reading on OE1 (an Austrian radio channel) on 22 February 2017 of the more than a million words of *Dance*. Gerald Preinfalk contributed improvised music. The transfer of this humorous masterpiece into German has progressed to the seventh volume and is to be completed in 2019. The novels, washed with all classical, modern and postmodern waters (pastiche, complex framings, changes in perspective and register, etc.), are a panorama of the social, political, military and artistic transformation of Great Britain from 1914 to 1975. Neither ideologies nor the power-obsessed escape the author’s precise, sceptical and ironic eye, above all Widmerpool - one of the great tragicomic figures of world literature - nor the secret main character, Nicholas Jenkins. How Time, this "strange thing", works, is understood through a hundred memorable figures recruited from all strata. Further readings from the cycle published between 1951 and 1975, as created for dramatic performance by Cornelius Obonya, are to follow.

Cornelius Obonya went to the Max Reinhardt seminar at the age of 17, but left after a year and learned from the cabaret artist Gerhard Bronner, whose teaching he still carries on to this day. Since 2000, Obonya has been an ensemble member of the Burgtheater. Among his numerous awards, he is also the "Actor of the Year" in the context of the "Long Night of the Radio Play".

*Source: OE1.orf.at  Translation courtesy of Google Translate amended by your Publisher, who takes full responsibility for all errors and infelicities.*
In the Footsteps of X Trapnel: A Meander through Maida Vale

Saturday 1 July 2017 1030 for 1100 hrs
Meet: Warwick Avenue tube station

This year, by popular demand, Ivan is reprising his first ever Summer Stroll … along the banks of the Maida Vale canal through Little Venice, tracing some of the wartime haunts of Julian Maclaren-Ross, model for X Trapnel. The area provides the setting in Books Do Furnish a Room for Trapnel’s affair with Pamela Flitton and the precipitate destruction of his manuscript of Profiles in String.

Following the walk we will lunch at a local hostelry. 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 (donations in the Hon. Secretary’s top hat will be welcomed).

Lunch will be “pay on the day”. Non-members welcome. For further details when available and booking please contact Ivan Hutnik, ivanhutnik@gmail.com or the Hon. Secretary.

A pint, a pie and informal conversation in a Victorian pub AP would have known. Why not bring something AP related to interest us?

Non-members always welcome.
No need to book. Further details from the Hon. Secretary, secretary@anthonypowell.org.

A Weekend in Powell’s Radnorshire

9-10 September 2017

For details see programme on p.35.
A Weekend in Powell’s Radnorshire

Saturday 9 & Sunday 10 September 2017

Society member John Blaxter is arranging a weekend exploring the Welsh borderlands of Anthony Powell’s ancestors

Friday. After your arrival in Hay-on-Wye, meet for an evening drink.

Saturday. Starting at Hay-on-Wye, we board our minibus to tour parts of Radnorshire, taking in places mentioned by AP in *Infants* which have links to his ancestry. We will take the scenic routes to provide a sense of the character of the region and visit three sites of more general interest: The Judge’s Lodgings at Presteigne, Pilleth (site of the Battle of Bryn Glas, 1402) and the large and unmodernised Elizabethan manor house of Monaughty. We return to Hay-on-Wye for a group dinner.

Sunday. Again starting at Hay-on-Wye our minibus takes us along the Golden Valley of Herefordshire. After a stop at Gwatkin’s Cider Farm we visit Kilpeck church (renowned for its 11th century carvings) and have Sunday lunch at the restored Kilpeck Inn. We continue to Hereford, where some may wish to catch trains for home, while others explore the Norman cathedral and city. We return to Hay-on-Wye in the late afternoon, where the trip ends.

Final details are still being arranged but we hope to keep the cost to around £100 per person; this includes 2 days of minibus & driver, Saturday dinner, Sunday Lunch and Saturday’s admission charges.

Hay-on-Wye, famous for its bookshops, has a range of accommodation to suit all pockets. The nearest train station is Hereford. You are responsible for your accommodation and travel, the cost of Saturday lunch and drinks.

Restrictions at venues mean the group will be strictly limited to 16.

Full details and booking information in the next Newsletter (out early June) when we will open bookings. As the programme may change, and pricing is not confirmed, please do not ask to book yet!
SOCIETY NEWS & NOTICES

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

New Members:
We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:
Peter Elliott, Lancaster
Charles Hansen, Evanston, USA
Richard Hubbard, Washington DC
GJ Rolf, Windsor
John Spain, London

Condolences: We regret that since the last Newsletter we have learnt of the death of Prof. Bernard Bergonzi, author of the monograph *Writers and their Work: Anthony Powell*. We send our condolences to Prof. Bergonzi’s family and friends.

Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, at the usual address.

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
Contact: Nick Birns
Email: nicholas.birns@gmail.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

German Group
Area: Germany
Contact: Theo Langheid
Email: theo@langheid.de

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you wish to make contact with a group and don’t have email.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1 April. Half of our members have subscriptions which expire this year and of course we very much want you to renew and continue your membership.

Reminders will be sent out in March to those whose membership is about expire. Where we have your email address, we will use this to send your reminder. Others will receive their reminder by post.

Why not save time and money with our 5 years for the price of 4 membership offer?

Anyone whose membership has expired will be removed from the membership list at the end of June.
Society News & Notices

Newsletter Copy Deadlines

Newsletter #67, Summer 2017
Copy Deadline: 12 May 2017
Publication Date: 2 June 2017

Newsletter #68, Autumn 2017
Copy Deadline: 11 August 2017
Publication Date: 1 September 2017

Newsletter #69, Winter 2017
Copy deadline: 10 November 2017
Publication Date: 1 December 2017

Newsletter #70, Spring 2018
Copy deadline: 9 February 2018
Publication Date: 2 March 2018

Contributions to the Newsletter and Journal are always welcome and should be sent to:

S.M. Walker
Newsletter and Journal Editor
Anthony Powell Society
25 Townshend Road
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1XH
editor@anthonypowell.org

We are especially grateful for reports or notices of Powell-related events and photographs.

Do You Care About the English Language?

If so, come and join us at the Queen’s English Society.
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www.queens-english-society.org

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* Any two persons at the same address.
** Please send a copy of your student card.

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

- Gift membership and standing order payment are also available; please ask.
- Subscriptions are due on 1 April annually.
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SOCIETY MERCHANDISE

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Eton 2013 Conference Proceedings
UK: £8; OVERSEAS: £14

London 2011 Conference Proceedings
UK: £8; OVERSEAS: £14.50

Centenary 2005 Conference Proceedings
UK: £11; OVERSEAS: £17

Oxford 2003 Conference Proceedings
UK: £7; OVERSEAS: £13.50

Eton 2001 Conference Proceedings
UK: £6.50; OVERSEAS: £10.50

Jeff Manley et al.; Dance Music
150-page guide to the musical references in Dance; in the style of Spurling’s Handbook.
UK: £7; 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: £6.50

The Master and The Congressman
40-page monograph by John Monagan describing his meetings with Powell.
UK: £4; OVERSEAS: £6.50

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: £24.50; OVERSEAS: £29

Anthony Powell, Caledonia, A Fragment
The 2011 Greville Press reprint of this rare Powell spoof.
UK: £8; OVERSEAS: £10.50

John Gould; Dance Class
American High School student essays from John’s two teachings of Dance at Philips Academy.
UK: £12; OVERSEAS: £17.50

PAPERBACK: UK £8.50; OVERSEAS £12.50
HARDBACK: UK £18; OVERSEAS £24.50

SHOPPING BAG

Society Shopping/Tote Bag
Sturdy 100% cotton bag approx. 38cm square with 10cm gusset. Each bag has A Buyer’s Market and Ada Leintwardine book cover designs.
UK: £6; OVERSEAS £9
(If you want several please email us for a postage quote)

JOURNAL & NEWSLETTER

Secret Harmonies: Journal of the Anthony Powell Society
Back numbers of issues 1, 2, 3 & the new 6/7 are available.
UK: £5; OVERSEAS: £9 EACH

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 + £5 donation)

POSTCARDS

Powell 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: £4

Society Postcard
B&W postcard of Powell with his cat Trelawney. Pack of 5.
UK: £2.50; OVERSEAS: £4

Wallace Collection Poussin Postcard
The Wallace Collection’s postcard of Poussin’s A Dance to the Music of Time. Pack of 5.
UK: £3; OVERSEAS: £4.50

The prices shown are the members’ prices as of October 2016 and are inclusive of postage and packing, hence the different UK and overseas prices. Non-members will be charged the member’s price shown plus postage & packing at cost.

Please send your order to:
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Are the novelist Anthony Powell and the actor Danny Dyer related? The biology has yet to be checked, but the evidence is compelling. Spiritually, at least, these two are blood brothers, intimately linked. Both are entertainers, both are fans of the pithy putdown (Powell: “His mastery of the hard-luck story was of a kind never achieved by persons not wholly concentrated on themselves”; Dyer: “Mate, you look like an earthworm who’s whacked a hoodie on”). And both are raging snobs. For Powell, lineage was of paramount importance, Burke’s Peerage his favourite book. Between writing, he devoted his studies to his own ancestry. The pedigree of others determined his attitude to them, from aristo pals to the postman. For all, he endeavoured to trace their descent back as far – and as posh – as possible.

Ditto Dyer. He wanted, he explained on his recent appearance on Who Do You Think You Are?, to uncover a dead relative either landed or minted or even more famous than he was. He got the jackpot. On learning Thomas Cromwell was his 15 times great-grandfather, Dyer was swift to point out their spooky parallels: self-starters, from the suburbs, raised by a single parent, a bit cheeky. “I’ve got his blood running through my veins,” said Dyer. “That excites me a lot.” When he found he could also claim a couple of kings as family, he had to take a moment; charmingly overwhelmed, oddly vindicated. But of all the attributes Dyer and Powell share, their eagerness to claim celebrity roots is perhaps the least singular. Rather, it appears appallingly common: interest and belief in genetic inheritance are on the up. The current series of Who Do You Think You Are? is the 13th. Shows such as The Crown or Downton Abbey, which shore up the hereditary-dependent system by which our country is ruled (despite the monarchy’s disappointing reluctance to prove their claim through DNA tests), are wildly popular.

The Guardian 25 November 2016

From: Lisa Doty

“One of the more recent sources to which Taylor has frequent recourse is Anthony Powell, the snob’s snob, whose obsession in his fiction and his life with heredity and reconcite forms of etiquette was epitomized by his insistence that his name was pronounced ‘poel’. As his Telegraph obituary explained, this was because the family had been traced back to ‘the early kings and princes of Wales’, albeit with the deflationary qualifier that it had been traced only ‘by himself’.”


Lisa adds: “Can’t think I would ever have read Powell if I had known that he was obsessed ‘in his fiction and his life with heredity and reconcite forms of etiquette.”
Dancing Bags!

After much discussion on the APLIST about future Society merchandise

Reusable cotton tote bags are here!

They’re shopping bags, so the design has a *Dance* and a shopping theme. Side one has a schematic cover design for *A Buyer’s Market* in red; side two has an outline design for the cover of Ada Leintwardine’s first novel *I Stopped at a Chemist’s* in blue. The design concept was suggested by Society member Prue Raper – many thanks, Prue! We hope the design may pique the curiosity of those who spot us with the bags and prompt them to investigate! They can be seen in full colour on the Society’s website.

The bags are made of stout 10oz cotton, are approximately 39cm square with a 10cm gusset and long handles. The gusset makes them much more able to accommodate our favourite objects: books!

The bags are available now at £6 to UK members and £9 to overseas members; prices include postage. If collected at a London event they’re just £4.50.

Should you wish to buy more than one bag we suggest you email either merchandise@anthonypowell.org or secretary@anthonypowell.org, tell us how many bags you want and ask us for a postage quote as this may well work out cheaper.

The snapshots below show the bag suspended from the bookshelf over the Hon. Secretary’s desk.

The bags will make great gifts for friends and family. They were selling like hot cakes at the AGM.