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EDITORS LETTER

We have news sad, good and exciting. Sad: John Powell reports that Jake the cat has died. See the obituary on p.26. Readers of the Journals will know of the importance of feline company for AP. Good: Nick Birns married Isabelle - see the notice on page 3. Exciting: your Chairman reports, as promised in the previous issue, on plans to publish further AP works and a photographic record of the Chantry collage.

Elsewhere Nick Birns and Jeff Manley offer different perspectives on AP and V S Naipaul. The relationship between two popular and influential writers of the last century - they met in 1957 when AP was 52 and VSN was 25 and stayed in regular touch until 1994 - intrigues us because of the different impressions given by AP in his Journals and by Naipaul in his essay An English Way of Looking.

Michael Barber investigates Odo Stevens. A character that delights many and who was memorably characterised by the late Miles Kington is his 1997 The Independent parody:
"My name is Odo Stevens, and I write short stories.
Widmerpool: Why on earth would a working class chap want to write short stories?
Odo: I’m not sure, but I think that Anthony Powell is totally incapable of portraying anyone proletarian unless he is like himself, ie a writer with a curious name?"

Robin Bynoe conducts an experiment in nominative determinism with an appreciation of the American writer and diarist, Dawn Powell. Prue Raper recalls her first encounter with AP in My First Time while Uncle Giles and Mrs Widmerpool give us the benefit of their advice.

Finally we have another noble mien in the ‘Profiles in String’ series; nominations for future portraits are most welcome.

Stephen Walker
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FROM THE SECRETARY’S DESK

Powell was proud of his ancestral roots in the Welsh borderlands and in researching this he too stumbled over many byways, mostly in the 17th and 18th centuries. As a good researcher he published his findings in the Transactions of the Radnorshire Society for others to use. The papers (38 of them over 47 years) contain a wonderful mix of the gentry, clergy, property deals, law suits, villainy and thuggery.

This is a greatly neglected aspect of Powell and we often forget that late in life he was elected a Vice-President of the Society of Genealogists. To help rectify this, John Blaxter has arranged a weekend in September exploring the Powell ancestral lands of Radnorshire (see page 35). It should be a really fascinating weekend.

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HAPPY NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS and BEST WISHES to Nick Birns and Isabella Smalera who were married on 20 May 2017. The Hon Sec sent very best wishes from all at the Society via Eileen Kaufman who proposed a toast at the wedding.
I decided to give Naipaul another chance after reading Christopher Hitchens’s essay about his work in *And yet...: Essays* (2015). Hitchens declared Naipaul’s later novel *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) to be his masterpiece and says that Powell appears as a sympathetic character in it. The subject of *Enigma* sounded more approachable for me than his earlier works being about a narrator living in rural England rather than the tropics.

As so often, Hitchens nailed it. *Enigma* is an interesting semi-autobiographical novel set in rural Wiltshire where Naipaul lived in the 1970s. His descriptions of both the surroundings and their inhabitants are readable, despite there being no plot to speak of. Hitchens overstates the appearance of the “Tony” character, who I found only briefly mentioned on one page. But there were other familiar characters and places, such as the novel’s setting in a cottage on the Wilsford Manor estate near Stonehenge, the narrator’s “landlord” who was obviously Stephen Tennant, and a writer named Alan who visited frequently and was a thinly disguised Julian Jepp.

AP also enjoyed the novel, noting in his *Journal* comments similar to Hitchens’s. AP didn’t recall the statements attributed to the “Tony” character but thought they sounded like something he would say (*J87-89*, p. 17). Moreover, AP reread the novel almost immediately after had he finished it. Although not mentioned by AP, Naipaul’s novel is, like *Dance*, inspired by and named after a painting - a 1912 surrealist painting by Giorgio de Chirico. Both novels are also narrated by a character who seems to be the author.

My enjoyment of *Enigma* led me to reread the Powell chapter in *A Writer’s People* (AWP); Patrick French’s recent biography of Naipaul, *The World Is What It Is* (2008) (*French*) and Paul Theroux’s memoir, *Sir Vidia’s Shadow* (1998). I also reread AP’s brief memoir of Naipaul in *Strangers* (163-66) and his reviews of Naipaul’s works collected in *Miscellaneous Verdicts*. After this, I
wondered if I had been a little unfair to Naipaul (both the man and his works).

When read carefully, *AWP* can be seen as an intended generous and grateful acknowledgment to AP and their friendship which began in 1957. Indeed, because of his friendship Naipaul declined a request to write a comprehensive assessment of AP’s literary career after he died. Naipaul had read only the first three volumes of *Dance*. He had little recollection of the first two, but recalled that he was “deeply impressed” by *The Acceptance World*; he admired both “the care of the writing [and] the management of the various moods.” He also recalled writing to AP a “letter of admiration” (*AWP*, 36). There is an excerpt from such a letter dated 13 October 1986 among the descriptions of AP’s archives recently auctioned by Bonham’s:

“…A fan letter. I’ve been reading *The Acceptance World* again. I cannot tell the pleasure – much greater than before – it has given me. So enjoyable, so rich; so beguiling; so classical; so full of wisdom and gentleness and passion. The drive to Templer’s house in the snow – there is in the language and the images the wonder and magic of a sonnet by Shakespeare – one of the less quoted, more original ones…Content must dictate form. Every true writer has to discern that; every writer has to write his own kind of book. What courage to have stuck to your own vision for so long, through such an undertaking”

After being asked to write the article, Naipaul acquired and read the last six volumes. It was these volumes that he found badly written. He singles out the bombing deaths in *The Soldier’s Art* and provides an analysis of why he thought them poorly conceived. As to the last three novels, who among us has not had problems with them? It may not have helped matters if Naipaul identified himself as the character Gibson Delavacquerie in *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, although he doesn’t mention this.

Naipaul may also have felt touchy by having been dismissed from AP’s life in 1994 when they last saw each other. He felt that AP said goodbye at the door of The Chantry with the understanding that that was to be their last meeting, “though he continued to see other people” (*AWP*, 35). In any event, Naipaul turned down the request to review AP’s career because he couldn’t honestly do so without trashing the second half of *Dance*. Why he didn’t hesitate to do so in his published memoirs is not so surprising, however, when compared to his other odd behavior described by both French and his friend, Paul Theroux,
as discussed below.

In the second part of *AWP* Naipaul makes clear that his friendship towards AP never flagged and they never had a major row. He recalled how AP had supported his writings at Punch from the very beginning. They were introduced socially by Francis Wyndham, a mutual friend, who worked at Naipaul’s publisher, Andre Deutsch. Naipaul remained grateful for AP’s help in obtaining a reviewing job at the *New Statesman* (and even intervening to enable him to stay on after a false start). Naipaul credits this job as a valuable source of experience for his writing.

He also ascribes a debt to AP in helping him learn a receptive attitude toward other people. AP’s deep knowledge of human nature and social relationships is also an attribute of the “Tony” character in *Enigma* who brings it to bear in a seemingly casual observation about one of the narrator’s neighbours on the Wiltshire estate (*Enigma*, New York: Vintage, 1988, pp. 229-31). Naipaul sees this lesson as “an important part of my education, and part of my training as a writer.” He admired AP’s literary reviews and thought them better than his fiction: “They held a lifetime’s thought about an extraordinary range of writers, and they were done in a straight and correct way” (*AWP*, pp. 48-49, 67).

Naipaul cites several instances of AP’s friends turning against him without warning or behind his back, including Malcolm Muggeridge, David Holloway at the *Telegraph* and an unidentified neighbour, and seems put off by their behavior as examples of disloyalty. At least two of these examples involve people who share Naipaul’s view that AP’s writing had deteriorated toward the end of his career. But nowhere is it suggested that Naipaul felt the need to get even with AP for some slight or settle some score by turning on him as he seems to have done in AWP. He appears to have been genuinely and unhappily surprised that he found AP’s fiction unsympathetic when asked to write about it.

For his part, AP ensured that Naipaul’s first novel was reviewed in *Punch*, and he reviewed the second favorably. At the *Telegraph*, he reviewed much of Naipaul’s nonfiction. He rarely, if ever, uttered a word against it and lavished somewhat extravagant praise. He began his 1962 review of *The Middle Passage*:

> V.S. Naipaul…is often spoken of as the best of the Caribbean
authors. It is time for the regional epithet to be abandoned and for him to be quite simply recognized as this country’s most talented and promising young writer.

Ten years later, he described Naipaul as “one of this country’s most important writers,” possessing quite extraordinary powers of reproducing the way people talk (MV, 391, 395).

In Strangers, published in 1982, AP reviewed Naipaul’s fictional output and, again, finds nothing but good to say about it. He also mentions a private joke between them that apparently spread beyond their immediate circle. AP referred to the Trinidadian writer Ganesh Ramsumair, who appeared as a Scottish character renamed “G. Ramsey Muir, MBE,” in Naipaul’s first novel. AP jokingly proposed a similar transformation of Naipaul into the Welsh writer Nye Powell (Strangers, pp. 163-64). This joke was later picked up by Naipaul and his American protégé, Paul Theroux, morphing into “Sir Vidia Nye-Powell, OBE.”

Naipaul and his wife Patricia (“Pat”) have many mentions throughout AP’s Journals, all of them suggesting that the Powells and the Naipauls shared a relaxed enjoyment of each other’s company. There is no suggestion that the Powells were aware of the Naipauls’ marital difficulties, as related by French, aside from an occasional observation such as in 1986 noting that Pat looked a bit tired. AP thought this understandable in view of her “exhausting time dealing with the Vidia dynamo” (J82-86, p. 218). In 1992 Powell notes her “arguing the toss sometimes with Vidia, which we had never seen her do before,” attributing this to some degree of domination she had managed to assert during his recent hospitalization (J90-92, p. 216). Nor does AP mention noticing signs of her cancer in the 1990s.

According to French Francis Wyndham introduced Naipaul not only to the Powells, but also to Antonia Fraser and her two husbands Hugh Fraser and Harold Pinter. Through that collective, he made friends with “a new group of privately educated, well-connected British people who were willing to accept him as a curiosity, particularly once he gained the imprimatur of literary success.” This included Lord and Lady Glenconner, novelist Emma Tennant, historian Hugh Thomas, writer Julian Jebb and novelist Edna O’Brien (French, p. 241). Naipaul rented a cottage through Glenconner, on his Wilsford Estate. Naipaul also made friends with the Powells’ sons Tristram and John. Naipaul sold Tristram his house in Stockwell, south London, when he and Pat moved to
the country. Tristram is mentioned as attending Pat’s funeral in 1996 and described it, according to French, as the most austere occasion he could recall (French, p. 480). Whether Tristram’s friendship survived Naipaul’s remarriage is not recorded.

Given that there were no signs of animosity between them during AP’s lifetime, the unprovoked attack on AP’s work in AWP seems gratuitous, clueless and in bad taste. Naipaul gains nothing from it except for explaining why he chose not to write a critical posthumous assessment of AP’s work. Such seemingly mindless viciousness, however, is in keeping with the Naipaul described in French’s biography and Theroux’s memoir.

Throughout his professional lifetime, Naipaul seemed, even for a writer, to be excessively self-centered. He could fairly be described as an egotist on steroids. He was an artist and others around him were expected to make the allowances and sacrifices required for him to succeed. It just so happens that AP was never viewed as a threat, perhaps because he was older and always perceived as helpful. But others were not so lucky.

The chief victim of Naipaul’s selfishness was Pat, whom he met while they were students at Oxford. She was extremely helpful in reading and editing his work, although she receives little credit for it. Pat is cruelly left out of his autobiographical works; in one case, where the context required it, she was referred to as his “companion.” His American publisher changed the references to “wife” which Naipaul thought was “too cozy.” AP addresses this point in his memoirs by citing the need for the autobiographer to edit out persons where necessary to create the impression sought. But, as detailed by French, Naipaul carried on editing Pat out of works such as travel books where she had accompanied him and contributed to his research in often uncomfortable circumstances.

From 1972, Naipaul also began editing Pat out of his life by taking up with an Argentine mistress, Margaret Murray. He arranges his foreign travels to allow Margaret to accompany him while Pat is left at home or with his relatives overseas. Margaret left her first husband and children to follow Naipaul on his travels. In the mid 1990s, when Pat was dying of cancer, Naipaul visited India, leaving Pat at home with her nurse. But at this point, when it was obvious he would soon be free to marry Margaret, Naipaul dumps her and takes up with a Pakistani journalist called Nadira. Two months after Pat’s death in 1996, he married Nadira, and she moved to England. Margaret was no longer in the
Naipaul’s relations with other members of his family were also rocky. His brother Shiva followed him to Oxford and also took up a career in writing, but Vidia kept him at arm’s length. Literary colleagues from the Caribbean, such as the poet Derek Walcott, were also shunned. Naipaul broke with his editor Diana Athill and publisher Andre Deutsch after 20 years. He may have had valid commercial reasons for moving, but he had the news of his departure delivered by his agent. He then sacked the agent and returned to Andre Deutsch after about a year with Secker & Warburg.

Naipaul also had a long but fraught relationship with Paul Theroux. They met in Africa where both were teaching in the late 1960s. Naipaul advised Theroux about starting a writing career. After visiting Naipaul in London, Theroux settled there. Naipaul introduced Theroux to the London literary scene in much the same way as Powell and Francis Wyndham had done for him. But Theroux was always aware that Naipaul was in charge of their friendship and was told several times that at some point most friendships must come to an end. After 20 years in England, where he saw the Naipauls fairly regularly, Theroux’s marriage broke up and he moved back to America. By that time he had achieved success following *The Great Railway Bazaar* and was less reliant on Naipaul’s support and advice. But they still communicated and saw each other when their paths occasionally crossed.

When Pat died in 1996, Naipaul asked Theroux to write an obituary. It appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* and Naipaul expressed his thanks. Theroux was later surprised to see some of the books he had given Naipaul listed in a catalogue. He wrote half jokingly to Naipaul, but received no further responses. He did receive, however, a strange and dismissive letter from Nadira, who seemed upset that Theroux had written Pat’s obituary. He sent Naipaul a copy of her letter and responded to Nadira directly but heard nothing further. He met Naipaul in Gloucester Road by chance on a visit to London. The encounter could not be described as successful. Theroux returned home and wrote his bittersweet memoir. In all the years of their friendship, Naipaul never paid his round. There are, however, press reports of them mending fences after meeting at literary festivals.

Since his new marriage, Naipaul hasn’t written much of anything except for AWP. He won the Nobel Prize in 2001. It seems strange that such a prolific writer simply stopped writing. Perhaps Pat’s editorial support and
encouragement were more important than he was ever willing to admit. In
the end, AP, for his part, seems to have come out fairly well. Each of them
wrote memoirs leaving a picture of a fairly relaxed friendship as compared to
many of the other relationships to which Naipaul was a party.

Nicholas Birns

In his 2008 biography of V. S. Naipaul, *The World Is What It Is*, Patrick
French ascribes to the Anthony Powell Society an anecdote about AP
on an Hellenic cruise circa 1980 saying, before eating an apple, “Do
you mind if I bite?” (187). The original source is from Betty Fussell’s
*My Kitchen Wars*, where it appears on page 193 or, as the Anthony
Powell Society website makes clear, originally from a *New Yorker*
excerpt of that book published in 1999. This shows imprecise research
habits, and it is the kind of thing- not actually citing the original
source-I routinely correct on undergraduate senior theses. French is
rather casual throughout, as when he calls Ralph Partridge a “Bloomsbury appendage,” (187) which, even if true, is not something one says in a biography of record, as opposed to a catty memoir or private journal entry.

French’s apparent hastiness made me want to slow down a bit and consider just how the friendship between Naipaul and AP, so firm both in private reality and public impression when both men were alive, seems to have been perceived differently by Naipaul after AP’s death in 2000. I did not at first understand Naipaul’s public and posthumous crusade against AP in A Writer’s People, or the sneering tone of French towards AP—French accuses AP of “self-congratulatory” (187) English humor. Surely one understood that, while Naipaul and AP admired each other’s talent and shared views and attitudes, and appreciated the irony of their being friends hailing from such different backgrounds, their body of work was each very distinct. AP’s memoirs and journals already make that clear, and this parallel but divergent literary path, of different aesthetics in a forty-year friendship, really should present no obstacles. AP’s style is both reserved and circuitous, while Naipaul’s is direct and transparent. One could make the same comparison between AP and Orwell, or AP and Amis. That AP, according to French (187), helped Naipaul get reviewing gigs for The New Statesman—not, French notes, Naipaul’s own kind of journal politically, but even less AP’s—illustrates this combination of general encouragement without necessary a specific identity of imaginative or cultural territory. For Naipaul to posthumously attack AP for really nothing more than having a different approach to writing fiction seems really rude and gratuitous. One can see AP thinking, as he did after Malcolm Muggeridge’s 1964 review of The Valley of Bones, “But I thought he was my friend!”

There might be some solution to this mystery. Naipaul precedes his discussion of AP with one of Derek Walcott, and in A Writer’s People speaks of “Powell or Walcott” (41) as exemplars of a (inferentially different from Naipaul’s own) “way of seeing and feeling”. The one thing AP and Derek Walcott had in common is that both wrote about one of Naipaul’s ‘homelands’ (England and the Caribbean) in a way that was (to put it subjectively and informally) “better” than Naipaul’s—for all of Naipaul’s great and undoubted achievement—and that Naipaul was inferentially revealing this by so juxtaposing them. Naipaul, in his characteristically honest and clarifying spleen, was tacitly admitting that both AP and Derek Walcott were ‘better” (or
‘richer’, ‘more capacious’, whatever) writers than V. S. Naipaul, again, notwithstanding Naipaul’s being, quite obviously, a superb writer on his own merits.

One notes that, whatever French’s animadversions about AP, both on behalf of Naipaul, he uses AP’s journals extensively, revealing that, though readers at the time of their issuance tended to see these writings as either late gleanings from a genius or grumbles from an old man, history may seem them most importantly as irreplaceable primary sources for their time, as John Aubrey’s Lives are of his. Indeed, one could conjecture that his understanding of the perspicuity and salience of AP’s Journals is one of the many tools that enabled French to accomplish the difficult task of writing a detailed and highly proficient biography of a major writer, who was still alive.

French notes on page 42, that one of Naipaul’s predecessors as a Trinidadian writer trying to make his way on the global scene was Alfred Mendes (1897-1991) “who placed two novels with Duckworth in London, one of them a blurb by the writer Anthony Powell.” This shows Powell’s discernment of good writing, from the Caribbean, or elsewhere, which he used to such advantage in his encouragement of the remarkable career of V. S. Naipaul.

Works Cited

Steve Loveman writes:
In a contribution to the regular Freelance slot in the TLS of 10 March, D J Taylor discusses journalistic sackings and refers to AP.

"Anthony Powell was dismissed from the literary editorship of Punch in the late 1950s, notionally for having been an ally of its recently departed editor, Malcolm Muggeridge, but also, his family recalled, for having made a fuss about not wanting to attend a contributors’ cricket match in Holland."
‘DON’T BE SO SNOBBISH, OLD COCK.’

Michael Barber appreciates Odo Stevens

When Captain Robert Maxwell, the future publishing magnate and swindler, was in action near the end of the war in Europe he asked his C.O. what he had to do to earn an M.C. The C.O. told him, and when the opportunity arose, Maxwell took it .... Or so the story goes. True or false I was reminded of this recently in connection with Odo Stevens, whose martial credentials are established when he gets his retaliation in first on a night exercise. Jenkins says the pressures of war are ‘forcing action on everyone’. But with the exception of General Conyers it’s impossible to imagine any of the other men he knows acting with such brutal dispatch. No ‘warrior’s abnegation’ for Stevens.

Jenkins thinks Stevens will go far, if he doesn’t get killed. And so it proves. Determined to have ‘what fun the army has to offer’ - an ambition that precludes regimental soldiering - he does better out of the war than anyone else in Dance, writes a provocative memoir about his exploits with the partisans and after a lively love life - hence his nickname, ‘Odo the Stoat’ - is fought over by two wealthy widows, Rosie Manasch and Matilda Donners. Rosie prevails. And since the last we hear of them they are still married, we must assume she has successfully buttered his paws.

Born in Brum and christened Herbert, Stevens is no more ‘a real gent’ than Ted Jeavons, which is one of the reasons I like him. He is not just a new face but a new type: cocky, resourceful, attractive to women and decidedly undeferential: how refreshing to hear him address Jenkins as ‘old cock’! (‘There is,’ as S.J. Perelman remarked, ‘such a thing as too much couth.’) Not long after we first meet him he detaches Isobel Jenkins’s sister Priscilla from her husband, Chips Lovell, one of those seismic shifts in the social strata that occur throughout Dance. He is thus indirectly responsible for their deaths in the Blitz, incurring Isobel’s loathing as a consequence. Her reaction is understandable, but it takes two to tango and Priscilla already had form.
Jenkins has misgivings about Stevens too, but his curiosity, as always, gets the better of him, especially when Stevens reveals that he writes poetry and is a fan of both Moreland and Max Pilgrim, the equivocal entertainer. It also helps that he’s brave, a quality Jenkins not only respects but would dearly like the chance to exhibit himself. There is a hint of envy in his voice when, in *The Soldier’s Art*, he asks Stevens how much hand-to-hand combat he has done. Years later when Pamela Flitton calls Stevens ‘that little ponce’, he says at once, ‘You must acknowledge his war record was good.’

Pamela is the only character to get the better of Stevens, backhanding him in public and belittling his performance in bed. But I suspect that like the hero of *Look Back in Anger* he has ‘no public school scruples about hitting women’, and would have repaid her blow with interest given half a chance. It’s rumoured that during their courtship he gave Rosie a black eye. He also, with Rosie’s help, gets the better of that other hard case, Gypsy Jones, whose progress from *poule de gauche* to Stalinist enforcer so intrigues Books Bagshaw.

Stevens’s ‘no-bullshit’ tone is reminiscent of Fifties’ writers like Kingsley Amis, whose potential AP, in contrast to many of his contemporaries, was quick to spot. But despite his undoubted success with the ladies I don’t think Amis contributed anything to Stephens. Sir Paddy Leigh Fermor, adventurer, war hero, travel writer and charmer, is a possibility. But in his *Journals* AP refers to him only once, and that dismissively. You could say of him – but not of Stevens – what Stringham says of Bill Truscott, that he was given to ‘earmarking duchesses.’

A more plausible candidate is Alan Ross, whom AP knew for over fifty years. In a diary entry dated 15.9.49 Malcolm Muggeridge reported that AP was ‘very excited about the marriage of Alan Ross and [the chocolate heiress] Jennifer Fry.’ Ross was then working for the British Council and establishing himself as a writer and poet. It was Jennifer’s money that later enabled him to buy the *London Magazine* from John Lehmann.
Though Ross was educated at Haileybury and Oxford, for whom he played cricket and squash, he had what his old schoolmate Michael Davie called ‘a Bolshie streak’, a reference perhaps to his admiration for the sort of ‘poetry without pomposity’ associated with Auden. In December 1942, serving as a naval rating aboard the destroyer HMS Onslow, Ross took part in the battle of the Barents Sea. When Onslow was hit by salvos from the German cruiser Hipper, Ross was lucky to survive. This epic action inspired his long narrative poem JW51B and the autobiographical Soft Objects, whose protagonist, wading through a flooded mess full of dead bodies, can never forget

…the feel/Of the non-feeling in the heel/He ground on a face as he vomited.

Later, thanks to the grounding in German he’d learnt at school, Ross eavesdropped German radio traffic in ‘E Boat Alley’ off the East Coast*, spending his leaves in Fitzrovia, where he met AP’s old flame, Nina Hamnett, and Julian Maclaren-Ross, whose unfinished Memoirs of the Forties he would publish posthumously. After the war, commissioned by now, he spent a year in Occupied Germany, where the ‘temptations’ Stevens refers to came up with the rations. He would always find these hard to resist, conducting numerous affairs as a married man, including one with Barbara Skelton, Pamela Flitton’s prototype.

Regrettably, I only met Ross towards the end of his life, by which time his many amours and the strain of keeping the London Magazine afloat without his estranged wife’s money, had taken their toll. There was talk of my writing his biography, but for various reasons this never came to pass. We did however discuss AP. He described him as ‘essentially good-natured, but rather limited in his sympathies.’ He thought it a pity that when in the Army, AP didn’t spend some time in the ranks. Others have said this about Evelyn Waugh, overlooking the fact that unlike AP, a soldier’s son, he was congenitally insubordinate. Still, had they both served as privates, the course of literature, if not the war, would have been altered.

*Powell made use of this as background for Valentine Beals in The Fisher King.
DAWN POWELL

Robin Bynoe

Most Members of the Society will, I suppose, also subscribe to Popbitch’s weekly email service. If so they will be familiar with the concept (also hallowed recently by a question on University Challenge) of nominative determinism, the idea that one’s name predetermines what one does in life. This week’s Popbitch entry, for example, reads: ‘Aberdeen’s pre-eminent newspaper, the Press and Journal, has a new news editor...Shona Gossip’. Dawn Powell owes her appearance in these pages solely to her surname. This is perhaps alt nominative determinism, but I am delighted to have an excuse to write about her.

Twenty years ago I was browsing the shelves of the excellent Shakespeare & Co bookshop in New York. I wondered how our hero was doing there. It turned out that he was sadly absent, but in the space that he would have occupied, given the inflexible demands of the great British alphabet, were the complete published works of Dawn Powell, most of them in the elegant paperback editions of Steerforth Press. I looked inside them; bought two; was delighted; then all the others; then the stories, plays, letters and diaries; then the biography by Tim Page. Dawn Powell is an amazing writer and was an extraordinary person. Her reputation goes in and out of fashion. It was then in; probably it is now out. Anyway, here is a plug (rather than a considered appraisal) directed at those who do not know her work.

The first thing to make clear is that genealogical research has failed to establish any kinship between the two writers. I am not sure whether either had even heard of the other. They were born within a few years of each other; it is hard to be precise, as Dawn Powell tended to shave a year or two off her age in later life. She came from rural Ohio, where she had a difficult childhood, being shunted unwanted around her family. She was glad in due course to escape to New York and determined never to return. Nevertheless she mined her upbringing in a series of novels set in Ohio, and indeed a
constant theme in the later novels is coming to New York and living there as an eternal incomer. The Ohio novels are serious, on the whole sad, and should be read, but they do not have the aplomb of the New York novels that followed, and it is the latter that should probably be read first.

In New York her material circumstances did not improve. She married an alcoholic and they had a son with severe mental and physical problems. She loved them both but it was an exhausting life and she needed the occasional holiday, particularly from her son. She wrote to keep the family afloat but was always financially in what her namesake called ‘lowish water’. There were plays and stories but the best of what she did (possibly excepting her diaries) were the novels. These are joyful and scabrous, breathlessly funny, often heart-breaking. She had a merciless – if ultimately affectionate – eye for the scheming and insanity of bohemian life in the city. She enjoyed the triumph of innocence; also its defeat. Sometimes she turned her attention to real people, very thinly disguised, in a way that would delight the acrosticians among our Society’s Members. The self-regard of Ernest Hemingway (in *The Wicked Pavilion*) and the then celebrated but less historically resilient Clare Boothe Luce (in *A Time to be Born*) is skewered; likewise the smug artists and writers in their watering holes in *The Golden Spur*. Much of *The Happy Island* takes place in what we are now encouraged to call the Gay Community. The characters carry on their lives, calculating, conniving or sad; and uniquely for the time (1938) they are not treated as hilarious, victims or wicked for being gay. They are fallible human beings, just like everyone else, some sympathetic and at least one absolutely repulsive.

All funny writers (funny painters too) suffer at the hands of those critics who apparently believe that humour is inconsistent with serious intent. Dawn Powell suffered from this. (So of course did Anthony Powell.) She also, cruelly, had to bear the opposite prejudice. She had the misfortune to live in New York at the same time as Dorothy Parker, with whom she has endlessly been compared. Parker was also witty, sometimes cruel, often hilarious. The difference is that Powell wrote novels that work, whereas Parker was a great luncheon-companion - no doubt - but, as a writer, a dilettante. It helped Parker that she, although proclaiming herself a Communist, was posh, whereas Powell came from Ohio.

Gore Vidal was a stalwart supporter, but in terms of hard graft Powell’s reputation is largely due to the efforts of Tim Page. He has edited her work – including the *Diaries*, which are an engrossing picture of bohemian New York
from the 40s to the 60s, as well as a restless commentary on her work in progress and her personal circumstances – and he has badgered publishers into making the work available. Her books are not now I think in print but they are all to be found online. Some more easily located than others: her disowned first novel *Whither*, for instance, has been illegally retrieved from the Valley of Lost Things by a kind and Astolphonian gentleman from India. Within the past year an academic study of the New York novels has been published (*The Message of the City*, by Patricia E Palermo). We must hope that her reputation is due for an upswing again.

In the meantime we can all help. Try any of the titles mentioned above. If you can, start with the opening pages of *The Wicked Pavilion*, a real *tour de force*. Then read the rest. But hurry while stocks last.

**MY FIRST TIME**

*Prue Raper*

Being a keen rider in the hunting field at the time – sometime in the mid-sixties - the first AP volume I picked up was *From a View to a Death*, assuming it must celebrate a jolly cross-country romp in the shires. The cover of the Fontana paperback did nothing to suggest otherwise, but I soon found out that fox-hunting was not the main subject. However, as I read on I became more entranced with the book, and particularly, of course, with the remarkable encounter between Mr Passenger and Major Fosdick – the latter dressed one of his wife’s outfits “in the fashion of some fifteen years before”, surmounted by a large picture hat decorated with cherries, though confusingly sporting a heavy grey moustache. That picture has returned to me many times, while cross-dressing has become an ever more popular subject in today’s media. To be honest, I found the ending of the book a bit disappointing, but it’s time I read the whole thing again with fresh eyes.

The first volume of *Dance* that came into my hands (the series still then known simply as *The Music of Time*) was *The Acceptance World*. I’m not sure if it was the Osbert Lancaster cover design that attracted me, but I was hooked from the start by the description of the tea party at the Ufford with Uncle Giles, whom I immediately recognised as my Uncle Roddy under an assumed name. Everything about Uncle Giles (as I’ve noted before: see *Newsletter 63*)
was a perfect reflection of Uncle Roddy, and made me feel at home from the start.

I soon found more and more friends among the characters. The world they inhabited, though actually the early ‘30s didn’t seem so far removed from our own at the time. I’d had my own small share of debutante balls and the fringes of bohemia, even while living in the Fulham Road: artists such as Elizabeth Frink frequented the local pubs. One chap (whose name I’ve forgotten) lived across the road from our flat and we looked straight into each other’s top floor windows. The night before his forthcoming exhibition he got very drunk, made himself a pan of scrambled egg, then went round his studio room flinging spoonfuls of it at the paintings (luckily oils). So it was easy to feel that I was living in this same world and rubbing shoulders with its inhabitants.

At the same time that I was reading *The Acceptance World*, *At Lady Molly’s* was coming out, and a sneak preview chapter appeared in one of the glossy magazines. This really got me keyed up, and I went straight out and bought paperbacks of *A Question of Upbringing* and *A Buyer’s Market*, which I felt made me a fully-fledged Powellite. I’ve never looked back.

I was introduced to the web-site – though I never got round to reading it. I found myself, in true *Dance* coincidence, singing in the Grosvenor Chapel choir at AP’s memorial service; then I read about the Society from a small piece in the *Times* diary. I joined at once.

**One final postscript:** I was looking at an old family photograph album a year or so ago and found a snapshot of myself, aged about four, sitting on the grass surrounded by my dolls and stuffed toys. The caption was “Mrs Jenkins and her family”. I had completely forgotten that in my childhood make-believe world, I called myself Mrs Jenkins. What foresight!
There are two justifications for Abroad and its inevitable concomitant, Foreigners. One is as somewhere to escape. (I remember once disappearing to Dieppe to avoid the attentions of a solicitor in Norbury, with whose wife I had developed a friendship; fellow threatened me with all sorts of mumbo jumbo, tipstaffs just the start, so I made myself scarce for six months while it settled down.) But I digress. (Betty, her name was: fine figure of a woman.)

The other is as a venue for upholding the Pax Britannica.

Some regard Abroad as suitable for recreation. I cannot agree. Life is hard enough as it is.

These days, of course, Abroad and Foreigners are all around us. I found a page of the *Daily Mail* sticking soggily and in breach of Health & Safety to a piece of battered fish that I had purchased, and the fellow there went on about the comity of nations at some length. Bad thing, he thought.

All the more reason to master the rules, say I.

1. Only use foreign languages where *kudos* will ensue. Hindi is good; French a non-starter, especially if dealing with a Frenchman.
2. Including American.
3. The classical languages may be indulged in freely. *See kudos, supra.*
4. When using English with a foreigner, shout if you wish, but shout clearly.
5. Address foreigners as if upper domestic servants: with courtesy but vagueness. It is not necessary to remember their names, which may
be complicated.
6. Foreign clothing may be worn only when tweeds are out of the question: in other words, effectively never. I have seen many a downhill path that started with the donning of a burnouse or beret.
7. Nearly all foreign food is better than English. Weekly preparation and consumption of the family curry has enabled me to achieve an enviable age.
8. Facility with foreign food may also confer kudos.

It’s a sensitive subject, but you get the idea.

**Mrs Widmerpool’s Cookbook**

Mrs Widmerpool and the Mitfords Part 2
September 20 1941 Rose Cottage, Adlestrop near Stourwater, Glos.

Dear diary, the news from the front line continues to give me cause for concern. In North Africa, our boys in khaki are holed up in Tobruk, besieged by that ghastly little man General Rommel; while Malta is still under aerial bombardment by the Hun. At least there is a ray of hope that some convoys are getting through.

How I long to pay a visit to Debenham and Freebody’s in Piccadilly to stock up on my winter thermals. But I will just have to bite the bullet and make do
with Pobjoys, the drapers in the High Street. It will be my little sacrifice for England and for Victory!

Since my son disgraced himself with our esteemed guests Lady Redesdale and her daughters, I have been badgering him to help me restore friendly relations. (Note to self: Anthony Eden might need my diplomatic skills to shore up our support from our allies.)

**October 1**

Oh joy, oh rapture. Lord and Lady Redesdale have invited Kenneth and me to a soiree at their stately home Swinbrook to coincide with Kenneth’s being granted leave by the General Staff. Gen. Alan Brooke, no less, has hinted that my son might be promoted to the rank of colonel so long as he minds his Ps and Qs!

The big day arrives.
I have cooked some delightful “Flapjacks” which I will bring as a gift. Here is the recipe.
8oz oats
2oz butter or margarine
4oz of Lyles Golden Syrup
2oz demerara sugar
You may wish to add some dried fruit such as raisins or sultanas from the store cupboard.

Method
Preheat the oven to 350°f or gas mark 4. Grease an 8in square, shallow cake tin.
In a saucepan melt the butter, syrup and sugar. Stir in the oats and dried fruit and pour the mixture into your tin, spreading evenly. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Take out of the oven and cut into square or rectangular pieces immediately. For the best results leave in the tin to cool before removing the flapjacks with a palette knife.

What happened next….
My flapjacks were a terrific success, as I knew they would be. People are always complimenting me on my fine “flaps”. “They will be the talk of Adelstrop Mrs W.” Lady Redesdale winked as she and her ravenous brood wolfed them down.
But then an unfortunate episode occurred. “Shall we get out our dressing up box, mummy?” said Unity excitedly. “I have a box Brownie and we could take snapshots of one another in ‘fancy dress’.”

“Yes, why not,” replied my son. “You are a military man, are you not Kenneth?”, twitted Deborah. “Then this hat which we picked up in Munich will be just the ticket.

No sooner had these fateful words been uttered than Tom Mitford stepped forward, took out his camera and snapped my son wearing … a Nazi officer’s peaked cap!!!

“Oh no. I think I’m ‘going red’; and not in a good way,” spluttered Kenneth, by now crimson with embarrassment, the prospect of his colonel’s red tabs vanishing with each passing moment.

We made our excuses and left. “If General Alan Brooke ever becomes Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke, then I’m for the high jump,” said my Ken dejectedly. “No, my son. No one will ever find out…”

Mrs Widmerpool’s Diaries and Cookbook © Stephen Hoare 2017

✂...Cuttings....Cuttings...✂

UBIQUE

AP crops up everywhere as shorthand for a vanished world.
In Ben Judah’s review of Minoo Dinshaw’s biography of Steven Runciman Outlandish Knight, London: Allen Lane, 2016 (Financial Times, 21 Oct. 2016)

"Dinshaw, rather than writing a crisp biography, has written a gigantic one, as rich, funny and teemingly peopled as Anthony Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time".
AP’S COLLAGE AT THE CHANTERY

Robin Bynoe

AP took the visual arts seriously. As a draughtsman, his skills were those of an amateur, but he kept sketchbooks, he wrote knowledgeably about art and in the 1960s he embarked on what must be considered – if you ignore all the writing stuff - his magnum opus. Tiepolo decorated ceilings – both in AP’s imagination and in life. AP, by contrast, enhanced the boiler room in the basement of his house, The Chantry, in Somerset. To start with, he cut out and attached pages from French publications of the end of the Nineteenth Century, often women with the statuesque figures of the time. Soon after he embarked on this, first the Sunday Times and then other similar publications started publishing colour sections; the Sunday Times version celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. AP attacked them with his scissors and gum. The statuesque French ladies were joined by Twiggy-shaped models of the mid-Sixties – indeed Twiggy herself. It was not just pinups: there were his heroes, some villains, some friends; Betjeman, Berlioz, Dante, Clive James and Rasputin jostle for attention.

The Chantry dates from a time when a boiler enjoyed an amplitude wholly lacking in the modern combi. Accordingly, to accommodate it, the boiler room is itself large, and filling it with art took AP decades. But fill it he did and it is a tribute to his sense of design, the humour of his juxtapositions and the staying power of the Sunday Times’s printing processes, that, fifty years on, scrutinising the walls, the ceiling and the decorated pipes is a delight that can distract you for hours.

The Sunday Times’s printing processes are not however entirely proof against the effects of time, and some fading has taken place. The boiler itself requires attention. So, the Society, with John Powell’s support, decided to engage a photographer to record the whole room. I should record our heart-felt thanks to John here. Without his enthusiasm, none of this would have happened. The photographer is Hugh Gilbert. He is a fan of AP’s work and of The Chantry and his speciality is recording the interiors and exteriors of great buildings. You can see some of his work at www.hughgilbert.com.
The job is done. The Society holds a database recording every inch of the boiler room’s decorated surfaces. If you had the necessary software you could reconstruct the boiler room inside a white cube: actual size and fresh as paint. Even without it you can view every inch of the collages in very high definition.

Our priority was to make a record, as good as possible, of the collage, and to provide it to researchers and enthusiasts. We have done that. The first recipient was Hilary Spurling, when she was covering that part of AP’s life in her forthcoming biography. We now have to decide what to do next, and it seems appropriate to consult the Members. There seem to be the following options.

We can make a memory stick, with all the images, available to Members for a price calculated to cover our costs. Indeed, we can do that whatever else we do. We can sell to Members as merchandise some of the images in the form of postcards or prints. More adventurously, we can publish a small book with colour plates recording passages of the collage. Even more adventurously, the small book might include a CD containing all the images, so that Members
can look at the whole boiler room and its decoration on their computers.

We have not done any costings on any of these possibilities. 3 and 4 would be relatively expensive, and we would plan to embark on them only if enough Members said that they were interested in principle, and we would then print books only against specific orders.

So, what do you think?

Please write to the Editor at editor@anthonypowell.org or start a discussion on the APList, which you can find through the Society’s website.

**JAKE**

John Powell writes:

![Image of Jake]

Sadly I have to report that after 15 years our cat Jake has retired to the Pantheon reserved for former cats resident at the Chantry. He was actually 17, an age only bettered by the Burmese Fum (Kingsplay Flixey) who reached 19. Jake combined the knockabout nature of Snook with Trelawney's preference for climbing all over you. Jake particularly enjoyed the attention of the Hon. Sec. and many other members of The AP Society, welcoming them with open arms or paws, though he was never sure whether I gave him enough of the literary life which his predecessors enjoyed.

**The Hon Secretary writes:**

If you never met him, Jake was a big bruising lion of a tabby cat, but very affectionate.
PROPOSALS FOR PUBLISHING

AP started writing reviews, particularly literary ones, to pay the rent, but continued long after that ceased to be a problem. He enjoyed doing them. The template included a certain world-weariness, considerable perceptiveness - as one would expect - derived from an inside track on how writing worked, good jokes, and often a patrician sign-off, holding the author in question to task for some error: perhaps for referring to the wife of a knight by the address proper to the daughter of a duke.

Towards the end of his life he edited two collections: Under Review and Miscellaneous Verdicts. Both were published by Heinemann, his regular publishers. They are substantial works in every sense. They cover his contemporaries and the great figures of world literature, and they are physically big: over four hundred pages each of small print.

There was to be a similar third. He edited it and sent it to Heinemann. They sat on it, finally deciding that they did not want to publish it. In the meantime, they had mislaid about a third of the copy. The truncated text was published in 2005, after AP’s death, by a smaller publisher, Timewell Press, under the name Some Poets, Artists and ‘a Reference for Mellors’.

Recently, John Powell brought to my attention a fourth volume that AP had worked on with a view to publishing it in the same form and size as Under Review and Miscellaneous Verdicts and Some Poets as originally envisaged. Just as Some Poets had extended the range beyond the literary canon (as we are encouraged to call it these days), volume four went even further. AP wrote at some length about King Arthur, for example, and explored some more obscure and ephemeral literary byways.

This was exciting. It seemed to us that this what just what the Members – and others - wanted to read. One can more or less guess, having read Dance, what AP thought about Proust, but his views on The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail would be fascinating. John then came up with more. First, the copy that Heinemann lost had been reconstructed and could at last be published. Secondly, there was a number of articles about wine – something immensely important to AP, as anyone who has read the Journals will appreciate. These had never been collected.
AP, incidentally, loved wine but was not a wine bore. He recognised the risk and avoided it. These articles do not pore over vintages. They ruminate on the humorous, literary and social implications of bottles that his heroes, historical and imagined, found at various points agreeable.

We had a word with one or two publishers, but they did not feel that AP on King Arthur would generate the return on capital that in these straightened times their Chief Financial Officers required. We therefore decided that, assisted by David Eldridge, who recently redesigned the *Newsletter, Secret Harmonies* and the *Conference Proceedings*, and with the austere guidance of our Publications Committee (Alison Walker, Stephen Walker, John Roe, Nick Birns and me) perhaps we should do it ourselves. We thought that for a charity dedicated to supporting AP’s work that should be a priority.

There seems little point in publishing doorstoppers like *Under Review* and *Miscellaneous Verdicts*. They followed Heinemann’s publishing imperatives, which are not ours. We’d propose to issue the reviews in a series of volumes of much more manageable size. They would be elegant volumes, worthy to hold their place on a bookshelf alongside the original Heinemann editions of the novels. We’d start with the volume on wine. This would be slighter and shorter, perhaps, than subsequent volumes, but would have the merit of testing the interest of our public.

We’d offer the volumes as Society merchandise, and possibly, more expensively, also to the public on Amazon. Timing and costing have all still to be decided.

So, this is where we stand, with what we hope that you will find an exciting project. I hope that before too long we will be inviting you to send in your orders for *AP on Wine*.

✂...*Cuttings*....*Cuttings*...✂

**UBIQUE (ITERUM)**

The obituary of Jeremy Lewis (*Times*, 12 April 2017) reveals that Lewis was, like AP, a cat-lover, but that AP likened Lewis to a floppy labrador.
"Happy Birthday Prue" we all said as Prue Raper gamely disclosed that it was her birthday, which let the record show, she did celebrate with a glass of fizz - lime juice and soda. Lunch on a clear sunny day in Mayfair with friends - there are many worse ways of celebrating your birth.

Prue's impressive calorie control was not followed by her co-lunchers at The Audley, who tucked into its new menu. The brand new and much touted Lemon & Garlic Chicken was eschewed in favour of thick cut 9 inch gammon steak with egg and chips or Dunkley's "hand crimped golden short crust pastry" steak & ale pie and mash. Hand crimped perhaps but sallow not golden. Your Secretary stayed loyal to the Fish and Chips and awarded them a "showing marked improvement". Which considering the depths to which they had sunk is heartening news for lovers of our national dish. The distaff table all tucked into Sweets - the Eton Mess Scone Cup tussling for custom with the Apple Crumble. The chaps just supped their IPAs.

As ever conversation was lively and varied. Once the organ recital was out of the way: knees - your Secretary's are much improved, - cataracts, ears and sugar intolerance induced ague, we moved onto the emotional, social and cultural implications of Ovaltine and Horlicks; near starvation at Thames Valley prep schools - what the Headmaster could save on food for the boys he could spend on feed for his wife's horses - and drinks that you could make with half-chewed Old Fashioned flavour Spangles, saliva and vigorous shaking.

A new idea for a summer walk emerged - pet cemeteries, partly inspired by the sad news of Jake's demise, see p 26, and memories of a British Council denizen's chat up line "Have you seen Ribbentrop's dog's grave?" (It's in Carlton House Terrace.) Reminiscences of sweaty nights in The Refectory cellar club gyrating to Little Eva's Locomotion vied with those of Ewen Fergusson's proudest achievements as British Ambassador in Paris - he tidied up the silver cupboard and rebound the books in the library. Why should England tremble with such diplomatic coups? Vive l'entente cordiale!

Much excited anticipation about Hilary Spurling's forthcoming life of AP (See page 33). Especially given the expectations that she raised in her 2004 Daily
Telegraph review of Michael Barber’s biography- “bland reductive tone of a school report patronising a mediocre pupil”.

Finally, the dress sense of guests having a snifter in the The Audley before attending weddings in Farm Street Church always entertains. Tailored suit, fascinator, 6 inch heels and a red rucksack was a novel combo. Sadly only two of our group’s men wore ties. What would Uncle Giles say? (See NL issue 58 for a clue).

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir
I enjoyed the last issue of the Newsletter § 66 but wish to respectfully draw attention to a few errors in Stephen Hoare’s article on Trollope.

p.8 a. The Revd Septimus Harding is Archdeacon Grantly’s father-in-law not his brother-in-law.
b. The heroine of Dr Thorne does not inherit a fortune from her upper class but worthless father but from the man who inadvertently kills him, her maternal uncle. That fellow, then a mere labourer or the like, simply intends to give the cad, his drinking companion, who has dishonoured his sister a sound thrashing but takes it too far. So he serves some time for manslaughter but not that long as the court is sympathetic in the circumstances. Once out he wastes no time in becoming self-made railroad magnate.
c. ”High and Dry” and the Oxford Movement were indeed often at loggerheads - fighting for the same sacred ground - but the Proudies and the Revd Slope represent a Low Church challenge to the High and Dry establishment of 1850’s Barchester.

p.9 a. Bishop Proudie is not completely dominated by his wife.
b. I’m not sure that the Stanhopes are meant to be badasses. Amusing and rather eighteenth century in lifestyle; yes.

p. 9/10 a. The decline of the upper gentry and the aristocracy should not be overdone. Many great houses who were around in the 1850s are around still: they know how to look out for themselves. If Trollope’s Duke of Omnium had been a real person, there would probably be a Duke of Omnium today. The lesser gentry were certainly more vulnerable. They formed a lower upper class, forgotten today, but widespread in Victorian times. There are quite a few fictionalized representatives in Trollope. This sector was certainly hit by the
depression in farming from the late 1870s, but those who managed to hang on were buoyed by the sustained revival in farming from WW2. The trick was to take the smallish tenanted farms in hand and to become a large direct farmer yourself on two or three thousand acres.

b. Stringham is entirely untypical of his class cf. Sebastian. There always were a few dipsos but most kept their drinking within bounds and in both World Wars would have served as officers to be killed if that fate befell in the approved time-honoured role.

c. Stringham is, of course, a clever distillation of the worst parts of the trajectories of Alfred and Hubert Duggan both of whom actually did better than their fictional offshoot. Alfred (1903-1964), a noted alcoholic, looked set to suffer a similar total eclipse to Stringham’s, serving patriotically but, given his weakness, humbly in WW2. Afterwards, however, he pulled himself together to astonishing effect becoming a noted historical novelist from 1946. Hubert (1904-43) left Oxford bored after one term: the exact model for Stringham. But then he spent a few years in the army before entering politics and was an MP from 1931. He rejoined the army with a commission in 1939/40 and like Stringham suffered an early death; but a natural one from tuberculosis.

Yours sincerely

Clive Gwatkin Jenkins

Profiles in String

Mr Clive Gwatkin Jenkins, in an Oxford hostelry
'I've been thinking, Derrick.'
'You've been thinking, Eric?'
'Yes, Derrick. This business of Widmerpool's ring-pull champagne cans.'
'What about them, Eric?'
'How will he manage the larger containers? The Magnums and the Jeroboams. '
'Jeroboams, Eric?'
'Yes, Derrick. That's the largest: eight bottles' worth, is it not?'
'Eight bottles, Eric? Oh dear, no. You're way off target, old chap.'
'Am I, Derrick?'
'You are, Eric. A Jeroboam is six bottles' worth.'
'Six bottles, Derrick? Are you sure?'
'Completely sure, Eric. Eight is an Imperial.'
'So an Imperial is the largest vessel.'
'Wide of the mark again, Eric. A Nebuchadnezzar holds twenty. Do keep up. '
'Twenty, Derrick? Well I never.'
'You must do some reading, Eric.'
'I certainly must, Derrick. But consider the pressure.'
'The pressure, Eric?'
'That the champagne fizz exerts on the glass bottle, Derrick. How will 
Widmerpool contain it in a mere tin can?'
'A good point, Eric.'
'Thank you, Derrick. I do try.'
'Of course, champagne bottle glass is stronger and the concave dimple at the 
base gives it more strength yet, Eric.'
'I thought the dimple was for waiters to hold the bottle as they pour without 
warming the glass with their hands, Derrick.'
'A secondary benefit, Eric.'
'Apart from Cristal, Derrick.'
'Cristal, Eric?'
'There's no dimple in Cristal champagne bottles, Derrick.'
'Really, Eric. I didn't know that.'
'Made of an especially strong lead glass to allow a flat bottom, Derrick.'
'Why is that, Eric?'
'It was commissioned by Tsar Alexander II so that no one could hide a bomb 
in the dimple, Derrick.'
'The things that you know, Eric.'
**NEWSLETTER 67**

**Anthony Powell – A Life**
Hilary Spurling  
Publication: 5 October 2017 Hamish Hamilton; 504 pages; £25  
ISBN 9780241143834

The definitive portrait of a literary master from one of our generation's foremost biographers

Acclaimed literary biographer Hilary Spurling turns her attention to Anthony Powell, an iconic figure of English letters. Equally notorious for his literary achievements and his lacerating wit, Powell famously authored the twelve-volume, twenty-five year magnum opus, *A Dance to the Music of Time*. This endurably fascinating portrait of mid-20th-century Britain has never been out of print, inspiring TV and radio adaptations and elevating the author to *The Times'* list of fifty greatest British writers since 1945. Master novelist, well-connected socialite and keen-eyed social observer, Powell comes into focus as never before in this authoritative biography from one of our generation's greatest biographers.

**Pre-order now from Amazon UK**
**London Group**

**Summer Saturday Stroll**

*In the Footsteps of X Trapnel: A Meander through Maida Vale*

Saturday 1 July 2017

1030 for 1100 hrs

Meet: Warwick Avenue tube station entrance

This year, by popular demand, Ivan is going to reprise 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 The Waterway in Formosa Street at 1300 hrs.

No need to book for the walk, which is free (donations to the Secretary’s top hat welcome).

If you wish to join the lunch party please let us know as we may need to cap numbers. Lunch will be “pay on the day”.

Non-members always welcome.

For further details and booking please contact Ivan Hutnik, ivanhutnik@gmail.com or the Hon. Secretary.

**London Group Pub Meets**

Saturday 5 August 2017

Saturday 4 November 2017

The Audley

Mount Street, London W1

1230 to 1530 hrs

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 but further details from the Hon. Secretary, secretary@anthonypowell.org

!! HOLD THE DATE !!

**Anthony Powell Conference 2018**

*Theme: Anthony Powell and the Visual Arts*

Friday 31 August to Sunday 2 September 2018

Merton College, Oxford

Further details when available from the Hon. Secretary, secretary@anthonypowell.org
Society member John Blaxter has arranged a weekend exploring the Welsh borderlands of Anthony Powell’s ancestors.

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

**Saturday.** Starting early 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 AP’s ancestry. We will take the scenic routes to get a sense of the region’s character 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 at the Old Black Lion.

**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 we conclude.

Hay-on-Wye, famous for its bookshops, has a range of accommodation to suit all pockets. The nearest train station is Hereford.

**Price:** £110 per person includes Saturday & Sunday coach travel, Saturday evening dinner, two course Sunday Lunch, Saturday’s admission charges. Not included: your travel to/from Hay-on-Wye; accommodation; Saturday lunch; drinks.

Restrictions at venues mean the group will be limited to 16. Please email to check availability before making payment.

Bookings open on 10 June; places will be allocated on a first-come- first-served basis. Please book with the Hon. Secretary. Further information & advice from JohnBlaxter, johnblaxter49@gmail.com
**Small Print.** Attendees will be sent joining instructions approximately three weeks prior to the event; if you have not received anything one week before the event please contact us urgently. Programme subject to change. Cancellations received in writing before midday on 16 August 2017 will be refunded less a £10 administration fee. No refunds will be made for cancellations after this date or for non-attendance. Please be aware that some of the places to be visited are old buildings and may not be suitable for those with mobility difficulties. Those with disability or special dietary requirements should contact us as soon as possible. Attendees are responsible for arranging their own travel and accommodation.

Image: Kilpeck church doorway
MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

New Members
We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:
- Michael Cahill, Lewes
- Robert Clarke, Princes Risborough
- Michelle Butler Hallett, St John’s, Canada
- David Metz, London
- Frank Minns, Ipswich
- David Pratt, Albany, USA
- Benjamin Short, Princeton, USA
- Christopher Sivori, San Antonio, USA
- Tom Wallace, New York, USA

Condolences
We regret that since the last Newsletter we have learnt of the death of member Michael Sheridan. We send our condolences to Michael’s family and friends.

Subscription Reminder
Reminders are sent out in March to those whose membership is about to expire. Where we have your email address, we will use this to send your reminder as it is quicker and a lot cheaper. 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. Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, at the usual address.

Please help us to keep costs down by renewing promptly.

Has your subscription expired?
Did you forget to renew?
If so, this will be your last Newsletter!
If in doubt, please check with the Hon. Secretary.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 17th Annual General Meeting of the Anthony Powell Society will be held on Saturday 21 October 2017 at 1400 hrs in the Conference Room of St James’s Church, Piccadilly, London W1.

Nominations for the four Trustee posts which fall vacant this year must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 7 August 2017. Candidates must be proposed by two members, indicate their willingness to stand and provide a short biographical statement. Nominations will be accepted by post or email.

The elected Trustees must not be barred from being trustees under English law and a majority of the Trustees must be ordinarily resident in England and Wales.

Motions for discussion at the AGM must also reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 7 August 2017. They must be clearly worded, proposed by at least two members and contain a statement in support of the motion which will be published to members. The AGM agenda and voting papers will be included with the Autumn Newsletter in early September.

Proxy votes must reach the Hon. Secretary by Monday 16 October 2017.

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 Rehbiner
Email: reginarehbiner@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

SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTICES
Please tick below the membership required:

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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. If joining on or after 1 January, membership includes following subscription year.

Name:
Address:
Postcode: Country:
E-mail:

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[ ] Please debit my Visa/MasterCard with £
Card No.:
Expires:
CVC:

[Delete if not required.] 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 (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the Society will reclaim on your donations for that tax year.

I agree to the Society holding my contact details 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 Email: membership@anthonypowell.org
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