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EDITOR’S LETTER

This issue is different. No book reviews, no learned articles about Powelliana. Instead views, comments and suggestions from members as we address the existential threat to the Society's existence posed by your Secretary's announcement at the AGM last October that he will retire in 2018 instead of in 2021.

As promised in the last issue § 69 this one is devoted to "Whither the Post-Marshall Society." We print a selection of responses.

We include two interviews with Keith about the Society, 18 years apart. The first is reprint of an interview with my predecessor, Stephen Holden. The second is with me conducted by Zoom - a superior version of Skype - last month. Comparing them is fascinating. You can see Keith's vision and achievements. You can also see where there have been difficulties and what needs to be done. Much to ponder for us all.

Some themes emerge from the interviews and the responses. The main ones are: too much has fallen on Keith in his role as Secretary; the functions need to be reallocated in a flatter structure; a general manager/factotum role is essential; publications are vital; the different audiences within the membership must be served; membership has to be increased particularly amongst younger readers of AP; the Society's archival and preservation function is of enduring value and finally, although the Society has made use of the Internet and online communication, it has not done enough. But a red line: hard copy publications must stay.

We don't just navel gaze. Uncle Giles opines, Stephen Eggins visits the Modigliani Exhibition at Tate, the very full social calendar is reviewed with the tour de force of Alexander Waugh's talk at the Travellers, the Grolier Lunch, AP's Birthday Lunch and the Pub meet. And a new member, David Mabb, tells us about his First Time.

Any comments, about the Society and what happens next are welcomed, indeed beseeched, and should be addressed to the Editor. The APSOC is made up of its members. If its members don't come forward it will die. That, as Keith says, would be very sad indeed. We don't want Dance To The Music of Time to end with the last waltz, do we? So please join us on the dance floor.

Stephen Walker editor@anthonypowell.org
"Brilliant", "Great fun", "Just the sort of event that the Society should be putting on." The sell out crowd of members from both the Travellers and the Society repeated these sentiments to each other over wine after Alexander Waugh's talk. As your Secretary says in his Interview (p. 9), it was scurrilous in parts but great fun and very informative and, it is good for the Society to hear other perspectives on AP.

Why was it so much fun? Alexander opened with two lively conceits. Describing himself as the fox that the Society was letting into its chicken coop, he promised to clean up the bloodstained feathers. Then he introduced the Chair of Historical Truth to which he led Hilary Spurling's "brilliant book" on several occasions. The chair was a hideous Victorian carved wooden chair in the kitchen at Combe Florey. A carving on it says "Given by John Betjeman to Evelyn Waugh on his 60th birthday." This was simply not true. Evelyn bought the chair to give to John Betjeman but his wife rejected it.

On the first of three visits to the Chair, Alexander explained that Evelyn and AP had been great friends throughout their lives. Evelyn was a man of passionate likes and dislikes but was a loyal friend. If you became his friend you stayed his friend. AP, who had been working in a dugout job at Duckworths, had given Evelyn his first commission to write a book on Rossetti. It was not correct for Hilary Spurling to say, as she did on page 86, that AP met Evelyn in October 1927 at Holborn Polytechnic when taking a printing course and that he had only known Evelyn at Oxford by reputation. They had known each other at Oxford. In fact, on 8 December 1924 Evelyn records in his Diaries "Then I went to Oxford. Drove to 31 St Aldate's where I found an enormous orgy in progress. Billy (Lord Clonmore, Earl of Wicklow) and I unearthed a strap and whipped Tony. Everyone was hideously drunk except strangely enough myself."
She was also in error in repeating the canard that Evelyn went down from Oxford with a Third in History. In fact, Alexander emphasised, Evelyn never took a degree at all.

But his strongest correction was about his father, Bron, who was the Spectator’s Political Correspondent at the time that Hilary Spurling was its Literary Editor. Bron may have been friendly but was not shambling and his overcoat was never shabby. In fact he had expensive tailored coats and was a "great dandy". Not a description one suspects that Alexander would apply to himself.

After this record-straightening, more fun was had by Alexander examining the condition identified by the Spectator as "Irritable Powell Syndrome" - (NB this only works if you eschew the "Pole" pronunciation). Quoting extensively from AP’s correspondence and Bron’s journalism Alexander illustrated how AP grew increasingly touchy as he grew older with his comments on Evelyn as being "common", "frightfully jealous", "arrogant and dogmatic" and his work being "a shade overrated." The insults and disobliging epithets whizzed by, delighting us all. For the full flavour you will have to read the full version of the lecture in the next issue of Secret Harmonies.

No doubt partly an act of filial piety Alexander treated us to an extract of his father's parodies in Private Eye. He also usefully decoded some of it for non-Eye readers. All rather puerile but very funny. The Chantry became the laundry. Writing Dance became knitting. Describing it is less like the Bayeux tapestry and more like French knitting (a form of knitting that uses a spool with a number of nails around the rim to produce a narrow tube of fabric.)

Alexander explained that this wasn't all just a tease for American academics with its emphasis on AP’s love of cats, appreciation of fine wines and knitting. He also applied his own digs at AP’s social pretentiousness. He disapproves of the "Pole" pronunciation explaining that Powell simply means "son of Howell" - which is never pronounced "hole" and linked this to the principle of bon heddig in Welsh genealogy and social standing. This means having a pedigree, which brought legal privileges such as inheriting land. In order to qualify for pedigree you had to have three quarters. In 1964, he alleged, AP changed his arms to fortify his claim to be bon heddig.

He freely admitted that Bron had an animus against AP. Its origins appeared not just to be that in 1952 AP persuaded Hugh Massingberd to delete the
reference to the Waugh family from the 17th edition of *Burke's Landed Gentry* but also AP's conduct in 1960 when Bron published his first book, *The Foxglove Saga*. Evelyn's friends including John Betjeman and Graham Greene rallied round to promote it, but Cyril Connolly and AP did not. As Alexander said: "the anti-AP germ was hatched."

Bron's final act of revenge came in 1990. The Spurling version is at pages 422-423. The Waugh version was that Bron was forced by the then Literary Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, Nicholas Shakespeare, to review AP's *Miscellaneous Verdicts*. He wrote what Alexander admitted was "an extremely rude review" giving full vent to his hatred of diffident double negatives and the dissociative inverted comma. He concluded that "*Dance*" was "an early upmarket soap opera" and "the cruelest practical joke played by a Welshman". AP resigned in outrage. He had been a reviewer for the *Telegraph* for 50 years.

There was more to savour. We were treated to the Shakespeare version. Nicholas Shakespeare was in the audience. At the end of the talk he gave his explanation. That week there had not been many books to review. The alternative was a book about the French Resistance. Hilary Spurling had already agreed to review *Miscellaneous Verdicts* for the *Daily Telegraph*, which he knew would be positive. He sent AP's book to Bron to review and went on holiday. When he returned Bron telephoned, asking "Have you been fired yet?" He offered his head to Max Hastings who refused it. In self-mitigation Nicholas Shakespeare claimed that AP dished out lots of pastings in his reviews over the years and had received Hilary Spurling's nice review in the *Daily Telegraph*. AP had also been showing signs of touchiness for some time. As Hastings says in his memoirs "By the late 1980's his (AP's) powers were failing but we continued to use him out of veneration." But in Alexander's wise words these literary battles are part of literary life. This one is over and it's part of the Great Story.

The whole evening was a huge success. Many thanks to Alexander Waugh for coming to talk to us, to Harry Mount and Patric Dickinson for persuading him to do so and to George Warren for arranging the venue at the Travellers. It was after all AP's club where he was Chairman of the Library Committee and ate his lunch in the Coffee Room wearing his hat in accordance with Regency tradition. Why he would choose to do that in the second half of the Twentieth Century is perhaps the subject of a further talk.
DANCING THE LITERARY SOCIETY INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM

This is a slightly edited version of an interview that appeared in the first issue of the Newsletter between Keith Marshall and Stephen Holden, the original editor of the Newsletter. NB Your current Publisher (formerly a preservation librarian) regrets to see the all too frequent ‘dusty libraries’ trope appearing but will let it pass in this historical piece.

The literary society is dead. Long live the literary society! Well at least the old literary society - those collections of enthusiasts meeting in dusty libraries to enthuse over their hero - may be moribund. But a new venture is breathing life and modernity into a transformed style of literary society. The newly formed Anthony Powell Society has emerged out of the Internet - probably the first literary society to do so. We went to see Dr Keith Marshall, the Society’s Honorary Secretary, Webmaster and visionary.

You’re the Secretary of the Anthony Powell Society, and helping organise its first conference, but it is no ordinary literary society. How did this literary revolution come about?
KM: Well, I suppose it is revolution really – at least viewed from the literary society viewpoint – because in many ways we have re-invented the literary society. But to me it feels much more like evolution. Maybe that’s because I’ve lived with it for so long. It all grew out of my being recommended Anthony Powell’s A Dance to the Music of Time by an old school friend of my wife’s. I was captivated. Powell became one of my heroes. That was in the early 1980s.

Why did Powell become one of your heroes?
KM: I think for two reasons. First of all I found in Dance a world which I could inhabit; a world which is surprisingly true to life, with the paths of the large and varied cast of characters, from all walks of society, interlinking and crossing at seeming random times and in unexpected ways as it chronicles the changes and interactions in their lives from the eve of the First World War to the heady cults of the late-60s and early-70s. I think I also recognised – rightly, of course – Powell as being one of the greats of twentieth century English literature, not just for his many novels, biography, memoirs and journals, but also because for some sixty years he was a highly knowledgeable reviewer and literary critic who knew many of the great writers of the century.
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So how did you get from there to here?
KM: When I started my own web pages, back in 1994, it was natural to write a page about my heroes. And then I realised there was almost nothing else on the web about Powell; no central Internet information resource site. So I started one, first with just an outline chronology and a small bibliography. Gradually the content expanded.

Was there a real turning point; a major jumping off point?
KM: Yes. Actually I think there were three. The first was the broadcast of the Channel 4 TV films of Dance in the autumn of 1997. Suddenly I was getting e-mails from people around the world wanting information, giving me information, telling me about televisations in other countries. So I started publishing news and information about Powell on the website.

And the second?
KM: In early 1998 I was contacted by Julian Allason. That was to be the beginning of some months’ work we did on the sources for the real life models Powell used for the characters in Dance, and which we published on the website. It was during this work on the character models that I decided to start the AP e-mail discussion list (APLIST) and invited my, by then long, list of e-mail contacts to join and discuss Powell.

What is an e-mail discussion list?
KM: How can I best describe it? It is like a discussion you’d have in the pub with your mates. Only it’s all done by e-mail. I write an e-mail and send it to the site hosting the list. From there it is sent to all the list members – so they get everyone’s comments in their e-mail in-basket. They reply … and so on …

Was that successful?
KM: Not initially. Like all these things it took time to get started, and you need a critical mass of participants (and contributions). That took about a year. Now the list has over 100 members spread around the world – in Europe, America, Japan, Australia. And they’re a glorious mixture of distinguished academics, students and enthusiasts … all discussing and contributing as equals; no undue deference and no pulling rank. That means a transformation of the study of an author’s work, making it accessible around the world, in a new and participatory way, and at negligible cost. We even have as a member the person currently making a new Dutch translation of Dance – it’s brilliant for him; he has a ready means of understanding the intricacies of English society and Powell’s literary style; and it’s enormous fun for us.
Is this where the Anthony Powell Society had its roots?
KM: Yes, very much so. This really was the start of the Anthony Powell Society. From early on in the life of the APLIST people were asking me to start a Powell society. But I wouldn’t: not only did I not feel there was enough critical mass, no-one else was volunteering to do any of the work involved … and to be honest it wasn’t where my real interest lay.

So what was the catalyst that made you found the Society?
KM: This was the third real turning point; and one we all knew had to happen sooner or later. Powell died. On 28 March 2000. At the age of 94.

How was this the catalyst?
KM: When some of the dust began to settle several of us realised we shared a vision of a conference devoted to Powell, as a form of celebration. And when a handful of us got together and started discussing the idea we quickly realised we needed an organisation as the foundation for the conference. Hence the Anthony Powell Society was formally founded on an English summer’s evening in Chelsea. But of course it had already existed in all but name since mid-1998 in the guise of the APLIST and the website.

So if you are all dispersed around the world, how does the Society operate? Clearly some of you have to meet?
KM: Yes, some of us do meet – but that is largely the team organising the conference and then irregularly. As for the Society, yes, several of the committee are part of the conference team and are based around London. But our Treasurer lives in Belfast. And we have two committee members in America. And of course the membership is worldwide. Few of the members have actually ever met in the flesh. Why do they need to? We have shown that pub discussions can happen just as well over the Internet! And as papers can be published so easily on the Internet, why do they have to be read aloud at meetings in dusty libraries and church halls?

So with a worldwide Society operating successfully over the Internet, why have a conference, which I assume means you’ll all meet somewhere?
KM: Yes, many of us will meet – finally. We started out looking at the idea of a virtual conference, with the whole thing being conducted over the Internet. It is possible, but technologically tricky to do well at anything but the most basic level; something for the not too distant future, I hope. So we started looking at possible venues. And one of the team found that Eton College were keen to host the conference. This was beyond our dreams! We couldn’t refuse! We
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just had to make such a one-off opportunity available since *A Question of Upbringing* (volume one of *Dance*) is set at what is a barely disguised Eton of the early 1920s. Despite all that, most of the conference organisation is being conducted on-line; team meetings are rare, communications are going out by e-mail (as you know) and bookings are coming in by e-mail.

*When exactly is the conference?*
KM: Monday 23 April 2001 - appropriately both St George’s Day and William Shakespeare’s birthday. And it will be held in the Farrar Theatre of Eton College, Windsor.

*Only a one-day conference?*
KM: Yes. Although one of the team is a professional conference organiser, we decided to learn to walk before we tried running.

*So are there plans to try running?*
KM: Oh definitely. Our vision is that this will be the first of a series of biennial conferences. We are already thinking about a 2-3 day event in Oxford in 2003. And then a 4-5 day extravaganza in Venice in 2005 to celebrate the centenary of Powell’s birth, and the 25th anniversary of *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, the last of the twelve volumes of *Dance*. Why Venice? Because AP sets a large literary conference there in *Temporary Kings*. And then of course we have to organise events for the members around the world; apart from a newsletter, we have lots of ideas …perhaps even duck shooting in Venice!?

**AN INTERVIEW WITH KEITH MARSHALL**

This is an edited version of an interview carried out via Zoom between Keith Marshall and Stephen Walker on 8 February 2018.

*Will you miss it?*
KM: Of course I will miss it. It will be as big a wrench for me leaving the Society behind as it was leaving full-time employment. I will miss being, as Robin said, Lord High Everything. I
will miss being involved. I’m not sure yet that I will continue as a trustee. Part of me says that it is wrong for me to walk away and leave everything. Another part of me says, why should I stay? The new trustees will not want me in the way. In the past I think that one of the problems has been that the trustees have paid too much attention to what I said. I hope that I will remain involved but not necessarily as a trustee.

*Why are you leaving?*

KM: I have to be careful what I say. I told the AGM that I have been Secretary for 18 years and in fact longer more like 25. That is too long for any person and for any organisation. Also I have become much more tired recently. I also think that Robin in particular as Chairman wants to take the Society in a different way. He has refocused it. I am conscious that the Trustees have paid too much attention to my views in the past and my vision and therefore I do not want to be in the way.

By nature I am a cautious person. I see that Robin is more risk-taking in the sense that he is prepared to spend more money on publications. For example, the recent book on wine. It is different from the previous sorts of publications that we have as a Society produced. It has design and is produced to a higher standard. It is also more expensive. But Robin has succeeded in getting into several bookshops. We now have the money to absorb the risk of a publication losing money. In the past we did not.

I don’t share Hilary Spurling’s apprehension that the Society has run its course and that there is nothing more to say about AP. There is lots and lots more to say about AP. I don’t think that her approval of the suggestion that the AP Society should set up a separate chapter for another writer such as CP Snow is a good idea. (*Laughter*). I think that separate authors should have separate silos.

I don’t think that Hilary has succeeded in persuading people under 35 to read AP. I think that is a lost cause. People under 35 don’t read books. Even if they do they haven’t got the necessary appreciation and knowledge of the English language to understand and appreciate a piece of prose. I’m not saying that I did at that age. I’m not having a go at this particular generation of people. I just think that an appreciation of AP as a writer is something that comes with maturity. I remember Nick Birns telling me that the demographic of literary societies is always skewed towards the old. I think that the Society has three
different audiences. The enthusiasts, the academics and the literarists like A N Wilson.

What do each of the audiences want from the Society and what can it provide?
KM: I think that AP enthusiasts want to know more about AP and his world. By that I mean people who would have known AP or come into contact with him. For example, Adrian Daintrey, Evelyn Waugh, Nina Hamnett. Stephen Eggins has been for some years urging me to widen the boundaries of the Society to embrace AP and his world. I think that it is more than just AP, Lady Violet, the cats and the two boys but it is not the whole world.

Can I ask where you think the boundary is? You and I have been in email correspondence about reviewing two new books on Henry Green. Do you think it would be within the boundary to have an issue of the Newsletter with two book reviews and a couple of articles on Henry Green? He was known to AP because they were at Oxford together.
KM: I think that would be OK. Provided that as far as possible they refer to his relationship with AP. But one of the articles could be about Henry Green in his own right.

The enthusiasts want insight into AP and his world and are interested in the byways. The throwaway remarks in AP’s works; for example the Greenford Trotting. It's just a phrase but when you look into it there is a background. This shows that Dance is a very useful social history.

It is amazing that you mention that because one of our most recent members (you know who I mean, the legal luminary who is an enthusiast) particularly liked your piece about the Greenford Trotting.
KM: They also want to share their enthusiasm with fellow enthusiasts. This is why they join the APLIST or attend conferences or meetings. At conferences most people tell me there isn’t enough networking time.

The academics want help with their research. I am often asked for information and signposts. We make use of the Society’s archive in pointing them in the right direction. At the moment there is a student at Edinburgh University writing a doctorate on AP. She is in touch quite often and only this week I helped her about AP and country houses. I think that this is a valuable service the Society can perform.
They also want an outlet for their work. This is why when we set up the Society we wanted to have not only a *Newsletter* but also an annual academic journal. We haven’t always succeeded in producing it every year but I think it is still something useful. I know that you recently suggested merging it with the *Newsletter* but I think they should be kept apart. There is a need for something that can accommodate academic or longer articles.

The literarists are a hybrid between the academics and the enthusiasts. A N Wilson is perhaps a special case. But they want to share their knowledge and have an outlet. Another good example is D J Taylor. He's a good friend of the Society.

*Looking at the range of activities which the Society undertakes, which ones do you think the Society should spend its money on?*

KM: Let’s look at them. Conferences, talks, newsletter, *Secret Harmonies*, proceedings of conferences, publications, social gatherings such as the pub meets, the Secretary’s Brunch and the Birthday Lunch. I think we need to spend our money and effort on all of them. How much will depend from year to year and change over the decades. Different members like different activities. For example, there are people who come to the conferences and nothing else. There are those who come to the talks or the pub meets and you never see them again except at another pub meet or talk.

There is more work to do on AP. For example, we have photographed the collage at the Chantry. That is an important thing that the Society has done. Robin is now talking about preserving a record of the scrapbooks by having those photographed as well. They are a conservation nightmare and will not last.

Alexander Waugh’s talk at the Travellers was a great success. Even though he was very scurrilous it was very informative and useful for us to hear a different perspective. The Travellers had a block of seats, which meant that their members could have access to what the Society was doing. We might recruit some. It worked extremely well; after all the Travellers was AP’s club. He was Chairman of the Library Committee.

We also have to remember that we have quite a strong American membership. Some of them come over to conferences. But others will not or cannot travel. We have to make sure that we cater for them.
I think that most members would like to keep the Newsletter in hard copy rather than receive it online. We post back issues online for archive purposes, but the current issue should be retained in hardcopy. Members tell me they look forward to it. They like to hear the thud on the carpet and feel that it represents value. And don't forget that there is a significant percentage of the membership that is not online. I realise online communication will grow but I don't think that for the foreseeable future we should be putting either the Newsletter or Secret Harmonies online.

When we set up the Society we had no members and no money. It was a risk. We had the APLIST and we said to the 50 or so members of the APLIST they could become honorary members of the Society until such time as we started to make a charge. When we first set the subscription it was £20. It was raised to £22 about 10 years ago. I think that it is time now to raise it again. The production costs of the Newsletter and the postage, which is the main expense - have risen.

We try to cover our base cost such as postage, insurance and production of the Newsletter out of the annual subscription. I know that some societies have two levels of membership. For example for £15 you receive their Journal online. For £22 you can receive it in hard copy. We could offer that but for the reasons that I have said I think that it is better to keep it in hardcopy for everybody.

Recently there was a bumper issue of the Newsletter (Issue 69). Two North American members said they had not received their copy. I had to send them new ones. The reason that they had not received theirs was because they had not told me that they changed their address. It cost £5 each to post the Newsletter to them. That is a significant amount of money. Even for an ordinary 40 page issue it costs £3.50.

When we set up the Society, as Stephen Holden said in his interview with me it was revolutionary by its growing out of the Internet. I don't think we've made as much use of the Internet as we could have done. I think other societies are now making more use. But as I've said we have to remember that a significant proportion of our members are not online.

*In your interview with Stephen Holden you said that the APLIST was like going down to the pub with your mates and having a chat but you do it on the Internet.*
KM: I still think there is a place for meeting people in person. In my professional life I was already using audioconferencing a lot when we set up the Society but not very much videoconferencing. The technology has moved on immensely. Here we are having an interview online and we can see each other. I came to the opinion of that nothing is as good as meeting people face-to-face. But not everybody can come to meetings; I understand that.

What was the hardest part of the job?
KM: The hardest thing for me about the job are the conferences. I have repeatedly said that I do not want to do the conferences but I keep being sucked into them. Jeremy Warren is helping me with the Oxford conference. We have been working on it since June last year. There is simply so much to do: organising the venue, the speakers, pricing it up etc, etc. And then there is the actual running of it on the day itself. We are shortly going to have to take decisions on what to put into the conference and what not. We have received more submissions for papers than we have slots for. Ideally I would like to limit the papers to a maximum of 16 including short talks and keynotes. Even that is going to make for a very crowded programme. I like your suggestion that perhaps we could offer those whose talks we cannot accept the opportunity of having them published free of charge in Secret Harmonies. Some papers have only slight relevance to the main theme of the conference so they are obvious candidates to be rejected. But there are going to be some hard decisions to take.

Keith, we're not going to be able to replace you. The Society is your baby. You are its father. No one else is going to want to be its parent, even its adoptive parent. It's obvious to us all that no one can do what you have done.
KM: I agree that the Society is my baby but I did not necessarily want it to be. I have ended up doing everything and being Lord High Everything. It has been very hard and frustrating. It has also been great fun and I have really enjoyed it. It takes a lot of hard work and time.

This problem of succession is not unique to the Society. It occurs in law firms and any business which has been set up by one or two people. Succession planning is important and difficult. You simply have to reengineer the way in which the organisation is run.
KM: I agree that all the things I do could be separated out into different functions and given to different people. Robin has already done this. When I announced my intention to bring my retirement forward to 2018 which is the time when my term as a trustee expires in any case - he, Graham and I met for
3 hours over lunch in a London pub and discussed what to do. We discussed the allocation of functions and came up with a list of names. I am leaving it to Robin as Chairman to find the replacements, he is after all a lawyer and very persuasive. Of course I will liaise with him. My advice to Robin is that the new people do not have to know what to do. They can learn. I did not know what to do when I set up the Society. I did not know about publishing or the Charity Commission. I had to learn it. And you do sometimes learn the hard way. Can I tell you; you only forget to include VAT in the price once.

What you do need is time, willingness and a flexible or curious mind. The thing that you do have to have to make it work well is attention to detail. I learned that as a project manager. So you have to bring the same skills about detail that I used as a project manager to the AP Society. I realise that with several different people involved things will get missed, the quality may drop to start with. I have always wanted the Society to be a slick and professional outfit. I think that we have achieved that.

Another requirement is that they should be UK based. The only job that can be done from anywhere in the world really is the website. We also need to recruit more members. We need more members for the future. What do I think will happen after I've gone? I do not know.

Keith, but you have made a prediction. You have said publicly that you have written it down and put it in an envelope in your drawer.
KM: Have I?

I think that if you look at your personal blog you’ll find that you do indicate that.
KM: (Rueful smile and laughter.) Well, there are different scenarios. I do not know which one will happen. People can come forward and the Society carries on under Robin's chairmanship. People have to cooperate and there will be someone who has to operate in the General Secretary role even if he's not doing all the things that I do. After all we have already hived off various functions such as merchandising, publications etc. It makes sense to re-organise them. For example shouldn't all the money be received by the Treasurer? So maybe the Treasurer should be both the Membership Secretary as well as Treasurer. Who should price up the publications, the Newsletter and conferences? At the moment I do it. I have an algorithm and a spreadsheet that works. But it would be much better if the Treasurer did it. There are some
legal sorts of things to do with the Charity Commission but that can be learned. You don't have to be a lawyer to do it.

We recently emailed to find a new independent examiner of the accounts. Eddie Hathaway wants to stand down. Graham has already had at least three names approaching.

If members do not come forward then I think the Society will stagger on and eventually become moribund even if it is not formally wound up. That would be a great pity. Many people, including myself, have invested a lot of time and effort and emotion into the Society. It would be very sad if that happened.

What I want is for the recruitment of people and the succession to be in place between June and the AGM so that there can be an orderly handover.

WHITHER THE POST-MARSHALL SOCIETY?

Robin Bynoe, Chair of Trustees

Your Editor has asked me to write something about my vision for the post-Keith era. This is at least in part because Keith has said (at the AGM for instance) that he believes that my vision of the future is different from his.

The first thing to say is that Chairmen don’t have visions. Their job is to mediate between other people’s. The second is that, if I were suddenly transported into being a philosopher king, instead of simply Chairman, there is not a lot that I would change. Members already get an abundance of services for their subs: conferences, lectures, a website, a safe space on the internet for Powellians to exchange views without the risk of a rude intrusion of CPSnow-Thought, social events of a more or less sedentary nature, an array of publications centred around the quarterly newsletter. Other literary societies must be consumed by envy. I would not change any of these. We will have our work
cut out to find volunteers to keep them going, many of them being currently supervised by Keith - but that’s another matter.

Where there may be a difference of emphasis is my emphasis on publication, my desire to follow *Anthony Powell On Wine* with more volumes, in similarly classy form, of AP’s journalism. Powell had made plans to publish these pieces in book form, and it seems to me that the one thing that his society ought to be doing is to follow his wishes. Whether we can will depend not on the Society’s management but on Members and others buying the books. I am assuming that all Members, who are sufficiently interested in AP to join a society dedicated to him, will also be sufficiently interested to buy all his published works.

And that reflects a more general point. People have confided in me that no one can replace Keith, the implication being that we should turn our gaze upwards in the desperate hope that a fully working substitute will descend from the clouds, in a manner of which Tiepolo would have approved. That isn’t going to happen, and it would be bad for the Society if it did. Keith has done superhuman work for the Society, and its present position is that it has an enviable range of activities and an enviable bank balance. Now it’s our turn.

**Nicholas Birns, Publications Committee**

We all want Keith to stay on for longer, but I understand why he is leaving. I have been editing the US-based Australian literature *Antipodes* since 2001, roughly the same amount of time Keith has been leading the Society, and I am leaving this year for the same reason: eighteen years is just long enough for one person to do any sort of job. Keith has left the Society in very good shape. He has brought to his role an extraordinary combination of attributes: openness, honesty, a willingness to encourage others, inclusiveness, and a sense of pragmatism and financial rigour. Keith has been a genuinely collaborative leader, always open to suggestion but persistent in pursuing the course that seems right for him. Since his establishment of a Powell website in 1997, his correspondence with AP himself in 1998, and his initiation of the
APLIST that same year, Keith has done more for the study and appreciation of Anthony Powell than anyone.

He will not be replaced by one person, and we will have to find a group of people willing to manage the Society in its next phase. Fortunately, the reanimation of the Newsletter under the editorship of Stephen Walker shows that this is possible. We will all need to do what we can to help. I am going to make a few scattershot and potentially self-contradictory suggestions:

1) There are still many people around who knew AP—friends, enemies, reviewers, family members, colleagues. We should reach out to them, try to get their thoughts and memories while we have them.

2) On the other hand, a whole generation has grown up since AP passed away. The polemics and resentments of the twentieth century which coloured Powell’s reception during his lifetime mean little to this new generation. With the Spurling bio now available, this is a great time to try to get younger readers to turn to Powell and all the riches that await them there.

3) Keith has always been good about permitting criticism of Powell at conferences. Though like me, coming to Powell as hardcore fan, he has understood that discussion of an author flourishes best when all perspectives are permitted, and when the atmosphere is not hagiographic.

4) With new leadership here will no doubt have to be some administrative changes in how things are run. In this respect, the spirit of Keith’s guidance, administratively-tenacious, determined, flexible, and creative, should be honoured rather than just strictly adhering to the letter of just how things have been done in the past.

Keith Marshall’s scientific training, literary curiosity, and innate sense of ethics and decency have created a society that I am convinced Anthony Powell would regard with great pride. I know we have it in us to step up for what will be needed in the future.

Jeff Manley, Trustee

As to whither the APS after Keith, I think Stephen and Robin have already started with the improvement and expansion of publications. Keith devoted most of his energy into meetings, conferences, membership, etc and was largely successful, leaving him little time for publications. But those benefit mostly the members in
Southern England whereas an expanded publications program benefits all members. I would hate to see the *Secret Harmonies* fall by the wayside because there will be always be some papers that are too large for the *Newsletter*. I suppose they can be spread over more issues but the question is whether that makes them more difficult to consult as research material for the future. But if you can expand the *Newsletter* sufficiently, then *Secret Harmonies* might become unnecessary.

The main thing is attracting new younger readers/members. I don't have the answer to that but the main problem is that AP is not accessible in small bits that might be nibbled by a larger youthful audience before gorging on the main course. Getting AP’s works onto secondary and university syllabi is obviously a priority. Keith was always aware of that but never found a solution. I alas don't have one either. And the present generation of Eng Lit teachers, at least in the USA, have barely heard of AP let alone read him. I've met some university Eng Lit teachers who have no idea who he is.

**Colin Donald, Trustee**

For me the great pleasure of the AP Society since its foundation has been the realisation that there appears to be an infinite amount to say about AP, his life, times and influences, also an extraordinary variety of people who wish to say it. I see no sign that this fascinating conversation – appropriate to the intimate style of Nicholas Jenkins himself – is about to dry up. There are themes that I find more interesting than others, but one of Keith’s many achievements as Secretary and as moderator of the APLIST (which I no longer tune into, partly because that email account seems to have died, and partly because I’m not looking for tempting distractions) is that he skilfully defined the parameters of the conversation, and prevented it from being diverted by ephemera.

I am with PG Wodehouse in being pleasurably mystified by how AP brings off his effects. What precisely, for example, is so compelling about the description of the interior of the Ufford that opens *The Acceptance World*? What is particular magic that marks out Smith from other drunken butlers in literature? I would be glad to see the Society spend more time on close analysis
of “the text”, but I appreciate that reflects my Eng-Lit-at-uni background, and is a desired emphasis that will not be shared by everyone.

Something I saw today in a caption of a painting (A Muleteer from Andalucia, c1923 by Beatrice Huntington 1889-1988) in a fascinating exhibition of Scottish Art 1900-1950 at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art struck me as very apposite to Powell studies:

“The geometric rendering of the sitter’s face and the painting’s overall austerity of design, seen in the plain background and flattened depiction of the hat and jacket, illustrate Huntington’s declaration that ‘simplification’ is not omitting, like so much which is shown – it is containing and realising the bigness of it all – and that comes with knowledge and hard work”.

Mrs Erdleigh told Nick Jenkins during their fortune-telling session that he “must try to understand life.” Over 30 years since first encountering, I still feel compelled to “try to understand Powell” and to do that I feel that we need to talk about the work, at least as much as the aura that surrounds the work.

Elwin Taylor

I am very much in favour of the first steps that have been taken in new directions - e.g. with the book publishing. And I am also very pleased that the publishing backlog has been cleared so efficiently. This now creates a solid platform for future publishing activity. But of course making a book is one thing - distributing it and getting people to buy it and read it is another, and I feel that this is an area in which a big effort will have to be made.

With Keith’s departure it is a matter of ‘dropping the pilot’ and we should not do anything to jeopardise the very successful course that he has set. So although not quite ‘steady as she goes’, we should only look to change course carefully and incrementally. In deciding on our future direction we can’t do worse than go back to first principles and ask ‘what is the society for?’ Essentially this is to promote interest in the work of AP. In doing this, rather than chasing a brainstorm of ideas, we should concentrate on one at a time
and put all our efforts into realising that. In my view this could be getting AP onto the syllabus.

That said, we have also to keep up the enthusiasm of the existing members, which means a programme of activities between conferences. I think this is something that Keith has been very aware of and we have not been slack in this area. Lectures, pub meets, birthday lunch, brunch etc form a very good backbone. And at times have been added to with e.g. collage workshop, coach trips, Bodleian Library tour etc. Could there, however, be an intermediate layer between these and the full conference, such as symposia for small groups? The format of these symposia would be that all participants prepare and read a paper. This would limit the numbers applying (important as society events should be open to all). Ideally such symposia would provide a programme of intellectual rather than purely social events; and provide a source of material for society publications. But of course we should be careful to make sure that such activity does not cannibalise the conferences.

And if we do ever look for another exotic conference venue, why not Bulgaria? AP attended a literary conference in Sofia in 1977, guest of the Bulgarian Writers Union, and described it in some detail in his memoirs. Apart from its other attractions (Museum of Socialist Art, etc) Bulgaria is cheap. However little hard currency you exchange, you will still come back with a fistful of Levs.

Stephen Eggins

I would guess that I am one of the longest standing members of the Society, having attended every single conference, except Washington. For me, the Society has been wonderful - it has been my window on the literary world, post school. We have enjoyed so many great talks, lectures, conversation pieces and good craique together. And now the Hon Sec has announced his retirement. Keith! His retirement!

Keith has been amazing - no other way to describe him. He has been Atlas, carrying the society on his shoulders. I don’t know where he and the other trustees have got their inspiration from for all these talks and events and venues, but I would bet my bottom dollar that it was Keith who has done the
lion's share of the work to produce them.

I haven’t always seen eye to eye with Keith – I claim that I was one of the early proponents of a Venice conference, which he denies. Short commercial break to remind us all and thank Elwin and Susan Taylor for the tremendous work they did to produce such a triumphant conference.

I also proposed that the Society should be renamed Anthony Powell and his circle, which Keith vigorously opposed, whilst the Society did indeed become that, in all but name!

I’ve also thought for some time that the Society should be more rock ‘n’ roll, by which I mean that we should dip into the Society’s substantial endowment, to maintain the very high standard of events and talks which we are used to. I’m not sure that we can continue to expect people to give of their knowledge pro bono. I have made my own modest contributions to the Society but I have never been in the inner circle, as such, because I haven’t been able to allocate the necessary amount of time. So treat me as an insider outsider looking in.

I would like to thank Keith from the bottom of my heart for the wondrous work that he has done. No appreciation of Keith would be complete, without praising his co-conspirator and partner in crime, his darling wife Noreen. Noreen has been amazing in her support of Keith and the Society - slaving tirelessly behind the scenes, I believe is the customary expression and, of course, she is the Society’s much valued Hon Archivist.

My personal opinion is that the Society will founder sans Keith. I mean who else is going to do the WORK. Over the years Keith has been barraged by ideas, some probably quite good ideas, from members who have been happy to pass the idea on to Keith, but not to provide the labour to bring it to fruition. One of Keith’s recurrent and legitimate moans is that it’s all very well having ideas but someone has to do the work.

So who is going to replace Keith as Atlas, holding up the Society on his broad shoulders. No one that I can see. That’s the bad news.
Prue Raper

First thought: is Keith really determined to retire? If he would simply prefer to divest himself of parts of the huge job which he has created, could he simply do that, and refine his role to the bits he would like, and feel able, to continue with? He mentioned in the interview above that he found the organisation of the conferences to be particularly onerous. It would surely be possible to find someone – if not a member of the Society, then a professional organiser of literary conferences – to take on this role. If cost is a problem, then perhaps the conferences could be triennial rather than biennial. The time between them certainly seems to whizz by.

Whatever the outcome, he must clearly be given a title commensurate with the role he has played in the Society’s formation and presence – to be agreed between him and the Trustees.

Looking more broadly at the future of the Society, I am sure there are ways in which its membership could be broadened, probably via the academics already committed to its welfare. Could we receive more reports of activities from the “group contacts” for the Nordic and German groups? The North American ones are pretty active already. With a professional conference organiser, we could also get some media coverage for our conferences. Oxford would seem to offer a good opportunity for spreading the word and winkling out some fans who haven’t joined so far.

Theo Langheid, German Group

It is very difficult to give any input from so far away (not meaning UK/Germany, but we are not very familiar with the structure of the APS and the duties of the various officers); we run our very small “Verein” with two enthusiasts only, but we do not do too many things either, so we survive. However I have some insight into the Marcel Proust
Gesellschaft here in Germany (with ca. 500 members and a very active club life) so I’ll try:

1. I have never met Keith personally but through telephone/email - contact he was very helpful in everything I had to deal with (the last question was about the German rights for the Dance which our Society wanted to buy together with Reclam but which were sold to Elfenbein Verlag).

2. From our perspective there is definitely the need for someone who runs the business on a day to day basis. The Proust Gesellschaft (which was managed for years by its president alone) has installed a General Secretary who is responsible for communications, conferences, travels etc. The president and the board have always splendid ideas (topics for the annual conference, trips to Venice &c.), but the GM is the one to transfer these ideas into the real world.

3. As said, being not familiar with the management structure of the APS (from the website it seems that there are a lot of important roles but it is not easy to distinguish who does what regarding everyday work), it is my impression that you need one person who succeeds Keith in his capacity as ‘general factotum’. Meaning that a General Manager as a link to the executives/trustees who is responsible for the whole thing and to whom all the other divisions (website, conferences, NL, merchandise &c. &c.) report to, could be helpful.

**Paul Milliken**

I believe we need to avoid creating another 'Keith' situation where he/she takes on an unsustainable load. Ideally each of the Trustees should help share the load together with other volunteers from the membership. These roles should be clearly defined to the membership so that queries etc are directed to the right person. I personally am comfortable with the overall direction and I like the improvements made to the Newsletter. We need to make better use over time of the web based materials. We have a good mix of academic and amateur interests and we need to sustain this. Personally I would like the chance to visit the Chantry and this would be a good way of enthusing the membership.
The main concern has to be getting enough volunteers to do all the various stuff Keith does and has done. So what exactly is this?

General “secretarial” stuff that any secretary does - minutes, committee meetings, reports general administration & legal matters? But also other things that secretary may or may not do which may overlap with other existing officers eg -

- Membership records & list, collecting and chasing subs. (overlap with Membership Sec & Treasurer)
- Organising trips (which several people are now doing)
- Organising the Conference

Also things more peculiar to the Society:

- Maintaining the various internet things website & discussion which is important to publicity
- Publicising the society’s existence
- Maintaining links with the Powell family & relations

As far as the “general direction” of the Society goes, I think that we can let things evolve gradually, as they have been doing for several years: I’m thinking in particular of broadening out activities beyond just Anthony Powell and looking at other authors, (eg the visit to Rye a few years ago which seems to have few specifically Powellite connotations, though I may stand corrected).

I think the Society “Punches above its weight” (though may be that’s because, as a member, I notice stuff about AP which I wouldn’t otherwise) in terms of its “establishment” connections eg use of London clubs, Oxford colleges, links with academia etc.

I think the Society does not have a good balance between academe and entertainment. It's an imbalanced mixture that does not seem to attract much 'new blood'. One only has to read the APList to see how niche, introspective, and hidebound the most regular posters are.
The list (and webpage) aside, the 21st century seems to have largely bypassed the Society. At the very least we should have a proactive Twitterfeed - promoting comment, discussion, events, etc. Look at other literary societies and learn from them. Although I personally don’t, a Facebook page seems de rigueur too.

I sense that the only way to push Powell more into the limelight is by capturing youth at A-level/university level. I don’t know what has been done in this regard but with so many academics on the ‘staff’ surely there must be opportunities to plug this aspect.

Ultimately, with a membership of only about 300, and few under the age of 50, we cannot expect longevity or notoriety. Perhaps Powell is just too niche. For example, Spurling’s recent biography really failed to elevate him into the mainstream, even for a moment. But I think a move away from the dusty academic focus and embracing modern social media may be a start.

Peter Kislinger, Vienna

- Call for papers: targeting academic institutions, English Departments, History departments too, world-wide (not just in English speaking countries)
- Encourage MA and PhD theses
- Encourage members to write sober, non-polemical, fact-based letters-to-the-editor in response to obvious factual mistakes, errors
- Going through Wikipedia entries in languages Dance / Powell has been translated into
- Target bookshops to keep all 12 novels in stock
- Sort, and arrange online, what by now must amount to thousands of email-group contributions according to topics; Herculean task? Maybe – but Hercules and her/his team – could be finances by donations.
- Annotate one volume – say volume 3, or 4 or 5 to make some newcomers first-time readers
- Find a publisher for (back-numbers of) Secret Harmonies (and publish Newsletter essays) – University of Vienna Library, Austrian National Library; major German university libraries often do not order copies
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because of its “private print” status; I’ve donated Secret Harmonies to University of Vienna Library / English Department)

- Tri-annual conferences
- Annotate one volume – say volume 3, or 4 or 5 to make some newcomers first-time readers aware of the both the complexity of AP’s achievement and the fun, nay the joy of re-reading; seduce them to read Dance in its entirety and in sequence, and thus, who knows, gain “real (Powell) readers” (“a real reader is a re-reader”, Nabokov).

And I’d like to add my appreciation, indeed admiration, for Keith’s selfless, stimulating work – bringing, and keeping together as well as in order, Powell readers and fans. And don’t let’s forget Noreen. The end of an era.

John Trotter

Keith has of course done an amazing job for the Society and no one is going to be able to replace him- nor can really be expected to do so. The question is whether the programme of events that we have had for all these years can and should continue even with Keith’s responsibilities spread among several people. (By the way, we know that the newsletters and publications are now in very good hands !)

The conference is at the heart of the society’s activities. It is good for 'profile' and also attracts new members, as well as bringing together more longstanding members who may not get to many of the other meets. I think that every two years is still the right interval for the conference. If, recognising how much work is involved, we moved it to say every three years, in my view that would be too long a gap : impetus would be lost and connections could go cold. The annual lecture has been difficult to arrange, with the Wallace Collection withdrawing their subsidised support. However, the Travellers Club Waugh lecture was such a success that perhaps that Club will allow us to continue there. It also has the great advantage that the Powell connection will bring in non-members from the Club. Are there enough good speakers and topics to justify an annual lecture as well as a conference every other year ? I don’t know the answer to that.
Lastly, the lunches and pub meets which Keith has organised are always enjoyable - and well written up in the Newsletter too. I am afraid I do not get to many of them but they seem to attract a quorum each time. Maybe there could be a couple less of those. I do very much enjoy the guided walks and one of those a year, interspersed with appropriate readings, would be popular I think - even if they were repeats.

Public awareness of AP is probably at its highest now for many years, with Hilary's book, and we should try to build on that by attracting more members. Can we try and involve the English faculty at Oxford to get some students along?

Philippa Fawcett

Here are my thoughts.
1. There are a range of approaches:
   From no change (which would be boring) to abolition (which would be unthinkable)
2. One obvious question: What is the purpose of the APSoc?
   Is it:
   (a) to keep the memory of AP alive among those most likely to know about him/have read him already?
   (b) to promote him to a wider, younger, audience, hitherto ignorant of his existence?
   (c) to be an enjoyably comfortable, predictable lunch club with occasional lectures and weekend-long enjoyably comfortable, predictable gatherings?
   (d) all of the above
   (e) none of the above
3. Answers (a) and (c) are compatible with each other and require little if any change of direction/format. Answer (b) is more revolutionary. It would make the APSoc a more campaigning organisation which would require member action (for example, putting on readings of The Great Works at libraries, schools, bookshops, colleges, village halls, stately homes, factories, hospitals, tube stations, art galleries, old people’s homes, supermarkets, co- [Enough-Ed]).
If Stringham’s Modigliani can’t be classified as a leitmotif, it certainly has significance in the Dance as a point d’arrêt.

Stringham’s collection of artworks is first mentioned in A Question of Upbringing, and again in The Acceptance World, where the drawing by Modigliani is included.

We meet the Modigliani again in Books Do Furnish a Room when Pamela hoofs it from the matrimonial home taking the drawing with her.

'Tell him I'm leaving and taking the Modigliani and the photographs of myself. He can do what he likes with the rest of my junk'.

Subsequently they adorn the love nest which she shares with X Trapnel in Maida Vale. And when Pamela, the harridan, leaves poor Trappy, having hurled his novel Profiles in String into the canal, she takes with her again . . . the Modigliani and the pictures of herself.

And from Hearing Secret Harmonies a poignant reminder and summation: ‘Henderson snatched the parcel and began to open it. Bithel lay still further back in the pop-art armchair. He closed his eyes. Henderson threw away the brown paper. He held the Modigliani drawing up in front of him. The glass and the frame was cracked in several places; the elongated nude no worse than a little crumpled. It had been executed with a few strokes running diagonally across the paper. The marvellous economy of line would help in making hard to identify- if anybody bothered-as more than a Modigliani drawing of its own particular period. It was signed. In any case, no one was likely to worry. It had hung in Stringham's London flat in early days; then passed to Stringham's niece, Pamela Flitton; on Pamela's demise, to her husband, Widmerpool. Pictures had never been Widmerpool's strong point. For some reason he must have clung onto this one. It was odd that he had never sold it. Henderson, even at the period of his renunciation of such vanities as art, must have marked it down, as it lay about somewhere in the commune. Now the agent, even second-hand, of its preservation, he deserved his prize. Bithel gave a
terrible groan in his sleep. He began to slip from the exotically shaped armchair; would soon reach the floor.".

I hope every single member of the Society has visited the Modigliani exhibition at Tate Modern – it is nothing less than a sensation. For those of you who haven’t, the first two rooms are quite modest and I found myself wondering what all the fuss was about - but then the exhibition opens up into two or three grand rooms (including sculptures) which are nothing less than magnificent. There is also a virtual reality experience, which places you in Modigliani’s studio in Paris. I hadn’t really experienced this phenomenon before - it was absolutely compelling.
It was the Hon Sec, who reminded me, in his inimitable fashion, that Stringham's was a drawing not a painting!

Your Publisher recommends this blog on artworks in Powell: https://picturesinpowell.com

MY FIRST TIME

David Mabb

Last year, I reread the novel; still the same twelve Fontana paperbacks, with the (full page) Marc Boxer drawings on the front covers, that I bought well over 30 years ago – some pages detached, but none yet missing.

However, it was not the books, with their covers, that led me to recall their first reading; but rather your Editor (first encountered 35 years ago). Looking at the Society’s website to see whether any real life inspiration was suggested for Jean Templer (none was, though the new biography may permit some addition there), I spotted a familiar face and name. Two or three weeks later (carrying Volume 6, as it happened) I bumped into him. He mentioned this regular feature.

I came to the series without any personal recommendation; though, once I started talking about the books, someone I worked with emerged as having read at least some of them. I must have seen a reference somewhere, possibly one drawing parallels with another lengthy novel.
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What is clear is that I bought, and read, Volume 1 and, within a few months, all twelve. My initial impressions were coloured by the appealing covers, and by the interesting and mysterious titles. However, that is not to say that I found the books uniformly engaging.

Volume 1 seemed rather thin and limited in colour; maybe reflecting characters and plot starting from scratch, and the youth of the narrator. I much enjoyed Volumes 2 to 5; with the development of the personal, society, artistic and commercial worlds through 2 to 4, and then the step back in time to meet, and follow, Hugh Moreland (and his friends). (Nick’s comment years later in Volume 11(6), after leaving Moreland’s hospital, is especially poignant: ‘That morning was the last time I saw Moreland. It was also the last time I had, with anyone, the sort of talk we usually had together.’)

Volume 6 seemed thinner, particularly the childhood section; though the linking of the periods leading to the two Wars was interesting, as were the return to Stourwater and the meeting by the sea with Bob Duport.

Volumes 7 to 9 were more difficult. To me, the setting was less appealing; and, as with Volume 4, the large numbers of characters required more attention than I initially devoted.

The return to the artistic world (literary, this time), with its gritty post-War feel, in Volume 10 was welcome. Volume 11 seemed, initially at least, to make too much of Venice, the Tiepolo (Candaules and Gyges) and the slightly tiresome Pamela Flitton; and Volume 12, rather out of touch and exaggerated.

Overall, and notwithstanding some of those comments, I found the writing compelling: elegant, balanced, subtle, amusing, moving – including the dialogue. I reread the series a couple of times over the next two or three years, and then several times more over the succeeding years. On one occasion, as a special treat, I picked just Volumes 2 to 5 and 10, which were still my favourites.

Last year I returned to the books by a different route. After Roy Jenkins’ Churchill biography and Andrew Roberts’ Masters and Commanders I felt, for the first time, mild enthusiasm for some WW2 fiction. After rereading the Sword of Honour trilogy, I went to Volumes 7 to 9; noticing that each is balanced around one or two breaks of some sort from the military routine: in Volume 7(3) the course and the weekend at Frederica’s, in Volume 8(2) the
long day in London to meet Major Finn and then at the Café Royal and at the Jeavons’, and in Volume 9 the drinks with Ted Jeavons in chapter 2 and the night of the raid in chapter 3. With more interest this time in the background, and more attention to the large numbers of characters, I found the three volumes so appealing that I immediately followed them with a full, and careful, rereading: this time Volumes 1 to 6, then 10 to 12 and, finally, back to 7 to 9; finding more in, particularly, 6, 11 and 12.

I hope it may be permissible to conclude this brief account with one question and one nomination for the best short joke. Why do the really important male characters, the significant ones with whom Nick has a real connection, all die? A number of less significant, albeit engaging or interesting, ones live on or, at any rate, live long: Dicky Umfraville, Sunny Farebrother, Bithel, Duport, Norman Chandler, David Pennistone, General Conyers, Jeavons, Sillery: longest of all. However, Charles Stringham, Peter Templer and Ralph Barnby all die in the War, Moreland within about 15 years after (and, assuming he can be viewed as significant, X Trapnel about 5 years before Moreland). Widmerpool too comes to an abrupt end.

It is true that J. G. Quiggin is a significant character, appearing (or referred to) in all but Volumes 8 and 9; Mark Members too, who appears (or is referred to) in all but Volumes 7 to 9. However, although they contribute a good deal to the plot, in neither case is there the same real connection. (Leaving aside Isobel, there is only one really important female character: Jean Templer. She does survive, appearing for the last time in the final chapter.)

More generally, death is all around. For example, three of Nick’s brothers-in-law die early – the only one to live on is Hugo. No fewer than four of the (male) characters die in motor accidents. Priscilla Tolland and Molly Jeavons die, on the same night as Chips Lovell and Bijou Ardglass. Pamela Fliton, Matilda Wilson, Eleanor Walpole-Wilson, Tuffy Weedon, Baby Wentworth and Gypsy Jones die too; as do Macklintick, General Flores, Ferrand-Sénéschal, Edgar Deacon. (Incidentally, was the ‘shady’ club where Deacon fell after his birthday party (Vol.2(4): p.239), the Bronze Monkey (Vol.5(1): p.15) or the Brass Monkey (Vol.12(7): p.236)? Is the latter simply Chandler’s joke?)

One response to the primary question might be that my view as to who are the really important male characters, for example including Templer but not Quiggin, is flawed. However, do the more important deaths say something
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about Nick (or the author), or merely the pressure for development and change in a lengthy novel running over many years?

The nomination (better, I think, than Pennistone’s two word note on Blackhead’s minute in Volume 9(1)) comes from Volume 3(4), where Umfraville persuades Anne Stepney and Barnby, Jean Templer and Nick, to accompany him from Foppa’s to Milly Andriadis’ flat. The rather intense Werner Guggenbuhl is ensconced. He delivers a terrific lecture about Soviet Theatre, with a long list of the different performers and workers engaged there; then stops abruptly. ‘“Any ventriloquists?” Umfraville asked.’

Uncle Giles’ Corner

Uncle Giles on social media

Uncle Giles, are you cool with social media?
Relations with Mrs Erdleigh are not as warm as formerly. What’s more, Mrs East, my landlady, was unpardonably rude the other day. As a result, I am in lowish water, temporarily accommodated again at a small private hotel (and how one misses the Ufford, for all its occasional grimness). In the circs, one sometimes feels the need for human company…

Resorting to Tinder, are you, Uncle Giles?
Myra presented me with a ‘mobile telephone’. She said that it was a parting gift. I do hope not. What she was too impatient to do, unfortunately, was to explain to me how it worked. I am, however, an old soldier. An officer of the Queen must find his way around the most inhospitable terrain. He owes it to his men – not of course that I have men any more. I found in the box a manual of sorts, not by any means originally in English; did a bit of a recce…

So, you downloaded some good apps, Uncle Giles?
Nothing technical, of course. Keep it simple is always my motto. But I was able to make some contacts, using the old ‘mobile telephone’. ‘Networking’, is it called? No problems accommodating them at my private hotel. The reverse, in fact – there’s quite a lot of coming and going already, as I’ve discovered. Funny world, eh!

**And what advice do you have for us, Uncle Giles?**

Didn’t realise until it was almost too late that you have to plug the things in. I assumed it was batteries, being Japanese and devilishly clever and so on - but no. Then I discovered that my contacts, who I’ve mentioned, all wanted to borrow the leads; arrived with their own phones almost dead, they said. And of course walked off with them. I had two leads in the package Myra gave me. Now there’s none left. Keep your hands on your leads, that’s my advice, however you are occupied at the time. I’m within two bars of having no social life again.

**Bars, Uncle Giles! How comms you’ve become!**

Pshaw! (Though I say so with quiet pride.)

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**GIDDY-HEADS AT THE GROLIERS**

Nicholas Birns

Edwin Bock’s inventive and spirited theatrical meta-musings, performed by the impromptu company the Noel-Poel Players, have been a longtime highlight of the Anthony Powell birthday lunch at the Grolier Club in New York. This year, the revels were given special pungency by the appearance of Hilary Spurling’s biography of Powell, prompting the play, *Walberswick, or Dance Characters In Peril*. The premise of the play was to scrutinize Spurling’s biography for moments in which it was unfair to certain *dance* characters, and vetting how few were mentioned in the index. The principal characters selected were: Billson (played by Eileen Kaufman). Matilda Willson, aka Lady Donners, who chaired the proceedings in the play (Cheryl Hurley), Jeff Manley (as Smith the butler), Emily Brightman (Lisa Doty), General Conyers (Mike Leahy), Gypsy Jones (played by Arete Warren) and the magistrate who examined their claims, Sir Percival Waterhouse, QC, counselor for the Consortium of British Writers and Publishers, played by Gerald Ruderman. Leahy also doubled the role of Sir Moby Dick, lawyer for the characters.
The slightly Buddha-like Ruderman provided a good mixture of sagacity and legal malevolence. Jeff Manley was very charismatic as Smith, while Leahy was magisterial in his demanding double role. Arete Warren was seductive and stylish as Gypsy (indeed, more like Nina Hamnett herself than her seamier analogue in Dance), Cheryl Hurley’s portrayal of Matilda reminded one of how much the late Joan Williams had deemed that character the most admirable female presence in the novel. Eileen Kaufman was splendidly frenetic and hysterical in playing Billson as she was at the time of the Stonehurst scene. It brought to mind how much that original Dance character is from the ‘world’ of Sigmund Freud: a woman struggling to understand her own sexual desires in the wake of Victorian repressiveness. Eileen’s performance made Billson seem less a Dance character than a doyenne of the world of Arthur Schnitzler or Egon Schiele—apt as a portent of the sudden furies of world war. Billson, nicknamed “Silly Suffolk” by Albert in the Kindly Ones, provides the name of the play—Walberswick in Suffolk. She also—coaxed by General Conyers’ psychoanalysis-informed hypnotism—provides to enact a certain proletarian catharsis.

The play, remarkably, worked almost as well for those in the audience who did not know the books as those that did, although touches such as Emily Brightman serving as Matilda’s legal clerk were amusing for insiders. It was a sprightly and vivacious Entertainment that brought alive the paradox of Dance -- that it is one man’s creative vision, yet populated by, to use Powell’s phrase from Afternoon Men, ‘a company of giddy-heads’ who persist in roaring with their imaginative independence, from the author’s work to the biographer’s.

**AP Birthday Lunch**

*Stephen Walker*

Another full house for the return visit to the Malabar Junction on 2 December 2017 for our annual AP Birthday Lunch. In fact, we had to squeeze in a couple of unexpected members who were not on the Official List, having failed to email their menu choices. Normally this sort of lapse would have resulted in exclusion from the event. Fortunately on this occasion we were able to accommodate them. But a plea. Please read your emails and respond. Having a cold is not really a reason for not checking emails.
We faced a challenge to our seating arrangements. The new manageress gave the vegetarians their own table. Yes indeed, as the punsters had it: a veggietable. Usually the standard of jokes rises as the alcohol and food take hold. Sadly, not on this occasion. Conversation was far more reflective than usual. The expected main topic of conversation - Hilary Spurling’s new life of AP - was subordinated to detailed discussions about 007.

A prominent member with a well-deserved reputation for a deep appreciation of the visual arts revealed that he had devoured On Her Majesty's Secret Service while waiting for his flu jab. Learned reference was made to specialist James Bond websites as several male members confessed to modelling their wardrobes- especially knitted silk ties - and handgun fantasies about Biretta 418s, Smith & Wessons Centennial Airweights and Walther PPKs on Ian Fleming’s alter ego. Non-007 fans - yes, there are some - discreetly rolled their eyes. Suddenly the conversation took a more serious turn. Was James Bond racist, snobbish or sadistic? Would he have been a Brexiteer? The consensus answer was: Not really, Not really, Yes and Yes. Similar questions have been asked in the past of AP himself.

Surprisingly those who had read Hilary Spurling were not all wildly enthusiastic. Although some reviews had highlighted her revelations members thought that the real question is: what is she not saying? They expressed support for her mission to introduce AP to the under-35 generation but thought that it would be difficult. One trustee explained how he was trying to persuade his grandson to read books. "Ah really?", said the youngster, "Books are just one word after another." Is the world now ready for a graphic novel version of Dance? But it's not just the iPhone and iPad generation. A new member who regularly reviews books for The Tablet reported how an article about AP and the Arts had been rejected by The Burlington Magazine as not being relevant to its readership’s interests. Can this be right? Despair was kept at bay by a steady stream of South Indian dishes. The tofu and the chicken curry were much enjoyed although the curried fish divided opinion quite sharply.

The shock news delivered by your Secretary at the AGM that he was bringing forward his retirement to October 2018 prompted discussion about what the Society should be doing. Who would replace Keith? He is, in the true sense of the word, irreplaceable. Who therefore will do the jobs that he did? Discreet soundings were taken. Murmured expressions of interest and half promises were whispered. Everybody agreed that we are at a crossroads in the Society’s
history. If members do not come forward to take on some of the functions that Keith performs the Society will wither away. Will there even be Birthday Lunch in December 2018? It is in our hands.

Many urged the Society to push ahead to increase membership and widen its range of publications and in particular publish previously unpublished or out of print works by AP. The recent book on *AP and Wine* was enthusiastically cited as an example of what it should be doing.

As the meal ended a distinguished City lawyer was heard accusing BoJo's aunt of being an impostor. "You can't be his aunt", he explained,"You look much younger than he does". That's perfectly true she does, but she is. Other comments made about BoJo are best left unrecorded. But which figure in *Dance* does he most resemble? Perhaps its time to reinstate the Widmerpool Award. All in all, another very congenial occasion.

**PUB MEET 3 FEBRUARY 2018**

*Noreen Marshall*

Twelve of us sought refuge from February by gathering in The Audley for beer and books – or should that be chips and conversation? While a number of regulars were unable to be there, it was very pleasing to welcome some new members, one of whom, Steve Butters, was the newest of all, filling in his membership form there and then.

Pints of T.E.A (The English Ale) and St Edmund’s Golden Beer were quaffed along with the more customary IPA and large glasses of wine. No innovations in the food department, but gammon and egg was popular, and Eton Mess Scone Cup was queen of puddings, so to speak. (A Temporary Queen, however, since a matter of days later it was axed from the menu in favour of lemon meringue tart – such is the fickleness of culinary status).

Most of those present had feasted their minds not only on the recent Hilary Spurling biography of Anthony Powell, but also on the Winter *Newsletter* with its rich array of reviews of the book, hot topics being the fresh insights into AP and, in particular, Lady Violet. Other examples of Spurling’s writing (and versatility) were discussed, and two had been brought along: *The Drawings of Mervyn Peake* (1974) for which she wrote a 20-page
introduction, and Elinor Fettiplace’s Receipt Book (1986), which she edited for publication from the original compiled by one of her husband’s ancestors.

The AP Society’s past and future were also considered, from the day AP’s death was announced on the front page of The Times – leading to the Society’s foundation – to the present day, and in particular the Hon Secretary handing over his role. Plaques blue, brown and green, and efforts to establish a commemorative plaque to AP were also discussed; other topics of conversation ranged from Simon Raven, social history, and methods of reading, to genealogy, where to live, and even whether AP would have been in favour of Brexit. One last surprise ingredient was the presence of a recently bought print of Poussin’s A Dance to the Music of Time, once again available at the Wallace Collection shop.


SECRETARY’S BRUNCH

Clive Gwatkin Jenkins

Ten members assembled in the Patisserie Valerie on 13 January 2018 to eat - in most cases - a hearty meal. Topics of conversation varied: Trollope’s novels and his penchant for hunting both in fiction and real life cropped up early, naturally extending to the Victorian habit of drinking warm brandy with their hearty breakfasts after the hunt. We moved onto the experience of working in the V&A opposite, the logistics of the trip to be included in the Oxford conference and a comparison between living in French and German speaking Switzerland.

Two old chestnuts were chewed over. First, Political Correctness - an analysis of its limitations and possible conceptual flaws eg an examination of how you could define a social class. Can one assign an objective core of meaning as the Marxists claim to be able to do? Too often these labels are used very loosely without rigour to suit the demagoguery of the moment. Secondly, Brexit, especially the practical difficulties which unsticking the UK could cause in legal terms. This discussion proceeded without opening the searing divisions among the collocutors for which the matter like a latter day Dreyfus affair is
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becoming notorious. It was, however, properly serious; but a remark of Noreen’s inspired me to a frivolous and solipsistic take: if Remainers are accused to their faces of being members of a metropolitan elite, I might derive much needed social kudos by going around vocally claiming to be one.

We finished not with hot brandy but with champagne generously offered by Keith, who offered the eponymous patisserie to boot. It seems premature to wish him well in his retirement as he will still be shouldering a formidable amount of conference organising for months to come and will not be standing down until it is over. But this, his last Secretary’s Brunch, was certainly one occasion to mark his huge contribution. Who knows whether his successor will continue the tradition.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

London Group 2018 Pub Meets
Saturday 5 May 2018
Saturday 4 August 2018
Saturday 3 November 2018
The Audley Mount Street, London W1
1230 to 1530

Anthony Powell Conference 2018
Anthony Powell and the Visual Arts
Friday 31 August to Sunday 2 September 2018
Merton College, Oxford
Booking leaflet included with this Newsletter
Further details when available from the Hon. Secretary,
secretary@anthonypowell.org
Membership Updates

New Members
We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:
- Paul Barber, Isleworth
- Pete Bellotte, Petworth
- Steve Butters, London
- Patrik Enander, Sweden
- Ann Jarrett, Abergavenny
- Robert Jenkyn Bedford, Milton Keynes
- David Mabb, London
- Richard Miles, Redhill
- Suzanne Stern-Gillet, Manchester

Condolences
We regret that since the last Newsletter we have learnt of the death of Kaarina Huhtala, Finland.
- Richard Jenkins, Bradford
We send our condolences to all their family and friends.

Subscription Reminder
Reminders are 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 as it is much 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.

Society Website
www.anthonypowell.org.
The Society is undertaking a project to rebuild and modernise our website. The work is being undertaken by Agile Ventures, www.agileventures.org, a charity devoted to helping other charities with IT development and through that improve the skills of developers. We hope to have the new website available in the next few months.
LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

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New York & NE USA Group
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German Group
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Contact: Theo Langheid
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SOCIETY MERCHANDISE

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

York 2016 Conference Proceedings
UK: £8; Overseas: £14

Venice 2014 Conference Proceedings (including recordings of the papers on a CD)
UK: £11; Overseas £16

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

London 2011 Conference Proceedings
UK: £8; Overseas: £14

Centenary 2005 Conference Proceedings
UK: £11, Overseas: £17

Oxford 2003 Conference Proceedings
UK: £7; Overseas: £13

Eton 2001 Conference Proceedings
UK: £7; Overseas: £10

Anthony Powell on Wine. Six pieces by AP and one by Violet Powell on the pleasures of food and drink, ed. Robin Bynoe. UK: £17; Overseas £23
Bernard Stacey, War Dance, a glossary of the military terms and references in the War trilogy novels
UK: £10; Overseas £14

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: £13

Writing about Anthony Powell
Talks given at the 2004 AGM by

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Violet Powell; A Stone in the Shade
Fourth & final volume of Lady Violet’s autobiography covering mostly the 1960s. Includes many of Lady Violet’s coloured travel sketches. Hardback.
UK: £24; Overseas: £32

Anthony Powell, Caledonia, A Fragment
The 2011 Greville Press reprint of this rare Powell spoof. UK: £8; Overseas: £11

John Gould; Dance Class
American High School student essays from John’s two teachings of Dance at Philips Academy. UK: £12; Overseas: £18

Paperback: UK £9; Overseas £13
Hardback: UK £18; Overseas £24

JOURNAL
Secret Harmonies: Journal of the Anthony Powell Society
Back numbers of issues 1, 2, 3 & 6/7 are available. UK: £6; Overseas: £9 each
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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: £12 (£6 + £6 donation)

SHOPPING BAG

Society Shopping/Tote Bag
Sturdy 10oz cotton bag approx. 38cm square with 10cm gusset. Each bag has A Buyer’s Market and Ada Leintwardine book cover designs.
UK: £8; Overseas £10 (If you want multiples please email us for a postage quote)

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: £3; Overseas: £5

Society Postcard
B&W postcard of Powell with his cat Trelawney. Pack of 5. UK: £3; Overseas: £5

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: £6

ORDERING

The prices shown are the current members’ prices (revised June 2017) and are inclusive of postage and packing, hence the different UK and overseas prices. Non-members will be charged the UK member’s price shown plus postage & packing at cost.
Please send your order to:
Anthony Powell Society Merchandise,
48 Cecil Road, London, E13 0LR, UK
Email: merchandise@anthonypowell.org
Payment by UK cheque, Mastercard, Visa or PayPal (to secretary@anthonypowell.org). You may also order through the Society’s online shop at www.anthonypowell.org.
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