The Anthony Powell Society
Newsletter
Issue 38, Spring 2010 ISSN 1743-0976

!!! BOOK NOW – 2010 EVENTS – BOOK NOW !!!

Saturday 24 April
St George’s Day & AP Society 10th Anniversary Collage Event

Tuesday 1 June
Celebration of AP Society 10th Birthday and 50th Anniversary of Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant

Saturday 19 June
Bodleian Library Tour & Pub Lunch

Saturday 26 June
Extraordinary London Pub Meet with Dr Nicholas Birns

Saturday 23 October, morning
Whitechapel Bell Foundry Tour

Saturday 23 October, afternoon
Society AGM & talk

Saturday 4 December
London Group AP Birthday Lunch

Quarterly London Pub Meets on Saturdays 8 May, 14 August and 13 November

Event details on pages 16-17 or from the Hon. Secretary

See also page 22 – please tell us your views

Subscriptions due 1 April : please renew promptly : see p15

Contents
From the Secretary’s Desk … 2
REVIEW: Dennis Wheatley Biography … 3
Anthony Powell’s Pentagram … 6
REVIEW: Michael Arlen … 9
OBITUARY: Nancy Cutbirth Small … 11
The Strange Tale of Dicky’s Wristwatch … 13
Clive James on Anthony Powell … 14
Society News … 15
Dates for Your Diary … 16-17
Local Group News … 18-19
Writers and their Typewriters … 20
Future Society Events … 22
From the APLIST … 23-25
Cuttings … 26-28
Letters to the Editor … 29
Merchandise & Membership … 30-32
2009 AGM Minutes & Christmas 2009 Quiz Answers … centre insert

Hon. Secretary’s new fax number: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483
"Spring is sprung" – at least that’s how it’s felt for the last couple of days. While it’s still chilly here in London there’s a clear blue sky and lots of anti-depressant sunshine. And the “green shoots of recovery” have begun; Nature is awakening; buds are beginning to swell and open. Our roses are already putting on new growth, the buds are just beginning to break on the lilac and the crocuses are out, albeit 3 weeks late. And don’t we need Spring after this long, bleak northern hemisphere winter? In the UK this has been the coldest winter since 1978/9.

With Spring not far away, Summer can’t be too far behind. Time to crawl out of our burrows and enjoy life once more: the delights of the garden; alfresco dining; village cricket; the English seaside; remove the extra sweaters.

Fortunately as a Society we are not really dependent on good weather for our activities; although it always seems easier to arrange events for the warmer months. Consequently we all too often have a gap in events over the winter. And this is where you, our members, come in: by supporting the events which we put on, come rain or shine; but also by telling us what you would like as events and even volunteering to organise some of them.

Having said that, I am conscious that the majority of events are in and around London, but then half our members are within easy reach of London. This means we especially need people away from London to get local groups going and arrange local events. All ideas and volunteers welcome!

Meanwhile, roll on Summer!
In 1974, in a welcome and unexpected break from the rugby-oriented curriculum, Dennis Wheatley appeared at my school, \textit{diabolus ex machina}, to speak to a small group of senior boys. In authentic Wheatley style the talk was an after dinner affair, the dinner itself involving only Wheatley and our housemaster, \textit{à deux}. It is hard to imagine that this meal matched up to the famous author’s Lucullan standards, but when he emerged he at least gave off the impression of satisfaction, clutching a brandy in one hand and a cigar in the other. Wheatley’s evening dress added to the overall effect of a sophisticated, well-aged and sun-ripened clubman, a succulent grape just about ready to burst. So striking was his appearance that I came in retrospect to believe that our housemaster, by contrast, had appeared in a tracksuit. That can hardly have been true, but the vision was artistically in keeping with the extreme alternative that Wheatley offered to the prevailing school ethos.

Wheatley’s presence was occasioned by a visit to a young relative. But ever-generous and outgoing, sensitive also perhaps to a minor public relations opportunity, he allowed the supposed intellectual elite of our house, some half dozen of us, to gather respectfully (and literally) at his feet. Also present, for reasons not explained, was a solitary boy from another house, obscure in the school and personally unknown to the others in the group. I have forgotten his name, but following Wellington’s example there is no reason not to call him Atkins.

Correctly judging his audience’s cultural world to be bounded by \textit{War Picture Library}, \textit{Battle Picture Library}, \textit{Commando} and the novels of Sven Hassel, Wheatley hung his talk around the Second World War, with particular reference to his own part in it. The decisive role played by the deception unit of the Joint Planning Staff came as a surprise to students of the conflict brought up in the school of ‘Die, Fritz!’ and ‘Take that, Tojo!’ and I for one found it frankly incredible.

Atkins, I noticed, was also getting restless, and before long it all became too much. ‘But Sir, Sir!’ he suddenly blurted out, ‘have you ever witnessed a manifestation of evil?’ With a thrill of sudden illumination it became clear that Atkins, hitherto so dull and uninteresting, was in fact a keen young Satanist, the mage’s improbable visit made known to him by occult means. Wheatley, perhaps feeling that he had not said all he wanted to about the Joint Planning Staff, at first ignored the interruption. But Atkins was not to be denied. He piped up again, more insist
than before. ‘Sir, Sir,’ he cried, ‘have you ever witnessed a manifestation of evil?’

A frisson of excitement ran round the room, and I noticed that the lamps, whether by a pre-arranged act of showmanship or otherwise, were few and heavily shrouded. Wheatley paused. He looked thoughtful. He drew carefully on his cigar. And then he gave of his knowledge, a tale of unhallowed invocation, lunacy, death and horror. He spoke of Aleister Crowley’s attempt to raise Pan in a cheap Parisian hotel, of how Crowley and another man sequestered themselves in a private room for this purpose, and of how the remainder of Crowley’s satanic cadre was confined to an antechamber, enjoined to leave the two adepts undisturbed on pain of horror. And so the disciples sat through the night, shaken by occasional strange and appalling noises from the adjoining room, their nerves on edge, until silence fell and they set to getting ‘stale drunk’. This last touch appealed to the youthful imagination, the goggling audience being anxious at that age merely to get drunk. ‘Stale drunk’, later revealed as a disagreeable and meaningless experience, seemed then to be an impossibly sophisticated level of grown-upness, a higher degree of initiation. The denouement was shocking. For when in the grey dawn the trepid disciples entered at last the forbidden chamber, they found Crowley gibbering mad in a corner, and his associate stone dead.

It is therefore interesting to learn from Phil Baker’s biography of Dennis Wheatley that this story of raising Pan had for over 40 years been the great occultist’s stock (and only) reply to questions of the Atkins type. Wheatley’s own experience of occult practice being effectively zero, his book learning supplemented by snippets of private correspondence, he had picked up this Parisian tale from the sinister socialist Tom Driberg. But so effective was this late (perhaps even the last?) performance that it comes as a shock to realise that, despite the impression he created, Wheatley was not in fact present at the Paris séance and did not meet Crowley until several years later. Nor were the facts correct. Nobody died, although Crowley’s colleague later suffered a minor mental breakdown.

Baker’s biography at first astonishes by its length: 600 pages for Dennis Wheatley? The clue is in the title: it is a ‘Life and Times’. Normally this formulation is used by publishers to conceal the wretched inadequacy of a commissioned and paid for ‘Life’. In the case of Baker’s book, however, it is magnificently justified. Wheatley, unusual, overripe and positively fruity by the end, cries out for contextualization. This is provided by an elegant and skilful writer, possessed of an excellent wit which he uses sparingly and only ever to precise effect. Highly sensitive to period, Baker deals with areas such as appeasement and anti-Semitism (not a Wheatley failing) with much more
intelligence than is usually encountered. Anthony Powell, a literary contemporary of Wheatley who followed a different creative path, provides a trace element of this contextualization, and Baker is clearly familiar with Powell’s work. The late friendship of the two writers is indicated, and they had more in common than might at first be supposed. Both were clubmen, although of differing degrees of intensity – Wheatley’s late spurt of joinings appears pathological, and can only partly be attributed to social ambition. While Powell stuck to his last with the Travellers, Wheatley seems to have been searching restlessly for an earthly paradise in and about St James’. Like Shangri-La it remained tantalizingly out of reach and may not in fact have existed. On the domestic front both were collagists. Powell’s boiler-room masterpiece is well-known to his fans, while Wheatley worked with fish in the bathroom and stars on the bedroom ceiling.

It is known that Powell consulted Wheatley in respect of plot (Powell’s weak point, Wheatley’s strong point) and Baker quotes from a specific request for a solution to Widmerpool’s entanglements. Baker is also convincing on the identification of Wheatley as Beals in The Fisher King, suggesting that he was far more closely the model for the popular novelist character than Powell acknowledged. Incidentally Baker is wrong in saying that The Fisher King was Powell’s last published fiction, although many AP readers would prefer that he was not.

A life of 75 years, a writing career of 45 years and some 50 or so bestselling novels spreads over a far wider canvas than can be covered in a review. How much Wheatley’s post-war success owed to the fact that the ex-wine merchant entered the Age of Austerity possessed of a splendid cellar, a gregarious nature and a flair for entertainment cannot be precisely measured, but Wheatley the man, as distinct from the writer, is always more than interesting in his own right. A cadet on HMS Worcester, he joined the Royal Artillery in 1914, and served in France in 1917-18. Baker describes his service as ‘undistinguished’, but this seems a harsh judgement. Wheatley was at the front with the Fifth Army when it bore the full force of the German assault in March 1918 and evidently survived the horrors of the fighting retreat. In fact, and in the true Wheatley manner, he celebrated his survival by securing, while under heavy German bombardment, the services of the only remaining prostitute in an otherwise deserted Amiens. Here we find all the military virtues of initiative, determination and pluck, and it is surely only by chance that this junior officer did not come more closely to the attention of the General Staff. The ‘Blue Sky Thinking’ papers that Wheatley circulated among Churchill and others of the wartime elite came to form the cornerstone of his personal myth. But his youthful audience of 1974 would have been more impressed by his earlier, less cerebral, exploits.

In keeping with British publishers’ conventional disregard for the intelligence of their customers the book, although technically a hardback, is perfect bound. And despite charging a very full price Dedalus have avoided the use of plates for the illustrations. The identification of Goya’s source painting would probably have been of more interest than the details of the jacket designer. By contrast the kidron-bound, richly-tooled, Heron edition of Wheatley’s works, a 1970s artefact much admired by amateurs of kitsch, stands out as some sort of bibliogonic highpoint.

■
An answer to a longstanding Powellian mystery has materialised in *The Devil is a Gentleman*, the new biography of Dennis Wheatley by Phil Baker. Scholars have often wondered where Anthony Powell acquired his considerable knowledge of the occult. Could it be accounted for purely by desk research, in which case what prompted the fascination with matters magical? Or did it derive from a more direct experience of the subject?

*A Dance to the Music of Time* is threaded with references to the dark arts, indeed one gains the impression that they well outnumber those to conventional religion in which Powell latterly professed himself “non-croyant”. That the novelist knew whereof he wrote is not in doubt. Episodes, more comedic than spine-chilling, like the Ouija session chez Templer, are sufficiently detailed and convincing to indicate familiarity with the planchette procedure, although it could be argued that to one of the author’s personal disposition a single experience would have been more than enough. Likewise Mrs Erdley’s readings of Pamela’s palm and of Giles’s tarot cards betray authorial interest in the subject albeit subordinated to the craftsman’s purpose. Nonetheless the authenticity of the principal occult characters hints at a passing acquaintance with real life practitioners at least as capable as Dr Trelawney, Mrs Erdley and Scorpio Murtlock. Indeed there is some internal evidence supported by *Journal* entries to allow a tentative identification of the Doctor’s character model (with all the caveats flagged up by Powell himself).

See the “Dance Character Models” page on the AP website, anthonypowell.org.

It is evident that Powell has been at pains to sidestep the clichéd incorporation of notorious individuals such as Aleister Crowley, the self-styled Beast 666, whose biographer records multiple appropriations by novelists including Orwell. Trelawney is plainly not intended to “be” Crowley: indeed the borrowings for the character constitute a model of creative restraint. Trelawney’s “vision of visions” mantra (familiar to General Conyers) may have an echo of Crowley’s satanic grace – “Do what though wilt shall be the whole of the law” – but precious little of the Great Beast has made it into *Dance* in the way of manner, physical resemblance or mode of speech. This is certainly deliberate, for

Reverend Montague Summers
Powell had lunched with Crowley through the offices of Dennis Wheatley and saw him subsequently. Powell found the magus absurd yet “intensely sinister, both in exterior and manner”.

By 1934 the Great Beast had metamorphosed into the Great Bore. It would not be until Crowley’s rediscovery by the 1960s counterculture that he would regain his notoriety, appearing on the cover of the Beatles’ Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band and as inspiration to the real-life models for Murlock’s character. The latter, it is suggested by Canon Fenneau, believes himself to be a reincarnation of Trelawney. At the time of their meeting with 666 Wheatley and Powell seemed to have been at greater risk of being touched for a loan than of suffering from the ill-effects of satanic power.

To this troika of individuals, each with their own interest in the occult, is introduced a fourth and less familiar personage. If Crowley was the magical practitioner extraordinaire, and Wheatley well on the way to being hailed as “Britain’s occult uncle” on the strength of his 1934 thriller The Devil Rides Out, Powell could hardly have failed to be intrigued by the Reverend Montague Summers. For one thing his 1926 History of Witchcraft and Demonology was said to have set the subject back four hundred years, though swallowed whole by Wheatley. How well he and Powell knew each other remains unclear as does much about this purported clergyman: what was known then was sufficient to have him sent packing by alarmed bishops whenever a clerical living hove into his view.

It is certain that Summers knew a very great deal more about the demonic than even a diocesan exorcist had any right to and, for all his clerical garb resembling a Trollopian prelate in society, conducted himself disgracefully. Only a series of cover-ups by the hierarchy and well-intending editors kept the lid on scandals of national proportions. Summers confided that he was sexually aroused only by young Catholic men whose subsequent corruption afforded him inexhaustible pleasure. A recent academic book accords one of his ceremonies in Hampstead on Boxing Day 1918 the unexpected status of “the earliest black mass for which there was reliable evidence”.

Some time later Summers received the greatest fright of his life during an encounter with the demonic and underwent a sudden if ambiguous conversion, devoting the rest of his time to the issuance of dire warnings against involvement with arcana. Whether, like Wheatley, he followed his own prophylactic advice seems doubtful for one so deeply compromised. A thinly-veiled Summers appears in the former’s To the Devil a Daughter as the sinister but wonderfully named Canon Copely-Syle. It is Baker’s opinion that Powell drew upon this frankly two-dimensional character (both of them bad) in the creation of Canon Paul Fenneau in Hearing Secret Harmonies.

This seems misjudged to me for a number of reasons, not least that Powell denied any such borrowings. Nor is there any obvious precedent in Powell’s work for the importation of another writer’s character, however much he may have admired its construction – and this one was of barely animated cardboard. On the other hand, by Powell’s own account real people encountered in life contributed a personality trait here and a physical mannerism there to his characters, and Summers, being less well known than
Crowley, might have been hard to ignore altogether. It seems most likely that the mechanism at work here was personal knowledge of the original and the reaction of others to him.

At one point during Wheatley’s friendship with Summers the clergyman attempted to perpetrate a fraud upon his student in the black arts and was discovered. For a moment the mask slipped to reveal a demoniac, at least in Wheatley’s account. By contrast Fenneau is an infinitely subtler creation than Copely-Syle – or anything Britain’s Occult Uncle ever came up with – his character conveying forbidden knowledge gained well outside the seal of the confessional, wreathed in a characteristically Powellian aura of ambiguity.

It seems not unreasonable to conclude that the author remained true to the modus operandi honed through the eleven preceding volumes of Dance. An encounter with Summers may well have provided a notion of the dramatic potential of a renegade priest. The gothic overtones of To the Devil a Daughter would surely also have furnished some amusement at Wheatley’s expense as well as a certain admiration for the book’s sheer pace. Powell wrote seeking his friend’s advice on the plotting of Dance. So perhaps one can best interpret the creation of Fenneau as a realisation of the potentiality of Summers rather than anything as crude as direct inspiration by the Copely-Syle character.

“Sex, jingoism and black magic” were the words extracted from a friendly reviewer and splashed on the covers of Wheatley’s subsequent books. One newspaper blamed him for “an outbreak of occult nudity in the home counties”. Not precisely Powellian but not that far removed either, for there are stranger things abroad than we dream of. The fifth member of the Wheatley pentagram was one Rollo Ahmed, a West Indian magician and fraudster who represented himself as a reincarnated ancient Egyptian. Like most of Wheatley’s magi he had a weakness for rituals involving virgins and goats. During one of these he failed to master the demon who made all his teeth fall out. It must surely have made Powell laugh but, as he observed on another occasion, real life is sometimes just too crude to be usable.

The Devil is a Gentleman by Phil Baker is published by Dedalus in hardback at £25.
BOOK REVIEW

These Charming People
by Michael Arlen
First published in 1923;
new edition by Capuchin Classics, 2010;
£7.99

Reviewed by David Butler

In 2005 I set myself the task of looking into some aspects of the life and works of Michael Arlen, an author of whom at the time I knew very little. I was intrigued by the reference to his novel The Green Hat in Anthony Powell’s first Dance volume, A Question of Upbringing, and the resultant jottings were kindly included in an earlier volume of this Newsletter. Arlen was a best-selling novelist who enjoyed unrivalled celebrity and success in his inter-war heyday, on both sides of the Atlantic; but his success was towering rather than enduring, his mannered style and rarified settings losing their allure as the glow of the roaring 1920s became obscured by the economic and political storm clouds of the 1930s. Nonetheless, in referring to The Green Hat, Powell knew that to a 1950s readership the book was sufficiently emblematic of the early 1920s to require no further explanation. (Incidentally, DJ Taylor does the same thing with the novel in his 2009 work Ask Alice, in which the character of Constance is to be found reading it “continuously”. Although one wonders whether that device is more of a nod to Anthony Powell and Dance than it is to Arlen himself, given various other allusions to Dance which appear in Ask Alice.) In any case, if it has to be acknowledged that the Arlen spell did wear off as far as inter-war readers were concerned, a fresh reading of his works surely also reveals a cast of characters, an evocation of period and a sheer skill in storytelling which deserve the attention of continuing generations of readers.

And so it was with particular delight that I recently learnt of Capuchin Classics’ intention to re-publish These Charming People, a collection of Arlen tales which first appeared in 1923. Capuchin is a new imprint dedicated to reviving unjustly neglected works of fiction, and other authors recently or to be published under its banner include Nancy Mitford, Saki, and GK Chesterton. Capuchin had already published an edition of The Green Hat last year which – I believe I am correct in stating – has become their best-selling title to date. This new edition features a brief foreword by Emma Tennant, novelist and niece of Stephen Tennant. It comprises 15 stories which – as the original 1923 subtitle and marketing blurb explains – together present a
tapestry of the fortunes, follies, adventures, gallantries and general activities of Shelmerdene (that lovely lady), Lord Tarlyon, Mr Michael Wagstaffe, Mr Ralph Wyndham Trevor and some other of their friends of the lighter sort.

The stories are self-contained, but linked by common characters and purport to have been gathered together by their budding writer friend, the above-mentioned Wyndham Trevor. Our location is firmly fixed on Mayfair, although we are permitted the occasional Saturday-to-Monday, and an odd provincial excursion to Hampstead. Among the cast of characters, we are introduced to Wagstaffe, a modern-day Robin Hood in the guise of a confidence trickster; George Tarlyon, the wise owl of the group; and the delightful Shelmerdene, a black-haired beauty gallantly shouldering the burden of a tragic past, in which respect she prefigures Iris Storm, heroine of *The Green Hat*; and also bears comparison with Lily Christine, the eponymous star of another, later, Michael Arlen novel, and a particular favourite of mine amongst his characters.

The stories themselves provide a mix of romance, intrigue and crime, with the odd urban ghost story thrown into the mix. By way of example, the tale called “When the Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square” tells of a man’s plan to expose his wife’s adultery in order to secure his own freedom, a plan carefully conceived but which goes disastrously and ludicrously wrong. The title of this story, of course, was later taken up as a popular song. Throughout the book Arlen’s trademark cynical, satirical streak is to the fore, as in this description of Shelmerdene’s estranged husband …

He was a very good-looking man in a naval sort of way – which was just as well, as he was in the navy – and his eyes had that bleary, bitten look which they tell you comes from being out on the high seas in all weathers, but you and I know that it comes from drinking gin-and-bitters all hours, there being so little else to do on a battleship.

… while his characters are his familiar war-weary, world-weary, well-to-do Mayfairians, sometimes referred to as the Lost Generation, who in Arlen’s hands are aristocrats of such languid manner that they and their stories can sometimes seem to move in slow motion, and for whom one fears even the raising of an eyebrow might prove an exertion too far. Perhaps reflecting his personal drive for worldly success, Arlen as author never allows himself to stray too far from the reader’s eyeline as he slips in waggish references to young authors, editors and Armenians along the way.

Although *The Green Hat* was undoubtedly Arlen’s blockbuster, it is possible to argue that the short story format suited him better, as it permits his prose style – admittedly somewhat too rich for certain tastes – to be taken in moderate doses while emphasizing his skills as a pure storyteller, with all that suggests in terms of his ability to conjure up denouements amusing, shocking, surprising or downright depressing as the case may be; and to deliver the punchline swiftly. Many of the characters populating *These Charming People* re-appear in Arlen’s 1925 work *May Fair*, a follow-up collection of urban tales, so readers who agree with that evaluation may go on there to enjoy more Arlen in short story form.
OBITUARY

Nancy Cutbirth Small
(1940-2009)

The following obituary appeared on 9 December 2009 in the Western Herald (Kalamazoo, Michigan) for Nancy Cutbirth Small. She will be best remembered by Society members for producing a publication called Anthony Powell Communication that ran for two dozen or so editions in the 1970s and 1980s. (See James Tucker’s article in Newsletter #14 for more details on this publication.)

Nancy Cutbirth Small, a long time Western Michigan University English professor, environmentalist, and local war activist, passed away on Nov. 27, 2009 after a long fight with cancer in her Kalamazoo home.

Born on Sept. 1 in Port Arthur, Texas, Small spent many years of her childhood in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela and Santiago, Cuba where her father managed oil refineries.

She earned a PhD in English literature at the University of Texas in Austin and began teaching in the Department of English at WMU in 1971. She taught Renaissance literature, Shakespeare, and English poetry, among many other subjects. Small met her future husband, Tom, also a professor of English at WMU. They co-taught a Shakespeare course as well as co-directing the annual WMU Shakespeare Festival.

She was also the editor of an Anthony Powell newsletter [sic]. She taught for 25 and a half years at WMU.

Arnie Johnston, a retired English professor and department head, remembers the couple well.

“My memories of Nancy almost all involve Tom, because they were such a wonderful team, working ardently through their Quaker group for the cause of world peace, and tirelessly laboring on behalf of various initiatives to preserve and enhance the environment,” he wrote in an e-mail.

Johnston said that Tom and Nancy worked to improve the habitat at Maple Street Magnet School, where his wife Deborah Ann Percy, was principal until 2007.

“Nancy and Tom spearheaded the rehabilitation and flourishing of the Arcadia Creek area on Maple Street’s grounds, as well as the creation of a Rain Garden in the school’s courtyard. Debby remembers being impressed not only with Nancy’s willingness to do the hard work of digging, weeding, and planting, but also her enthusiastic inclusion in the project of as many of Maple Street’s students as possible,” he said.

“Both the cause of peace and that of nature conservancy will miss Nancy’s devotion. All of us at Western, however, will miss her as a wonderful friend and colleague.”

Nancy was also a founding member of Kalamazoo Non-violent Opponents of War (KNOW), which held a rally every Sunday in front of the Federal Building downtown Kalamazoo to protest the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
Raelyn Joyce, who taught at Kalamazoo Valley Community College for over 30 years and is secretary for KNOW, remembers her dedication to the group.

“[Nancy] not only started the idea of holding Sunday anti-war vigils as mentioned in the obituary, she actively promoted attendance at the vigil by speaking to each person who came to the vigil and getting the person’s name and contact information and eventually creating a huge master list of KNOW supporters to whom an electronic KNOW newsletter was regularly sent by her and Tom,” Joyce wrote in an e-mail.

In 1999 they co-founded the Kalamazoo Area Chapter of Wild Ones, a national organization that is devoted to natural landscaping.

In 1995 Nancy began transforming the Small’s lawn of their house on Waite Avenue into wildlife habitat, with Michigan native plants. A Quaker, Small was a member of Friends Committee for Unity with Nature, a Quaker environmental organization.

“She loved beauty, natural beauty in the form of flowers, butterflies, trees, and such,” Joyce wrote. “To encourage the Kalamazoo Friends Meeting [a Kalamazoo Quaker church] to continue to maintain its native plant garden, which she and Tom helped start, she put together for us, adults and children of the Meeting, an album of pictures of beautiful butterflies that would be attracted by these native plants.”

“Looking at this album of pictures of butterflies makes me happy and grateful to Nancy for her efforts to teach and lead the rest of us.”

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“That boy will be the death of me,” said Stringham, as we walked quickly together up the road.

[Anthony Powell; A Question of Upbringing]
“Look ’ere, I am ringing from Yorkshire”. It is 12.45pm on Sunday and the call has come out of nowhere. “Are you the writer fella? Seen y’name on the Powell website. Want to know about this Umfraville character. Real name Patrick Tritton. Did y’know him?”

I confessed that I had. But what exactly was his interest in the character model for dear old Dicky?

“I have been in New York. Found a lovely watch for t’wife. Cartier Tank. On the back were engraved, “To Patrick Tritton on his 21st birthday from Father”. Wife said, “Scrub it oot and put my name on’t”. But I reckoned ’e musta been special to get a watch like that for his birthday, ’im so young. So I looked ’im oop. Not much except this Powell website saying ee’s t’original of Umfraville.”

At this point my own wife hands me a note which reads: “It is very rude to ring at lunchtime especially on Sunday”. So I tell our friend to read the book. All twelve volumes preferably. There is a strange noise at the other end of the line like a pudding being strangled followed by a click.

Must have been a beautiful watch.

War left, on the one hand, a passionate desire to tackle a lot of work; on the other, never to do any work again. It was a state of mind Robert Burton ... would have well understood. Irresolution appealed to him as one of the myriad forms of Melancholy, although he was, of course, concerned in the main with no mere temporary depression or fidgetiness, but a "chronic or continued disease, a settled humour". Still, post-war melancholy might have rated a short subsection in the great work: The Anatomy of Melancholy.

[Anthony Powell; Books do Furnish a Room]
I have just located and re-read my photocopy of Clive James’s “They Like It Here” – a review of Dance that was published shortly after Hearing Secret Harmonies was published in the States. Although James is critical of what he calls the “stylistic difficulties” present in the last three volumes, most of what he has to say about Dance (and about Powell himself) is quite positive. And James’s own writing style is – to me, at least – quite impressive.

A couple of examples:

Powell’s view of the British ruling class is not at all romantic, whereas Waugh’s was very romantic indeed: Brideshead Revisited is merely the first culmination of Waugh’s love-affair with the aristocracy, whom he venerated holus-bolus, not only putting Lady Diana Cooper on a level with St Helena, which was quite reasonable, but putting the whole upper crust on a level with Lady Diana Cooper, which was not.

Powell’s scope of sympathy is wider, taking in not just the beau monde that includes the aristocracy but a good deal of the ordinary world that includes and replenishes the beau monde. He is an insider who can report on the confusion of what he is a part of. Waugh, especially in Brideshead Revisited but also in Sword of Honour, was an arriviste who worshipped the old order’s exclusive coherence, reporting pessimistically on its collapse.

The network of people in The Music of Time is widely heterogenous. Instead of a sense of the old order passing, there is a sense of the disorder continuing – only mutability has ever been constant, and will persist in being so. Change, loss, and death are regrettable, but the regretting is done without bitterness, even with a certain optimism, as if there were a kind of joy in accepting the facts of erosion.

One can disagree with much of what James says (I’m not at all sure that he’s being entirely fair to Waugh) while still agreeing that he says it very well.

**Society News**

### Local Groups

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

**NY & NE USA Group**  
Area: New York & NE USA  
Contact: Leatrice Fountain  
Email: leatrice.fountain@gmail.com

**Baltic Group**  
Area: Sweden & Finland  
Contact: Regina Rehbinder  
Email: reginarehbinder@hotmail.com

**Toronto Group**  
Area: Toronto, Canada  
Contact: Joan Williams  
Email: jwilliamsto@hotmail.com

Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you wish to make contact with a group and don’t have email. If you wish to start a local group the Hon. Secretary can advise on the number of members in your area.

### Subscriptions

**PLEASE RENEW PROMPTLY**

Members are reminded that subscription renewals are due on 1 April. We are pleased that rates remain unchanged this year (see back page for current rates). Prompt renewal is appreciated as this obviates the expense of sending reminders.

Sadly most of those UK members with Standing Orders failed to update the instructions to their bank last year, despite a reminder. If you have not done so, please adjust your Standing Order now to reflect the current rates.

Members are also reminded that subscriptions and membership enquiries should be sent to Graham & Dorothy Davie at:

**Anthony Powell Society Memberships**  
Beckhouse Cottage  
Hellifield  
Skipton  
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Email: membership@anthonypowell.org  
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Fax: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483

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

**Newsletter & Journal Editor,**  
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**Copy Deadlines**

*society_newsletter#39, Summer 2010*
Copy Deadline: 14 May 2010  
Publication Date: 4 June 2010

*society_newsletter#40, Autumn 2010*
Copy Deadline: 13 August 2010  
Publication Date: 3 September 2010

**Secret Harmonies #5, 2010**
Copy Deadline: 10 September 2010  
Publication Date: 22 October 2010
St George’s Day & AP Society 10th Anniversary Collage Event
Saturday 24 April 2010
Venue: The Wheatsheaf
25 Rathbone Place, London, W1
1230-1630 hrs
Come along and learn more about collage, one of AP’s artistic pastimes. Make your own collage and help us build a large communal collage to celebrate AP and the Society’s 10th Birthday. As last year the session will be led by artist Laura Miller.
Buy your own lunch. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Small charge on the day to cover room hire, materials and refreshments. Members & non-members welcome. Please contact Hon. Secretary.

London Quarterly Pub Meets
Saturday 8 May 2010
Saturday 14 August 2010
Saturday 13 November 2010
The Audley, Mount Street, London, W1
1230 to 1530 hrs
Good beer, good food and informal conversation in a Victorian pub AP would have known. Why not bring something AP-related to interest us? Members & non-members welcome. Further details from the Hon. Secretary.

AP Society 10th Birthday & 50th Anniversary of Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant
Tuesday 1 June 2010
As seems appropriate we are visiting one of London’s renowned Chinese restaurants
Meet: 1830 for 1900 hrs
Beehive, 126 Crawford St, London W1
Dine: 1930 hrs
Phoenix Palace Chinese Restaurant
5 Glentworth Street, London NW1
We will meet in the Beehive for a quick pre-prandial drink and then take the 3 minute walk to the restaurant
Cost £30 for 4 course set menu, including service but not drink
Advanced booking (with payment) advised so we can ensure we have a large enough table. Members & non-members welcome. Please contact Hon. Secretary.

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Nothing is interesting unless you are interested, and conversely.
[Anthony Powell; A Writer’s Notebook]
**Anthony Powell Society Newsletter #38**

**Dates for Your Diary**

**Whitechapel Bell Foundry Tour**
Saturday 23 October 2010
Meet: 0930 hrs prompt
Whitechapel Bell Foundry
32/34 Whitechapel Road, London E1
Cost: £10 per person

Whitechapel Bell Foundry is Britain’s oldest manufacturing company, having been established in 1570 and being in continuous business ever since.

An unusual tour of this working foundry which is a genuine part of Britain’s cultural heritage and an intriguing look at the English art of bell-ringing.

Advanced booking (with payment) essential as places are strictly limited.
Members & non-members welcome.
Please contact Hon. Secretary.

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**Bodleian Library Tour and Oxford Pub Lunch**
Saturday 19 June 2010
Meet: 1015 hrs prompt
Bodleian Library Main Entrance
Cost: £12 per person for the tour

The Bodleian is one of the great libraries of the world and was an essential research resource for Powell’s biography of John Aubrey. The 1½ hour guided tour will include the basement and reading rooms.

After the tour we’ll adjourn across the road to the King’s Arms for pub lunch.

Even if you can’t come on the tour you will be welcome to join us in the pub.

Advanced booking (with payment) essential as places are strictly limited.
Members & non-members welcome.
Please contact Hon. Secretary.

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**Extraordinary London Pub Meet**
Saturday 26 June 2010
The Audley, Mount Street, London W1
1230 to 1530 hrs

Dr Nick Birns will discuss What’s Become of Waring. Details as London Pub Meets on page 16.

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**Annual General Meeting 2010**
Saturday 23 October 2010
1400 hrs
V&A Museum of Childhood
Bethnal Green Road, London E2

Followed at 1500 hrs by a talk AP’s Edwardian Childhood by Noreen Marshall
Senior Curator, V&A Museum of Childhood and Society Hon. Archivist

Further details to follow

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**London Group Annual Powell Birthday Lunch**
Saturday 4 December 2010
Central London venue to be arranged.
All welcome. Details when available from the Hon. Secretary.

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***************
We need your views on events
See page 22
***************
Local Group News

London & SE England Group Pub Meets

By Keith & Noreen Marshall

The Society’s London and SE England Group gathered, as usual, at the Audley on Saturday 13 February for a mainly literary conversation over lunch.

Early discussions centred around Anthony Powell and Somerset Maugham; research into AP; and Lady Antonia Fraser’s “Harold Pinter diaries”. At least one reader of the latter found it so dull they recommended it be bought only when it appears for £1 in charity shops – and that despite all the Powell references!

Worryingly there was a collective failure to pinpoint the source of a comment somewhere in AP’s writings to the effect that when reading the classics, if you find anything boring then just skip over it. In the immortal words of 1950s magazines “answers on a postcard, please”.

We had with us a copy of Susan Hill’s recent book Howard’s End is on the Landing, her account of a resolve to read from her existing books for a year. This was a consequence of the realisation that she had so many unread books, found during her house-wide search for the book in the title. There are a couple of mentions of AP, including the admission that she feels that Powell is among the authors she is unlikely to read again. One chapter is called ‘Not Met’ and she explains that this derives from the fact that

To my amazement when I first flipped through the index to Anthony Powell’s autobiography [sic] before reading it I came upon my own name. Hill, Susan. Novelist (Not Met).

In retrospect, this is something of a mystery, since as we know there is no Powell autobiography, nor does Hill appear in the indexes to either Powell’s memoirs or journals.

Of course such discussion led to our wondering how successful any of us would be in a similar endeavour not to buy new books. And then on to other aspects of book owning and collecting, such as: Is it acceptable to write in a book? How do you arrange your books, if at all?

As so often, it seems, conversation turned into slightly darker territory in talking of Dennis Wheatley and other thriller writers, in particular Nevil Shute’s use of metal fatigue as cause of an air disaster in his 1948 novel No Highway, which appeared to predict the real life Comet airliner crashes of 1954 (crashes which resulted in the Comet being out of commercial service until 1958).

Hauntings and the supernatural came up, leading inexorably to the ghost stories of...
MR James and their habit of lingering in the mind. James was Provost of Eton College when AP was a pupil there, and AP refers to him in *Infants of Spring* as “a shrouded but powerful eminence in the wings” – a fitting description for a master of the uncanny story, after all.

Also discussed were universities and degree courses, the 1980s anti-contraception campaigner Victoria Gillick, hypnotherapy, ladies of the night and Berwick Street, languages, shopping, cartoon strips, branding and logos, students dying young, the Elgar Society, and 1960s and 70s ephemera.


There was also an extra pub meet on 9 January at the Audley when Jeanne and Joe Read were in the UK visiting. This was attended by Stephen Holden, Keith and Noreen Marshall and Robert Tresman, and we talked a good deal about the characters in *Dance* as well as the usual assorted subjects.

Jeff and Maria Manley and Keith and Noreen Marshall also tried out The Queen’s Head & Artichoke pub in Albany Street (close to the Powells’ Chester Gate house) while Jeff and Maria were in the UK during February. The original intention had been to try the Chester Arms (on the corner of Chester Gate), being a pub which AP knew. But the Chester Arms was closed and Jeff subsequently discovered this was because the receivers had been called in and the pub is currently for sale. So we ate at ‘The Artichoke’ which is highly recommended.

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*The Quarterly Review*

A classic journal of ideas and culture  
[www.quarterly-review.org](http://www.quarterly-review.org)

Founded by Walter Scott, Robert Southey and George Canning, the *Quarterly Review* (1809-1967) was one of the most influential journals in British history. Revived in 2007, the *QR* Mark II follows its great predecessor in providing uncensored political analysis and stimulating cultural critique – from abortion to Zimbabwe, via *Nosferatu* and Powell.

Contributors include Rowan Williams, Richard Body, Ezra Mishan, Tito Perdue, Kirkpatrick Sale, Keith Waldrop, Rupert Sheldrake, Taki and many others.

Complimentary sample copies and subscriptions available by calling +44 (0) 1507 339 056 or email to editor@quarterly-review.org
William S Burroughs. Throughout the 1950s he owned various typewriters, since he was constantly pawning them. Many of his manuscripts were done on a Remington. *The Naked Lunch* was typed from handwritten notes by Jack Kerouac, presumably on Kerouac’s Underwood. In a 1965 *Paris Review* interview Burroughs says he uses a Facit Portable. By the 1970s he was using an Olympia SG1.

Raymond Chandler. Underwood Noiseless.


William Faulkner. Underwood Standard Portable; Royal KHM.

Ian Fleming. Royal portables, including a gold-plated Royal Quiet Deluxe.

Dashiell Hammett. Royal De Luxe.

Ernest Hemingway. Corona 3; Underwood Noiseless Portable; various Royal portables; Halda portable.

Jack Kerouac. Underwood portable. *On the Road* was typed on a continuous roll of paper.


Cormac McCarthy. Olivetti Lettera 32. The *Guardian* reported on 1 December 2009 that this typewriter is be to put up for auction, with the proceeds, expected to fetch $15,000-$20,000, to go to the Santa Fe Institute, a scientific research facility in the writer’s home state of New Mexico. This machine is almost 50 years old and estimated to have produced some 5 million words without a service.
Bloom himself remains a somewhat confused conception. We are told the most intimate details about him, but at the end of it he is not such a graphic figure as Fagin or Monsieur Nissim Bernard: nor does one feel that a fuller physiological account of either of the two latter would have resulted in more photographic portraits. The fact is that the presentation of Bloom suffers from the usual difficulties of attempting to record in great detail the mental processes of a character other than the author's projection of himself - in this case Stephen. As Bloom’s thoughts are, in fact, Joyce’s thoughts (even though at the remove of being Joyce’s thoughts of what Bloom’s thoughts might be) Bloom ends by giving the impression of being more like Joyce than the romantically conceived Stephen, who is always treated as if he necessarily belonged to a higher plane than those who surround him. After seven hundred pages we do not have a sense of knowing Stephen better than, say, Benjamin Constant’s Adolph after fifty. Joyce was not a writer with the imaginative potency of Dickens and Kipling on the one hand; or James and Proust on the other; and he does not, perhaps, set out to create character in the sense in which this phrase is often used; but all novelists are to some extent to be judged by the vitality of their creatures, and in this direction his abilities are not seen at their most outstanding; though minor figures like Mr Deasy suddenly emerge with vividness.

[Anthony Powell; TLS, 30 October 1948]
My mind, and those of the other trustees’, regularly contemplates the arrangement of events for members. This year’s programme of events (pages 16-17) is the result of our latest deliberations.

These events are almost all suggested (and organised) by the trustees. This is fine, up to a point – we expect to have ideas for events and we expect to organise most of them. However it is good when others volunteer for this, as Mike Jay did with last summer’s tour of the Bodleian Library.

What it does mean is that you, the members, are offered what we dream up and think may be of interest. You are not necessarily therefore getting what you would especially like; and we trustees are not getting your good ideas. This is your opportunity to change that.

First of all I would like to hear from as many members as possible with your ideas for Society events. **What would you like the Society to arrange by way of events? What would you attend?** While I don’t promise that we will arrange everything suggested (clearly not all ideas will be practical or affordable) I do commit that we will consider everything suggested. **So please write or email me with your ideas.** Just a word of warning though: the more complex and prestigious the event the more expensive; venue hire and catering are especially costly.

Secondly, what follows is a list of some of the ideas we currently have for future events. These are, naturally, London & SE England-centric as this is where the critical mass of members are located. **Here are some ideas which might be feasible, please tell me which are of interest:**

- Tour of the British Library
- Tour of Buckingham Palace and/or Royal Mews
- Visit to the Imperial War Museum
- Re-creation of the Military Attachés’ tour of France and Low Countries (as undertaken by AP and fictionalised in *The Military Philosophers*). If arranged this will be a long-term project; routes etc. have to be researched in detail.
- Outings to places of literary/artistic interest (but which may not be AP-related), with a lunch and guided walk. For example Rye, East Sussex is an obvious candidate. Other ideas welcome.
- Dinner at one of London’s top Indian restaurants.
- Saturday or Sunday morning coffee event (**ie.** coffee and pastries with a short talk).
- **Dance** intensive study day or weekend.

Thirdly, a couple of the trustees are looking at the feasibility of a weekend in Venice. The currently favoured format includes a dinner (perhaps with a talk) and a tour of some key Powell-related sights. The plan is to make this very informal and flexible with members arranging their own travel and accommodation to suit their finances and their desire for a longer or shorter break. This is not yet certain to happen; a lot has yet to be researched; so do not expect it until at least 2012. But Venice is not lost and forgotten!

As you can see there are plenty of ideas, but **we need to know what you would like and your ideas.** We would also like people to do some of the organising both in the UK and for the overseas groups.
From the APLIST

Recent Conversation from the Society’s Email Discussion Group

From Jeff Manley
In *O, How the Wheel Becomes It!* (surely the worst title he ever chose) Powell arranges the pivot point of the plot to depend on Shadbold’s former love interest Isolde reappearing on his doorstep after several decades at the very moment a TV interview crew arrive a day earlier than expected. An extremely unlikely confluence of coincidences and yet if it didn’t happen exactly that way, Shadbold could well have escaped his fate of embarrassment by TV.

From Adam Bohnet
I rather like it [*O, How the Wheel Becomes It!*], actually. It is a bit long. (I am reminded of the memoirs for the unpleasant civil servant in the *The Fisher King*. The civil servant himself wants to call them *His Helmet Will be a Hive for Bees* and his daughter argues that, as publishers like shorter titles, he might rename it *Bees in my Bonnet*. On the other hand, I rather enjoyed the discussion of the title at the beginning of the novel. Perhaps long titles go well with short novels.

I suppose in addition to the Widmerpool awards, we could have an argument as to worst Powell title, but that might result in even louder arguments.

From David Hallett
I am reminded of *The Pistons of our Locomotives Sing the Songs of our Workers* aka. *Engine Melody*.

Having recently been through both *Wheel* and *Hamlet* again, but for the first time in close proximity, I was more alert this time (for whatever reason) to the flawed relationship nuances in the line which follows “O, how the wheel becomes it,” which is “It is the false steward that stole his master’s daughter”. I was thinking about the title in light of Powell’s fondness for Shakespearean quotations as titles (*Wheel* is the 5th consecutive William Shakespeare-drawn title for Powell) and how throughout the memoirs the title line always seems to evoke in relation to the stages of Powell’s life described in each volume something of the circumstances in which the line is uttered in Shakespeare in addition to the imagery of each phrase by itself. In *Wheel*, as so much of the novel’s conflict rests in problems of relationships causing Shad’s “centre” to stop holding, I was thinking of a parallel with Ophelia’s mental decline and the fact that so many of the lyrics she chants in that passage have something to do with relationship betrayals, lies, failures etc.

As a sidenote there is also the echo of Nick with Widmerpool in *The Soldier’s Art*:

“Like the Unjust Steward.”
“Who was he?”
“In the Bible.”
“I thought you meant an officer of that name.”
From Adam Bohnet
Also, I wonder if these are all really that shocking as coincidences. Ultimately, these are unwelcome coincidences only because Shadbold has been trying several deceptions too far. Otherwise: old friend, rival and possibly lover’s memoirs, old girlfriend (shared with this friend, as it happens), all united by providence sounds like nothing more than an excuse for alcoholic consumption than a disaster. It sounds likely to kill only in the sense that Moreland died from an excess of nostalgia. Think of how Nick Jenkins soon learns to view with almost complete detachment the fellow lovers of Jean.

From Jeff Manley
I agree that it’s a bit of a stretch that Shadbold should get so worked up about the potential revelations of Winterwade’s affair with Isolde. His original concern about the publication of Winterwade’s memoirs was that they would reveal a schoolboy homosexual advance on Winterwade by Shadbold. He is spared that since it is not mentioned but then becomes obsessed by the description of the affair and its potential embarrassment. For someone of Shadbold’s age to become so stirred up about this is hard to credit. But I still think it would have been more effective to blame the revelation on Cubbage (the TV presenter) rather than coincidence since the opportunity presented itself given Cubbage’s manipulative nature. And it would make him seem even more despicable. But Powell seems to go out of his way to pin it on a series of unlikely coincidences.

From Adam Bohnet
I didn’t think that concerns about the revelation of the homosexual affair was a major concern for Shadbold at all. I thought it really was a matter of unfinished rivalry between the two, to which their previous affair might have contributed. After all, Shadbold doesn’t seem at all concerned to conceal the affair – he wrote a play about it, *Irregular Conjugation*, to celebrate it.

Quite possibly I skipped the vital line. I think the school affair between Shadbold and Winterwade is a significant aspect of the book, but I didn’t think it was the key reason why Shadbold opposed publication.

From Jeff Manley
I think you may be right that it was primarily the rivalry on a professional level and maybe the potential discussion of the war record that concerned him, but he was relieved when he found that the homosexual affair wasn’t mentioned. The affair between Isolde and Winterwade, however, was not known to him until he read the diaries, so that didn’t contribute to his dread in reading them for the publisher.

From Adam Bohnet
I agree that Powell may well have been writing to answer the claims of some his critics. You are probably right there. I don’t, however, agree that is a coincidence to far. Unlike the *Dance*, it is not a long set of novels united by a series of coincidences (none of which seem to unlikely to me, but which might stretch the credulity of some). Instead we have a short novel set around one sudden meeting of a series of events, which should not be seen as unbelievable by anyone, as such coincidences do happen, or we wouldn’t have a word to describe them. For some
reason, it feels a bit like Saki, now that I reread it.

Thank you, to Jeff for bringing up *O, How the Wheel Becomes It*. This may be a high crime, but I think it is a wonderful book. Among the many enjoyable passages, I enjoyed the following:

> Notwithstanding the comparative leanness of the output Shadbold was not to be dismissed as a light-weight, a mere hack. He had worked hard reviewing other people’s books up hill and down dale, tirelessly displaying himself on the media and elsewhere in every variety of lecture, quiz, panel-game (at the last of which, endowed with an exceedingly reliable memory supported by wide reading, he was unusually proficient), also always prepared to offer views on marginally political subjects for which he was less accredited by instinct. Insofar as the cliché can be without irony, he had become a respected literary voice.

Practically the definition of hack, at least in the modern televised era – someone who displays himself to the media as an author to talk about a wide range of subjects, including political subjects, concerning which he knows little. I am reminded of a number of academics who, while not knowing a word of Korean, nevertheless feel it necessary to speak at length in the media concerning the “dangerous rise of anti-Americanism among misguided South Korean youth” every time that there is a large demonstration. But Powell gives the hack his due, allowing that, as hack, he is both hard-working and proficient.

From Joe Trenn
I have not yet read *Wheel*. My expectation is that I’ll be disappointed, perhaps I should read it without expectations, but can that be done having read *Dance*?

Powell seems to be engaging in Powellian irony here to me. As Adam points out the paragraph offered as evidence of Shadbold’s status as no lightweight, no hack provides the very definition of hack. None of these activities “tirelessly” engaged in by Shadbold are activities that Powell engaged in with any regularity. As a result his popular literary status is much lower than that of many other shall we say Shadboldian writers of his time. We all of course know differently. ■
DJ Taylor writing on 22 November 2009 in the *Independent on Sunday* makes this comment vis-à-vis the literary “Bad Sex Awards”:

All this raises an interesting question, one whose boundaries extend far beyond polite literature: what is the best response to the prospect of public humiliation? Rage, passive acceptance and bleak indifference all have their supporters, but nothing really beats an attempt to carry the battle into the enemy’s camp. There is a rather telling scene in Anthony Powell’s wartime novel *The Valley of Bones* (1964) in which a gang of subalterns decide to rag an incompetent fellow-officer named Bithel by placing an effigy in his bed. Instead of taking offence, Bithel presses the figure to his chest and dances grotesquely around the room with it. Rather than cooking Bithel’s goose for all time, the incident enables him to establish what Powell’s narrator Nick Jenkins calls “a certain undoubted prestige”. Whoever steps up to the rostrum to collect the Bad Sex Award should bear this lesson in mind.

Slowly, but very deliberately, the brooding edifice of seduction, creaking and incongruous, came into being, a vast Heath Robinson mechanism, dually controlled by them and lumbering gloomily down vistas of triteness. With a sort of heavy-fisted dexterity the mutually adapted emotions of each of them became synchronised, until the unavoidable anticlimax was at hand. Later they dined at a restaurant quite near the flat.

[Anthony Powell; *Afternoon Men*]

DJ Taylor (again) writing in the *Independent* on 10 January 2010:

I most enjoyed reading ... *The Fallen*, Dave Simpson’s intriguing study of the large number of musicians who, in the band’s 33-year history, have played in The Fall, only to fall out, as it were, with the irascible frontman Mark E Smith ... While accepting that *The Fallen* contains quite a bit of score-settling, I have never quite understood why so many writers, artists and musicians are so deeply reluctant to have things printed about them that happen to be true. There is an explosive moment in Anthony Powell’s diary from 1991 when Powell, having been sent a copy of Kingsley Amis’s newly published memoirs, discovers that Amis has included their brisk exchange from 1973 on the death of WH Auden. “Rather a blow,” Amis volunteers. “I’m delighted that shit has gone,” Powell is represented as lobbing back. According to Powell, this was a private remark “not to be repeated in a book”.

But why, if Powell felt so strongly about Auden, disliked his poetry and deplored his flight to America at the start of the Second World War, should he object to the rest of us knowing about it? And why, if he didn’t want his contempt for Auden to become public, did he sound off in the presence of Amis, a man who, experience should have told him, was exactly the kind of person who would report the remark? The same point about reaping and sowing, or indeed about truth, applies to Mark E Smith and his hapless minions. If your career as the leader of the rock band is based on annoying your sidesmen, you shouldn’t be surprised if they want a little of their own back.
Arthur Krystal, writing about F Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood in *The New Yorker*, 16 November 2009 observes:

Fitzgerald’s attitude to Hollywood was as inconsistent as his attitudes toward everything. The warring impulses in him never really subsided. He was alternately sensible and reckless; worldly and adolescent; down to earth and somewhere above Alpha Centauri. He said that he knew more about life in his books than he did in life, and he was right. In life, he simply wanted too much. He wanted to be both a great novelist and a Hollywood hot shot. He wanted to box like Gene Tunney and run downfield like Red Grange. He wanted to write songs like Cole Porter and poetry like John Keats. He wanted the trappings of wealth but was drawn to the social idealism of Marx. He wasn’t so much a walking contradiction as a quivering mass of dreams and ambitions that, depending on how he was feeling and whom he was talking, created a dizzying array of impressions. Anita Loos noticed that people in Hollywood “treated him like an invalid,” and George Cukor found him “very grim, dim, slightly plump”. Anthony Powell, however, after having lunch with Fitzgerald in the MGM commissary, noticed “a schoolmasterish streak, if at the same time an attractive one; an enthusiasm, simplicity of exposition, that might have offered a career as a teacher or university don”. Fitzgerald’s own schoolmaster at Princeton, Christian Gauss, would not have been surprised by these disparate opinions. Fitzgerald, he said, reminded him of all the Karamazov brothers at once.

[Spotted by Forest Ann Newcomer]
From The Guardian, 17 November 2009 from an article by Tony Davis about Penguin books covers:

What was it Anthony Powell said: “books do furnish a room”? Well, bookish objects can express ideas and furnish a room in the same way; sometimes, more succinctly and emphatically. What’s that bookcase for if not to show off what you’ve read, and therefore decorate a home with your erudition?

From the Daily Mail, 11 January 2010, from an abridgement of Lady Antonia Fraser’s Must You Go? My Life with Harold Pinter:

SEPTEMBER 8 [1975]
Heinemann’s lunch for my uncle Tony [Anthony] Powell’s 12th volume of A Dance to the Music Of Time. Sat next to Tony who had [the novelist] Jilly Cooper, blonde and lissom, on his other side. As the star guest, she had begun on his right, but he had switched us over. ‘When the Revolution comes, let it come. But at my lunch, things will be done properly.’ Being an earl’s daughter, I had to be on the right.

From a music review by Stephen Holden [no relation – Ed.] in the New York Times, 10 February 2010:

To borrow the words of the English novelist Anthony Powell, Stephen Sondheim’s “Night Waltz,” from A Little Night Music, might be described as a dance to the music of time. A little giddy, with one foot off the ground and the other perilously perched on tiptoe, the song is the thematic thread in an unfurling Sondheim medley that is the centerpiece of the jazz pianist Barbara Carroll’s new show at the Oak Room of the Algonquin Hotel.

From a restaurant review of Le Colombier (London, SW3) by Nick Harman, 4 December 2009 on the Foodepedia website, www.foodepedia.co.uk:

It’s not often I enter a restaurant and immediately lower the average age of the clientele by about thirty years. All around us glided silver haired, straight-backed gentlemen of ex-Brigadier appearance, accompanied by their good lady wives decked in the family jewellery. It was rather like entering one of the last books of A Dance to the Music of Time. Mark Members over there, Sir Magnus Donners at the door and to the side, balefully watching the throng, Widmerpool himself ... Some people might hanker for a more modern novel approach to cooking it’s true, but when it’s a neighbourhood restaurant we’re talking about you can give me Anthony Powell over Zadie Smith anytime.
Letters to the Editor

Victoria Cross

From John Gilks
Apologies if this is old news. I was watching Scrum V, a television show that is a sort of news round up for Welsh rugby. They did a section in tribute to Sir Tasker Watkins VC, a former Lord Justice of Appeal and long serving president of the Welsh Rugby Union. It seems that Sir Tasker earned his VC commanding a company of 1/5th Battalion of The Welch Regiment during the battle for the Falaise pocket. Could this be the VC that Nick Jenkins is referring to in his conversation with Montgomery in MP? I think it pretty much has to be as it was the only VC awarded to a member of the regiment to that point in the war.

Captain Beefheart

From Kevin Jewell
Just a few words of appreciation and thanks for the work you put in on the Society’s publications. They very swiftly reached and have sustained an impressively high standard. In the latest Newsletter issue I particularly enjoyed Robin Bynoe on Capt. Beefheart and Lady Sophie Huntercombe. Informed, interesting, funny and quirky – it had all the features I look for in a Newsletter contribution.

From John Potter
Thanks for the Society’s Newsletter which I read avidly from cover to cover as soon as it arrived yesterday ... the very challenging Quiz supplement can wait for later.

I was surprised to find Captain Beefheart featured in an interesting article by Robin Bynoe. This sent me scuttling to my CD collection to look up my copy of the Trout Mask Replica album. I had always imagined that I was the only person who reads Powell and also listens to the good Captain and his Magic Band.

The article mentions three early novels by DJ Taylor which were published in paperback under the title Returning. These were listed as Trespass, The Comedy Man, and English Settlement. My own copy of Returning (Timewell Press, 2007) is different. In the edition I have, the three novels are Real Life, Trespass, and The Comedy Man. I think this must be a mistake, unless there are two different collections of Taylor’s novels, which seems unlikely.
Society Merchandise

**John Gould; Dance Class**
American High School student essays from John’s teaching of Dance at Philips Academy. Perceptive insights.
**UK: £11  Overseas: £14**

**Centenary Conference Proceedings**
Collected papers from the 2005 centenary conference at The Wallace Collection, London.
**UK: £10  Overseas: £14**

**Oxford Conference Proceedings**
Collected papers from the 2003 conference at Balliol College, Oxford.
**UK: £8  Overseas: £9**

**Eton Conference Proceedings**
Papers from the 2001 conference. Copies signed by the Society’s Patron.
**UK: £8  Overseas: £9**

**Writing about Anthony Powell**
The talks given at the 2004 AGM by George Lilley, Michael Barber and Nick Birns; introduced by Christine Berberich.
**UK: £4  Overseas: £5**

**The Master and The Congressman**
A 40-page monograph by John Monagan describing his meetings with Powell.
**UK: £4  Overseas: £5**

**Secret Harmonies: Journal of the Anthony Powell Society**

**Centenary Newsletter**
120-page celebratory Centenary Newsletter (issue 21; December 2005).
**UK: £6  Overseas: £7**

**Newsletter Back Numbers**
Back numbers of Newsletter issues 9 to 19, 22 to 29 and 31 onwards are available.
**UK: £1 each  Overseas: £2 each**

**BBC Radio Dramatisation of Dance**
Originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4 between 1979-82. 26 one-hour episodes. For copyright reasons available to Society members only.
**Single CD of 26 MP3 files. £11 (£3 + minimum £8 Donation)**
**26 Audio CDs. £70 (£26 + minimum £44 Donation)**
(Prices apply to both UK & overseas)

**Audio Cassette Tapes of Dance**
Simon Callow reading (abridged) volumes of Dance:
- A Question of Upbringing
- The Kindly Ones
- The Valley of Bones
- The Soldier’s Art
**UK: £3 each  Overseas: £4 each**

**Michael Bakewell; Fitzrovia: London’s Bohemia**
Published in the National Portrait Gallery “Character Sketches” series. Snapshot biographies of Fitzrovian characters including Powell and many of his friends.
**UK; £4.50  Overseas: £7**

**Society Postcard**
**UK: £2  Overseas: £3**

**Wallace Collection Poussin Postcard**
**UK: £2  Overseas: £3**

**Wallace Collection Poussin Poster**
The Wallace Collection’s 48.5 x 67.5 cm (½ life-size) poster of Poussin’s A Dance to the Music of Time. Sent in a poster tube.
**UK: £6  Overseas: £7.50**

**Society Bookmarks**
Pack of 10.  **UK: £1  Overseas: £1.50**
**Society Merchandise**

**Pricing Notes.** The prices shown are the Society members’ prices and are inclusive of postage and packing.

Please note the different UK and overseas prices which reflect the additional cost of overseas postage.

Non-members will be charged the overseas price shown plus postage & packing at cost.

**Ordering.** Please send your order to:

**Anthony Powell Society Merchandise**  
Beckhouse Cottage, Hellifield, Skipton  
North Yorkshire, BD23 4HS, UK  
*Phone:* +44 (0) 1729 851 836  
*Fax:* +44 (0) 20 8020 1483  
*Email:* merchandise@anthonypowell.org

Payment may be by cheque (UK funds drawn on a UK bank), Visa, Mastercard or online using PayPal to secretary@anthonypowell.org.

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### Anthony Powell Society Merchandise Order Form

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<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Unit Cost</th>
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□ I enclose a sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank  
Please make cheques payable to The Anthony Powell Society

□ Please debit my Visa / MasterCard  
Card No.:  
Valid from: Expires: Security Code:

### Name & Address of Cardholder & for Delivery

Name:  
Address:  

Town:  
County / State:  
Postcode / Zip:  
Country:  
Date: Signed:
**Member Information**

**Type of membership** (please tick):

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<td>Organisation</td>
<td>£100 minimum</td>
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- □ Buy 5 years membership for the price of 4 (any grade)

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

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

**Number of years membership being paid:**

1 / 2 / 3 / 5 years for price of 4

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**Payment Information**

- □ Total amount payable: £ ______
  (No. of years x membership rate)
- □ I enclose a sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank. Please make cheques payable to The Anthony Powell Society.
- □ Please debit my Visa / MasterCard
  
  Card No.:
  Expires:
  Security Code:
  (Please give name & address of cardholder if different from the above.)

- □ I authorize you, until further notice, to charge my Visa / MasterCard account for the sum of £_______ on, or immediately after 1 April each year. I will advise you in writing immediately the card becomes lost or stolen, if I close the account or I wish to cancel this authority.

- □ 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.

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

Signed:

Date:

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**Gift Membership**

If this is a gift membership please attach the name & address of the recipient plus any special message on a separate sheet of paper.

Where shall we send the membership?

- □ Direct to the recipient
- □ To you to give to the recipient personally

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Please send the completed form and payment to:

Anthony Powell Society Memberships, Beckhouse Cottage
Hellifield, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 4HS, UK

**membership@anthonypowell.org**

Phone: +44 (0) 1729 851 836

Fax: +44 (0) 20 8020 1483