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Letters of J. F. Powers to Evelyn Waugh: 1949-1963

Introduced by Katherine A. Powers

J. F. Powers (1917-1999) was an American novelist and short-story writer best known for stories about the lives of Catholic priests in the American Midwest. He published three collections of short stories: *Prince of Darkness* (1947), *The Presence of Grace* (1956), and *Look How the Fish Live* (1975); and two novels, *Morte D'Urban* (1962), which won on the National Book Award in 1963, and *Wheat That Springeth Green* (1988). He was married to Elizabeth Alice Wahl Powers (1924-1988), who wrote chiefly under the name Betty Wahl. She published a number of short stories and one novel, *Rafferty & Co.* (1969). The couple had five children—I am the eldest—and no settled abode, moving back and forth between Minnesota and Ireland.

J. F. Powers first wrote to Evelyn Waugh in February 1949 while Waugh, with his wife, was in the USA gathering information for an article on American Catholics for *Life* magazine and lecturing at Catholic colleges. Powers was a great admirer of Waugh's writing (with the exception of *Brideshead*) and had heard that Waugh had expressed the desire to visit Minnesota to see an Indian reservation and to meet him. Powers had produced one collection of short stories and was celebrated as a Catholic writer of real merit and great promise. He was living with his wife, Betty, and their two children in St. Paul, Minnesota, in a residential hotel on Summit Avenue, “an old red stone dump creaking with age and old women,” as he described it (letter to Betty Wahl, 18 June 1945).

In his first letter, Powers invited Waugh and his wife for dinner, an occasion that came to pass. The apartment was tiny and the older child (me) had been shipped off to relatives; the younger one, Mary, age 15 months, had been put to bed out of sight in the other room. All was not quiet and Waugh is reported to have asked: “How old is that noise?” The meal prepared and served by Betty was Lobster Newburg and Waugh liked it very much.

Powers later wrote to his friend, the poet Robert Lowell, about the occasion: “[Waugh] was all right, and his wife, but it wasn't anything like the bout I'd anticipated from his books. Suppose that's life. Drank wine. Still don't think I care for it, not dago red at ten in the morning. He wanted to know how old you were when I asked if you'd met yet. He wanted to know how old I was too. Seemed relieved to know he'd been younger when he pub'd his first book. I may be wrong about that, but that was all I could make out of it” (letter to Lowell, 25 May 1949).

Powers visited Waugh at Piers Court in 1952 accompanied by Fr. George Garrelts, an exceptionally ambitious man, both in the Church and the arts; he had been one of Powers's best friends since high school. Powers had been told by the Irish writers Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain that Waugh seemed to have lost his mind, that "he had his servants wearing livery, the latest development" (letter to Fr. Harvey Egan, 8 March 1952). This, of course, was not true, as Powers reported to a friend after his visit: "Saw Waugh at Piers Court. All a lie about liveried servants. Carried out his dishes himself. Very nice, but no fun for me. Gave me his new book, not published: MEN AT ARMS, which I haven't had time to read; and that should tell you I'm working" (letter to Egan, 22 Aug. 1952). For Waugh, the high point of this meeting—if there was one—may have been Powers's shoes, which had been "repaired" by an Irish cobbler who had nailed great ridges of rubber on the soles, causing Waugh to ask more than once if he "could just have another look at those soles, Jim" (as my father told me).

Powers and Waugh corresponded intermittently. Sixteen letters from Powers are extant and nine letters, three postcards, and one telegram from Waugh. There are at least three letters known to be missing, all of which had been given (lent) to Fr. Garrelts. They were clearly destroyed, either in a rectory fire in the 1950s, or when Garrelts left the priesthood in 1970. Garrelts told me in 1999 that he had burned all his letters then, including the countless ones written to him by Powers.

One of the missing letters was written by Waugh to Powers in response to the latter's having sent Fr. Garrelts's beginning effort to dramatize Waugh's novel, *The Loved One* (see Powers to Waugh, 18 July 1950)—an astonishing impertinence towards Waugh on the part of Garrelts, to say nothing of the imposition on Powers as intermediary. (Powers had, in the past, had to disentangle himself from Garrelts's attempts to colonize him as collaborator in playwriting and other artistic endeavors.) I believe that Powers's favorable remarks on Garrelts's proposed play (to Waugh, 18 July 1950) came out of duty owed to friendship rather than critical acumen. In any case, as Powers's letter to Waugh of 27 September 1950 makes clear, Waugh had written a letter to Powers which was extremely critical of Garrelts's work and Powers then handed that letter over to Garrelts. It was never returned.

In his letter to Waugh, Powers quotes Garrelts as saying, "Still suffer now and again from the decisiveness of Waugh's letter, though I am no less fond. [...] For my part I can't remember that he has left anything untouched ... except reconciling the dying." In fact, Powers altered Garrelts's response, which actually read (italics are mine): "Still suffer now and again from the decisiveness of *Evelyn's* letter, though I am no less fond. [...] *The few things he has left to work on should be worth our working at.* For my part I can't remember that he has left anything untouched ... except reconciling the dying." Garrelts's "Evelyn" is typical of his presumption, as is the idea that there was anything at all left to work at in cannibalizing Waugh's novel. Like Waugh, Powers was, perhaps, excessively fastidious about the over-familiarity of using Christian names. After addressing his first and second letters "My Dear Powers" and "Dear Powers," Waugh went on with "Dear Jim" until the last extant letter (20 Feb. 1963), when he goes back to

“Dear Mr Powers.” Waugh clearly wondered at his correspondent’s formality in a letter written before Powers’s response on 14 August 1962. Powers writes, “No, I haven’t been on Christian name terms with you in the past” and the next year addresses him as “EVELYN.” Waugh’s inquiry about formality is missing; no doubt the letter was lent to Garrelts.

In the third letter known to be missing, Waugh apparently wrote about going to confession. That this one had been lent to Garrelts is certain as I was told so by my mother. There may have been others.

Though Powers was a committed pacifist, which Waugh certainly was not, the two men shared much in their views of the world, not least in their dismay over changes in the Church, especially, in Powers’s case, in the adoption of the vernacular Mass and non-clerical garb of the clergy. Here, in conclusion, is a passage from a column I wrote shortly after my father's death in 1999.

My father admired Waugh’s writing for its cold eye, for its understated portrayal of the indecent pact most people make with the world. Like Waugh, he believed that the “well-adjusted” have forgiven themselves much and that larceny in the heart pervades the order of things—the post-Reformation order of things, I should say. They were fellow Tridentine Catholics who saw in the state of modern society, in its ruthless mediocrity, more compelling an argument for our having here no lasting home than could be found in any work of eschatology. (*Boston Sunday Globe*, 18 July 1999)

Katherine A. Powers, a writer and literary critic, is the editor of *Suitable Accommodations: An Autobiographical Story of Family Life: The Letters of J. F. Powers, 1942-1963* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2013). See the review, “Kindred Spirits,” by Jeffrey Manley, in *EWS* 44.3 (Winter 2014): 27-30.

Letters from the British Library transcribed by Jeffrey Manley and annotated by Jeffrey Manley, Katherine Powers, and John Howard Wilson, Lock Haven University.

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150 Summit Street
St Paul, Minnesota
February 17, 1949

Dear Mr Waugh

Excuse the fact that I haven’t been introduced, please, and let me ask you to keep a night free for me and possibly a friend or two (spiritual friends of Basil Seal and Fr Rothschild, as I am) when you come up this way. I haven’t heard yet when that will be, but I do know the date of

your Chicago engagement, and think you may turn north after that.[1] Perhaps you have old friends in the vicinity (though I doubt it) and in that case I wouldn't expect to see much of you. But if it is just the people who arrange and pay for your lectures, I hope you'll be able to shake them off. I wish I could invite you to stay here, and your wife if she is with you, but as you will see if you come, it is out of the question: we live on the right street but the wrong building. I hope you are having some good American adventures. Too bad you aren't here this week. We are having Winter Carnival and last night was the Coronation ceremony. It is good early Waugh and beyond reason, beyond the telling, I'm afraid. Very best...

/s/-Jim Powers

I heard from several sources that you intended to look me up in St Paul, which is why I write, and to head off the others.

[1] Waugh lectured in St. Paul on 9 March 1949. See John McGinty and Jeffrey Manley, "'Something Entirely Unique': Evelyn Waugh's 1948-49 Tours of North America, Part 1," *EWS* 43.3 (Winter 2013): 1-15; Part 2, *EWS* 44.1 (Spring 2013): 1-16; and Part 3, *EWS* 44.2 (Autumn 2013): 1-11.

150 Summit Street
St Paul, Minnesota
February 25, 1949

Dear Mr and Mrs Waugh,

Rec'd your letter today and have made reservations at the Commodore Hotel here (79 Western Avenue). This is not downtown, but not far from here, or from downtown. Scott Fitzgerald it is said, used to stay at the Commodore when he came to St Paul, but you will be the first writer since him, I imagine. If you would prefer to be downtown, please let me know: I thought you might be a little tired of that. If you wd let us know when you expect to arrive, we would meet you at the station. A close friend, Fr Garrelts, has a car and would be glad to be of any service.[2] We can drive to St John's Abbey, Collegeville, if you would like to see it; often visitors do. We (Fr G and I) for our part could pick up some bock beer in the vicinity; but then you may be tired of traveling. We are very anxious to meet you, however, and for that reason hope to keep you pretty much to ourselves—unless you'd like to see people. We cannot think of anyone else we're anxious to meet. My wife was inspired by your 'homage' and has started work on a story.[3] It is seldom she hears any encouraging word. I try to discourage all competition. (What really irks me is that she is a college graduate and I am not.) I gather from your letters that you are not speaking here. I had thought you were. I asked about it the last time I went to St John's, but I gathered you weren't signed up there either. Perhaps you come too high, I don't know. We'd like something at \$12.50 and all the vanilla ice cream and cake you could eat afterwards. Very best and please let us know if possible when you will arrive...

/s/ J. F. Powers

[2] George Garrelts was ordained in St Paul in 1942. In the 1960s, he was “a progressive priest who helped put the University of Minnesota’s Newman Center at the forefront of changes sweeping the Roman Catholic Church.” He left the priesthood, married, and taught at Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania from 1979 to 1997. He died at age 85 in 2003. See Trudi Hahn, [“Obituary: George Garrelts, who left priesthood after leading U of M Newman Center for 30 years, dies at 85.”](#) *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 22 July 2003.

[3] Waugh wrote regarding Betty Wahl’s “Martinmas” (*New Yorker*, 15 Nov. 1947): “I was told yesterday that your wife is the author of a brilliant sketch of convent school life which I read with relish in the ‘New Yorker’. If this is indeed true please give her my homage.” Letter to Powers, 20 Feb. 1949; Elizabeth Alice Wahl married Powers in 1946. She published seven stories, three in the *New Yorker*. When she died, she left three unpublished novels and nearly twenty stories. See Cassandra Nelson, [“Betty Wahl \(1924-1988\).”](#) *Literary Encyclopedia*.

May 22, 1949
150 Summit Street
St Paul, Minnesota

Dear Mr Waugh,

Thanks so much for the Sermons.[4] It came as a great surprise, and a more beautiful book I’ve not seen for some years. I think I had the idea that such bookmaking was against the law in England nowadays. Judging from the other titles from the Dropmore Press (The Golfer’s Manual By ‘A Keen Hand’)[5] the government still has a long way to go.

Since you were here, I’ve read Loom of Youth and Seven Men.[6] The first succeeds I know not how, on sheer sincerity, on its heart, where thousands that would be like it must fail ... anyway I liked it very much and so did Betty. No reason to tell you this. Seven Men, wonderful, as you said. I won’t attempt to go into that. I don’t know which one I liked best, after Enoch Soames, or do I like the one about the two writers better? I haven’t seen this Maugham movie Quartet [1948], four of his stories, but what a movie two or three of these Beerbohm stories would make. Which reminds me of your “Wesley,” not that it would make a movie[7] ... but the other day Betty and I were attending a Bela Lugosi-Boris Karloff horror picture billed with another as “Edgar Allan Poe’s Gruesome Twosome,” and in one scene a tree crashed through a lady’s bedroom and her lover, rushing in, said “Oh, it’s nothing— just a tree.” Please see it if it comes your way: “The Raven.” [1935]

I want to thank you for the review of my book too. I had not seen it when you were here. When I first read it I was grateful—as I am now. I did not go into all the details of it. Don’t mind the part about Hemingway and Steinbeck because I did some stories early and unconsciously, and now that I seem to know what I’m doing I feel no temptation to write like them or even writers that I admire, in which inadequacy also enters. But I see John Lehmann has taken his

share pretty hard, too hard in his capacity of publisher—I wrote to him of my innocence in the Waughish Plot. I hope now that you didn't mind his letter, or feel that it reflects my feeling. I could wish that you spared him, but then you are not famous for being housebroken in these matters, and as it stands, in that paragraph beginning "Boom!", we have more than just a review from you, a fragment of the real thing.[8]

I've taken too long to thank you for these favors. I should mention the fact, though, that your lectures here, rather than the question-and-answer period afterwards, have done a lot for my reputation. The only bad thing about that is losing one's obscurity, the need to publish another book. Hardly anyone but the scientists got renewals of Guggenheim fellowships, and so I've decided to teach at Marquette next September.[9] I'll have comparatively few hours of it (creative writing; advanced composition), and perhaps we'll get more living room out of it.

Very best, you and Mrs. Waugh...
/s/-Jim Powers.

I'm reading the sermons now—plan a brief review probably for *The Commonwealth* if they will notice a foreign book. Crying need for good sermons. These are very good, indeed. I know Faber's work. Msgr. Knox gives a fine portrait of him.[10]

[4] *A Selection from the Occasional Sermons of the Right Reverend Monsignor R. A. Knox*, ed. Evelyn Waugh (London: Dropmore Press, 1949). See Waugh's preface, *Essays* 369-71. Powers reviewed the book: "Short and Select," *Commonweal*, 5 Aug. 1949, 415-16. Waugh described it as a "limited *edition de luxe*" (*Monsignor Ronald Knox* 314).

[5] By H. B. Farnie, 1857, republished 1947. Waugh wrote "Dropmore Press Makes Good," *Spectator*, 16 July 1954 (*Essays* 461-63).

[6] Alec Waugh, *The Loom of Youth* (1917), a novel of school life; Max Beerbohm, *Seven Men* (1919), stories including "Enoch Soames," about a poet who makes a deal with the devil to discover his posthumous reputation. The story about two writers is "Hilary Maltby and Stephen Braxton."

[7] "A Brand from the Burning," the film based on the life of John Wesley in *Vile Bodies*.

[8] Waugh reviewed Powers's *Prince of Darkness and Other Stories* in the *Month*, March 1949 ("Pioneer! O Pioneer!" *Essays* 373-74). He wrote that "the shadows of Hemingway and Steinbeck lie over the work." John Lehmann commended Powers for avoiding "the tough background and the sentimental approach so characteristic of much modern fiction." Waugh wrote that Lehmann had, "with singular fatuity, ... picked out for praise the only two serious defects in Mr Powers's art." Beginning with "Boom!" Waugh quoted three paragraphs describing one character beating another.

[9] Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Waugh lectured there on 13 March 1949. See McGinty and Manley, "Something Entirely Unique," Part 2, *EWS* 44.1 (Spring 2013): 8-11.

[10] Knox delivered a sermon entitled “Zeal” at the London Oratory on 17 November 1945, the centenary of Anglican priest Frederick William Faber’s conversion to Roman Catholicism.

July 20, 1950
3401 South 57th Street
Milwaukee 14, Wisconsin

Dear Mr Waugh,

Enclosed is the beginning of a dramatization of your novel, *The Loved One*. I trust that you will think back to your visit here two years ago and remember Father Garrelts and me in St Paul. The dramatization is the work of Fr Garrelts. He has more, but we both thought it better to send only the beginning, in case you should not want anything of the sort done with the novel. Fr Garrelts, attached to the Newman Club at the University of Minnesota, has successfully produced *Shadow and Substance* and other plays there.[11] He is no longer interested, however, in producing plays which have their whirl on Broadway: reproducing them rather in the Little Theater manner. He wants to do something new, and it is as an old admirer of your work that he has chosen *The Loved One*. We are both hoping that you will agree to the dramatization and production at the University, with the usual royalties (in the case of a novel dramatized by another hand) going to you and to him, and he would like the same arrangement to hold in the event of a Broadway production. What the usual arrangement, and royalties, would be, I don’t know at the moment, but Fr Garrelts does want you to understand that he is not trying to get something for nothing. It seems to me that the enclosed beginning is evidence that he can do a first-rate job. If you should think so too, and say the word, he would get the remainder typed up (better, I hope), and mail it to you for your approval. The conclusion of the novel presents some difficulties, but I do believe he’s managed a resolution of them. I hope you are well, and Mrs Waugh, and that you are working. We await the next installment of your new novel in *The Month*. [12]

Very best...
/s/ J. F. Powers

[11] *Shadow and Substance* (1937) by Paul Vincent Carroll (1900-1968). New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for best foreign play, 1938.

[12] *Helena* was serialized in the *Month* in June, July, and August 1950.

September 27, 1950
3401 South 57th Street
Milwaukee 14, Wisconsin

Dear Mr Waugh,

Thanks for looking over Fr Garrelts’ work. I’m sorry that it didn’t strike you as worth while. I was not pretending to think it a good job. You asked me not to tell him what you did say

about it, in so many words, but I'm afraid we know each other too well. And so I did show him your letter, which he still has. If that be treason, well, you are used to it, from me (I often regret feeding you to that photographer in Minneapolis and to the nuns and girls at St Catherine's).[13] I rec'd a letter from Fr Garrelts this morning, from which I quote: "Still suffer now and again from the decisiveness of Waugh's letter, though I am no less fond. Thought very fondly of him when I read of Donald Culross Peattie's new book in the SRL, the one he's doing with his son, about nature and how to love it. I think it is entitled 'Lush Places' and it is amazing to think of Waugh having anticipated that by so long and dispatched it so neatly. For my part I can't remember that he has left anything untouched ... except reconciling the dying." [14] Very best to you and Mrs Waugh

/s/ Jim Powers

[13] Probably the College of St Catherine (now University), a women's college in St Paul.

[14] Hal Borland, "[The Peattian Philosophy](#)," rev. of *A Cup of Sky*, by Donald Culross Peattie and Noel Peattie, *Saturday Review of Literature*, 9 Sept. 1950, 27. "Lush Places" is William Boot's nature column in *Scoop* (1938). Waugh wrote about reconciling the dying in *Brideshead Revisited* (1945); Garrelts is joking. His letter to Powers is dated 26 Sept. 1950.

Nov 7 1950

Dear Mr Waugh:

I want to thank you for sending the signed Helena. I think it's a beautiful book, beautifully written, and I'm proud to know the author—who does the impossible, improves upon himself.

Very best,
/s/-Jim Powers

May 8, 1951
3401 South 57th Street
Milwaukee 14, Wisconsin

Dear Mr Waugh,

Fr D'Arcy was here one evening and we enjoyed having him so close to us, after wondering so long what he'd be like. For a great man he was very warm and gentle, I thought.[15] A lady on a local paper (Margaret Fish who interviewed you here when you visited last) gave me these photographs of Fr D'Arcy and I thought you might like one and perhaps if Fr D'Arcy would like the other you would be the one to pass it on to him. John Pick tells me that Fr D'Arcy is still in this country but he moves in secret—and so I think it better to send the photo to you.[16] We were gratified to hear some word of you from Fr D'Arcy.

Very best...
/s/ Jim Powers

Please don't bother to acknowledge this letter. We're moving away from Milwaukee at the end of the month. I've decided to accept my publisher's offer to finance me for a year. We'll pass the summer in Minnesota, and perhaps in September we'll go to Ireland—at least I want to try to do that.

[15] Fr Martin D'Arcy, SJ (1888-1976), instructed Waugh in Roman Catholicism prior to conversion in 1930. He spent much time at American institutions of higher education.

[16] John Pick taught at Marquette from 1945 to 1975. Waugh he found exasperating in 1949: see McGinty and Manley, "“Something Entirely Unique,”” Part 2, *EWS* 44.1 (Spring 2013): 8-11; Martin Stannard, *Later Years* 238; and Sister Thérèse Lentfoehr, "My Meeting with Evelyn Waugh," *EWN* 11.1 (Spring 1977): 1-4. Pick died at age 69 in 1981. See "[Rites Tuesday for John Pick, MU professor,](#)" *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 9 Feb. 1981, 2:16.

Dysart[17]
Kimberley Road
Greystones
Co Wicklow
September 4, 1952

Dear Mr Waugh:

I've just finished *Men at Arms*—not wanting to read it on trains or until I'd be through with enough of my own work to deserve a reward—and now I have to thank you for it—for the copy itself—but much more for another book such as I can look for from no one else.

Apthorpe was fine; I was very sorry to see him go—and blame Ritchie-Hook—more, I think, than you do. I feel about R-H as Guy does about "anti-fascist 'cellists and dealers in abstract painting from the Danubian Basin." [18] I grant Guy is on firmer ground; I am probably quarreling with the flesh. Still I like R-H (as I liked Hermann Göring—at a great distance, as a fictitious character) for his honesty [19]—not all pluck, which I see as the public vice of the British: at the moment I'm thinking of A. A. Milne's letters on taxation of authors; "elegant masochism," in Compton Mackenzie's phrase. [20]

Anyway, this book makes me want to read the next one, and Betty and Fr Garrelts—who got at it right away—also enjoyed it immensely. (We all have an insight into the chemical closet—had one of our own, a poor American cousin to Apthorpe's, in Minnesota.)

Thanks to you and Mrs Waugh for your hospitality, including the auto trip from Oxford. This time I'll confine myself to hoping you're well since you have ways of managing the other [ether?].

Jim Powers

[17] The first of several houses where the Powers family lived during four extended residences in Ireland. Powers, his wife, and two daughters arrived on 31 Oct. 1951. See *Suitable Accommodations* 163-65.

[18] A quotation from the novel, chapter XVIII, describing the idle pioneers at Penkirk (Little, Brown 220).

[19] Hermann Göring (1893-1946), commander of the Luftwaffe, briefly mentioned in *Brideshead Revisited* (Little, Brown 294).

[20] A. A. Milne (1882-1956), writer best known for *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926); Compton Mackenzie (1883-1972) wrote the novels *Sinister Street* (1913-14), which appears in Charles Ryder's rooms at Oxford, and *Thin Ice* (1956), which Waugh enthusiastically reviewed (*Essays* 511-13).

509 First Avenue South
St Cloud, Minnesota
March 28, 1956

Dear Mr Waugh

—The Commonweal with your review has just arrived and I hasten to thank you for taking the trouble to set down your thoughts on my work. As always in your reviews, you are most interesting, and in this one (as in the one you wrote for PRINCE in The Month) there is much for me to meditate. I hadn't realized at all that I was difficult to understand, because of my diction.[21] I will think on that. I was hoping you might like "Blue Island." I regret to say that this sort of thing happens all over the country, goes off without a hitch, that is; there is a company that runs full-page ads in women's magazines urging readers to have such "parties" in their homes....[22] Other words in your review draw blood, "unnatural fertility," for instance, and I think the phrase, though accurate in many cases, makes a virtue out of what is a defect in me.[23] As for there being an easy market for my stories, I have as much trouble as ever in selling my work.[24] Only the New Yorker stories brought in anything like a living wage.[25] I had thought there must be more readers in England than here for written books. I know I enjoy British publications more than ours, and subscribe to more of them. In fact, still referring to your review, I have been tainted by my sojourn abroad, oh mortally, and I daily wish that I could set out for those foreign parts I knew once if not so well.[26] They don't seem so foreign as all this. I know better than I did the meaning of the word "glooms," which is what Mrs Waugh said is what you did, I remember from your day in St Paul.

—Very cheerful news from John Pick today, however. I suppose, though, that you would be one of the first to be told that he is engaged to "The Marchesa Cecilia / next word illegible / Barbaro of St. George." [27]

—But now let me thank you for the review. You are very good to me as on other occasions.

Best wishes...

/s/-Jim Powers

[21] Evelyn Waugh, "Scenes of Clerical Life," rev. of *The Presence of Grace*, by J. F. Powers, *Commonweal*, 30 March 1956, 667-68. Waugh wrote that Powers's "colloquial language ... is often not only unfamiliar but unintelligible" (667).

[22] Waugh judged the "outstanding stories" to be "The Devil was the Joker" and "Blue Island"; the latter is "a grim story of suburban life, an anxious, rather shady young couple in a new district, trying and failing to get on with their neighbors. The incident is something that could not conceivably happen outside America, nor I suspect outside a very small area there, but Mr. Powers leads the alien into this society, confidently establishes him there and shows him everything" ("Scenes" 667). "Blue Island" includes what came to be called a "Tupperware party," wherein guests are expected to buy kitchen products.

[23] Waugh noted that "Many less scrupulous artists have allowed themselves to be reduced into unnatural fertility by early success. Mr. Powers' second collection comprises nine stories, a total output of only one a year, and each displays the same exquisite craftsmanship as its predecessors" ("Scenes" 667).

[24] Waugh: "The list of acknowledgments which prefaces *The Presence of Grace* proclaims that there is now an eager market for his work among the popular magazines" ("Scenes" 667).

[25] Powers had published four stories in the *New Yorker*: "Death of a Favorite" (1950), "Defection of a Favorite" (1951), "The Devil was the Joker" (1953), and "A Losing Game" (1955). All appear in *Presence of Grace*. Powers published ten more stories in the *New Yorker*, the last in 1979. Waugh never managed to publish anything in the magazine.

[26] Waugh: "Mr. Powers has been subject to other temptations. He has been to Europe. But no taint from that insidious continent mars the innocence of the Middle West" ("Scenes" 667).

[27] Pick married the Marchesa Cecilia Zimmermann Barbaro on Malta in 1956. They were rescued from the wreck of the *Andrea Doria* in July 1956 but lost some "very valuable paintings." See "[Rites Tuesday for John Pick,](#)" *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 9 Feb. 1981.

Cunard Line

MV "Britannic"[28]

November 22, 1957

Dear Mr Waugh:

Just a line to say that I've just finished *Pinfold*, and I think it's a fine book even by your standards. Please don't let Mr Pinfold do the black book he says he could write against himself. This one is hard enough on him, including as it does everything I've heard said about you, and much more but putting it in the proper perspective. Incidentally, you do more with Ha Ha (in that take-off on radio) than I would've believed possible.[29] What a splendid distillery we have in your genius! In goes all the bad grain of the times and out comes the delicious nectar.

Best wishes...
/s/-Jim Powers
(late of Minnesota)

[28] Powers and family were returning for another year in Ireland.

[29] In chapter 4, "The Hooligans," Pinfold hears a BBC program with Jimmy Lance, "a poet and artist by nature who had let himself become popularized" (John Betjeman?). Lance cracks some lame jokes, and the audience repeatedly laughs: "Ha. Ha."

June 10, 1960
412 First Avenue South
St Cloud, Minnesota

Dear Mr Waugh

—A note to tell you I've just read your MONSIGNOR KNOX and have enjoyed it very much. I think you are the only one who could make it what it is—a very interesting book and a fitting memorial. I think you dealt fairly with the Hierarchy, conveying something of that dazed feeling that they alone can confer, by their words and acts, on some of the faithful.[30] (The bishop here is crazy about processions and field masses.) I was much amused by Monsignor Knox's failure to be himself with Cardinal Bourne[31]—exactly my problem when I've been in the presence of a certain British novelist. Monsignor Knox's last words, it seems to me, are immortal—so tender and funny and true of him. And at such a time, so close to death, they almost prove we will be what we are.[32] Thanks for another fine book.

Best wishes...
/s/-Jim Powers

[30] *Monsignor Ronald Knox* (1959) was usually considered too critical of the hierarchy. See Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh* (Penguin, 1977), 530-32, and Stannard, *Later Years* 420-23.

[31] Francis Alphonsus Cardinal Bourne (1861-1935) was "quite devoid of anything which would have passed for scholarship, taste or humour in Ronald's Anglican circle" (*Monsignor Ronald Knox* 166).

[32] Lady Eldon asked if Knox would like her to read aloud from his version of the New Testament; he said "No," then, after a pause, "Awfully jolly of you to suggest it, though" (*Monsignor Ronald Knox* 333).

June 26, 1960
412 First Avenue South
St Cloud, Minnesota

Dear Mr Waugh,

—Your letter rec'd and enjoyed, but I don't want you to think that reference to a certain English novelist was meant to be critical of you. I should have added *mea culpa*. So far as my experience goes, you are the soul of charity. It is your work that is intimidating.

—It wasn't the Irish, about whom you are probably right,*[33] but ourselves: house exposed to sea (but good for BBC), cliff to climb, coldest winter and summer since weather was recorded in Ireland, carpets rising and falling underfoot from the wind, turf fires until we switched to coal and wood, Betty pregnant (our fifth born in Dublin),[34] and surprising offer from Betty's father to buy a house here—this now suspended since his idea of a house wasn't ours and ours no longer is ... here. Once again we are meditating flight, perhaps in 1961, perhaps back to Ireland. In the meantime, I must rob a bank or write a best seller.

—I seldom see that Minnesota priest you mention. He roams the world in pursuit of his duties as National Chaplain of the Newman Clubs, has spent a fortune on postcards, I know, and I trust that Cardinal Newman is properly grateful to him. I hope to be present at their first meeting.[35] Best wishes...

/s/-Jim Powers

*Of my heroism I heard nothing,[36] but a reporter (himself not so familiar with my well-known works as he might've been) did tell me that somebody had told him that I was rated as the 6th-best writer in the U.S.A.

[33] To Powers, Waugh had written: "I heard of you last summer when two priests from Minnesota came here dressed as Palm Beach holiday-makers. They said you had despaired of living in Ireland. I was sorry but not surprised. They are a deeply hostile people (the Irish not the priests in fancy dress) under their affability. They particularly resent benefactions. I don't suppose they will ever forgive you rescuing them from drowning" (letter, 7 June 1960). Katherine Powers adds that "one of the priests must have been Garrelts," but it "seems odd that Waugh would not have mentioned that one visited him with Powers in 1952. Powers seems to think Waugh is referring to Garrelts. No letters from Garrelts to Powers during this period, at least not in the archives."

[34] Jane Elizabeth Powers, born 2 July 1958.

[35] Father Garrelts.

[36] In May 1952, a couple of months before visiting Waugh, Powers saved a boy from drowning and was awarded a "certificate of bravery." Betty described the incident: "Some little boys ran up carrying a life preserver and said, 'A boy's after falling in the ocean'.... So Jim found himself standing half in the water on a ledge of rock, holding onto the boy in the life preserver and the waves trying to splash them both out into the ocean. And he had to keep his teeth shut tight because he had his pipe in his mouth and no hand to take it out.... There were no end of women and retired men and boys around but no one strong enough to pull them out until

the guards came, and also the milkman. (There is nothing that can happen in Greystones without the milkman being there with the first of them.)” See *Suitable Accommodations* 171.

July 22, 1962
412 First Avenue South
St Cloud, Minnesota

Dear Mr Waugh,

—I rec’d a letter from Doubleday yesterday, with a quote from you about MORTE D’URBAN, for which I thank you.[37] I am sending you a copy of the book, but I think I’ll wait for another printing, on account of typographical errors in this one. I found I had no idea how to write a novel when I began this one, and it suffers from that, and other things as I don’t have to tell you. I kept before me your advice to your son (passed on to me by Fr Garrelts), and though it helped, I did feel at times that there must be more to novel-writing than slogging along. Anyway, I thank you for your kind words.

—I’d like to be able to give you some late on-the-spot news about Fr. D’Arcy and Fr. Garrelts, now, I gather, traveling as a team. I saw them in person just before Lent, but only hear about them now by postcard, stories in the Catholic press, etc.

Best wishes...
/s/—Jim Powers

[37] Powers’s first novel, *Morte D’Urban* (1962). In a blurb on the front of the dust jacket, Waugh was quoted: “This is the book for which his many admirers have long been waiting.”

August 14, 1962
412 First Avenue South
St Cloud, Minnesota

Dear Mr Waugh,

—I didn’t realize you’d been sent galleys, and I am all the more grateful for the favorable comment. No, I haven’t been on Christian name terms with you in the past, and, to answer your other question, it was the Bishop’s ball that broke Fr Urban’s old spirit.[38] I hope you don’t mean I should’ve gone into the medical aspects of his case—injuries to the head (and spine) are very hard to diagnose, and, though this would’ve been easy enough in fiction, I preferred to skip it. Perhaps you mean more than that. As I saw it, and see it, the change in Fr Urban had to come from without—a rude wind. Perhaps the book loses by it, the involuntary quality of the change, but otherwise there could have been none in Fr Urban, in my hands. I’m afraid you’re right about my being more of a short-story writer than a novelist. I know I don’t like to think of tackling another novel, though I must. Some of my devoted readers among the clergy have been after me to try a non-clerical book, and maybe I will. I have been re-reading the stories in WORK

SUSPENDED, and enjoyed “An Englishman’s Home” to a degree I hadn’t previously, not that it has changed. But here is what I want to say, and have thought before: WORK SUSPENDED is so fine you must go on with it.[39] Best wishes...

/s/—Jim Powers

[38] Father Urban, the main character in *Morte D’Urban*.

[39] “An Englishman’s Home” (1939). Waugh stopped writing *Work Suspended* in 1939, published it in 1942, and never continued it, though he did revise it. Powers seems to have read *Work Suspended and Other Stories Written Before the Second World War* (1948, reprinted 1949, 1950; Penguin, 1951).

February 15, 1963
412 First Avenue South
St Cloud, Minnesota

Dear Mr Waugh,

—Just a word to say that I made the supreme sacrifice yesterday and spent 60¢ for *Esquire* so as to be able to read your story. I got a big bang out of it. For a while, though the title was reassuring, I was worried about Basil, but he came through beautifully in the end.[40] Incidentally, I had no idea P and P were teaching in the Twin Cities, and know that Fr Garrelts, if he doesn’t have them booked already, will be glad to hear of this.[41] Anyway, it is a fine story as well as first-rate Waugh, and I for one am thankful for it. With best wishes...

Jim Powers

[40] “Basil Seal Rides Again,” *Esquire*, March 1963.

[41] Parsnip and Pimpernell, the poets based on W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, had become Professor of Dramatic Poetry at Minneapolis and Professor of Poetic Drama at St Paul.

December 3, 1963
Ardmore, Church Road
Greystones, Co Wicklow

Dear EVELYN,

—Early in November I heard that a copy of BASIL SEAL had arrived for me in St Cloud. I waited for it until today, wondering whether it would be a signed copy. I see that it is but that I am now J. Powers. I seem to be sinking fast—from Jim, to Mr, to J. Powers (which sounds like a jockey to me), in less than a year[42].

—The book is a beautiful job—I marvel that even you are able to command such work nowadays.[43] I have dipped into the story here and there since the book arrived and will be reading it all again on one of these dark nights.

—We lost our perch in Minnesota, through deaths in my wife’s family, but now, for December anyway, have two establishments, Ardmore (c. 1933) and half of a small hotel where we’ve been since September, first as guests and then as sole occupants, and then as proprietors (the owners returned as non-paying guests). I said I’d never come back to this isle of saints, scholars and solicitors unless I had money enough to buy a house and live in the style to which I could rapidly become accustomed, but I lied.[44]

Thanks very much for the book...

/s/–Jim Powers

[42] The book was signed “For J. Powers with regards Evelyn Waugh.”

[43] A limited edition, large paper, with a color frontispiece by Kathleen Hale.

[44] The family’s third stint in Ireland, from 1963 to 1965.

The Plain Facts about Crete

Donat Gallagher

James Cook University

I’ve always been conscious of the anomaly – sharply pointed out by Michael Barber in *EWS* 44.3 (Winter 2014) – of my challenging Antony Beevor’s version of what Robert Laycock and Evelyn Waugh did during the evacuation of Crete. After all, Mr Beevor is a celebrity military historian and I am probably the least martial person on the planet. But *ipse dixit* went out early in the Middle Ages, and this argument is not about Gallagher versus Beevor and Barber but about what actually happened during the last night of the evacuation of Crete, 31 May/1 June 1941, and whether Waugh told the truth about it. Though pre-emptive, I must say that it is an argument between fact and guesswork. In *Brief Lives: Evelyn Waugh* (London: Hesperus, 2013), Mr Barber makes it only too plain that he is unaware of the simplest facts of the evacuation of Crete, in which he is not alone; and that prompts me to offer the following brief outline of events as they relate to Evelyn Waugh.

In 1991, fifty years after the lost battle for Crete, Antony Beevor published a short history of the campaign, including six pages about the last night of the evacuation. The “focus” of those pages (strangely, considering his minor role in the evacuation) was the then Colonel and Brigade Commander (later General Sir) Robert Laycock, Officer Commanding LAYFORCE. A Commando brigade, LAYFORCE comprised four Commandos (cunningly disguised as “A”, “B”, “C”, and “D” Battalions). Two battalions, “A” and “D”, and Headquarters, around 800 men, were sent to Crete when the battle against the German invaders had already been lost and the army from the northwest was in retreat to the south coast. LAYFORCE was assigned to rearguard duties. Evelyn Waugh was Laycock’s Intelligence Officer, responsible for writing the LAYFORCE War Diary. Soon after the campaign, he also wrote a “Memorandum on

LAYFORCE”, a large part of which reads like a vivid diary of his role in the rearguard and evacuation. Enter Mr Beevor, who forcefully declares Laycock guilty of serious wrongdoing and the War Diary radically untruthful and designed to cover up Laycock’s alleged misdeeds. The picture painted by Beevor, though ingenious and stimulating, reverses reality.

As the standard histories deal with the evacuation only in general outline, I turned to the original documents – war diaries and despatches, narratives, ships’ logs, letters written to unit historians, memoirs, and the like – to discover what Laycock actually did and whether Waugh’s or Beevor’s account was true. The documents told a very different story from the impression created by Beevor, and I published three detailed essays, “Sir Robert Laycock, Antony Beevor and the Evacuation of Crete from Sphakia”, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 78 (2000), 38-55; “Misfire: Reassessing the Legacy of General Robert Laycock”, *RUSI [Royal United Services Institute] Journal*, 153.1 (February 2008), 80-89; and “Guy Crouchback’s Disillusion: Crete, Beevor and the Soviet Alliance in *Sword of Honour*,” *A Handful of Mischief: New Essays on Evelyn Waugh*, ed. D. Gallagher, A. Pasternak Slater, and J. H. Wilson (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2011), 172-219. Michael Barber says he prefers Beevor’s opinion to mine, as well he might. But may I ask him to tell the world, citing evidence, which, if any, of the facts presented below is incorrect.

Barber, who pointedly says he trusts Beevor, does not draw on him. Instead, he returns to an older polemic that would make Beevor wince. For example, he says that Crete “was defended by several thousand heterogeneous British, Dominion and Greek troops” (67). In fact, British and Dominion (i.e. Australian and New Zealand) troops on Crete amounted to well over twenty thousand, and herein lies the problem. While the Army needed to evacuate twenty thousand-plus troops, the Navy could give only limited help. Complete German air superiority leading to fearsome losses of ships and men in the preceding weeks, and looming urgent tasks, meant that the Navy could send relatively few ships to Sphakia, and they could come on only four nights – 28, 29, 30, and 31 May – and then only between 11.30 pm and 3.00 am. Clearly there was no hope of taking off all British and Dominion troops – let alone the Greek soldiers, Cretan paramilitaries, and civilians thronging the embarkation beach. Agonizing decisions had to be made as to which British and Dominion units could leave, in what numbers, and in what order.

Categories evacuated. The main classes to be taken off Crete, in priority order, were (a) wounded, (b) staff at Brigade level and above (this alone entitled Brigade Commander Laycock and his HQ to leave), and (c) “fighting forces”, that is, roughly equal numbers of British, Australian and New Zealand troops “still organized to fight”. On the last night of the evacuation 4000 “fighting troops” with orders to leave were at Sphakia (the embarkation beach); so too were 5000 British and Dominion troops fated (although they had not been told) to remain: they included Artillery and Engineers (a controversial exclusion), base troops such as clerks and mechanics, ad hoc groups under officers, and worryingly large numbers of demoralized stragglers.

LAYFORCE designated “fighting forces”. Because Barber denies LAYFORCE the status of “fighting forces” scheduled to leave Crete, may I point out the “Despatch of Major General E. C. Weston”, Officer Commanding Crete on 31 May, which must be held authoritative? No. 42 of the “Despatch” reads “Numbers Remaining: (a) Fighting troops, 4000 consisting of: - 5 N.Z. Div. 1000; 4 N.Z. Div. 200; 2/7 Aust. Bn. [Battalion] 750; 2/8 Aust. Bn. 250; **LAYFORCE 500** [emphasis added]; Royal Marines 550; L&M [Landing and Maintenance] Unit R.M. 200; N.H. [Northumberland Hussars], 1/Rangers, 1 Welch 150; 17 Aust. Bde. [Brigade] 250; 106 R.H.A. [Royal Horse Artillery] 150.” Weston continues: “My orders direct me to give preference in evacuation to fighting troops.”

Freyberg ordered LAYFORCE to cover the evacuation on 31 May/1 June and then “disengage and embark”. Early on 28 May, General Freyberg, Officer Commanding Crete, issued a long written order setting out which units were to be evacuated, their quotas, priorities, and duties. Poignantly, the copy of the order passed to Laycock, typed on scrap paper, is now lodged (badly water damaged) in the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King’s College, London. The part of the order relating to LAYFORCE reads: “It is intended to embark 5 NZ Inf. Bde and 19 Aust. Bde on this night. Therefore the only troops available to hold an intermediate position will be the RM Bn and LAYFORCE. This they must do during 31 May and at nightfall they will disengage and embark night 31 May/1 June.”^[1] Thus, General Freyberg ordered LAYFORCE to “hold an intermediate position” on the last night of the evacuation covering the withdrawal of 5 NZ Infantry Brigade and 19 Australian Brigade, which is precisely how events turned out on the fateful night (except that the role of the Royal Marines changed from covering to being covered). Most significantly, Freyberg adds: “**at nightfall they [LAYFORCE] will disengage and embark**” (emphasis added). Of course this meant that the Commandos would embark “last” of the rearguard units; and of course, if the Germans had become active, LAYFORCE would not have been able to embark at all. Waugh’s “Memorandum” contains elliptical jottings about meetings between Laycock and Freyberg, and Laycock and Weston, regarding the embarkation of LAYFORCE, which feature “last”; but they must be read in light of the written orders.

General Weston adds a rider: wait for a message from staff before retiring. Late on 31 May, Laycock and Waugh met General Weston, by then Officer Commanding Crete, to seek “further orders”. (Freyberg had left the island the night before.) Weston did not record the meeting in his War Diary, but Waugh relates his understanding of it in *Diaries* (508-09). Weston repeats Freyberg’s order that LAYFORCE “cover the withdrawal”, but adds to it: “a message would be sent to us by the embarkation officer on Sphakia beach when we could retire”. Intended to be facilitating, this rider created major difficulties because Weston’s staff flew off at 11.50 pm without delivering the message.

Events of the night

6.30 pm: LAYFORCE takes over defensive perimeter. At 6.30 pm the Commandos took up the “intermediate position” ordered by Freyberg. They moved into the defensive perimeter around Sphakia previously held by 5 NZ Infantry Brigade. This was no easy task as the perimeter extended for many miles, across the mountains north of Sphakia and down to the coast on the east and west.

6.30 pm: Navy doubles lift from 2000 to 4000-plus but ends evacuation. Weston returned to his HQ at 6.30 pm and found, to his huge disappointment, that the Navy had signalled that the ships would not come again; but, under intense pressure, it had increased its last lift from 2000 to “ships’ capacity”, i.e. around 5000. This meant that the rearguard units would now be able to embark.

8.00 pm: Weston orders Australian and Marine rearguard to hasten to Sphakia. At 8.00 pm Weston climbed to the rearguard units facing the Germans: 19 Australian Brigade HQ, 2/7 Australian Battalion, and the Royal Marine Battalion, who had expected to hold their positions for another night or two. Having delivered the dire news about the end of the evacuation, Weston passed on the good news: capacity on this night had been doubled; the men must make for Sphakia with all speed.

8.23 pm, sunset; fighting ends 8.45 pm; Germans do not move. The Marines were ordered to set off first, at 8.30 pm. But sunset was at 8.23 pm (Navy records) and while it was still dusk German machine-gun fire prevented the Marines from leaving until 8.45 pm (report of Major Ralph Garrett RM, Officer Commanding the Marine Battalion). The Australians followed the Marines without incident.

The German “M.G. fire” at 8.45 pm was the last hostile action by the Germans on the ground. They were not in contact with any units other than those mentioned: 19 Australian Brigade and the Marine Battalion. For their own reasons, they did not pursue the rearguard or “surround” Sphakia or fire a shot; they stayed in one area, twelve rugged miles from Sphakia. The British Official Historian, though surprised at German inactivity, confirms these facts. I emphasize this matter because the Waugh literature contains astonishingly fanciful accounts, some by first-rate scholars and writers, of LAYFORCE “withdrawing” or even “sailing away” while “fierce fighting was still going on”. To repeat, the last fighting was at 8.45 pm and LAYFORCE held its defensive positions for another four hours after that, until at least 1.00 am.

10 pm - 12.30 am: NZ cordons allow 1600 NZ, 200 Australians, 200 L & M Marines etc. to embark. Brigadier James Hargest, CBE DSO, Officer Commanding NZ forces at Sphakia, did not trust General Weston and feared that turbulent elements might rush the boats and cause the Navy to pull out. He therefore took personal charge of getting his men away. He placed heavily armed Maori soldiers shoulder-to-shoulder around the embarkation beach supported by machine-gun posts and another cordon farther out. By 10.00 pm all NZ troops designated to leave, with several other units, were in a line leading to the beach. Three Landing

Craft emerged from hiding; 540 men boarded; and the Craft went out to meet the ships as they arrived at 11.30 pm. By midnight the New Zealanders had embarked. But – and this is established by the War Diaries of the Maori Battalion and of 64th Medium Regiment RA (although it is not in any history) – at midnight the effective New Zealand cordons withdrew and were replaced by a badly briefed and far-too-small contingent of 64th Medium Regiment. “Rabble” charged the new cordon but the Maoris rushed back and amidst ugly scenes restored the line. From this point, order at Sphakia broke down.

The “breakdown of order” meant that official entry to the embarkation beach became jammed by aggressive stragglers, preventing the rearguard units from embarking; on the other hand non-scheduled troops flooded onto the beach from other directions. Paradoxically, therefore, of the 4000 troops taken off, a little over 2000 were “fighting troops” and the rest had “made their own way” to the boats.

11.30 pm: Australian and Marine rearguard units arrive at Sphakia. After heroically covering the rugged terrain between their positions facing the Germans and Sphakia, the parched, hungry, and sleepless Australian and Marine rearguard joined the queue heading towards the beach. They arrived shortly before 11.30 pm. The time of arrival is fixed by Major Madoc RM who recalls in his memoir the considerable time that elapsed between arrival at Sphakia and Weston’s plane taking off at 11.50 pm (Air Force log). The Australians and Marines now came under the orders of “Movement Control” (64th Medium Regiment). Tragically, most of the rearguard was unable to board, partly because “Movement Control” had wrong orders, mainly because truculent stragglers, believing their early arrival gave them priority, blocked access. The Australians and Marines reached the beach just too late to embark.

11.30 pm: Laycock climbs to CREFORCE HQ in search of staff. Meanwhile, Laycock was climbing the precipitous goat track to CREFORCE HQ cave above Sphakia, looking for staff to give LAYFORCE the promised message to retire. But by now all staff had left to catch the seaplane that took off at 11.50 pm. Fortunately, Major F. C. C. (Freddy) Graham, whom Beavor rightly treats as a reliable witness, was at HQ. Graham’s memoir relates that before Laycock “panted up” to the cave, Graham had heard the Navy ships loading. The leading cruiser, HMS *Phoebe*, began loading at 11.35 pm (ship’s log). Consequently, Laycock can be reliably placed at CREFORCE HQ at 11.35 pm, at least half an hour’s hard travel from the Sphakia beach.

11.40 pm – 12.15 am: Laycock, Graham, Waugh and others hurry back to the beach but find no embarkation officer. Even by “hot footing” it back to Sphakia, as he did, Laycock could not have reached the beach until after midnight. But he found no staff there. Several senior officers – for example, Major Ralph Garrett RM and Lt Col. W. R. Windham Royal Signals – had the same experience as Laycock, and Windham angrily complained about it to the Inter-Service Committee of Enquiry into Crete. The Committee responded with stern recommendations that fully briefed Beach Officers supervise all evacuations.

12.15 am: Laycock orders his troops to withdraw. As there was no CREFORCE staff to send LAYFORCE the message to retire, around 12.15 am or later, Laycock “on own authority” (as Waugh ineptly puts it) ordered his men to withdraw to the beach. Waugh’s batman (Private, later Captain, now Doctor Ralph Tanner) acted as runner and he recalls the verbal order Laycock gave him: “If [they] *could* get away, they *were* to get away” (*Touch and Go*, ed. David Smurthwaite, 1991). This order has prompted two accusations. Beevor asserts, as a key point, that it was issued before the rearguard had reached Sphakia. But that is flat wrong. The New Zealand rearguard had embarked and by 11.30 pm the Australians and Marines were in line struggling towards the beach under the pickets. Laycock issued his order at 12.15 am.

Again, Beevor sees the phrase “on own authority” as condemning Laycock “straight from the horse’s mouth”. But in the circumstances, Laycock was entitled to send the order to withdraw. Freyberg directed LAYFORCE to “disengage and embark”. Weston confirmed that order but added a facilitating rider: “a message would be sent to us by the embarkation officer ... when we could retire”. Because no CREFORCE staff of any kind was left on the island, it was physically impossible for the message to be sent and therefore for Laycock to obey the implied order to wait for the message. In this (admittedly rare) situation, it was legal for Laycock to carry out his primary order, which was for LAYFORCE to “disengage and embark”. Moreover, Part III, Paragraph 73 of the report by the Inter-Service Committee of Enquiry into Crete “regrets” the “difficulties of communication” that led to “the bulk of LAYFORCE being left behind”. The clear implications are that CREFORCE expected LAYFORCE to get away and that staff would have delivered the message to withdraw if not impeded by “difficulties”. If Laycock had acted wrongly, the Committee would have censured him. Its criticisms of some officers were so blunt that Brigadier Guy Salisbury-Jones, its President, was banished to South Africa for the remainder of the war, despite pleas to the Army Council; and its report was (a) ordered revised and (b) even as revised, suppressed.

1.30 am – 2.30 am. LAYFORCE arrives at Sphakia. About 150 of 800 Commandos embark. Because LAYFORCE was spread north, east, and west of Sphakia, Laycock’s summons reached the troops at different times, the earliest probably by 1.00 am, and they had widely different distances to travel to reach the boats. The centrally located “D” Battalion, as its War Diary relates, arrived at Sphakia in time to embark but could not penetrate unruly crowds blocking entry to the beach. Private correspondence shows that the Commandos on the east raced to Sphakia but arrived after the ships had left. Finally the War Diary of “A” Battalion, memoirs of participants, and family letters confirm that troops from the west, led by an outstanding young officer, ran to Sphakia and the first 120 just managed to be taken onto the last Landing Craft. To the 120 from the west who left that night, add 15 from HQ, and 15 “others”, about 150 total. Wounded and deserters who left on earlier nights, and escapees after surrender, raise the total to 209 returned out of 800 Commandos who went to Crete.

2.30 – 2.45 am. Laycock, Graham, and Waugh boarded HMS *Kimberley*. Waugh writes: “Bob ordered brigade HQ to embark ... we reached the destroyer *Nizam* [*sic*] at about midnight

and sailed as soon as we came aboard” (*Diaries* 509). Like much of the Memorandum, this sentence is deeply confused about times (and much else). Waugh sailed on the destroyer *Kimberley*, the *Kimberley* sailed at 3.00 am, and there is every reason to believe that Laycock, Graham, and Waugh boarded just prior to sailing. Navy sources reveal that Laycock waited for the Commandos until the last minute, urging the Navy to extend the cut-off time for boarding. The notion that he boarded a ship early in the night without a care for his men is popular error and unhistorical libel gone mad.

War Diary. Because the charge that Waugh falsified the LAYFORCE War Diary to cover for Laycock is of nearest interest to students of Waugh, by way of conclusion I shall compare the relevant entries in the War Diary with the facts established.

14 hrs, 31 May. “*Final orders from CREFORCE for evacuation (a) LAYFORCE positions not to be held to last man and last round but only as long as was necessary to cover withdrawal of other fighting forces. (b) No withdrawal before order from H.Q. (c) LAYFORCE to embark after other fighting forces but before stragglers.*” The entry reflects Freyberg’s order of 28 May: LAYFORCE will hold an “intermediate position” (“cover withdrawal”) and at nightfall will “disengage and embark” (“embark after other fighting forces”). Waugh adds Weston’s directive of 31 May: “Weston said that a message would be sent to us ... when we could retire” (“No withdrawal before order from H.Q.”).

22 hrs. “*On finding entire CREFORCE staff had withdrawn, Col. Laycock accompanied by B.M. [Brigade Major] and I.O. [Intelligence Officer] proceeded to SPHARKION to obtain authority for withdrawal.*” The entry omits Laycock’s climb to CREFORCE HQ urgently seeking staff, and Major Graham’s hearing the ships’ loading before they arrived. It records Laycock’s party leaving CREFORCE HQ (which had to be after 11.35 pm) and racing down to the beach in a fruitless search for “authority to withdraw”. Fatally for Beevor’s argument that Laycock’s search was pretence, impeccable witnesses such as Major Garrett RM and Lt Colonel Windham Royal Signals were equally surprised to find “entire CREFORCE staff had withdrawn”.

22 hrs. “*All fighting forces were now in position for embarkation....*” Beevor declares this statement “definitely false”; in fact it is demonstrably correct. Laycock arrived back at the beach after midnight. By that time the rearguard units, shielded by the Commandos, had either embarked (1600 men of 5 NZ Brigade, 207 of 2/8 Australian Battalion) or were “in position for embarkation” (2/7 Australian and the Marine Battalions had been on the path to the beach under the orders of “Movement Control” since 11.30 pm).

22 hrs. “*there was no enemy contact....*” Beevor contests this, claiming that “mountain troops had surrounded the beachhead”, but that flies in the face of a mountain of evidence. Major Garrett RM, Officer Commanding the Royal Marine Battalion, testifies that the Germans stopped firing at 8.45 pm. The War Diaries of the Australian units make clear that the enemy did not

pursue them as they withdrew. And many authorities, such as the British Official Historian and General Weston, though surprised, noted that the Germans did not interfere with the evacuation. There had been no contact since 8.45 pm.

22 hrs. “*Col. LAYCOCK on own authority, issued orders to Lt Col. YOUNG to lead troops to SPHAKION by route avoiding the crowded main approach to town and to use his personality to obtain priority laid down in Div. orders.*” CREFORCE orders to LAYFORCE were that, having held an “intermediate position”, LAYFORCE would “disengage and embark”; and Weston added a rider that his staff would send a message authorizing withdrawal. Laycock did not exercise “own authority” to permit his troops to embark. Freyberg and Weston had given that permission. He issued the order to withdraw, very late in the evacuation, because CREFORCE staff had failed to deliver it as promised. This was legal because it was physically impossible to carry out Weston’s directive and Freyberg and Weston’s original order was that LAYFORCE “disengage and embark”.

On the other hand, there seems to be doubtful warrant for the second part of the entry. Laycock gave Pvt. Tanner a verbal order to carry to the Officer Commanding “A” and “D” Battalions. The gist of that order was: “If [they] *could* get away, they *were* to get away” (the words “A” Battalion records receiving). Waugh writes: “Bob then took the responsibility of ordering Layforce to fight their way through the rabble and embark” (*Diaries* 509). That is not the order Dr Tanner remembers being given to transmit.

22 hrs. “*LAYFORCE reached SPHAKION in good time for boats but were unable to penetrate rabble; flank dets [detachments] were able to reach beach but main body remained ashore.*” According to the War Diaries of “D” and “A” Battalions and much other evidence, this entry is exactly right. “D” Battalion arrived outside Sphakia in time to embark but was “unable to force their way through the rabble of refugees etc. which thronged the entrances to the beach” (“D” Bn War Diary). The statement that “flank dets . . . were able to reach beach” refers to Commandos who ran onto the beach from the west very late, 120 of whom were taken onto the last Landing Craft to leave Sphakia, given preference over unauthorized troops then being loaded (“A” Bn War Diary).

Summary. I have said nothing about Waugh’s state of mind on leaving Crete, how much he understood or misunderstood, or whether or not he was afflicted by guilt arising from his escape. Interesting as those subjects might be, they are for others to discuss. All I have tried to do is to outline major events of the Commandos’ very limited success in evacuating Crete and measure what Waugh states in the LAYFORCE War Diary against established facts. On any objective reading of documents and events, Laycock and Waugh acted correctly, and indeed very decently, in extremely difficult, ugly circumstances where nothing went according to CREFORCE plan. And the LAYFORCE War Diary recorded CREFORCE orders, Laycock’s actions, and the military realities of the night not only correctly, but also with unusual detail and frankness. It is sobering to reflect that if the very effective New Zealand cordons had remained in

place for another hour, all “fighting forces”, including LAYFORCE, would have safely embarked as planned, and this discussion would not be taking place. It is also sobering to reflect that in discussing a hectic three-hour evacuation an error of an hour can prove fatal. When Antony Beevor mistakenly placed Laycock’s withdrawal order at 11.00 pm instead of where it indubitably belongs, at 12.15 am or later, he was able to draw adverse conclusions against Laycock and Waugh. But when the correct and only possible time for the order is recognized, the adverse conclusions become clever non-sense, losing any force they might have possessed.

CODA. Michael Barber’s *Evelyn Waugh* is well written and interesting. It gives welcome space to Frances Donaldson’s testimony to Waugh’s extraordinary (if intermittent) charm, and it awards a half-tick to his generosity “to Roman Catholic causes” – if only Mr Barber realized how heroically generous Waugh was to private persons in need when his own finances were perilously stretched. But the “brief life” is at its best when Barber’s familiarity with Anthony Powell’s world shows through, as in illuminating portraits of Maurice Bowra and Cyril Connolly.

But why, I cannot help asking, must this brief life, and other lengthy lives, be marred by so many ludicrously wrong efforts to make Waugh look bad? Of twenty or so possible examples in this brief book, let one suffice. “Evelyn ... referred to [Lord Lovat] in his diary as ‘Mickey Rooney’” (73). Waugh was responsible at Brigade level for a projected operation, “Coughdrop”, a joint attack by Bomber Command and the Commandos on heavily fortified German submarine pens at Lorient. Nothing came of it because Air Chief Marshal (“Bomber”) Harris in a long letter finally expressed grave doubts and Laycock, on Waugh’s advice, in an even longer letter refused to let men under his command participate. MI6 was also uneasy. The officer appointed to lead the Commando part of the raid was Captain O. B. Rooney, highly praised for “Operation Fahrenheit” in November 1942. As his first name was Oswald, Rooney probably did not much mind being nicknamed “Mickey” after the film star. When Waugh writes, “heroic Mickey Rooney is at work training his detachment” (*Diaries* 536), he is so plainly referring to Captain Rooney, leader of “Coughdrop”, that it is difficult to imagine the miracle of determination to put Waugh in the wrong that led Barber to accuse the diarist of bestowing the modest moniker “Mickey Rooney” on proud Lord Lovat. The head spins and the heart sinks ...

Note

[1] D. M. Davin, Official Files re Crete Campaign, MS Papers 5079-229, Operational Directive ... No. 6, (Sgnd) R. C. Querie, Major for HQ British Tps on Crete, 28 May 41. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ.

Arthur Waugh’s Influence, Part III: *One Man’s Road*

John Howard Wilson

Lock Haven University

After he had published two collections of essays, *Reticence in Literature* (1915) and *Tradition and Change* (1919), Arthur Waugh began to write his autobiography, *One Man's Road: Being a Picture of Life in a Passing Generation* (1931). Over the Christmas holidays in 1919, Arthur read his early efforts aloud at home. His younger son Evelyn Waugh heard the first two chapters on 19 December and expressed regret that Arthur had “scrapped it”; he found his father’s autobiography “very sentimental but ... awfully good” (*Diaries* 44). Two days later, Arthur read more, and Evelyn tried “to persuade him to go on with it” (*Diaries* 45). Arthur did complete *One Man's Road*: it was published in 1931, after he had retired, but the book breaks off in 1919, the year it was started, and ignores the 1920s. He wrote that “the end of the War was the end of our generation” (*OMR* 364). Perhaps 390 pages were enough. Arthur’s elder son Alec thought that his father’s “emotionalism put [Evelyn] on his guard,” so that Evelyn gave “the impression of being heartless” (166). Evelyn rejected the sentiment, but his father’s autobiography nevertheless exerted considerable influence. Allusions to the book are scattered in various works by Evelyn, and *One Man's Road* became an important source for Evelyn’s own autobiography, *A Little Learning* (1964).

Summarizing his education at Oxford, Arthur recalls “the three years the locust had eaten under the shadow of New College tower” (*OMR* 161), referring to Joel 2:25. Evelyn’s last novel, *Unconditional Surrender (The End of the Battle in the USA, 1961)*, is dedicated to his daughter Margaret, “child of the locust years,” and the prologue is entitled “Locust Years.”

Echoes may be coincidence, but Evelyn also quotes from *One Man's Road*. From 1911 to 1915, Arthur claims to “have been the youngest man of my age in London” (*OMR* 332). After quoting this sentence in *A Little Learning*, Evelyn adds that he always saw Arthur as “old, indeed as decrepit” (63).

Some of Arthur’s experiences provide precedents for Evelyn’s own. In childhood, Arthur notes, his nurse “sat at the table, reading her Bible. She always read straight on, night after night, from year to year, history, psalmody, prophecy, genealogy; it was all the same to her” (*OMR* 25-26). Similarly, Evelyn found that his nurse was “like most nannies ... a regular bible-reader.... She read undeviating, right through genealogies, law and minor prophets, accepting them all with the same confidence in their life-giving properties. This office took her six months when she turned back to Genesis and started again” (*ALL* 30).

At school, Arthur observed, he “always seemed to be a day behind or before the fair.” At Oxford, “the freshmen of 1885 were well established in work and friendships before I made my belated appearance, and it took me all the rest of my first year to recover lost ground” (*OMR* 111). Evelyn quoted this passage in *A Little Learning* and commented: “It is curious that, alive as he was to the disadvantages of his own experience, he should have set me on precisely the same road” (163). The concluding phrase is perhaps an allusion to Arthur’s title, *One Man's Road*.

At his grandfather's funeral, Arthur recalled, a cousin advised him to "beware of Oxford women" and "never to go outside my college on Sunday without attiring myself in a top-hat and morning-coat" (*OMR* 112). This advice reappears in a different form in Evelyn's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). Because Oxford is "pullulating with women" during Eights Week, Sebastian tells Charles "to come away at once, out of danger" (*Brideshead* 23). A cousin said that Charles's father should "*always* wear a tall hat on Sundays during term," though Mr. Ryder never "heard it commented on" (25). Similarly, Arthur found that top hat and morning coat were "already obsolete" (*OMR* 112). In *Brideshead*, Cousin Jasper dispenses "the rules of conduct," and he advises Charles not to wear "a tweed coat and flannel trousers—always a suit" (26). Later, Jasper delivers his Grand Remonstrance: Charles's "get-up seems an unhappy compromise between the correct wear for a theatrical party at Maidenhead and a glee-singing competition in a garden suburb" (42-43).

Evelyn seems to have absorbed some of Arthur's themes as well. In childhood, a gate separated the nursery from the rest of the house: thus Arthur encountered his "first discipline in the eternal problem of exile" (*OMR* 17). He refers to himself and his sisters as "exiles" awaiting the ghosts of their parents (319). When Sherborne School dropped Alec from its rolls, Arthur felt obliged to "follow him into exile" (358). In *A Little Learning*, Evelyn wrote that "the common fate of all us exiles" is "to have been born into a world of beauty, to die amid ugliness" (33).

Another common theme is the relationship between host and guest, a model for the relationship between father and son. Arthur left his father's house for school at age eight in 1875; he returned "many times, but in future always as a guest" (*OMR* 35). Recalling the standard of entertainment around 1900 and apparently contrasting it with what he had read in Evelyn's *Vile Bodies* (1930), Arthur notes that "the laws of guest and host were laws of comity and grace" (*OMR* 299). Evelyn did not make much of this theme in *A Little Learning*, but once he had completed Chapter 3, "My Father," the *Sunday Telegraph* requested an article about his relationship with Arthur. Serial rights to his autobiography had already been sold to the *Sunday Times*, so Evelyn had to write a new piece. The *Sunday Telegraph* wanted something on the strain in their relationship (Peters), and Evelyn may have turned back to *One Man's Road*. In his manuscript, "Father & Son," he wrote that "our relationship was . . . that of host and guest. . . . Perhaps host and guest is really the happiest relation for father and son" (5). The article was published as "My Father" on 2 December 1962.

The distinction between generations is another theme that attracted both Arthur and Evelyn. As Evelyn wrote in 1929, Arthur's contemporaries persisted as "the wistful generation . . . too old for military service," distinct from "the stunted and mutilated generation who fought" and "the younger generation" (*Essays* 61-62). Arthur identified "the greatest mistake" of his generation as trying "to keep on equal terms with its successor, to be brothers and sisters to its boys and girls" (*OMR* 373). To Evelyn, this criticism seemed mild. His early fiction presents various failings of the oldest generation: greed, irresponsibility, dottiness. Often parents have already died. Left on their own, the youngest generation rebelled against "the widest conceptions

of mere decency” and turned “instinctively to the second rate in art and life.” Members of Evelyn’s generation were “Bolshevik at 18 and bored at 20” (*Essays* 62). Arthur noticed the same tendency at Evelyn’s school: the “distinguishing foible was a premature assumption of the modern undergraduate pose of boredom” (*OMR* 370).

The main difference between Arthur and Evelyn was religion. In *One Man’s Road*, Arthur mentions his childhood belief that Roman Catholics were “vain worshippers of idols” (75). Before the Calvary at Downside Abbey, Arthur felt “a vague spirit of apprehension” due to “public exposure of the heart of the faith” and the “breach of that very emphatic second commandment” (76). Arthur never lost his distaste for Roman Catholicism, though Evelyn converted in 1930, the year before *One Man’s Road* was published. Commenting on people’s readiness to believe in premonitions during the war, Arthur claims to have “kept clear of all such curiosity, believing it to lead into swamps where the judgment is rapidly submerged, and where many wise men have been proved fools” (*OMR* 362). Evelyn, on the other hand, came to delight in such “swamps.” He calculated the odds against his rescue in the Amazon at over fifty million to one and credited St Christopher with intervention in *Ninety-two Days* (1934). On religion, Arthur and Evelyn could never see eye to eye.

Arthur died in 1943, and ten years later Alec proposed republishing *One Man’s Road*. At first, Evelyn suggested cutting the autobiography in half (Davis 292). Later he frowned on the whole idea: “If, as perhaps you hold, [Arthur’s] individual identity has ceased, he is now incapable of pleasure. If, as I hold, he is working his passage to heaven, he is quite indifferent to such matters” (letter, 20 August 1953). For Evelyn, every issue was ultimately religious. He distinguishes his brother’s beliefs from his own, but in both cases Arthur would be indifferent. Evelyn’s is not a strong argument against republication, but of course he prevailed and *One Man’s Road* was not republished. I wonder if he had considerations other than those explained to Alec.

In 1953, Evelyn was writing the second of three novels about the Second World War, *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955). At the end of the war, he had realized that two projects would occupy the rest of his life, his “war novel” and his autobiography (*Letters* 238). He would not take up his autobiography until 1961, but it may have seemed closer in 1953. Evelyn did not anticipate the delusions of 1954 or the novel he wrote about them, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), nor did he foresee having to write the biography of Ronald Knox (1959). Eventually, after publication of the third volume in the war trilogy, *Unconditional Surrender*, as he feared running out of material, Evelyn started his autobiography. He may have intended to draw on *One Man’s Road* and may have opposed republication for that reason.

To read *One Man’s Road* and *A Little Learning* together is to experience occasional déjà vu. Consider the following passages about the Rev. Alexander Waugh, D.D., Arthur’s great-grandfather and Evelyn’s great-great-grandfather. Arthur writes that Dr. Waugh was “one of the most eloquent preachers of his generation. He helped to found the London Missionary Society

and Mill Hill School..." (OMR 61). Evelyn writes that Dr. Waugh "became one of the most prominent Nonconformist preachers of his day and, among other public activities, helped found the London Missionary Society and the Dissenters' Grammar School at Mill Hill" (ALL 5). Other examples could be appended, but it seems clear that Evelyn wrote his account of heredity with one eye on his father's autobiography. In *A Little Learning*, he describes *One Man's Road* as "a book of much charm, which lacks general interest only in its latter half, when his life became uniformly uneventful" (14). Evelyn paid tribute to his father in Chapter 3, but he had difficulty with earlier chapters, and he referred to what his father had written. He noted that it would be "otiose" to repeat his father's recollections (14), but he nevertheless drew on *One Man's Road*.

One Man's Road was Arthur Waugh's last book and thus the last to have any influence on Evelyn's writing. Published over sixteen years, three of Arthur's books—*Reticence in Literature, Tradition and Change*, and *One Man's Road*—provided Evelyn with subjects he exploited throughout his career. Indications of influence may also be evident in Arthur's biographies of Tennyson (1892) and Browning (1900), *Legends of the Wheel* (poems about bicycles, 1898), *A Hundred Years of Publishing* (history of Chapman and Hall, 1930), and other works. Alexander Waugh has pointed out many connections, but the whole subject should be investigated more thoroughly. After *One Man's Road*, moreover, Arthur continued to write occasional pieces, such as "To a Young Man," a reply to Evelyn's "To an Unknown Old Man," broadcast on the BBC in the autumn of 1932 (Stannard 292). These too should be studied for signs of influence. Until we learn more about what Evelyn borrowed from his family, and what he rejected, we cannot fairly judge his originality and his debt to his early environment. The matter of influence is always debatable, and in the case of his family, Evelyn tried to cover the tracks, at least until after Arthur's death. Sir Isaac Newton seemed to see further than others, but he claimed to have stood on the shoulders of giants. Arthur Waugh may not have been a giant, but he certainly boosted the literary careers of his sons Alec and Evelyn.

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Everywhere Something Lovely: Evelyn Waugh and Mells, Part 2

Jeffrey Manley

Shortly after the death of Conrad Russell in 1947, **Ronald Knox (1888-1957)** became a resident of Mells Manor until his death in 1957. He completed his translation of the Bible and Commentaries there, along with his church history (*Enthusiasm*), several collections of sermons, conferences, and articles, translation of St. Therese's autobiography, and other books published posthumously.[22] Waugh had known Knox since his Roman Catholic chaplaincy at Oxford, but they became closer after he moved to Mells. Knox made Waugh his literary executor and biographer. The biography was dedicated to Katharine Asquith and Daphne Acton. Knox had lived at Aldenham, the Actons' Shropshire estate, before moving to Mells.[23]

Waugh frequently visited Mells after Knox moved in, but only a few sentences in the biography describe those visits. Waugh refers to himself in the third person, concentrating on Knox's writing and theology. Anthony Powell felt that Waugh "revered" Knox. Waugh once told Powell that Knox "could be chilly if surroundings were in the least unsympathetic." Powell found Knox to be a "man of delightful humour" and never noticed chilliness. Waugh replied: "You were at Eton and Balliol" (Anthony Powell, *The Strangers All Are Gone*, London, 1982, 40).[24] Powell's wife Violet describes an afternoon visit to the Manor; Waugh overlapped with Alan Pryce-Jones, whom he despised. To avoid unpleasant confrontation, Knox conducted Waugh on an extended tour of the estate "and kept him looking at the pigsties until the coast was clear" (Violet Powell, *The Departure Platform*, London, 1998, 96). Violet recalled John Betjeman's visit to a house on the Welsh borders. It was not yet on the electric grid, so Betjeman requested delivery to the nearest source of power for his electric razor. What a hypocrite Betjeman must be, Knox observed: when invited to Mells Church to dedicate an electric carillon, he "fiercely inveighed against modern, especially electrical, technology, regretting the old days of bell-ringing by hand." In a "piquant trimming," Anthony Powell recalls that the Mells bells "playing hymns greatly disturbed [Knox], possibly hymns reminding him too vividly of his own apostasy from the Church of England" (*Journals 1987-1989*, London, 1996, 119).[25]

In January 1957, Knox was diagnosed with cancer that turned out to be untreatable. Waugh cancelled an expenses-paid trip to Monte Carlo with Laura to take Knox to Torquay while Katharine Asquith had medical treatment. The March weather was beastly, the hotel uncongenial, but Waugh lasted for three weeks. Knox's primary entertainments were *Scrabble* and the *Times* crossword; he filled in all the horizontal answers and then tried to work out the verticals without clues. Waugh complained that Knox played *Scrabble* with intensity, demanded silence from other players, and miscounted scores. He did not share Knox's pleasures (*Letters* 488; Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh*, Penguin, 1977, 519-21). Back at Mells, after Katharine had returned, Knox continued to decline, and he died in August 1957.

Knox was buried at his request in the Mells churchyard the day following a funeral in Westminster Cathedral in London. According to a letter from Katharine to Waugh, Knox was obsessively worried about his coffin being wheeled from the Roman Catholic chapel at Mells Manor into the churchyard.^[26] The coffin was carried into the churchyard. Auberon Waugh, among the pallbearers, recalled a huge dog named Tarquin that "howled like a woman wailing for her demon lover as we carried the coffin across the lawn in front of the house."^[27] The priest from the Roman Catholic parish of Frome presided over the burial service. Violet Powell's church at Chantry is, at least today, in the same C of E parish as Mells, and she describes Knox's service as sung by the monks of Downside Abbey: "The [Anglican] Rector, Mr. Cavendish, much cherished by the family at the Manor, was standing by. He had issued instructions that if any of the local Anglican clergy wishing to attend should inquire what ought to be worn, the answer was 'cassocks and cloaks.' This sage suggestion resulted in a group of black-gowned figures forming a dark frieze behind the white-robed chanting monks" (*Departure Platform* 109-10).

Knox's grave is near that of Siegfried Sassoon, another convert, who lived on the other side of Frome in Wiltshire. Knox arranged for the monks at Downside to instruct Sassoon in Roman Catholicism. Katharine Asquith, Christopher Hollis, and his wife Madeleine are buried in the same Anglican churchyard, though they were devout Roman Catholics. At the other end of Somerset, Waugh, his wife, and one daughter are buried in seemingly self-imposed exile, just outside the wall of the Combe Florey churchyard. Burial was, according to two of Waugh's biographers, "by special arrangement." Who made the arrangement and why they did so is not explained. How much Waugh had to do with the site is open to question, given his sudden death at an early age. He knew of Knox's 1957 burial in the Anglican churchyard at Mells.

There is no rule against non-conformist burials in Anglican churchyards. It depends on space and residence in the parish, which would not have prevented Waugh's burial in Combe Florey churchyard. The churchyard seems to be closed to additional burials; new graves are across the road, where Auberon Waugh is buried. The retaining wall between the Waugh graves and the churchyard is deteriorating, and the "special arrangement" has been reconsidered.

Another friend of Waugh lived about six miles east of Mells between Frome and Warminster. **Daphne Fielding (1904-97)**, not to be confused with Daphne Acton, was then married to Henry Bath.[28] They lived at Sturford Mead, a large house on the Longleat Estate, where her husband was heir. She knew Waugh from Oxford, and they met through the Bright Young People in London in the late 1920s. They corresponded after visits to Sturford during and after the war. Another friend from the 1920s lived in a cottage at Longleat. **Olivia Plunket Greene (1907-58)** was an alcoholic in the care of her mother Gwen. Olivia and her mother were Roman Catholic converts, and Olivia had introduced Waugh to Fr. Martin D'Arcy.

In 1942, while stationed at nearby Sherborne, Waugh visited Sturford Mead during Christmas and met Deborah Mitford after marriage to Andrew Cavendish, later Duke of Devonshire. Conrad Russell, Duff and Diana Cooper, and the artist Rex Whistler were also there. In a letter to his wife, Waugh said the party had been marked by "great drunkenness." When he visited Olivia next day, he "found her with no trousers on completely drunk and Gwen blacking the grate" (*Letters* 165).[29] Olivia and her mother lived in a cottage known as Aucombe, near Crockerton on the Longleat Estate. How they came to settle there is unclear, but they were there by 1940, when Olivia sent letters from that address.[30]

Daphne became a frequent correspondent after the war. Waugh described another party in 1948, apparently also at Sturford Mead, after her husband had succeeded to the title; in Waugh's letters, Daphne was the Marchioness of Bath. In a letter to Nancy Mitford, Waugh wrote that the party was

frightfully noisy and drunken. Daphne keeping me up till 3:30 every night and the children riding bicycles round the house with loud cries from 6:30. No sleep. Jazz all day. Henry at meals reading the most disgusting pages of Malinowski's *Sexual Life of the Savage* (and goodness they are disgusting) aloud to his 18 year old daughter and 16 year old son. All Longleat park like Surrey—the woods cut, second growth scrub, tank tracks and decaying Nissen huts. Then a great change to Mells—all Pre-Raphaelite paintings and the X-word puzzle with Ronnie Knox. (*Letters* 276)[31]

Waugh visited Olivia, whom he described to Nancy Mitford as "stark mad." In his *Diaries*, Olivia was "1/3 drunk 1/3 insane 1/3 genius." Waugh had been "involved since in a long correspondence with her in which she claims to be guided by God to give Gwen's money to the Communists" (698).

After Daphne's husband inherited Longleat, the Baths asked Waugh to write a book to be sold to visitors. He declined, since "he could never write the history of such a black Protestant family as the Thynnes" (Daphne Fielding, *Mercury Presides*, New York, 1955, 214). Daphne wrote the guidebook, the first in a long line of publications. Waugh was in a way responsible for starting her career.

Waugh's correspondence with Daphne continued after her marriage to Henry Bath broke up in 1953. Shortly thereafter, she married Xan Fielding, who had a distinguished war record of exploits in Crete. Waugh dedicated *Gilbert Pinfold* to her in 1957, and he promoted her writing in its early stages. He favorably reviewed her first novel, *The Adonis Garden* (London, 1961) in the *Spectator*. He joked that, as a professional novelist, he was "aghast at Mrs. Fielding's prodigality. She has squandered the themes and materials of at least four novels in this single act of exuberant bounty" ("Cornucopia," 22 June 1961, 28). He told her that she had "used almost everything that has happened in the last twelve years" (*Letters* 565-66). Waugh seems to have been right: this effort turned out to be her only novel. They corresponded regarding her biography of Rosa Lewis, *The Duchess of Jermyn Street* (1964). Rosa was the model for Lottie Crump in *Vile Bodies*, and Waugh wrote a preface for Daphne's biography.

Waugh wrote to Daphne of meetings in London with her elder son, Alexander, and expressed admiration of his good looks (*Letters* 475-76). Alexander studied art in Paris and promoted free love in "Swinging London" in the 1960s; as Marquess of Bath after 1992, Alexander continued to live it up. James Lees-Milne was a neighbor of Daphne in her last years at Badminton, Gloucestershire. In the final volume of his diaries, he describes her 90th birthday in July 1994 at Longleat. The estate had been turned into a safari park by Daphne's first husband, Alexander's father.

The park looked marvellous in the sunshine except for the masses and the funfairs and the lions. The party just what I feared. Upstairs in Alexander Bath's penthouse ... taste in fabrics and furnishings appalling; mulberry fitted carpets, jazzy cushions, office furniture. A band playing some ghastly sort of African jungle music so loudly that we could not hear a word said. Lord Bath with grey fuzzy hair all over face down to shoulders was dressed, as was his brother Christopher, as a Mexican bandit. He was jolly and quite mad. (*The Milk of Paradise: Diaries 1993-1997*, London, 2006, 112)[32]

Daphne wrote other books about upper-class English life, including two volumes of memoirs. Waugh wrote to Nancy Mitford regarding *Mercury Presides*: "Daphne has written her memoirs. Contrary to what one would have expected they are marred by discretion and good taste. The childhood part is admirable. The adult part is rather as though Lord Montgomery were to write his life and omit to mention that he ever served in the army" (*Letters* 433). Daphne Acton died in 1997.

Olivia continued to live in the cottage at Longleat until her death on 11 November 1958 (letter of Gwen Plunket Greene to Evelyn Waugh, 12 Nov. 1958, BL, Add. 81058). Waugh remained in contact with Olivia and her mother until shortly before Olivia's death.[33] From the hospital in Bath, Olivia wrote Waugh in 1958 and urged him to visit. I do not know if he complied, but it would have been characteristic. In the letter announcing Olivia's death, her mother mentions Waugh's gift of £5.00. Olivia intended to spend it on caviar when she got well.

Her mother died shortly thereafter; in her last letter to Waugh, Gwen had been hospitalized for dropsy (15 Jan. 1959).

Anthony Powell (1905-2000) became the last of Waugh's friends to reside near Mells when he moved in July 1952 to the village of Chantry, a little over a mile south.[34] At Oxford they had been, according to Waugh, "on friendly terms though barely in friendship" (*A Little Learning* 193). Powell recalls knowing Waugh in the Hypocrites Club and attending "Offal Dinners" in his rooms at Hertford College, but they did not become close until London in 1927. Waugh had failed as a schoolmaster and Powell had begun to work at Duckworth, the publishers. Powell sent Waugh a letter asking if he had anything suitable for publication. This initiative ripened into Waugh's first book, *Rossetti*, published by Duckworth in 1928. Their friendship flourished after Waugh's marriage in June 1928. At the Waugh's Islington flat, Powell befriended John Heygate.[35] Heygate precipitated the breakup of Waugh's marriage in 1929, but Powell remained Heygate's close friend. Waugh kept his distance, but he and Powell were cordial and met by chance over the next twenty years.

After the war, they saw each other regularly. Powell stopped at Piers Court when hunting for a house in the country in 1951.[36] He bought The Chantry, where he remained until death in 2000. His choice had nothing to do with Waugh's friends, though he knew some, such as Christopher Hollis and Henry Bath.[37] Waugh visited the Powells when in the vicinity, and the Powells reciprocated when near Piers Court or, later, Combe Florey. Piers Court and Combe Florey are both about fifty miles from Mells, the first due north and the other due west. Waugh and Powell's relationship seems relaxed during this period, with casual, unannounced visits on both sides. They resumed correspondence broken off in the late 1920s.

Waugh visited The Chantry in October 1952, shortly after the Powells had moved in, accompanied by his "well-conducted son," Auberon, in his first term at nearby Downside.[38] Some visits had comic results. Powell recalls Laura Waugh stopping unannounced with a child before dropping Evelyn at some neighbors (probably at Mells) and then picking up other children. The Powells were to collect Evelyn after luncheon and return to The Chantry to await Laura's arrival for tea. Despite having lived in the country since the 1930s, Evelyn did not drive a car, according to Powell.[39] After tea, the Waughs were invited to dinner, stayed until 11:00 pm, and returned to Combe Florey. All went well except for a "sharp argument (brought up by Waugh, then abandoned by him) as to what members of what clubs were homosexual." Powell included this story in his memoirs "to show, in light of a good deal of evidence to the contrary, that Waugh was perfectly capable of spending an afternoon and evening without making a scene" (*Messengers of Day*, London, 1978, 131-32).

In her memoirs, Violet Powell recalls dropping by unannounced at Piers Court and Combe Florey with children in tow. On one occasion, Waugh asked if his brood would like to be taken away by Lady Violet. All the little Waughs eagerly piled into her car (*Departure Platform* 30-31). On another, while Violet dined with the Waughs at Combe Florey, her younger son John

entertained the Waugh children at their table in the kitchen, so boisterously that Violet feared Waugh's reaction. Nothing was said, however (*Departure* 121-22).

In his diary for 5 February 1961, Waugh notes that, while visiting Mells Manor, he learned of the death of Violet Powell's brother, Edward Pakenham. Scheduled for dinner at the Powells the day after, he was apprehensive:

Any scruples we felt about approaching a house of mourning instantly dispelled by ribaldry. Frank [Pakenham] had spent the previous evening telephoning to everyone he knew seeking publicity for Edward.... Frank had roped in two hired mourners—Tristram Powell and young [Ferdinand] Mount, both from Oxford. I was reminded of Pansy's story of her mother's announcement in the nursery: 'Children, your father has been killed in action and in future your brother, Silchester, will be addressed as "Edward.'" (*Diaries* 776-77)

About eighteen months before Waugh's death, the Powells met him at Paddington on a train traveling through their station (probably Westbury) and invited him to disembark and stay overnight. He did and rang home to say he had been kidnapped from the train, or "shanghaied" in a letter to Katharine Asquith (14 Sept. 1964; *Letters* 624). Powell noted that "the evening was an enjoyable one. Again, Waugh is presented so rarely in an easygoing state that the incident seems worth recording" (*Messengers* 132).

Powell last encountered Waugh at a country wedding in November 1965:

Waugh did not look at all well. For some time he had been too fat to be in good health; now he seemed at the same time portly, yet wasted. He walked in a very shaky manner. One could never be sure such staggerings were not the pretence of being an old man that he had begun in middle-age, together with the ear-trumpet, but, if the ear-trumpet remained always something of a game, the deafness and unsteadiness on his feet were now quite genuine.

After a futile search of the house for whiskey, Waugh rejoined the queue down a slight slope with a ramp to the marquee. As they left, the Powells saw Waugh struggling up the slope with the aid of his wife and daughter: "That was the first time I grasped how bad was the state of his health by that stage.... At the top of the slope the three of them paused. Waugh smiled as we passed, making a faint gesture of his hand to say goodbye. That was the last I saw of him. He died about five months later" (*Messengers* 132-33).

In an obituary, Powell described Waugh as "a man of immense generosity, not only in material things, but—what is little known—as a literary critic. He read and enjoyed all sorts of books, especially novels, of which, in his self-created character of reactionary bogeyman, he might often have been expected to disapprove." One had to be careful in conversation to avoid "many persons and subjects ... under an interdict," and Waugh found aristocratic and intellectual

gatherings “equally trying.” Powell was “deeply aware that his going means that a chunk of my own life has gone too. Apart from any personal regrets, we have all lost the most naturally gifted writer of his generation” (“Three Evocations of Evelyn Waugh: A Memoir,” *Adam International Review*, Nos. 301-03, 1966).

After Waugh’s death, Powell remained in contact with Waugh’s friends around Mells and outlived his own generation. He had met Ronald Knox and the Asquith family in the early years of his residence and shared a hogshead of wine, with Knox trying to decant it. The Powells knew Knox slightly better than Katharine, who lived in “comparative retirement.” After living under the same roof, Powell observed, Katharine and Knox had “some of those mutual asperities with one another to be associated with a couple long and happily married” (*Strangers* 38). The Powells became better acquainted with Katharine’s children, who were closer in age. Powell was invited to visit her younger daughter Perdita at Ammerdown, a mile north of Mells, and he met her son Julian and his wife Anne, who lived at Mells Manor. The Powells often parked their car at Mells Manor when attending services at Mells Church.

In memoirs and journals, Powell does not mention contact with Christopher Hollis, who lived at Mells, but he does recall the funeral of Maidie Hollis, Christopher’s wife, in 1983. The service was conducted by her son, a priest, in the Frome R.C. church, “a building of unusual hideosity” (*J82-86* 72). She was buried in Mells churchyard with her husband.

The Powells’ closest friends in Somerset were Lees and Mary Mayall. The Mayalls acquired Sturford Mead after it was vacated by Henry Bath and his second wife. Powell describes the house, on the Longleat Estate, as “bigish without being grand, architecturally undistinguished.” Mayall had been at Eton and succeeded as a diplomat. Mary was his second wife, previously married to Robin Campbell. Waugh does not seem to have mentioned Lees Mayall, but he knew Mary from her first marriage, since he was in the Commandos with Campbell (*Diaries* 487). Another Commando known to Waugh, Robin Mount, married Violet Powell’s sister Julia; he arranged the Mayalls’ acquisition of Sturford Mead. The Mounts lived nearby in Wiltshire and helped the Powells to find The Chantry. Their son, Ferdinand Mount, frequently visited Sturford in youth and described it as the “headquarters of Wiltshire’s high bohemia.”^[40] He also says that the sale of Sturford to the Mayalls “must have been the only commercial transaction my father ever made a profit on” (*Cold Cream: My Early Life and Other Mistakes*, London, 2008, 86-87).

Powell completed his twelve-volume *A Dance to the Music of Time* at The Chantry, and much of the last volume, *Hearing Secret Harmonies* (1975), takes place around Mells. He also published four volumes of memoirs and three volumes of journals while living there; Waugh may be the most frequently mentioned writer. Powell evaluates Waugh as man and artist. He recognized that Waugh could be difficult but, like Christopher Hollis, had no recollection of bad behavior directed at him. As he grew older, Powell became obsessed with what he considered Waugh’s social climbing (as well as that of other friends, notably John Betjeman). He leaves a

favorable if grudging assessment of Waugh's accomplishments. At the end of his memoirs, before he published his journals, Powell's judgment of Waugh seems more balanced. Waugh seems never to have written an unkind word about Powell; he never forgot that Powell gave him his first break in publishing, at the lowest point in his career.

Though he lived in Gloucestershire and West Somerset, Waugh formed a lasting attachment to East Somerset around Mells. As Frances Donaldson explains in her memoir *Portrait of a Country Neighbour* (London, 1967), Waugh was not comfortable with casual, neighborly relations. His friendship with the Donaldsons, who lived near Piers Court, was exceptional.[41] Laura Waugh told her that "it was an embarrassment to her not to be able to ask her neighbors to the house in the ordinary way, but it had been more of an embarrassment when she had done so. The last time she had asked some people to tea, she said Evelyn had risen at five o'clock in the afternoon and saying a formal good-bye had said that he must go and take a bath" (*Portrait* 13).

Around Mells, he enjoyed old friends with whom he could relax. This neighborhood began to form after his meeting with Katharine Asquith in 1933. She was joined a few years later by Christopher Hollis, his friend from Oxford. Through Katharine and Hollis, Waugh met Conrad Russell, Hollis's neighbor. From the 1920s, he knew Daphne Fielding and Olivia Plunket Greene, who landed at nearby Longleat. Anthony Powell, familiar from Oxford, moved to a village next to Mells in 1951. Waugh knew Ronald Knox from visits to Oxford in the 1930s.

Waugh's longest visits to Mells were in the middle 1930s prior to his second marriage. He became a semi-resident and wrote parts of three books there. Even after marriage, during the war, visits continued. These increased after the war and the arrival of Ronald Knox and Anthony Powell. Waugh visited the monks at nearby Downside Abbey, where he also had friends. Mells was the neighborhood he failed to find in other parts of the country, including London. After the 1920s, London meant primarily clubs and literary business. At Mells Waugh found relaxation and peace.

Notes

[22] Knox dedicated *Enthusiasm* (1950) to Waugh, who declared it the "greatest work of literary art of the century" (Hastings 586; Waugh, *Essays* 479).

[23] Knox moved to Mells when the Actons settled on a farm in Rhodesia. Waugh describes a 1958 visit in *A Tourist in Africa* (1960).

[24] After Knox's death, Powell wrote to Waugh. During his short but enjoyable acquaintance with Knox, he was never conscious of stiffness and reserve mentioned in obituaries, and he "always found him extraordinarily charming and easy to get on with." Powell would have enjoyed learning about sides of Knox described in Waugh's biography. Letters, 24 Oct. 1957 and 12 Oct. 1959, Evelyn Waugh Papers, British Library, Manuscripts Department, Add. 81068.

[25] Powell probably refers to the electric carillon programmed to play hymns. In *Knox*, Waugh comments that the neighboring bell tower filled the garden with sound "rather too often for

Ronald's comfort" (309). Bells announced services, told time, and rang peals. Shortly after arrival, Knox wrote that Mells was peaceful compared with Aldenham, and he never wanted to do anything but "sit still and wait for the next time the church chimes will go off" (*Knox* 310).

[26] Letter, 16 Dec. 1957, Evelyn Waugh Papers, BL, Add. 81047.

[27] Auberon Waugh, *Will This Do?* (London, 1991), 38. Auberon recalled that the dog put his nose in the crotches of male visitors and often slobbered as well. Auberon gave the name *Tarquin* to the monstrous child in his first novel, *The Foxglove Saga* (London, 1960). Katharine, Auberon's godmother, urged him to write more pleasant novels.

[28] Henry's family name was Thynne. At the time of their marriage in 1926, Henry held the courtesy title of Viscount Weymouth, and Daphne, born Lady Daphne Vivian, became Viscountess Weymouth. After the war, when Henry succeeded to his father's title, Marquess of Bath, Daphne became Marchioness of Bath. After her marriage to Henry was dissolved, she adopted her second husband's name, became Daphne Fielding, and published several books. Her friends (or at least Waugh) seem to have dropped "Lady" when addressing her.

[29] Waugh's description is consistent with recollections of Gwen's grandson, Alexander Plunket Greene, a frequent visitor to Aucombe. In a letter to Harman Grisewood, 21 July 1983, he says that "Grandma Gwen and Aunt Olivia" were quite crazy when he visited during and after the war. They fed mice and scolded cats that tried to pounce on them. "Naked women with red hair would run about the woods which was quite exciting for a 13 year old boy and also, it seemed, for everybody else." Harman Grisewood Papers II, Georgetown University Library, Special Collections, Box 4, Folder 6. Alexander made a name in fashion, founding a shop in Chelsea called Bazaar and selling clothes designed by his wife, Mary Quant. Her designs became icons of Swinging London in the 1960s.

[30] Letter from Olivia Plunket Greene to Harman Grisewood, 24 Dec. 1940. Georgetown, Box 4, Folder 8.1.

[31] See also *Mr Wu & Mrs Stitch*, 102, where Waugh describes the same party in a letter to Diana Cooper and contrasts it with his reception at Mells in somewhat different terms.

[32] Anthony Powell described Alexander Bath (then Weymouth) in 1988 at a Christmas party at The Chantry given by Powell's son Tristram: "still dressed as a hippy of twenty or more years ago, patchwork coat like Harlequin, straggly beard" (*J87-89* 159).

[33] Olivia's side of the correspondence in her last years survives at the British Library, Evelyn Waugh Papers, Add. 81058. Her mother told Waugh on 25 November 1958 that she had saved all his letters to Olivia, but none has been published. They may have met the fate that befell letters to Gwen. In a letter to a prospective biographer, her grandson, Alexander Plunket Greene, explained that his father, Richard Plunket Greene, had disposed of everything when Gwen died in 1959. Letter to Harman Grisewood, 21 July 1983.

[34] Powell's house was within easy walking distance of Mells Manor. His sister-in-law Pansy Lamb, aged about eighty, walked to Mells in 1983 to visit Helen Asquith, Katharine's eldest daughter, who never married (Anthony Powell, *Journals 1982-1986*, London, 1995, 53). A

quarry has cut Mells Lane, the road between Mells and Chantry; a detour via Whatley or Finger Farm adds two miles to the journey.

[35] Heygate and Powell overlapped at Eton and Balliol; Powell says that they became closely acquainted only through friendship with the Waughs.

[36] This visit is described in Michael Barber, *Anthony Powell: A Biography* (London, 2004), 192-93. The house was owned by the father of Gerard Irvine, an Anglican priest known to the Powells in London. It was not far from the factory of Messrs. Tubbs, well-known manufacturers of trusses. In a letter to Waugh, 14 March 1951, Powell denied that he would “derive any great convenience from the proximity of the Tubbs’s factory.”

[37] Powell had known Henry Bath since prep school. According to Powell, Bath failed entrance to Eton, but they met again at Oxford. Powell says they were never close, but they exchanged visits after he moved to The Chantry. Hollis was at Eton and Balliol, but he was older than Powell. They knew each other at Oxford through the Hypocrites and Waugh’s offal dinners.

[38] Barber 280. Auberon frequently visited The Chantry, attending parties and seeing Tristram, Powell’s son, whom he knew from Oxford. After Evelyn’s death, Auberon’s relationship with Powell cooled considerably. See Barber 280-81, 297-98.

[39] See Waugh’s *Diaries* in 1939: “I drove the car back to Chagford” (448), and “I got in the wrong gear and progressed in a series of sharp jerks as though on a bucking horse” (449).

[40] Longleat and Sturford Mead are technically in Wiltshire, adjacent to the boundary with Somerset.

[41] Waugh was once nasty to Frances Donaldson, and coolness followed, but he remained friendly with her husband. See *Portrait* 81-83.

Leonard Russell’s Evidence in Evelyn Waugh’s Libel Case, 1957

John Howard Wilson

Lock Haven University

The Waugh-Russell Collection in the Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center, Washington, DC, includes eighteen letters and cards from Evelyn Waugh to Leonard Russell, sometime literary editor of the *Sunday Times*, along with a corrected carbon typescript of Waugh’s autobiography, *A Little Learning* (1964), and corrected proofs of four serial installments of *A Little Learning* for the *Sunday Times*.

Three notes are undated; nine are dated from 10 September 1952 to 8 December 1955, when Waugh seems to have been eager to write reviews for the *Sunday Times*. Waugh published five reviews in the *Sunday Times* in this period, notably of Graham Greene’s novel *The Quiet American* (1955), a book he requested on a card dated 8 December 1955 (Box 1, Folder 12), though the review appeared on 4 December (“Quixote Goes East,” p. 4). According to his *Diaries*, he had received the book by 28 November (747), so the date on the card was probably a

slip for “8 November.” Waugh also published a couple of letters and an article in the *Sunday Times* in 1953, along with two reviews and another article in 1956.

The Waugh-Russell Collection contains a few more items: a Christmas card from 1952 (Box 1, Folder 23), described in *EWS* 44.3 (Winter 2014); nine photographs of Waugh from 1930 to 1961 (Folder 22), including an unusual one on Spitsbergen in 1934; and a copy of Russell’s testimony in Waugh’s libel case in 1957 (Folder 21).

There had been tension between Waugh and the Beaverbrook press since the summer of 1953. Lord Beaverbrook’s newspapers—the *Evening Standard*, the *Sunday Express*, and the *Daily Express*—all panned Waugh’s *Love among the Ruins*. In an article in the *Spectator*, Waugh noted that “The unanimity of the Beaverbrook press is striking. All abuse, not so much my little book, as me, in terms which, used of a coal miner, would precipitate a general strike” (“Mr Waugh Replies,” *Essays* 442).

The statement is headed “Subpoena of Leonard Russell, 13 Feb 1957, re Evelyn Waugh (male) and Beaverbrook Newspapers Limited and Nancy Spain (Feme Sole) Queen’s Bench Division, High Court of Justice on 14 Feb 1957.”

The folder includes a letter from A. W. Martin of Allen & Overy to Russell, 15 February 1957:

Evelyn Waugh and Miss Spain

I enclose a copy of the Statement which you made to me this afternoon concerning the article which appeared in the SPECTATOR on 24th February 1956.

I confirm that the hearing of this action will not commence next Monday, but is now expected to begin at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday next, the 19th instant.

The article in the *Spectator* was Waugh’s “Dr Wodehouse and Mr Wain.” He had written that “The Beaverbrook press is no longer listed as having any influence at all” on the book trade (*Essays* 507). In response to Waugh, Nancy Spain had written “Does a Good Word from Me Sell a Book?” in the *Daily Express* on 17 March 1956. Spain claimed that her recommendation had pushed sales of Alec Waugh’s *Island in the Sun* (1955) to 60,000, and that Alec’s *Island* sales exceeded all of Evelyn’s first-edition sales. In fact, Evelyn had sold 180,000 first editions (Stannard, *Later Years* 383). Evelyn immediately wrote to his agent, A. D. Peters: “I have waited a long time to catch the *Express* in libel. I think they have done it this time” (*Letters* 468). He sued, Spain counter-sued, and Beaverbrook Newspapers called on Russell to support their case.

LEONARD RUSSELL of 14 Albion Street, W.2. will say: —

I am the Literary Editor of the SUNDAY TIMES and I have occupied this position since 1944.

I remember reading the article written by Evelyn Waugh headed DR. WODEHOUSE AND MR. WAIN which appeared in the SPECTATOR dated 24th February 1956 and I then understood the statement that the Beaverbrook Press was no longer listed as having any influence on sales of books as referring to Miss Nancy Spain.

I considered the comment made by Mr. Waugh to be reasonable in connection with the market research report which had appeared in the BOOKSELLER and an abbreviated version of which had also appeared in the OBSERVER dated 12th February 1956.

I was very surprised that the DAILY EXPRESS came so low in the list which appeared in the BOOKSELLER as my impression was that the DAILY EXPRESS had a greater influence on sales than appeared from the report of this research.

As Miss Spain is very well known to me and I am well acquainted with her ability as a book reviewer for a popular paper like the DAILY EXPRESS, I was not therefore influenced by what Mr. Waugh said, but anyone who did not share my opinion of the unsatisfactory nature of the report would be likely to form a poor opinion of Miss Spain's ability and influence on the reading public, as a literary critic. I remember commiserating with her at the time upon the effect which the report might have upon her position with the DAILY EXPRESS as I thought it might result in her being censured.

The statement is cautious, but two weeks later Waugh told Nancy Mitford that "a disgusting looking man called Russell from the *Sunday Times* ... gave evidence against me." After the first day, Waugh "would have settled for a fiver." He had, however, "taken the precaution of telling the Dursley parish priest that he should have 10% of the damages," and he had "a fine solid jury who were out to fine the *Express* for their impertinence to the Royal Family, quite irrespective of any rights and wrongs" (*Letters* 485-86). Waugh won £2000.

Waugh won two other libel suits at this time. In December 1956, he sued Pan Books for republishing Rebecca West's *The Meaning of Treason* (1947) with a new passage suggesting that his writing and Graham Greene's encouraged traitors. The book had to be withdrawn, and Waugh settled for costs without damages. The *Daily Express* published an article about West's book, so Waugh sued and won £3000 from Beaverbrook Newspapers in April 1957 (Stannard, *Later Years* 377-85).

Perhaps it is only coincidence, but Waugh did not write again to Russell until 1964. In April 1961, the *Sunday Times* agreed to pay £5000 for serial rights to *A Little Learning* (A. D. Peters Collection, Box 153, Harry Ransom Center). Waugh sent Russell two cards and two letters about publication in the summer of 1964. In 1965, Waugh refused to be interviewed about the late Ian Fleming: "I liked him but our interests were quite different" (Folder 17).

Waugh continued to write for the *Sunday Times*, but only occasionally. After the trial, he published an article and a letter on Ronald Knox in September 1957 and “A True Father in God” in 1958. Other work intervened: he wrote *Ronald Knox*, travelled to Africa (twice) and Germany, and wrote *A Tourist in Africa* and *Unconditional Surrender*. He did not appear again in the *Sunday Times* until 1961 in a series of publications starting before the purchase of serial rights: a review in January, a letter in February, a letter about P. G. Wodehouse in July, the text of the broadcast about Wodehouse, also in July, and a review in September. The essays “Sloth” and “Eldorado Revisited” followed in 1962; “Eldorado” had been commissioned by the *Daily Mail*, but they lost interest and Waugh resorted to the *Sunday Times* (*Letters* 583-84). He also published one review in 1963, another in 1964, and the last in 1965.

After Russell’s testimony in the libel case of 1957, Waugh seems to have turned away from the *Sunday Times*, at least for a while. He could not afford to ignore a prestigious newspaper that paid well, and the purchase of serial rights seems to have improved relations in 1961. Still, in his last decade, most of Waugh’s best reviews went to the *Spectator*, the magazine that had published “Mr Waugh Replies” and “Dr. Wodehouse and Mr. Wain.”

Waugh by Friends and Colleagues: Christopher Sykes

For a program entitled *A Profile of Evelyn Waugh*, Canadian broadcaster [Nathan Cohen](#) interviewed a dozen people, either friends of Waugh or fellow writers. The program was broadcast on CBC Radio on Waugh’s birthday, 28 October 1969, three years after his death. David J. Dooley, co-author of *Evelyn Waugh: A Reference Guide* (1984), recorded the program and transcribed it. A copy passed into the hands of one of Dooley’s students, Jeffrey M. Heath, author of *The Picturesque Prison* (1982). That transcript is now in the [Jeffrey M. Heath Fonds](#), Series 3, Box 6, File 1, E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University in the University of Toronto.

In each of the next several issues, *Waugh Studies* intends to publish the comments of one person interviewed for the program. The second is Waugh’s friend and biographer [Christopher Sykes](#):

Friends of mine who had heard that I had been asked by Evelyn Waugh’s family to write the definitive biography asked me, “Won’t you find it a very difficult assignment?” Well, will I? In a way, of course I will, because all truthful biography is very difficult. Family feeling must be respected, and at the same time the truth must prevail. But please observe that I said the definitive biography, not the official one. The fact is that, although Evelyn was one of the most eminent Englishmen of his time, he was not and could not have been an official person. Apart from his wartime commission in the Army, he held no official position. He had political opinions, some very strange ones, but he had no political allegiance. He had not any taste or inclination towards public life. And all of this gives me one sort of freedom. The reputation of

Great Britain in the world is not at stake, no matter what I say. The British constitution would remain intact even if I were to indulge in an orgy of scandalous vituperation. And I hope it is needless to say that such is not my intention. Evelyn was a natural rebel against society, by temperament an extreme and even violent one. He was aware of this, and he took measures against it. But the extreme conservatism of his later years, and on a much higher plane his devotion to the Catholic faith, were part of a conscious effort to subdue an anarchic element in his being which he condemned. But neither his assumed political ideas nor his sincerely held faith could prevent him being a rebel. This inherent anarchism was the cause of most of Evelyn's faults. But I would not say that that constitutes a biographical difficulty. Evelyn was an extraordinarily open man. He could shock people. He did not only shock prudes, but some of his best and most broad-minded friends. But there was no pretense about him. He had no hidden vices. He was an eminent man, as I have said, but he was a man about whom people could not entertain illusions. He was incapable of hypocrisy, the sin most condemned by the Christian Redeemer. All Evelyn's faults lay open to inspection, so to speak, and his biographer cannot possibly misrepresent him in the conventional way and hope to get away with it. I seem to have mentioned his faults a great deal. Had he no virtues? I would enumerate them as these: generosity, faith in God, inflexible intellectual honesty, the conscience of an artist. He had modesty too, much as it may surprise some people. If he had heard what I have just said above, I think he would have said, "I wouldn't say artist, say craftsman" (pp. 4-5).

Evelyn Waugh and Rex Whistler

Jonathan Kooperstein

In his review of Hugh and Mirabel Cecil's *In Search of Rex Whistler* in the Autumn [2013 Anthony Powell Society] *Newsletter*, Jeffrey Manley discusses the coincidental parallels between Whistler's life and the character Charles Ryder in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*.

What neither authors nor reviewer mention is that Waugh did base a character in one of his novels on Whistler: the (silent) artist Arthur in the first chapter of *Scoop* (1938). Arthur is "painting ruined castles on the ceiling" of Mrs Stitch's bedroom (as Whistler had painted grisaille mural decorations in the Gower Street drawing room of Lady Diana Cooper, the model for Mrs Stitch, a few years earlier). Mrs Stitch, who is simultaneously conducting her morning levée from her bed, helpfully provides Arthur with constructive criticism as he paints ("You're putting too much ivy on the turret, Arthur; the owl won't show up unless you have him on the bare stone, and I'm particularly attached to the owl".)

This comment, as Lady Diana astutely pointed out to Jacqueline McDonnell [*Waugh on Women* (1985), 184], indicates that the literary source for Arthur's painting is Thomas Gray's

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard (1751). (The identification of Arthur with Rex Whistler is also Lady Diana's.)

It was Richard Bentley's Gothick illustration for Gray's *Elegy* (1753), as it was reproduced in Kenneth Clark's *The Gothic Revival* (1928), that provided Whistler with the starting point for his full-page illustrations to the Cresset Press edition of *Gulliver's Travels* (1930), a rococo design in which the frame overshadows the incident depicted inside.

In view of this echo on Waugh's part of Whistler's attention to the illustration of Gray's *Elegy*, one has to wonder if Waugh was not more attuned to Whistler's career than at first seems likely. McDonnell observes that Waugh may have seen Whistler as a rival for Lady Diana's friendship—and he may also have envied Whistler's apparent, if misleading, ease of manner, when it came to dealing with life (what AP [Anthony Powell] calls "his overwhelming smoothness".)

Editor's note: This letter appeared in the Anthony Powell Society's *Newsletter*, Issue 53 (Winter 2013). It is reprinted with permission of the [Powell Society](#). Jonathan Kooperstein is coeditor of *The Acceptance of Absurdity: Letters 1952-1963*, by Anthony Powell and Robert Vanderbilt (2011). See also Jeffrey Manley's review of *In Search of Rex Whistler*, "Illustrator of *Wine in Peace and War*," *EWS* 44.2 (Autumn 2013): 33-36.

REVIEWS

English Francophile Meets French Anglophile

The Horror of Love: Nancy Mitford and Gaston Palewski in Paris and London, by Lisa Hilton. New York: Pegasus Books, 2012. 290 pp. \$26.95.

London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2011. 304 pp. £20.00.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Manley

Do we really need another book about the Mitfords? This one reviews the lengthy affair between Nancy Mitford and Gaston Palewski. That topic is not taken up, however, until the middle of the book. The first half is devoted to a familiar story: the eccentric childhood and young adulthood of Nancy Mitford and her sisters, her unhappy and unconsummated engagement to Hamish St. Clair Erskine, and her equally unhappy marriage to Peter Rodd. A few pages describe Palewski's family, childhood, education, and early political and military career. Only at the halfway point does *The Horror of Love* attend to Palewski's wartime and postwar responsibilities and love affairs, including Nancy Mitford. The target audience is clearly Mitford wonks.

Palewski's background is more interesting than I, as a Waugh reader, had been led to believe, and he is more important historically than Nancy Mitford. Waugh dismisses him as a stiff-necked French militarist posing as a politician. He joked that Palewski could become a schoolmaster in his son's prep school (*Letters of Mitford and Waugh* 386) and described him as a "cosmopolitan military man, plainly, with a knowledge of parliamentary government and popular journalism, a dislike for Prussians, a liking for Jews, a belief that everyone speaks French in the home" (*Letters of Waugh* 471). As Waugh complained in 1953, "I read long articles about French politics. Pray tell me why I never see Col's name mentioned? I think he is pulling your leg when he tells you that he is a leading politician" (*Letters* 402). Waugh almost always referred to "the Colonel" or just "Col," his comments spread throughout his letters, but they receive little attention in *The Horror of Love*.

Palewski was born in Paris to Jewish immigrants (father from Poland, mother from Romania) who saw that he had a proper French education. His undergraduate major was English Language and Literature, and he was a postgraduate for one term at Worcester College, Oxford. Like Nancy Mitford, he admired the right sort of English people. Lisa Hilton describes Palewski as Charles Ryder with spots.

Palewski floated through journalism in the 1920s and early 1930s and attracted the attention of center-right politician Paul Reynaud (later Prime Minister). Palewski became Reynaud's assistant and met Charles de Gaulle. French policy toward Nazi Germany was intensely debated. Palewski served with distinction in the air force until the fall of France; in England, he went to Churchill for debriefing. De Gaulle appointed Palewski to posts in the Free French government, and he became its spokesman. He met Nancy Mitford in London in 1942 at a social club for Allied soldiers. Palewski had met her husband Peter Rodd in Ethiopia, and he thought she would like news of him. After an eight-month romance with Nancy in London, Palewski accompanied de Gaulle to Algiers in 1943 and then France after D-Day. He became chief of staff in the provisional government.

After de Gaulle resigned in 1946, Palewski formed a party on Gaullist principles (RPF); he was elected to the National Assembly in 1951 and served in right-wing coalitions. Ironically, he lost his seat in elections that brought de Gaulle back to power but was appointed Ambassador to Italy in 1957 as consolation. Palewski may have been short of money. Was Nancy asked to help? Hilton provides no answer, but she says that Nancy supported her husband on proceeds of her postwar best-sellers. After leaving the ambassador's post in 1962, Palewski held ministerial and other appointments until 1974.

Unlike Nancy's, Palewski's personal life receives little attention until they become an item. He converted to Catholicism in 1923, more assimilation than deeply held belief. Waugh, in letters to Nancy, frequently comments on Palewski's religious superficiality, but Hilton makes no reference to these. Palewski seems to have been a womanizer before the war, but Hilton does little to explain why he and Nancy formed a long relationship. Hilton notes that Palewski was a

patriotic anti-Fascist Frenchman with an Anglophile streak, while Nancy was an aristocratic anti-Fascist Englishwoman with a Francophile streak. They were both interested in beautiful objects: in his case, paintings, furniture, and *bibelots*; in hers, clothes and furnishings. Neither was attractive; Palewski's pock-marked face is described as repellent.

Hilton weaves Mitford's writings into the narrative, but she spends too much time on pre-war novels, which shed little light on the love affair that is the subject of the book, and too little on post-war novels. Palewski is the model for two characters in later novels—Fabrice de Sauveterre in *The Pursuit of Love* and *Love in a Cold Climate* and Charles-Edouard de Valhubert in *The Blessing* and *Don't Tell Alfred*. Hilton might have analyzed these two characters—how they are similar and different, and how each compares to Palewski. She compares Waugh's works and Nancy's, explaining how they borrowed from each other and sometimes wrote about the same subject (40-43, 193).

The most enjoyable parts of *The Horror of Love* describe Nancy's early postwar years in Paris, when her affair with Palewski was untroubled, a "period of unalloyed bliss," according to Hilton. The best chapters are "The Embassy" (describing Louise de Vilmorin, mistress of Duff Cooper and perhaps Palewski), "The Pursuit of Chic" (describing Nancy's feelings for Palewski), and "Les Femmes du Monde" (describing Palewski's affairs). As Hilton suggests, Nancy may have portrayed Susan Mary Patten (later Alsop) as an unflattering character, Mildred Jungfleisch. She suspected that Susan Mary had become one of Palewski's mistresses (200-03).

Nancy's biographers characterize her last years as sad, but Hilton disagrees. In 1969, shortly after she was diagnosed with cancer, Palewski (without knowing of her affliction) informed Nancy of his engagement to Violette de Pourtales, Duchess of Sagan, who had two French estates and a fortune from her mother, from the Gould family of U.S. railway fame. Hilton rejects the idea that Nancy died of a broken heart. She was still married to Peter Rodd when she met Palewski in 1942, and Rodd agreed to divorce only in 1957. Marriage to a Protestant divorcee would not have pleased Palewski's conservative supporters, and Hilton believes that Nancy never expected a proposal. She enjoyed her sisters in her last years, especially Diana, who lived nearby, but the others were frequent visitors. Nancy remained friendly with Palewski after marriage--fidelity was never his strong suit. Through his influence, she won the Legion of Honor for her contribution to French culture, and he visited her until the day of her death. She completed her last book, *Frederick the Great*, in 1970 and died in 1973.

Palewski continued in politics until 1974 and then worked in charities. They provided contact with the great and the good, always important to him. He spent much time at his wife's estate, Le Marais, but maintained residence at Rue Bonaparte in Paris. He died in 1984.

The Horror of Love is well written and entertaining, but it contributes little to literary studies. Three biographies of Nancy cover the same ground, not to mention numerous volumes about her family. This book offers Palewski's side of the story, in the postwar period when his

affair with Nancy flourished, or flickered. Hilton's judgment of him is more positive than that in earlier books on Nancy. The text is marred by typographical errors, not just misspellings but also fractured sentences that require reconstruction by the reader. The author crams too many thoughts into one sentence when shorter sentences would do.

Literary Impressionism

A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing, by Adam Parkes. New York: Oxford UP, 2011. 304 pp. \$65.00.

Reviewed by Patrick Query, U.S. Military Academy

A dozen years of nonstop war, accompanied by a new wave of social and cultural shifts, have attuned today's artists and writers to the links between history and representation in a way reminiscent of their counterparts a century previous. Like another very good recent book from Oxford University Press—Sarah Cole's *At the Violet Hour: Modernism and Violence in England and Ireland*—Adam Parkes's *A Sense of Shock* packs additional punch because of the synchronicity, very lightly implied but nonetheless potent, between the aesthetic and political questions of its historical subject and those of our own. Parkes explores the ways impressionist writing not only responds to but also frames and even generates social and historical contexts from the 1870s to the 1930s. Like Cole, Parkes treats Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* at some length; little wonder that that novel, with a terrorist bombing at its center, is in the midst of a twenty-first-century resurgence of interest. Parkes goes further than Cole to dispel the automatic association of literary impressionism with softness or passivity, inherited from the paintings that inspired it. *A Sense of Shock* shows that the uses of impressionism have been dynamic and varied; as the title implies, they have also been charged and surprising.

The book's goal is to historicize literary impressionism; scholars have been surprisingly slow to move from ontological to historical treatment. Parkes asks not what literary impressionism *was*, but what it *did*, in culture and history as well as aesthetics. He argues that impressionist writing “might be understood both as a record of historical experience and as a rhetoric seeking to define the manner in which that history is to be imagined. [...] If impressionism bears the stamp of its time, it also does its fair share of stamping” (4). Applied to writers ranging from the usual suspects (James, Ford, Conrad, and Woolf) to surprises (Wilde, Wells, and George Moore), Parkes's approach is engaging and highly productive. His book reveals that the legacy of early impressionists like Pater and Symonds was richer, stranger, and more explosive than traditional readings of the movement suggest.

Evelyn Waugh is nowhere mentioned in *A Sense of Shock*, but the book might nonetheless interest Wavians. It provides background for Waugh's aesthetic responses to social and historical stimuli that animated the impressionists (and that the impressionists animated, as Parkes makes clear). Parkes mentions an “aesthetic of the ‘great moment’” that became

important to many modern writers, and a student of Waugh's writing begins to detect differences between Waugh's approach and that of his peers. Another difference, worth pursuing, is the relative importance of the visual in the two kinds of writing. If Conrad's cherished aim as a writer was "to make you *see*," surely Waugh's was something else, more to do with sound than sight. One should not overstate these differences, however. Waugh is increasingly shown to have silently deployed a number of modernist techniques—the impressionist among them—to unique effect. Parkes does much to test the boundaries of literary impressionism, and he might have gained still more by treating a writer such as Waugh, so dismissive (after his schooldays) of modernist vogues yet so thoroughly modern. The connection becomes especially attractive in light of Parkes's interest in shifting attention from impressionism's private, internal emphases to its public, outward-facing energy.

Ford seems much in the minds of Waugh scholars these days, especially as attention to Waugh's war trilogy keeps yielding reasons to recall Ford's own war saga, and with Ford scholar Max Saunders editing Waugh's trilogy. It is not *Parade's End*, though, or even *The Good Soldier*, to which Parkes gives the most attention. Rather, in a winning move, he focuses on Ford's later work, which rarely receives "more than cursory treatment" (259 n4) or the odd "perfunctory or embarrassed epilogue." (He cites Saunders as an important exception.) I am glad to have been reminded to read Ford's *The Rash Act* (1933) and *Henry for Hugh* (1934); Parkes argues that Ford subverts some aims of his early masterpieces and "reflect[s] ironically on impressionism's limitations as a vehicle of political critique" (180).

Easily Digested

Brideshead Abbreviated: The Digested Read of the Twentieth Century, by John Crace.
London: Random House, 2010. 355 pp. £12.99.
Reviewed by Jeffrey Manley

Brideshead Abbreviated is a collection of John Crace's digested classics from the *Guardian*. Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* is one of the hundred novels digested. The publishers make the most of the association: the dust wrapper portrays Sebastian Flyte's teddy bear, Aloysius, reading *Brideshead Revisited: The Bear Essentials* with Castle Howard in the background. The reader should be warned that less than one percent of the text is devoted to Waugh's work.

Crace tries to parody one hundred "classic reads" from the twentieth century. In many cases, his versions are more digest than parody. In the absence of parody, he satirizes style, characters, and plot. He selects ten classics for each decade of the century, and they form a kind of canon, except for the last fifteen years, when canonization seems premature. Oddly missing are Graham Greene, David Lodge, Norman Mailer, and Günter Grass.

Crace digests *BR* as one of ten classics of the 1940s. Others include *Darkness at Noon*, *1984*, and *Love in a Cold Climate*. No writer appears more than once, but more than one book may have been published in a given year, as long as the decade is limited to ten books. In the 1940s, four of Crace's selections were published in 1949 but none in 1941, 1946, and 1947. Crace includes a decent summary of *BR* in three pages, the length of most entries. The digest is not a parody of the novelist's prose but a summary with satirical comments. Crace handles Waugh's language in a few phrases. Charles Ryder recalls his first visit to Brideshead "when the ditches were creamy with meadowsweets and the sentences heavy with nostalgia." Later he likens that summer to "very heaven as we lay sketching, drinking and being very clever." Those are at best a limited attempt to parody Waugh's prose. Anthony Blanche announces that his stutter "is to let you know that I am a p-p-proper homosexual." Upon return to London for the General Strike, Charles wonders "why, if the lower orders really didn't want to work, they didn't do nothing in the first place, like me." That is more travesty than parody, but it is funny. After the ten-year lapse in the narrative during marriage to Celia, Charles announces: "My theme is memory, that winged host. Unfortunately, mine is not that good, because on my return to New York from sketching in Mexico, I was unable to remember the name of my own son or that my wife was pregnant when I left." The remainder summarizes the story largely through dialogue that bears little resemblance to the novel.

Similar approaches to other novels are evident. In Crace's version of *The Great Gatsby*, narrator Nick Carraway remarks, "I see from what I have written so far, you might think that I was not quite as detached from the fast set as I would like you to believe. So let me mention that I also worked extremely hard." In Nancy Mitford's *Love in a Cold Climate*, the narrator comments, "And so the rest of the summer passed in a few averagely diverting set pieces.... At the time I supposed it might have been the most daring comedy of manners with readers curious to speculate just how autobiographical it was about the magnificent Mitfords, but in hindsight I am more persuaded that it was rather a one-joke book with no real plot of which to speak." In Anthony Powell's *A Question of Upbringing*, the narrator Nick Jenkins seems lacking in any character of his own: "it might have been better if I had learned the value of having an emotional exterior world or anything approaching a personality; ... I had no thoughts of my own on the subject but continued my impression of a parasitic *tabula rasa*." In Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*, narrator Jim Dixon realizes that "He was in a farce, not a satire. So why should he bother with the niceties of character development and the conceit of luck? Why didn't he just play the whole thing for laughs as the plot lurched from one comic set piece to another?"

In the best entries, summary is parody. Crace's version of Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* includes "sentences of breathtakingly meaningless construction, a construction given over to a detailed deconstruction of every nuance in each regard, a regard to which anyone else in their right mind would not have devoted more than a second." That might have been written by James himself. In John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Crace emphasizes improbable coincidences: "I had unwittingly stumbled on the enemy's lair. I quickly found some explosives,

blew a hole in a wall and hid in a dovecote, before running 20 miles to the derelict cottage of a roadman I had befriended earlier... I could sense my exploits would already have stretched the credulity of a 9-year-old.” Crace also exposes Howard Kirk, the antihero of Malcolm Bradbury’s 1970s satire *The History Man*. Kirk has read enough “to understand that he is just a vehicle [of?] satire, a man of indefatigable false consciousness, and that as such his character will remain shallow and undeveloped. But then, perhaps satire has its own historical inevitability and there is something to be said for starring in the definitive campus novel.” Bradbury uses Kirk to satirize left-wing campus intellectuals, and Crace satirizes Bradbury’s self-consciousness.

Crace’s collection is not to be read cover-to-cover. It is easy to browse: the table of contents facilitates selective reading. I recommend starting with books you have read, moving on to those familiar through dramatization, and then, if still enjoying it, proceeding to the unknown. If you collect Waviana, you may want a copy with a dust wrapper. If you are interested only in the digested read of *BR*, you need not buy the book; it is still on the [Guardian’s website](#).

A Mixed Bag

The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Culture, ed. Michael Higgins, *et al.*
Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 2010. 323 pp. £18.99/\$29.99.
Reviewed by Jeffrey Manley.

The *Companion to Modern British Culture* appears as part of a series called *Cambridge Companions to Culture*. Previous volumes have been devoted to other “modern” cultures, such as those of America, Germany, Ireland, France and Russia, as well as Victorian Culture. This volume is charged with covering “modern” “British” “culture.” All three terms are fraught with problems. When does the modern period begin? Would it include the entire twentieth century, the period following World War I or that following World War II, or only post-Thatcher Britain? The essays are all over the place. Some (e.g., sport) go back to the nineteenth century. Others (e.g., art and fiction) hark back only as far as the 1980s. Some narrow their focus by including “contemporary” in titles, but the essay on sport includes this term, even though it extends back farther than others.

“British” culture is taken to include the United Kingdom as defined in chapter 2 (“Becoming British”). It begins with the Act of Union that joined England and Scotland and the articulation of the new nation that followed: the “official” national anthem, “God Save the King/Queen,” in 1745 and the Union Jack in 1801. The book fails to explain, however, that the “official” status of “God Save the King/Queen” arises not from any Act of Parliament or royal proclamation but from popular consensus. The song was written to commemorate victory over the French invasion led by Charles Edward Stuart in the eighteenth century. Early versions included such lines as “May he sedition hush, / and like a torrent rush, / Rebellious Scots to crush”; the second verse (seldom sung) still contains the lines “Scatter her enemies / and make

them fall. / Confound their politics, / Frustrate their knavish tricks.” Only in the reign of George V did “knavish” replaced “popish.” Scotland does not accept “God Save the King/Queen” as its national anthem, nor do Wales and Northern Ireland, and even England employs other songs such as “Jerusalem” on occasions. Each part of the country has its own national flag, increasingly displayed instead of the Union Jack. Attempts to align all regions of the UK under a single culture are bound to fail just as certainly as “national” symbols have failed. As is often the case, in *The Cambridge Companion* the problem is resolved by concentrating on England, mainly metropolitan London. “Culture” is itself a fraught concept. This book is broad enough to include sports, sexuality, and immigrant attitudes, but it excludes classical music, dance, and cuisine. The absence of any discussion of food in Britain is glaring given the notable advances since the 1980s.

The essays of greatest interest to Waugh enthusiasts are probably those on language, fiction, cinema, theatre, and television. The language essay is among the best. It explains how estuary pronunciation has replaced received pronunciation (“RP”) that prevailed until the 1980s. The essay on fiction (by Prof. Patricia Waugh, unrelated to the Waughs of Midsomer Norton) begins with publication in 1981 of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, followed by Martin Amis’s *Money*. She discusses those two writers as well as Kazuo Ishiguro, Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, A. S. Byatt, and Ian McEwan. The essay, “Contemporary British Fiction,” helpfully reviews writing of this period but leaves one wondering what literature of the past most influenced these “contemporary” writers. Writers obviously influenced by Waugh--William Boyd, David Lodge, Malcolm Bradbury, Alan Hollinghurst, and Rachel Cusk--receive little attention.

The essay by Sarah Street divides contemporary British cinema into several genres. The first is “heritage” cinema, harking back to the Merchant-Ivory films dramatizing novels of E. M. Forster and *Remains of the Day* by Ishiguro. Two contemporary examples are Mike Leigh’s *Vera Drake* and Pawel Pawlikowski’s *My Summer of Love*. There is no mention of the recent *Brideshead Revisited* remake (perhaps with good reason), though it seems to fall within this category. Another type is devoted to youth culture. The archetype is *Trainspotting*, with more recent examples *Human Traffic* and *28 Days Later*. Other films convey ethnic experience (*East is East* and *Last Resort*) and contemporary romance in London (*Notting Hill*, *Wonderland*, and *Croupier*). Essays on television (by Jane Arthurs) and theatre (by Michael Mangan) focus on mechanism of delivery rather than product. Major themes include the impact of the internet on TV distribution and the splintering of networks into specialized channels aimed at narrower audiences (BBC3 for youth and BBC4 for intellectuals).[1] In theatre, discussion centers on non-traditional (and non-West End) production companies and regional repertory, with little consideration of plays written or produced for either venue.

In general, the essays provide good but inconsistent coverage of the culture. They resemble in-depth surveys by various hands in weekly magazines or Sunday papers. A more

coherent survey might have been written by a single writer focusing on certain subjects. Collections show greater range, though they are not necessarily comprehensive or cohesive.

Note

[1] One paragraph is devoted to the transmogrification of Jamie Oliver from a TV celebrity chef into a campaigner for social reform through modification of eating habits. Otherwise *The Cambridge Companion* avoids food as a cultural development in contemporary Britain.

NEWS

Evelyn Waugh Collection Given to Huntington Library

Loren and Frances Rothschild gave their collection of Evelyn Waugh's works to the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The collection includes the manuscript of *Ninety-two Days*, the corrected typescript of *Decline and Fall*, over 100 letters between Waugh and his publishers, Chapman & Hall, and 250 rare books. For more information and several photographs, please visit the [Huntington](#).

Sale of Waviana

[Bonhams](#) in Knightsbridge offered fifteen lots related to Evelyn Waugh for sale on 19 March 2014. Many inscribed first editions came from the library of David and Tamara Talbot Rice.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Sold</u>
<i>P.R.B.</i>	£5,000-£8,000	
<i>Decline and Fall</i>	£4,000-£6,000	£7,500
<i>Vile Bodies</i>	£2,000-£4,000	£3,125
<i>The Loved One</i>	£600-£900	£812
<i>Helena</i>	£1,000-£2,000	£2,250
<i>Officers and Gentlemen</i>	£1,000-£2,000	£2,750
<i>The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold</i>	£800-£1,200	£1,375
<i>Unconditional Surrender</i>	£1,000-£2,000	£3,000
<i>A Little Learning</i>	£800-£1,200	£2,000
Four books (<i>Labels, Handful, POMF, Brideshead</i>)	£400-£800	£500
Three books (including <i>Scott-King</i>)	£400-£800	£500

Also inscribed for David and Tamara Talbot Rice: the author's revised proof of the limited edition of 250 copies of *Black Mischief*, marked up for the printer and with an original drawing.

The proof was purchased by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin with assistance from the B. H. Breslauer Foundation.

<i>Waugh in Abyssinia</i>	£600-£800	£1,875
<i>Helena</i>	£800-£1,000	£1,250

(inscribed for Hugh Burnett, 18 Aug. 1953, date of BBC interview for *Personal Call*)

Photo of Waugh by Carl Van Vechten, 1948 £600-£800

Sold in November 2012:

Four novels	£7,500
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(*D&F, VB, BM, HD*, Chapman & Hall, 1937, inscribed to Peggy Gatfield)

Archive of Catholic Herald

The archive of the [Catholic Herald](#) is available online. A search for “Evelyn Waugh” yielded 554 results, and these are sorted by decades from the 1930s (50 hits) to the 2010s (25).

Sword of Honour on Audio

Katherine A. Powers briefly reviewed audio versions of *Sword of Honour* and the individual novels *Men at Arms*, *Officers and Gentlemen*, and *Unconditional Surrender* in “New audiobooks of Evelyn Waugh,” [Washington Post](#), 23 April 2013. She writes that Simon Prebble, reading *Sword of Honour*, “gives a capable, stiff-upper-lipped performance” and conveys “British class tension.” Christian Rodska, however, reading the three novels, shows himself “master of a preternaturally large range of mid-20th-century British accents and voices” in “a brilliant vocal manifestation of Waugh’s acidly comic world.” Compare Patrick Query’s reviews of the same audio-books, the trilogy read by Rodska in “Waughdio, Part 2,” *EWS* 44.2 (Autumn 2013): 28-30, and *Sword of Honour* read by Prebble in “Waughdio, Part 3,” *EWS* 44.3 (Winter 2014): 23-24.

Letters of Hugh Trevor-Roper

In *Standpoint Magazine* for January/February 2014, Alasdair Palmer introduces [“The Letters of Hugh Trevor-Roper.”](#) One, written to Palmer on [23 October 1986](#), includes five paragraphs on Evelyn Waugh, who dubbed Trevor-Roper “the demon don” (*Letters* 415). In 1953 and 1954, Waugh and Trevor-Roper publicly quarreled over Catholic history (*Letters* 642-47). In his letter to Palmer, Trevor-Roper concludes that “Waugh remains a cult-hero to a little band who live in an imaginary Brideshead.” An edition of Trevor Roper’s letters appeared in 2006 (reviewed by John W. Osborne, “Gossip and Malice from the Demon Don,” *EWNS* 38.1, Spring 2007), followed by a biography by Adam Sisman (2010), wartime journals (2012), and another edition of letters (2013). Paul Johnson reviews this edition, *One Hundred Letters from Hugh Trevor-Roper*, in *Standpoint* for March 2014: [“Misfortune Made the Man.”](#)

Elizabeth Jane Howard, 1923-2014

Elizabeth Jane Howard passed away on 2 January 2014. She was 90 years old.

Elizabeth Jane Howard published her first novel, *The Beautiful Visit*, in 1950 and wrote two more before being asked to interview Evelyn Waugh on the BBC television program *Monitor* in 1964.

Waugh requested that he be interviewed by Cyril Connolly, Christopher Sykes, or a pretty girl (R. M. Davis, *Catalogue of the Evelyn Waugh Collection*, 286). Howard, a former model, was regarded as a great beauty.

A transcript of the interview is available at [An Evelyn Waugh Website](#). A brief excerpt has been posted on [YouTube](#).

Elizabeth Jane Howard went on to marry Kingsley Amis and to write *The Cazalet Chronicle*, a five-novel sequence (1990-2013). She also published *Slipstream* (2002), an autobiography that describes her encounter with Waugh.

Elizabeth Jane Howard is survived by a daughter, four grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren. Obituaries are available at the [Guardian](#), the [Telegraph](#), the [Independent](#), the [New York Times](#), and the [Washington Post](#).

Alexander Waugh Lectures on Evelyn

Alexander Waugh, grandson of Evelyn, delivered a lecture entitled “A Word or Two about Evelyn Waugh” at Durham University on 19 March 2014.

Evelyn Waugh and His Circle

A conference entitled “Evelyn Waugh and His Circle: Reading and Editing the *Complete Works*” will be held at the University of Leicester, 24-26 April 2015. Keynote speakers include Selina Hastings, author of *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (1994); William Boyd, screenwriter for *Scoop* (1987) and *Sword of Honour* (2001); and Paula Byrne, author of *Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and the Secrets of Brideshead* (2009).

New Blog: Waugh and Words

The University of Leicester hosts a new blog entitled [Waugh and Words](#), initiated in January 2014.

Waugh Book Club in Leicester

The University of Leicester’s School of English has organized an Evelyn Waugh Book Club. The club discussed *Brideshead Revisited* in January, *Decline and Fall* in February, and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* in April. For more information, please visit [“Leicester book lovers.”](#)

Doctoral Studentship at Oxford

The Arts & Humanities Research Council is supporting a Doctoral Studentship in English Literature at the University of Oxford. The appointment begins in October 2014; the individual will concentrate on Evelyn Waugh's inter-war travel writing as part of the *Complete Works*. Applications were due in February 2014.

Essays by Duncan McLaren

Duncan McLaren has added three new essays on Evelyn Waugh, "[You See, I'm a Public School Boy](#)" (on Lancing College), "[Canonbury Square, 1928,](#)" and "[Label\(s\)](#)" (on Lisbon).

Evelyn Waugh in *Papers on Language & Literature*

A photograph of Evelyn Waugh by Carl Van Vechten appears on the cover of *Papers on Language & Literature* 50.1 (Winter 2014). The issue includes an essay by John Howard Wilson, "The Origins of Japanese Interest in Evelyn Waugh, 1948-1963," 3-23.

The Efficiency of Ear Trumpets

In a column published in the *Spectator* for 11 January 2014, Alexander Chancellor claimed that "Evelyn Waugh's ear trumpet works better than my state-of-the-art Swiss hearing aid."

Waugh Cited in *Why Priests?*

Evelyn Waugh is cited in Garry Wills's recent book *Why Priests? A Failed Tradition* (2013). Wills quotes Waugh's article on the Second Vatican Council, "[The Same Again, Please](#)" (1962), specifically his criticism of circular seating in the new cathedral at Liverpool (*Essays* 607). Wills also quotes William F. Buckley, Jr., who suggested that divine providence had spared Waugh from the Kiss of Peace promulgated one week after his death on Easter Sunday 1966. Waugh unenthusiastically reviewed Wills's *Chesterton: Man and Mask* (1961) in the *National Review*. Buckley founded and edited the *National Review*; Waugh wondered if Buckley had been "supernaturally 'guided' to bore me" (*Letters* 543).

Waugh and the Victorians

In a two-part documentary on BBC4, [Bunkers, Brutalism and Bloodymindedness: Concrete Poetry](#), first broadcast on 16 February 2014, art historian Jonathan Meades argues that Evelyn Waugh helped to reverse the negative attitude toward Victorian art and architecture.

A Dim View of *Vile Bodies*

In the "[The Five Worst Books Ever Written by Great Authors,](#)" published in the *New Republic* for 19 February 2014, Isaac Chotiner lists (4) *Vile Bodies* (1930) by Evelyn Waugh, (3) *Fury* (2001) by Salman Rushdie, (2) *Exit Ghost* (2007) by Philip Roth, and (1, tie) *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) by Charles Dickens. Chotiner describes *Vile Bodies* as "nearly unreadable," "cartoonish," "confusing, unfunny, and ultimately pointless."

Vile Bodies and David Bowie

In conjunction with an international exhibition, *David Bowie is*, the performer's archivist released a list of "Bowie's 100 books," which includes *Vile Bodies* by Evelyn Waugh. For more information, see Adam Sherwin, "[From Homer to Orwell: David Bowie's 100 favourite books revealed.](#)" *Independent*, 1 October 2013. The exhibition has gone from London and Toronto; it is closing in São Paulo but opening in Berlin (May 2014), Chicago (Sept. 2014), Paris (March 2015), and Groningen (Dec. 2015). For more information, please go to the [V&A](#).

Evelyn Waugh's Worst Mother

In "[Bad mothers in books: a literary litany.](#)" published in the *Guardian* for 27 March 2014, Moira Redmond mentions Brenda Last in Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*.

Brideshead v. Noah and God's Not Dead

In "['Noah' and 'God's Not Dead': Graceless and Clueless.](#)" published in the *Washington Post* on 31 March 2014, Michael Gerson cites Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* as a treatment of religious themes superior to those in two recent films.

Joanna Trollope and Evelyn Waugh's Skill

On an episode of [Mark Lawson Talks To...](#), broadcast on BBC4 on 23 March 2014, novelist Joanna Trollope said she had never inserted a real person in any of her fiction. To pull off such an "extraordinary accomplishment," a writer would have to be "as skilled as Evelyn Waugh." Waugh of course denied having portrayed people he knew.

Bowra and Betjeman

Jonathan Brewer published "Bowra and Betjeman: a Brief Study" in the *John Betjeman Newsletter* 76 (August 2009): 11. Maurice Bowra and Betjeman were friends of Evelyn Waugh.

BBC Sword of Honour Wins Award

Jeremy Front's dramatization of *Sword of Honour* by Evelyn Waugh was named the Best Audio Drama (Adaptation) at the BBC Audio Drama Awards on 26 January 2014. The production was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in the autumn of 2013. For more information, please go to "[Winners of BBC Audio Drama Awards 2014 announced.](#)"

Evelyn Waugh Undergraduate Essay Contest

Mary Kathleen Reilly of the University of Delaware won the Ninth Annual Evelyn Waugh Undergraduate Essay Contest with her entry entitled "Place & Space in Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*." An edited version of her essay will appear in a forthcoming issue of *EWS*.

For the Tenth Annual Contest, sponsored by *Evelyn Waugh Studies*, undergraduates in any part of the world are eligible. The editorial board will judge submissions and award a prize

of \$500. Essays up to 5000 words on any aspect of the life or work of Evelyn Waugh should be submitted to Dr. John H. Wilson, preferably by e-mail at jwilson3@lhup.edu, or by post to Department of English, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven PA 17745, USA. The deadline is 31 December 2014.

Evelyn Waugh Society

The Waugh Society has 151 members. To join, please go to <http://evelynwaughsociety.org/>.

The Evelyn Waugh Discussion List has 80 members. To join, please visit

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Evelyn_Waugh.

The Evelyn Waugh Society is also on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/evelynwaughsoc>.

The Waugh Society is providing RSS feed: <http://evelynwaughsociety.org/feed>.

And the Waugh Society's web site has opportunities for threaded discussions:

<http://evelynwaughsociety.org/forums/>.

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