

Who's Who in *Some Tame Gazelle*

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She deliberately took all the main characters directly from life, since this was to be a roman à clef for her particular circle. Thus she herself was Belinda, Hilary was Harriet, Henry was the Archdeacon, the hated Alison West-Watson was Agatha, Jock was Dr Nicholas Parnell, Honor Tracy was Edith Liversidge, Count Roberto Weiss was Ricardo Bianco and Julia Pakenham (because of a rather matronly figure) was Lady Clara Boulding. – *A Lot to Ask*, p.54

<i>Belinda Bede</i>	Barbara Pym	<i>John Akinside</i>	John Barnicot
<i>Harriet Bede</i>	Hilary Pym	<i>Edith Liversidge</i>	Honor Tracy
<i>The Ven. Henry Hoccleve</i>	Henry Harvey	<i>Count Ricardo Bianco</i>	Count Roberto Weiss
<i>Agatha Hoccleve</i>	Alison West–Watson	<i>Lady Clara Boulding</i>	Lady Julia Pakenham
<i>Dr Nicholas Parnell</i>	Robert “Jock” Liddell		

This paper is about some of Barbara Pym’s friends, their influence on her life, and the use to which she put them as models for characters in *Some Tame Gazelle*, her first novel written with a view to publication.

From reading only the novel, you will not be aware of the identity of these people, but if you are acquainted with *A Very Private Eye* and *A Lot to Ask*, the sources of which are largely Barbara’s diaries and notebooks, then you may have come across them.

Soon after she took her degree and left the university Barbara had the idea of writing a story about some of her Oxford friends. She wrote in her diary on 1st September 1934

Some time in July I began writing a story about Hilary and me as spinsters of fiftyish. Henry, Jock and all of us appeared in it. I sent it to them and they liked it very much. So I am going on with it and one day it may become a book.

In the earliest draft Barbara made no attempt to disguise her characters, using their real names: Barbara and Hilary who were to become Belinda and Harriet Bede, of course; Henry Harvey (the Archdeacon); Robert ‘Jock’ Liddell (Dr Parnell); John Barnicot (John Akenside); Honor Tracy (Hester Carey), Alison West-Watson (Agatha); and Roberto Weiss (Count Piozzi). By November the characters had received their fictional names and the novel was completed.

Of Belinda, Harriet and Henry Harvey I shall say little, as much is known about them anyway. I shall concentrate instead on six of the minor characters and their real life models. First, however, you should understand how these people came to know one another, and to form a close-knit clique.

In a personal communication to Hazel Holt, Henry Harvey described his first meeting, when he was 18, with Robert Liddell, on a cross channel ferry from Dover to Ostend.

I noticed a lonely-looking, curly-haired little boy, very fair, of perhaps 13. He ... let me indulge myself, giving him ideas [about Aristotle and Hegel] he could use in his school essays. But this little boy was not 13. He was 21, already at Oxford and reading Greats. He was 2 years and 8 months older than I was, and knew very much more about Tragedy,

Aristotle and Hegel than I did (almost nothing). So he started talking and didn't stop until we got to Aachen the next morning.

When Henry went up to Oxford that autumn they became great friends, sharing digs in the Iffley Road, and later at 86b Banbury Road, by which time Robert had taken his degree and was working in the Bodleian Library.

One of Robert's colleagues at the Library was John Barnicot, who left Balliol in 1929 to take up a travelling scholarship studying Balkan languages and culture. He returned to work at the Bodleian Library specialising in Old Slavonic books. Though he was four years Robert's senior, he, Robert and Henry formed a close circle, which was widened by Barnicot's friend, Count Roberto Weiss, who also did a stint in the Bodleian.

Apart from Barbara and Hilary, the girls on whom those in the novel are based never really penetrated this masculine bastion, but were allowed in from the periphery when it suited the men.

Of these, I shall start with Lady Julia Pakenham, the model for Lady Clara Boulding, who opened the garden party near the beginning of STG. Lady Julia is rather more interesting than her fictional counterpart who appears only briefly, and exhibits no exceptional characteristics.

Julia's social status and connections were well above Barbara's. Born in 1913, she was one of the six children of Lord Longford, an Irish peer, and the 5th Earl, who was killed at Gallipoli. Her elder brother Edward, the 6th Earl, died without issue, so the younger brother Francis (always known as Frank) succeeded as the 7th Earl. Frank Pakenham was an outspoken Labour peer in the House of Lords, and a social reformer, best known for his abortive efforts to have Myra Hindley, the infamous Moors murderess, released from prison. Julia's sisters and sister-in-law were all writers – Frank's wife Elizabeth Longford was the well known biographer of Byron, Queen Victoria, and Churchill, among others; her sister Mary Clive was a writer and historian; another sister Pansy, married to the painter Henry Lamb, was a novelist, though little known now; and Violet, who married Anthony Powell, author of many novels including the sequence *A Dance to the Music of Time*, was also a writer. Julia's nieces, Antonia Fraser and Rachel Billingham, (Frank's daughters), are still writing today. Julia once said that her proudest boast was that she never wrote a book!

It was her original intention to read Modern Languages at Oxford, but she settled for PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) at Somerville College, where she got a disappointing third class degree in 1934. Her friend Isaiah Berlin, wrote to her expressing his 'horror, amazement and sympathetic indignation' at this result, and, as her son Ferdinand Mount writes in his memoir *Cold Cream*, Julia must have been 'grateful to Isaiah for taking up her cause with the austere and scholarly Balliol historian Humphrey Sumner and forcing him to concede that perhaps she ought to have been awarded a second'.

Sir Isaiah Berlin was a social and political theorist, philosopher and historian of ideas, widely considered to be the dominant British scholar of his generation. He studied Greats (Classics) at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, then took a degree in PPE, gaining another First after less than a year on the course. He was appointed a tutor in philosophy at New College, Oxford, and in 1932 was elected to a prize fellowship at All Souls College. At this time, according to Ferdinand Mount

[He] loves parties and gossip and intrigue and is already a legend for these qualities as well as for his intellectual brilliance. After taking my mother out he sends her little notes

datelined 'All Souls 2 am', going over the events of the evening ... The dateline suggests that he cannot get to sleep for thinking of her, but he does not actually say anything of the sort because he is shy with girls...

Ferdinand describes his mother in *Cold Cream*: 'She is tall and plump. She laughs when she is described as Junoesque because she knows perfectly well that what they mean is fat.'

Barbara wrote in her diary on 27th January 1932:

In the afternoon I went shopping by myself. I saw Julia Pakenham looking superb in a turquoise blue frock and a new halo hat. She was wearing a fur coat, so one couldn't see how fat she was.

There are several photographs of Lady Julia in her son's memoir, showing her as pleasantly plump, but the painting by her brother-in-law Henry Lamb in the front of the book does portray a rather hefty, though by no means obese, girl.

Ferdinand records that his mother was "extraordinarily happy at Oxford, happy to join in the babble of clever young people, happy to be courted for the first time."

When Julia was in her twenties, Ponds (founded 1840s) were running an advertising campaign for their cold cream (hence the title of Ferdinand Mount's memoir) using titled women as endorsers of the product. Ferdinand recalls

My Aunt Mary got in first, and she handed the franchise on to my mother. 'Lady Julia Pakenham says she owes her flawless complexion to Pond's Cold Cream' and there would be a picture of my mother looking flawless. It was rather well paid and accompanied by a year's supply of free cold cream, which cemented her lifelong loyalty to the product.

Lady Julia married Robert Mount in 1938, and died of cancer at the early age of 43. It is not recorded how she met any of the members of the circle. No doubt she was much sought after on account of her social status.

I have added my next character, John Akenside, to Hazel's list. Although he does not appear in STG, he is frequently referred by Count Ricardo Bianco, (renamed in the published version as Cape did not like 'Piozzi' because of its association with Dr Johnson and Hester Thrale.) Bianco was engaged in preparing Akenside's letters for publication, and would sit for hours brooding over them.

[He] would occasionally enjoy a melancholy talk about his old friend John Akenside, who had been killed in a riot in Prague, when he had just been sitting at an open-air cafe taking a glass of wine, as was his custom in the evening, doing no harm to anybody.

A foreshadowing of the death of Tom Mallow in *Less Than Angels*.

Edith Liversidge had also known Akenside in her 'Balkan Days' and it was rumoured that he had been very fond of her, but had been too shy to declare himself.

The model for Akenside was John Barnicot, who specialised in Old Slavonic books at the Bodleian Library. His daughter, Lady Radmila May, in her article *Barbara Pym in Henley*, asks

How much of my father is in John Akenside? Some, certainly. There is the Balkan connection. And the physical description "a twinkle in the eyes, which seemed to look slyly round the corner of the rimless glasses, and the mouth curled into a half smile, self-conscious, but at the same time a little defiant".

Barbara spent much time in John Barnicot's company as he was often a party to her outings with Henry Harvey and Robert Liddell, and he visited her with them at Oswestry. She (and Liddell, too, in his letters to Barbara) always referred to him as 'Barnicot' or 'Mr Barnicot' or Mr B. Perhaps because of the difference in their ages, about 8 years, she never used his Christian name, although they seemed on very good terms and shared some of their emotional problems. For example, on 17th July 1934 when Barbara was back in Oxford for her Viva

I was going to Bodley at about 12 but was waylaid by Barnicot and went and drank lemonade with him. We talked much – the poor dear always seems to want to talk about Honor. [This was a girl with whom he was at that time in love.]

On 1st June 1935, on a visit to Oxford to see her old friends, she had lunch with him

And we talked a good deal about Henry as we always do. He thinks I have absolutely no hope at all, and it's a waste of time me hanging around. Naturally, this wasn't really news to me, but I couldn't help being a little cast down when he told me that Henry found me boring because I always agreed with him. JB thinks it would be better if I were a little rougher with Henry.

And later that month she

had a long talk with Mr B. I can remember telling him that I thought I didn't care for Henry, in fact almost hated him at times, and wouldn't now marry him at any price, as I once thought I would.

In 1938 Barnicot married Radmila's mother and went to live in New York for some years. On their return they bought a cottage in Henley-on-Thames where they lived until he died in 1981. Barbara often visited them there. They admired her novels greatly.

The Honor mentioned above was Honor Tracy, who was the model for Hester Carey in the 1936 version of STG, and Edith Liversidge in the published version. I have to confess a complete failure to identify her. She does not appear as a member of the University in any Calendar between 1927 and 1940. I had thought perhaps she was an assistant in the Library since she seems to have connections mainly with Barnicot, but in view of later diary entries this is not likely.

There was an Honor Tracy born in 1913, as were Barbara and Julia, who became an author and widely travelled journalist, a little like Hester Carey, perhaps, but there is no evidence that she was at or in Oxford until she retired and died there in 1989. She seems an unlikely candidate.

Hester Carey is an interesting creation, of whom you will have heard only if you have read an early paper of mine in *Green Leaves*, about the first version of STG, completed in 1936. There we are told little of her background, but she evidently had the means to travel quite extensively in Europe, and like many other travellers she adopted an eccentrically careless style of dress and behaviour which Belinda secretly envied.

She was so unconventional and gave people the uneasy feeling that she knew all about their affairs and made fun of them. And then there were her foreigners. She was in the habit of inviting them to stay in her house for long periods at a time. Just now she had a Russian with her, a male Russian...But Belinda would hear nothing against her friend, and admired her fine Bohemianism, even if she sometimes thought that dear Hester went a little too far.

In spite of this, the curate asked Belinda if she would persuade Miss Carey to address the Women's

Institute.

I'm sure they would be interested to hear about her experiences in Russia and Finland. A series of nice little talks might be arranged – A Russian Washing Day, or Some Finnish Sandwich Fillings”.

The idea of Hester addressing the Women's Institute amused Belinda

One never knew what dear Hester might say to them. And then her peculiar Bohemian appearance would hardly set them a good example of tidiness, for Belinda had to admit that her friend Miss Carey often looked rather a mess. Harriet thought it would be so delightful if the Mothers' Union could be taught weaving on hand looms. It would be such an economy if they could weave the materials for their own and their children's clothes. And when they were more skilled in the craft they might even weave the flannels and tweeds for their husbands' coats and trousers. Hester must teach them to do it.

Hester had been loved by their friend John Akenside, an expert on Central European affairs and author of a posthumous Hungarian Reader and Grammar.

Belinda could not help feeling that although he had been shot in a revolution in Czechoslovakia some ten years ago, Hester's refusal had really killed him ... Surely dear Hester ought to become a little sad when his name was mentioned ... Belinda would hastily remind herself and anyone else who accused dear Hester of having no finer feelings that she had really loved nobody after poor John's death, with the exception of one or two Spaniards, a Russian, and perhaps that starving Hungarian Count to whom she had given shelter the winter before last ...

Hester maintained that love never killed anyone nor were the effects of unrequited love in any way lasting ... She affirmed that John Akenside's melancholy had been caused entirely by his stomach or his liver ... Belinda thought her almost cruel in the casual way she spoke of broken hearts.

In spite of the interesting possibilities afforded by this strong personality, Barbara decided eventually to tone down Hester Carey and make her into Edith Liversidge, 'a kind of decayed gentlewoman' according to Harriet, but Belinda disagreed. 'Nobody could call Edith decayed, and sometimes one almost forgot that she was a gentlewoman'.

Part of the description of Hester in the 1936 draft was applied almost unchanged to Edith Liversidge in STG. Mr Donne says

I came across Miss Liversidge this afternoon in the village and have persuaded her to address a meeting of the Mothers' Union. She seems to have had a great many interesting experiences.

Belinda smiled. The idea of Edith Liversidge addressing the Mothers' Union amused her. One never knew what she might say to them and she would hardly set them a good example of tidiness. Dear Edith, she was always such a mess.

Honor must have been a confidant of Barbara's. On 9th May 1934 Barbara mentions her in her diary for the first time and only time.

In the morning I worked hard in Bodley. Honor Tracy came in and I showed her where to find some books. She asked me to have tea with her at the Cadena tomorrow. [She] was awfully nice. She is on my side and thinks Henry has treated me badly. She advised me not to get involved in an affair with him.

There is more about Honor in Robert's letters to Barbara. She appears to have taken up a suc-

cession of jobs, but does not seem to have been received very warmly on her occasional visits to Oxford – merely tolerated, and possibly considered a bit of a nuisance. Robert says

Dear Honor suddenly appeared in Oxford [and] later visited me. [She] listened to the A minor quartet while I prepared her supper, supped, and was firmly put on a bus afterwards. I did not intend her to be stranded here, as twice before. She has abandoned her social work, and is going almost at once to Spain for a holiday – and then au pair to Helsingfors – in spite of Henry's protests.

She next went to work for the publishers Simpkin & Marshall, and later another publisher John Miles.

Dear Honor wrote inviting herself to the flat for Easter, but I was not able to receive her, as you can imagine. She is now in John Miles, and thinks she would like to publish my novel [*Kind Relations*].

But by September 1935

She has left John Miles and is now doing some sort of literary work (translating etc.) at Amersham, and hopes to get on with her own novel. She is shortly going to Russia to work in a bookshop.

In October she was spotted in the High with Mr Barnicot. Was he still in love with her? Although she had left John Miles, she was still trying to get them to publish Robert's book, but without success. She is last heard of working for The Council Against War and Fascism.

Count Roberto Weiss, whose particular friend in the group was John Barnicot, is the model for Count Ricardo Bianco. Weiss arrived in Oxford in 1928, when he was 22 years old. He already had a degree from an Italian university. Hazel Holt says of him,

Legend has it that he had originally gone to Cambridge, taken a dislike to the place and hired a taxi to take him to Oxford where he persuaded the startled authorities to accept him as an undergraduate.

David Rundle wrote in *Renaissance Studies*,

This self-proclaimed 'count' had certain exotic allure in his early life because he had made the decision to emigrate from Italy ... quite why he wanted to adopt Britain is the subject of rumour rather than hard fact but it is said that he settled here out of dislike for the Fascist regime in the land of his birth.

He did some research for John Buchan, whose son was a contemporary of his. Buchan, later widely known for his novel *The 39 Steps*, was at that time Governor General of Canada, and was completing his biography of the Roman Emperor Augustus with whom he drew unfavourable comparisons with Mussolini.

Radmila May says that she was sure that while her father found Barbara's picture of him (as Akenside) extremely amusing, the same could not be said of Weiss. As part of the Harvey-Liddell circle in pre-war Oxford, Radmila says that Weiss had been

a well-known 'character', famous for, among other things, falling hopelessly in love with women who did not return his feelings. Unlike his fictional counterpart he did marry (in 1936) and by the time we came to Henley he and his family were already well-established there. He was Professor of Italian Language and Literature in London University until his death in 1969. According to my mother, Roberto never forgave Barbara for her

picture of him, refused to meet her when she came to Henley to stay with us, and would not read any of her novels.

Barbara first mentioned a new girl friend of Henry's in her diary on 8th March 1934.

Lorenzo was in the English Reading Room – he smiled sweetly at me. I was jealous because he spoke for a little while to a girl – so I said 'Goodbye, you hound' as I left.

The next day Barbara wrote

In the Bodleian I observed the girl Lorenzo spoke to the day before. She is my rival and lives at 105 Banbury Road, and is called Alison West-Watson. To look at she is remarkably like Lorenzo, same sort of colouring, mouth and eyes, and I think she is rather attractive, although not made up or particularly well-dressed. I am really rather jealous of her as Lorenzo is always praising her up, and comparing her with me, to my disadvantage. Some of it may only be fun, but it hurts.

Alison West-Watson, on whom Agatha Hockleve is based, was an Oxford Home Student, hence her living in Banbury Road, opposite No. 86. In 1878 the Association for the Education of Women in Oxford was founded. Lady Margaret Hall (1878) and Somerville (1879) opened their doors as the first halls of residence, but the largest proportion of women students in Oxford – the so-called Home Students – still lived in private houses. Their tutorials and lectures were arranged for them by the Association. St Hugh's (1886) and St. Hilda's (1893) had had their own halls of residence since their foundation, and in 1910, the year before Alison came up, the University formally recognised the Society for Home Students.. It was not until 1940 that that the idea was suggested that the Society run hostels of its own, and in 1942 the Society for Home Students was renamed St Anne's Society. Now, as St Anne's College, it is a constituent part of the university.

Alison's father was the Rev. Campbell West-Watson, Cambridge educated, appointed Bishop of Barrow-in-Furness in 1909, and 16 years later Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand, finally becoming Archbishop of New Zealand from 1940-1951.

On 23 March Barbara noted in her diary

It seems that Lorenzo is really in love with Alison West-Watson, because she has not fallen into his arms straight as he expected she would.

Barbara could have learned a lesson from that.

Early in June she was back in the Bodleian on the last day before Schools.

Alison was also in. Henry came through, his hair all fluffy and washed; he spoke to Alison but not to me. I was a fool, but it hurt me terribly. I cried on the stairs coming out.

Henry and Barbara met only once more that year, but he was in Oxford again in May 1935, by which time Barbara had lost most of her personal animosity toward Alison. Henry and Barbara met for coffee at Fuller's: 'Funnily enough we saw Alison there and it was pleasant not to feel jealous of her.'

There is no more about Alison in the diaries, but she is frequently mentioned by Robert Liddell in letters to Barbara. Clearly Henry must have talked to him about Alison, almost certainly knowing, rather maliciously, that Robert would pass it on to Barbara, and foster her jealousy. On 15 March 1934 Robert wrote

Dear Pym, I promised to let you have news of the Watson business, and I dare say you

will be expecting developments by now. Yesterday he took her to coffee at Fullers and they sat there from 11.30 to 1.00 and talked about life and so forth. She told him that she always looked up at his windows when she passed ... that she lives alone with an old lady and is lonely.

Henry asked her to tea today – but I understand she is still a maid. He rather bungled the whole thing, though he says he was very eloquent. West-Watson said she wanted ‘Love’ but apparently not with Henry – but she was quite kind and consoling. He has been writing her a macabre letter about his bones, full of reminiscences of Donne, whose works I found lying open on the desk. He is much pleased with himself, and told her he was desolate and heart-broken.

At the end of this letter, there is written in another hand, presumably Henry’s this dramatic, tongue-in-cheek postscript: ‘She doesn’t love me. It is the end. Write and comfort my last moments.’

Robert continues,

I am sorry you have wept so many tears over Henry, and I wish I could give you more comfort. I am afraid he really is in love with West-Watson.

When she came to tea on Friday he only had a flirtation with her as an academic exercise. He sat on the floor at her feet and put his head on her lap, and she stroked it maternally, and they talked about life. She said she liked him so much and didn’t want to hurt him. He asked why she had run after him if she didn’t love him, and she said ‘My dear, my dear’ and sighed. Then she left a little abruptly.

Henry giggled all the evening, and wrote her a long macabre letter full of lies, e.g. that he had been out for a long walk to calm himself and returned in the small hours and so forth. He really was enjoying himself quite a lot ... By the way, West-Watson would be far more expensive to keep than you – the woman has a voracious appetite.

Henry regretted his silly letter to West-Watson, and his impatience with her. He told me he had never had to bide his time and intrigue before, and hadn’t thought Watson was worth all that trouble. He had expected her to collapse in his arms and had been so surprised when she failed to oblige that he had fallen in love with her. By the way, in moments of passion he addressed Alison several times as Barbara.

Barbara’s feelings for Alison are demonstrated without much rancour in the portrayal of Agatha as a clever, domineering and rather humourless woman, and a poor housekeeper who often irritated her husband, but was widely respected in the parish because her father had been a bishop.

Finally I come to John Robert Liddell, sometimes called Jock by his friends, who was the model for Dr Parnell, the University librarian and old friend of the Archdeacon. If you have read AVPE and ALTA, you will know that Liddell played a big part in Barbara’s life.

He was the son of a retired army officer who was later in the service of the Egyptian government in Cairo. Liddell wrote:

I spent my early winters in Cairo with my brother in the only home we ever shared with both my parents. In 1917 (owing to family intrigues) we were removed from the kind care of our aunts, and placed with other relations in a country house where we were very unhappy.

The little we know of Liddell’s early life is to be found in his novels, disguised under the family name of Faringdon. He declined an invitation from his publisher Peter Owen to write an autobiography. In a letter to him he wrote:

I am by nature rather retiring, and love privacy, and dislike 'name-dropping'. I think such a book would be pretentious from a writer as little known as I am. I destroy letters when I have answered them and have always encouraged my correspondents to destroy any letters from me.

In view of this, and the fact that, like Barbara, he had no descendants, it is extremely unlikely that any further biographical details will ever be known, but his letters to Barbara tell us something of his literary preferences, as well as his attitude to life in general.

For example, although Barbara initially did not like Ivy Compton-Burnett's novels, he soon converted her, and they wrote to each other in her style, to the great amusement of both. Barbara wrote a short story, *Mothers and Fathers*, in this vein. Robert and his brother Donald thought it exceptionally funny.

Don agrees with me that you are the greatest comic writer of the age and every now and then laughs over your story in retrospect. We know much of it by heart. Is it not easy and delightful to write like that? I wish we had thought of it first.

Robert was a great parodist himself. He left several stories in the style of some of his favourite authors, and many very amusing poems about his friends and other university dignitaries, some of which were read here in 2013.

According to a review of *Kind Relations* (first published in 1939 and reissued in 1994), this was

the first novel in a trilogy based on Liddell's own family and experience. The books chronicle English life in the first half of the 20th century and demonstrate Liddell's uncanny ability to transport the reader into the mind of a child. Set during the First World War, *Kind Relations* opens with the death of Mrs Faringdon while her husband is away on duty in Cairo. Their two sons, Andrew and Stephen, remain in a provincial town with their nanny and their mother's sisters. But Aunt Emma, who lives in the country, feels the boys would be better off living with her. And so begins a family tug-of-war, with Andrew and Stephen mere pawns in the game. The boys' security is further threatened when their father is remarried to Elsa, a woman of German origin and difficult temperament. Liddell's absorbing tapestry exposes the virulent antagonisms and snobbery that are part of the fabric of this outwardly sedate, middle-class family.

The second volume of the trilogy, *Stepsons*, did not appear until 1969, 30 years after *Kind Relations*, which story it continues. According to a review, it is

...a harrowing autobiographical novel [which] portrays a mythically wicked stepmother in chilling detail. Andrew and Stephen Faringdon's long ordeal of psychological abuse begins in 1916, when Elsa Blankenheim traps their widowed father Oswald into marriage ... once they return to London the boys join their household ... their bullying stepmother showers the boys with ridicule, sarcasm and petty torments. Introverted and conciliatory, the children accept her treatment without retaliation; their well-meaning but weak-willed father chooses not to see their misery. Skilfully evoking the ambience of an upper-middle-class British household between the world wars, Liddell depicts with utter believability the horror of a merciless, vindictive persecution that ends only when the boys attain their majority and leave home. Never lapsing into self-pity, Liddell tells an agonising tale with objectivity and irony.

In view of this ghastly childhood, it is perhaps not surprising that, after his brother's death, Robert continued to be introspective, leading a fairly solitary life abroad. He corresponded with some of his

English friends, who paid him occasional visits, most frequently of all Hilary, who spent many holidays in Greece pursuing her interest in folk songs.

The third book of the Trilogy is probably his best known novel *The Last Enchantments*. It was actually published in 1949, between the two novels which preceded it chronologically. The events of the novel, which take place in the years leading to WWII, are seen through the eyes of the adult Andrew and Stephen Faringdon, but mainly concern two of their neighbours rather than themselves. Unlike the other books it is richly comic, and far less personal. You may remember that our Chairman Michael Wilson wrote an appreciation of *The Last Enchantments* in the autumn 2015 issue of *Green Leaves*.

Liddell was educated at Haileybury College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he held a classical scholarship. After graduating he spent 5 years as an assistant in the Department of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. In 1940 he went to Greece as a lecturer for the British Council, but the next year, following the German invasion of that country, he went to Egypt, working as a lecturer at the universities of Alexandria and Cairo. His beloved brother Donald was killed on active service in 1943. After the war Robert went home once to visit his aunts in Tunbridge Wells. He never returned to England again.

Of all these people Barbara was probably closest to Liddell. On 3rd January 1935, just before Henry went back to Finland, she wrote in her diary, ‘Actually I miss Jockie more – his company and conversation, but I am still enslaved by Henry’s baser charms.’

It was largely through him that she kept in touch with Henry, who was not a frequent letter writer. Liddell and Barbara corresponded throughout their lives. His letters, which, happily, in spite of his strictures, Barbara kept, are in the Bodleian Library, but as intimated earlier, he disapproved of writers revealing the contents of private letters in biographies, though I believe he did so himself in *Elizabeth and Ivy*. I understand that he was angry with Hazel and for using so many of his letters to Barbara in ALTA, and asked the Bodleian Library to disallow any use of his letters within their power. Since his death there has been no embargo on their use.

Barbara was not a good diarist. Weeks, sometimes months, would go by without her making any entries. Then she might go back a week or more and fill in the events of those days. So, unfortunately, it is not possible to glean from them any more than I have told you about these friends, especially the women, in whom she probably lost interest after she had made literary use of them. But we could wish her to have been more assiduous, for it would be fascinating know on whom she based some of the other characters, like Mr Mold, Miss Aspinall, and above all, the Bishop of Mbawawa.

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Yvonne Cocking is a founding member of the Barbara Pym Society, was formerly its secretary, and now serves as its archivist and historian. A retired librarian, she worked for more than two years in the early 1960s at the International African Institute in London, where she made the acquaintance of Barbara Pym and Hazel Holt. She lives in Oxfordshire and has spent countless hours sifting through the richness of the Pym archives at the Bodleian library. She has spoken at numerous BPS conferences in the US and UK and is the author of Barbara in the Bodleian: Revelations from the Pym Archives (2013).