

LETTERS TO A FRIEND:

Some letters and postcards from
Evelyn Waugh to John Betjeman, 1936-1960

edited and with an introduction

by

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Evelyn Waugh and the English poet and essayist John Betjeman were close friends for over thirty years. Waugh's letters and postcards in the Betjeman archive at the University of Victoria, written over a period of twenty-four years, testify to the warmth of their relationship. All of these are reproduced here together with an introduction.

The introduction is divided into two parts. The first provides brief biographical sketches of both writers together with a resumé of the range of the correspondence. Attention is drawn to Waugh's early days in the Royal Marines, his comments on the progress of his work and his sense of humour.

The second part of the introduction is concerned with a series of letters and postcards written between December 1946 and May 1947. These are of greatest biographical significance. They are notable for Waugh's acerbic refusal to sympathise with any arguments which Betjeman advances for his remaining an Anglican. Waugh continually and unequivocally holds out the prospect of eternal damnation to Betjeman, chiding him for both the lack of any substance in his arguments and for what he, Waugh, considers to be Betjeman's totally erroneous view of the purpose of religion. Striking features of these letters are Waugh's conviction of the absolute truth of Roman Catholicism and the vigour of his exhortations to Betjeman to think out his own position.

Waugh became a Roman Catholic at the age of 27. He wrote only two short articles on the reasons for his conversion. In both of these he laid stress on the historical grounds which led him to Rome. His letters to Betjeman, too, stress the historical logic behind Waugh's

choice, but they are more remarkable for the revelation of Waugh's rather visceral distaste for Anglicanism in general and its clergy in particular. These letters give an intimate, racy insight into the tenacity with which Waugh held his adopted faith and into the lengths to which he was willing to go in order to persuade a close friend to follow his example.

The letters and postcards, together with a statement of editorial principles follow the introduction.

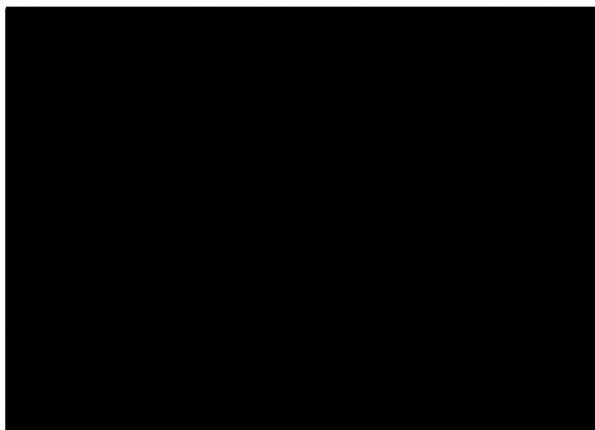


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INTRODUCTION

I

Evelyn Waugh was born in Hampstead, London in 1903. His father was a publisher and editor. He attended a private day school, a public school, Lancing, and Hertford College, Oxford. He did not take a degree. After Oxford he had a short-lived career as a schoolmaster and was for two weeks employed by the Daily Express. Nothing he may have written was ever printed in it. The publication of his first novel, Decline and Fall¹, in 1928, brought him financial stability. From then until his death in 1966, except for the period of his military service in World War II, he earned his living as a writer.

A biographical sketch of John Betjeman's early years reveals how similar they were to Waugh's. Betjeman was born in Highgate, which borders Hampstead, in 1906. From Byron House School, a private day school - one of his teachers there was T. S. Eliot² - he went to Marlborough, a public school, and from there to Magdalen College, Oxford. He, too, came down without taking a degree. From 1928 until 1931, when his first volume of verse, Mount Zion³, was published he was employed at various times as a clerk in an insurance office, as film critic for the Evening Standard - like the Daily Express, this too was owned by Lord Beaverbrook - and as a schoolmaster. In this latter capacity Betjeman is mentioned briefly in A Little Learning, the first

volume of Waugh's uncompleted autobiography. Waugh speaks of visiting "a young friend of mine, John Betjeman ... at his place of bondage."⁴

Although Waugh's first post-card to Betjeman in the following collection is dated 1936, it is probable that by reason of their mutual interests and Oxford connections theirs was already a friendship of perhaps a decade. These letters and post-cards are evidence of the ease Waugh felt in this friendship established in early manhood.

When Waugh became a Roman Catholic in 1930 his conversion was given prominent coverage in the Daily Express. He, himself, wrote an article on the reasons for his conversion in the same paper. Printed on the editorial page, it bore the headline: "'Converted to Rome; Why it Happened to me,' by Evelyn Waugh, whose novels have brought him fame at 26."⁵ Waugh was to write only one more brief, rather reticent article on this subject.⁶ Presumably he left it to any reader curious to know more, to infer whatever he might from the novels and works of non-fiction which he wrote after 1930. A Little Learning takes Waugh's story up to the late 1920's. It is reasonable to assume that the next volume would have dealt fully with the reasons for his conversion. In the absence of this any information bearing on the subject is of much significance to the literary critic since, on his own admission, Waugh's purpose in his later novels was nothing less than "to represent man more fully, which to me means only one thing, man in his relations to God."⁷ Thus of the letters presented here, those from late 1946 to early 1947, in which Waugh argues the case for Roman Catholicism against that of the Church of England, are of greatest biographical significance.

Before attempting a study of these six letters it is first of all profitable to take an overall look at the correspondence so that they may be placed in the chronological and emotional context of the Waugh-Betjeman relationship.

Like Gilbert Pinfold's, Waugh's friends "were the men and women who were growing old with him, whom in the 1920's and '30's he had seen constantly."⁸ One such friend was John Betjeman. Others from Waugh's circle of acquaintances of "the 1920's and '30's" who are here mentioned include Cyril Connolly, Father Martin D'Arcy, Nancy Mitford, Francis Pakenham, Peter Quennell, Maurice Bowra and Monsignor Ronald Knox. Along with these mutual acquaintances, Waugh and Betjeman shared a liking for architecture, painting, antiques, the gossip of the day and each other's work. Waugh is revealed throughout as a witty, courteous correspondent; as one who was neither unwilling to perform a kindness for Betjeman nor reluctant to ask for one from his friend. The only sour note he strikes was occasioned by Betjeman's "refusal"⁹ to appear at the Oxford Union for a debate in which, along with Waugh, he was scheduled to speak. This sourness did not last.

Two of the letters written between 1936 and the outbreak of the war contain references by Waugh to his work. "Oh dear oh Mexico it is a dry subject" (4) is evidently an expression of his boredom with the writing of Robbery Under Law.¹⁰ In an undated letter he encloses "the first chapter of a novel I was writing and have discontinued. It would have been O.K." (5). This was probably the opening chapter of what in 1942 came to be published as Work Suspended.¹¹

Because he took an active part in the fighting, Waugh's

opportunities for correspondence during the war must of necessity have been limited; only ten letters to Betjeman are found here. Written, with one exception, in 1939 and 1940, they involve an exchange of good turns. Waugh, having in 1939 enlisted in the Royal Marines, was concerned about the upkeep, in his absence, of his Gloucestershire House, Stinchcombe. He appealed to Betjeman for assistance in finding an architect to design a flat there for his gardener. Betjeman agreed to help. For his part, Betjeman, uncertain at this early stage of hostilities about the role which might best accommodate him in the war, appears to have turned to Waugh for advice. Waugh recommends the Royal Marine Brigade to him: "The Marines are a vy nice force indeed" (8); "...it would be vy nice to have you with us" (9). He goes on to suggest various people, Churchill included, who might help him obtain a commission in it. He is at pains to point out to Betjeman the obligations of the latter's social position: "You could only join as an officer" (12). If Waugh is to be believed, the well-known British 'old-boy' network extended to some of the highest military offices. However, he is surely overstating the extent of its power when he asserts that "the corps is recruited entirely by influence" (12). The description of day-to-day barracks life and of the geniality of his comrades, who, he says, "glory in their dimness" (9), recalls the sense of belonging that Guy Crouchback found so agreeable when, in Men at Arms¹², he first joined the Halberdiers.

When Waugh learns that Betjeman's preference was to remain in England, an abrupt change in the tone of his letters is noticeable: "If you want to stay in England I am afraid my brigade will be of no

use to you" (13). Such a preference must have seemed preposterous to one who thought that the most effective method of concluding the war was to "kill great numbers of Germans" (13). This note of hauteur anticipates the posture Waugh was to assume in his letters of 1946 and 1947.

Waugh viewed the worth of the Royal Marines - "my brigade" (13) - and the theological impregnability of Roman Catholicism as obvious, and he must have felt compelled to adopt an admonitory, cutting tone in the face of Betjeman's reluctance to enlist in the one and to confer with a Jesuit about the other. It is interesting to note that on both occasions his admonitions are spiked with references to homosexuality. Betjeman is warned against joining "a pansy mobile base defense unit" (12) and is accused of confusing the "true Church" (27) with "a handful of homosexual curates" (27).

In the only other letter written during the war, in January 1944, six months before his demobilisation, Waugh generously grants that his own Work Suspended, "Suspenders" (15) as he dubs it, is of "less merit" (15) than Betjeman's Continual Dew.¹³ However, the sincerity of this tribute is diluted by its following hard on a request for a copy of Betjeman's book, Waugh having previously promised it to "a girl of flawless beauty" (15). In the ensuing letters Waugh is uniformly complimentary in his remarks about Betjeman's work: "You know how much I admire almost all your poems" (41), and, on hearing of Betjeman's being awarded the Cooper Prize for his poetry: "You are just the chap for the award" (67).

Some interesting background information to Waugh's own books,

too, is provided. In a letter of May 1945, Waugh unabashedly informs Betjeman, at this time about to review the novel, of his own opinion of Brideshead Revisited: "I think it splendid. 'Daily Herald' readers wont unless you say it is a classic. Which it is" (16). In early June Betjeman wrote a complimentary review of Waugh's novel, but he evidently thought more highly of his readers' powers of judgement than did Waugh. He did not call it "a classic".¹⁴ This same letter indicates that at this time Waugh was beginning to work on Helena, which was not to be published for another five years.¹⁵ Claiming that he was writing Mrs. Betjeman's life "under the disguise of St. Helena's" (16), Waugh urges Betjeman to "tell her to write to me fully about adolescent sex reveries connected with riding" (16). Mrs. Betjeman may well have found the request indelicate at first - if she co-operated at all - since, in his next letter, Waugh imperiously directs Betjeman to "make Penelope send horse revelations" (17).

In the Spring of 1947 Waugh went to Hollywood to discuss the filming of Brideshead Revisited. A letter written shortly after his return may suggest one of the reasons why this venture came to nothing: "I lived entirely among morticians in the USA" (31). His first letter to Betjeman on his return shows the enthusiasm with which he undertook the writing of what was to become The Loved One¹⁶: "I am obsessed by american morticians (undertakers) and am starting a book about them" (30).

The letters written between September 1953 and January 1954 demonstrate the extent to which some of the incidents related in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold were drawn from the "countless

humiliations" (49) which Waugh underwent at this time. Just as Pinfold "remembered everything in clear detail but he remembered it wrong"¹⁷, so Waugh writes that his own memory is "sharp, detailed and dead wrong" (49). His final remark about the state of his health is to the effect that his "delusions are becoming more frequent" (53) - an abrupt and, for the reader, unsatisfactory break. Three years later, however, he alludes to these experiences when he laconically informs Mrs. Betjeman of the imminent publication of "an interesting book about going barmy" (63).

Any consideration of those letters in which Waugh discusses Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism should at once emphasize that in length, content and intensity of purpose none of them is typical of the kind of letter Waugh usually wrote to Betjeman. His religion was, for Waugh, a matter of the highest seriousness. These apart, Waugh's impish, at times sardonic, humour is frequently in evidence. Thus he gives Betjeman a graphic example of the kind of "ridicule and obloquy" (20) to which, Waugh feels, one is exposed by appearing on the radio:

'Eard you on the air last night Mr. Betjeman. Our Gladys said why if that isn't Mr. Betjeman's voice and we looked it up in the paper and it was' (20).

Mrs. Betjeman's business-like questionnaire supplies an opportunity for a quip at the expense of an Anglican Order of Priests:

4. Would you like to ride on the downs on Friday morning? ...Let us catch a Cowley Father and exercise him on the long rein (23).

The knighthood conferred on Maurice Bowra, a former tutor of Waugh's at Oxford, suggests an undergraduate prank; why not mark his "elevation to the Equestrian Order with the gift of a horse" (45)? In his correspondence with her, Betjeman should not confuse Mother Mercedes, the head-teacher at Waugh's daughter's convent school, with a "motor-car" (58).

Following Waugh's move from Gloucestershire to Somerset, in 1956, he and Betjeman would seem, from these letters, to have grown apart. There is a measure of pathos in the delight Waugh expresses upon receipt of a letter from Mrs. Betjeman at his new address: "Very nice to hear from you again, I thought you had dropped me" (63). Once again one is reminded of Gilbert Pinfold. "Sometimes he thought he detected a slight coldness in his old cronies."¹⁸ The final letter is in the same vein. It is at once an expression of gratitude, for Betjeman's favourable review of Waugh's biography of Ronald Knox¹⁹, and of regret: "I wish we met sometimes, I would like you to visit this house" (68).

II

Waugh's self-appointed task between December 1946 and May 1947 appears to have been to convert Betjeman to Roman Catholicism by convincing him of the contamination of Anglo-Catholicism by the "frightful sins of heresy and schism" (27). Betjeman is an Anglo-Catholic. In Wantage, the Berkshire town where he lives, there is both a convent and a priory. The convent is owned by the Order of the Sisters of Wantage, the priory by the Cowley Fathers. Both are Anglo-

Catholic orders. Waugh is probably referring to these when he writes of "the people of Wantage" (28), "the Church of Wantage" (28), and "your Wantage waifs" (29). Anglo-Catholics form a minority within the Church of England and regard other wings of the Church as either heretical or persisting in schism. In their turn Anglo-Catholics are themselves viewed by Roman Catholics as an heretical, schismatic body. Since Waugh repeatedly stresses that Anglo-Catholicism bears no resemblance to Roman Catholicism, it is appropriate to outline briefly the historical circumstances which shaped Anglo-Catholicism.²⁰

Often pejoratively labelled Ritualism, Anglo-Catholicism grew out of the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century. Initially this movement was, like Oxford itself at that time, predominantly clerical. Sometimes called Tractarianism, its chief concern was to stem the tide of increasing secularism within the Church of England. Its leaders, of whom the most famous were Keble, Pusey and Newman, thought that the Church of England clergy were increasingly losing sight of the ground on which their authority was built, their apostolic descent.²¹ The Tractarians felt that the Church needed to be reimbued with the spirit of holiness, of sacred mystery, in order to counteract what they held to be the stolid, excessively civil stamp of the practice of religion in England. Because the first Tractarians had invoked tradition in their plea for a holy clergy, it was almost inevitable that those of the clergy who accepted their teachings should want to enact them in the form and manner of the church services. After 1840 this took the form of recovering the ceremonial of the pre-Reformation Church in England. Today the outward and visible manifestations of Anglo-

Catholicism which resemble the Church of Rome include making the sign of the cross, incense, genuflections, the use of holy water, fixed stone altars instead of moveable wooden ones, crucifixes, adoration of the eucharist and auricular confession.

Two further circumstances which played a part in the growth of Anglo-Catholicism, and which have some bearing on these letters, were the revival of interest in church architecture and furnishing and the revival of religious communities for men and women in the Church of England. The first of these had the effect of making people want to adorn churches as they had been adorned in the Middle Ages. In the course of the second revival it was found that the Book of Common Prayer made inadequate provision for the daily worship of a monastic community, so the tendency was to enrich it with material that could be borrowed from pre-Reformation, which meant Roman Catholic, sources.

It is tempting to speculate why, after a friendship of twenty years, Waugh should attempt to convert Betjeman to Roman Catholicism. There are undoubtedly many reasons. Waugh himself gives the immediate reason when he mentions the "painful shock" (27) he experienced upon learning that Betjeman was "expounding Protestant devotional practices from the pulpit" (27). From two other items of information roughly contemporary with the writing of these letters it may be deduced that, along with his desire to banish Betjeman from the pulpit, Waugh also thought the time was now ripe to broach the subject.

When he reviewed Brideshead Revisited, the first of Waugh's novels with an overtly Roman Catholic theme, Betjeman wrote: "His [Waugh's] new novel is, I think, his best yet, and that is saying a

lot."²² He went on to imply his agreement with what he considered to be Waugh's "message": "...his message is that worldly values are not worth having." In a radio talk broadcast on December 14, 1946, he reiterated this opinion: "Some critics ...reckon his latest novel, Brideshead Revisited, his greatest failure, while I regard it as his greatest achievement."²³ In addition he said that to Waugh's "logical mind, the Roman Catholic Church, once he had accepted its premises, provided a fully worked out philosophical system." The "logical mind" to which Betjeman here refers may well have concluded that any reviewer, particularly one who was, too, a close friend, who praised thus fulsomely a novel like Brideshead Revisited, and who was also willing to grant that the philosophical appeal of Roman Catholicism did not preclude the exercise of logic, would give a sympathetic hearing to a more personal "message." Moreover, Waugh was aware that Betjeman was about to enjoy "a year's respite from uncongenial work" (27).

Waugh's purpose at this time can be said, then, to have been missionary. He himself maintained that his own conversion was an act of reason, not solely of faith; that he became a Roman Catholic with "firm intellectual conviction ... but little emotion."²⁴ To his attempt to convert Betjeman, however, he brought both "conviction and the missionary's fervent zeal. His tone ranges from the occasionally jocular to, more frequently, the stridently abusive. The objects of this abuse are both the Church of England and Betjeman's powers of judgement. By expressing himself colloquially, Waugh provides an insight more intimate than either of his public statements into the reasons for his own conversion.

From Waugh's letters it is apparent that at this time Betjeman was going through some crisis of belief. Such "doubts" (28) as may have been troubling him are never specified, but, whatever they were, Waugh dismisses them as being "terre à terre. They are the natural eruptions of a thoroughly bad intellectual constitution" (28). Satisfied that Betjeman was complacent in his intellectual deficiencies - "It is no good saying: 'I don't happen to be logical'" (27) - Waugh urges him during his "year's respite" (27) to "spend some of that time thinking" (27). Waugh fits the "logical absurdities" (27) upon which Betjeman bases his "life and hopes" (27) into a wider context; they are typical of an age in which people are "talking balls to psychiatrists... because there is no logical structure to their beliefs" (27). For Waugh, then, the world had altered not at all in the sixteen years since his own conversion. Where in the 1920's there had been the vacuous excesses of the Bright Young Things, there was now - and to Waugh's mind this was equally repugnant - the widespread and misplaced trust in the efficacy of psychiatry.

The dangers Waugh sees as inherent in the lack of coherent structure to Betjeman's thinking about faith may have reminded him of his own position in 1928 and 1929. Alec Waugh has written of a conversation he had with his brother at this time, shortly before the latter's divorce from his first wife. In the course of this conversation Evelyn said: "The trouble about the world today is that there's not enough religion in it. There's nothing to stop young people doing whatever they feel like doing at the moment."²⁵ For Alec, there was "no doubt that the break-up of his [Evelyn's] marriage hastened his

conversion to the Roman Catholic faith."²⁶ In the light of these statements, the "firm intellectual conviction" with which Waugh chose Rome can be seen to have been augmented by a combination of his disgust with the "unintelligible and unendurable"²⁷ life that surrounded him, and of his unhappiness over the failure of his short-lived first marriage. Hence, to Betjeman, in 1946, he not only offers a view of the prevailing Zeitgeist similar to the one he held in 1929, but also recommends to him the same means of combatting and transcending it: the acceptance of the 'logical' religion, Roman Catholicism.

Personal unhappiness and disillusion with the times, however, do not explain Waugh's choice of Rome. Since he takes pains to emphasize to Betjeman the importance of logic in the thinking out of one's religious beliefs, an examination of those statements in which Waugh explains the logic behind his own choice of religion will give added dimension to the arguments he advances in his letters.

The newspaper article he wrote, published twenty days after his conversion, reveals something central to Waugh's thinking; the importance of "civilization:"

Civilization ... has not in itself the power of survival. It came into being through Christianity, and without it has no significance or power to command allegiance.²⁸

It is extremely difficult to pin down concisely what "civilization" meant for Waugh. A passage in his biography of Edmund Campion is of some assistance in this connection. In it Waugh's choice of words when describing Oxford University at the end of the fifteenth century is illustrative of a way of life which, he felt, was both a product of and

a nursery for "civilization." He speaks of the "breadth of culture" of "English scholarship" at that time; of the "temperate and profound influence" of men like Thomas More which was leading the university "by a process of organic growth ... into the spacious and luminous world of Catholic humanism."²⁹ All this "ended abruptly and violently"³⁰ following Henry VIII's break with Rome when educational establishments were thrown into a "state of disorder which threatened at any moment to become chaos."³¹ To Waugh, Europe in 1930, judging once again by his choice of words, must have resembled the fractured state of education in England at the time of the Reformation.

It seems to me that in the present phase of European history the essential issue ... is between Christianity and Chaos.³²

Civilization and Christianity, then, were, for Waugh, inseparable. Together they were the source of a vital, continuing tradition. Their conjunction had been and was still man's only defense against the forces of "Chaos."

It was this idea of an orderly continuum, wherein civilization was wedded to christianity, which accounted for Waugh's choice of Roman Catholicism. For him the logic of his choice was irrefutable. Western civilization and christianity sprang from the Mediterranean. Waugh felt impelled to go to Rome, the historic centre of christianity:

The Catholic structure still lies lightly buried beneath every phase of English life; history, topography, law, archaeology everywhere reveal Catholic origins. Foreign travel anywhere reveals the local, temporary character of the heresies and schisms and the universal, eternal character of the Church. It was

self-evident to me that no heresy or schism could be right and the Church wrong. It was possible that all were wrong, that the whole Christian revelation was an imposture or a misconception. But if the Christian revelation was true, then the Church was the society founded by Christ and all other bodies were only good so far as they had salvaged something from the wrecks of the Great Schism and the Reformation. This proposition seemed so plain to me that it admitted no discussion. It only remained to examine the historical and philosophic grounds for supposing the Christian revelation to be genuine.³³

This sense of the "buried" but ubiquitous "Catholic structure" of "English life" - Waugh could well have substituted "civilization" for "life" here - together with his commitment to the force for goodness, for "organic growth", of a continuing past, accounted for Waugh's viewing the Reformation as an historical movement of "local, temporary character." Lacking historical roots, the Reformation could not forever suppress the vigour of the strong native tradition of Catholicism, which by contrast, according to Waugh, had the force of Western Civilization behind it.

This emphasis on the validity of Roman Catholicism by dint of its historical continuity is given point in one of his letters. Castigating Betjeman for his loyalty to his faith, Waugh, in a nautical simile, depicts all those who throughout history had broken with Roman Catholicism as "mutinous shiploads ... 4 centuries is about their life afloat" (28). The simile he uses here is given historical shape, in Edmund Campion, in Waugh's explanation for the 're-emergence' of Catholicism in the nineteenth century. The forces which gave impetus

to the Reformation had lost their vigour, and so Catholicism "could re-emerge, not as an alien fashion brought in from abroad, but as something historically and continuously English, seeking to recover only what had been taken from it by theft."³⁴

Thus, to this correspondence Waugh brought a massive, unemotional assurance that anyone, particularly an Englishman, who took the trouble to study the historical evidence would find that the one religion which logic dictated as true was Roman Catholicism. Secure in his certitude, Waugh makes no attempt to minimize the "sacrifices" (29) which, he feels, Betjeman would have to make if he were to follow him. In fact he seems to throw out a challenge to Betjeman's nerve "to start a new life in middle age with every literary and artistic predilection the other way" (29). Waugh makes it plain that he regards Betjeman's allegiance to one particular wing of the Church of England, not as a product of the latter's intellectual convictions, but rather as something which has grown out of Betjeman's sense of loyalty to an institution which furnished him with the subject matter of much of his writing: "You have build [sic] your life and learning and art around the Church of England" (29).

Throughout their correspondence on religion Waugh casts Betjeman in the role of Anglo-Catholic dilettante, seeing him as a man shying away from anything which may require serious thought about religion, preferring instead to "luxuriate in sentimental raptures" (28). Although he does not state as much, Waugh undoubtedly intends this caustic phrase to include "every literary and artistic predilection" of Betjeman's. For Waugh, Betjeman's poetry, bestrewn as it is with the

outward form and fittings of churchly things, must have been further evidence of a 'sentimental' mind. From his poetry it can be seen that Betjeman's deep affection for the English parish-church system extends to all wings of the Church of England, High, Low and Modern. This tolerance of Betjeman's which, despite his own exclusive faith, transcends the doctrinal differences of the various bodies within the Church of England is in marked contrast to Waugh's belligerent claims for the exclusivity of Roman Catholicism: "The true Church is unique and indivisible and nothing is remotely like it" (27). This assertion follows his telling Betjeman that only the "most superficial resemblance" (27) exists "between Catholics and Anglo-Catholics" (27). That he here chose to use a simile drawn from architecture in order to illustrate this claim - an Australian's innate inability to "distinguish between a piece of Trust House timbering and a genuine Tudor building" (27) - was probably not an accident. Betjeman is a well-known authority on architecture and old buildings.

Waugh finds Betjeman's religious stance intolerable because, he says, "a deep root of error" (33) on Betjeman's part is to view "religion as the source of pleasurable emotions and sensations" (33). The aesthetic appeal which the trappings of religion holds for Betjeman involves, according to Waugh, too much of the self. "Nothing less than complete abandonment" (33) is, for Waugh, the essential prerequisite for the true practice of religion, whereas he finds that Betjeman looks for tangible rewards from the church of his allegiance. Betjeman is informed of the kind of self-questioning to which he is prone: "You ... ask the question 'Am I not getting just as much out of

the Church of England as I should from Catholicism?" (33). Waugh immediately suggests the kind of question Betjeman should be putting to himself: "The question should be 'what am I giving to God?'" (33).

By bringing this "deep root of error" to his attention, Waugh probably thought he could effect a complete turnabout in Betjeman's thinking; that he could substitute the hard-headed logician for the vague, self-serving aesthete. Throughout these six letters Waugh would appear to have judged the process of his own conversion as the model which Betjeman should be persuaded to follow. However, in this particular letter he may have gone too far. His forthright appraisal of what he felt religion meant to Betjeman amounts to a serious criticism of his friend's mind and art. This letter, significantly perhaps, marks the end of the discussion of religion within the correspondence.

Waugh was well aware of the attractions of ritual. He claimed that they played no part in his own conversion. On becoming a Roman Catholic he stated that "three popular errors reappear with depressing regularity in any discussion about a convert to the Roman Catholic Church." One of these errors is that "he is captivated by the ritual."³⁵ This, in a nutshell, is one of the accusations he flings at Betjeman. At the time of his conversion Waugh admitted readily to the advantages held by the Church of England in matters of aesthetic appeal. It had "all the finest ecclesiastical buildings" and its "liturgy is written in prose of unexampled beauty."³⁶ In 1930 Waugh forsook all this, just as he evidently hoped Betjeman would in 1947. Ritual alone was of no consequence and "it would be a very superficial person who would accept

a whole theological and moral system on those grounds alone."³⁷ It would be wrong to infer from this last statement, written seventeen years previously, that Waugh had enjoyed a close friendship of twenty years with someone whom he thought was "a very superficial person." In fact Waugh must have reckoned their friendship to be strong enough to withstand such offence as his candour might cause. In the grave matter of religion, however, these letters and other evidence suggest that Waugh entertained serious reservations about Betjeman.

The deep-seated "error" which Waugh discerned in the whole area of Betjeman's thinking on religion was, for Waugh, a product of the latter's art. His review, in 1952, of Betjeman's First and Last Loves³⁸ provides additional, more explicit evidence of Waugh's judging Betjeman the literary artist to be inseparable from Betjeman the man. Waugh began by acknowledging that not only had Betjeman's work made its author "literally a house-hold word," but that "Betjemanism is a mood of the moment."³⁹ "Household word," "mood of the moment;" these are immediate warning signals of what is to follow. In the Waugh canon such summations are damning evidence of the artist's consorting with and pandering to the forces of 'Chaos'. Such wide popularity as its author might enjoy, although understandable - "A large part of his vogue springs from the recent embargo on foreign travel"⁴⁰ - was no argument for the book's value. Betjeman had cut himself off from the great classical tradition of art. His customary milieu and manner of composition, while typical of one who was "exclusively insular,"⁴¹ were simply components of some breathless entertainment.

The normal process of Betjemanizing is first the undesired stop in a provincial English town, then the "discovery" there of a rather peculiar police station, circa 1880; the enquiry and identification of its architect. Further research reveals that a Methodist Chapel in another town is by the same hand. Then the hunt is up. More buildings are identified. The obscure name is uttered with reverence befitting Bernini. The senile master is found to be alive, in distressed circumstances in a northern suburb of London.⁴²

At this point in his review Waugh fits Betjeman's "religious interests" into the scheme of "Betjemanism". This industrious discovery, celebration, cultus, almost, of the obscure, fundamental to the secular practice of "Betjemanism", carries over, he says, to Betjeman's delight in the variety he finds within the Church of England. An example of secular "Betjemanism" will perhaps best illustrate the nature of what Waugh found most-objectionable when it overlapped into religion, Betjeman on a Manx ballroom:

I like the Palace dance-hall best. It has a parquet floor of sixteen thousand square feet and room for five thousand people. It is in a gay baroque style, cream and pink inside, and from the graceful roof hang japanese lanterns out of a dangling forest of flags. A small and perfect dance band strikes up - ah, the dance bands of the Isle of Man!⁴³

There is, Waugh implies, no discernible difference in Betjeman's response to and literary treatment of a dance hall or a church: "Theology is totally closed to him, but he has sung hymns in every kind of protestant conventicle and acquired an expertise in Anglican deviations."⁴⁴ Moreover, and most pertinent to Waugh's

argument in his letters, "the services are a deep source to him of excitement and sentiment."⁴⁵ Once more Waugh's choice of words is revealing. "Anglican deviations", "every kind of protestant conventicle" are elements of the fragmentation precariously contained under the auspices of the Church of England. They compare unfavourably with the "unique and indivisible" condition of Waugh's adopted faith. Betjeman feels nothing more than "excitement and sentiment" where Waugh himself enjoys "firm intellectual conviction."

Waugh concludes this wide-ranging, scathing review by labelling Betjeman the "leader and sole instigator of the fashionable flight from Greatness." This involves fleeing from "the traditional hierarchy of classical genius," from the historical centre of Western Civilization - "away from the Mediterranean to the Isle of Man" - and "away from the Universal Church into odd sects and schisms."⁴⁶ "Betjemanism" thus flew in the face of everything Waugh valued. In the Waugh scheme of values this "mood of the moment" was no doubt another indicator of the decadence which threatened to overwhelm "civilization".

Before passing on to a consideration of the other charge Waugh levels, this more at Betjeman's church than at his character, attention should be paid to a paradox which becomes apparent when these six letters are considered within the context of the entire correspondence. This centres around Waugh's estimation of Betjeman's work. His expressions of admiration for Betjeman's work elsewhere in the letters have been noted. At one point Waugh even expresses annoyance at what he considers to be excessive editorial omissions in a compilation of Betjeman's poetry.⁴⁷ In addition, and of greater significance, only a

year after he reviewed First and Last Loves Waugh was, by his own admission, "bowed over" (51) upon receiving a "benefaction of oriental splendour" (50) from Betjeman. This gift was a Victorian wash-hand stand. When in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold Waugh came to retell the incident, he described its designer as "a man not universally honoured but of magisterial status to Mr. Pinfold and his friends."⁴⁸ The name of William Burges, the designer, does not belong in "the traditional hierarchy of classic genius," yet here, in a palpably autobiographical novel, Waugh, aligning himself with Betjeman, claims to accord to Burges a "magisterial status." In this light the enthusiastic collector of Victoriana, who here demonstrates something he also found in "Betjemanism" - a "sound love of the simpler sorts of craftsmanship"⁴⁹ - and the glacial reviewer make odd bedfellows.

III

Waugh's appraisal of the fundamental personal failing which, he thought, made true religious devotion impossible for Betjeman is candid but hardly malicious. However, when he writes about Anglicanism (and for the most part he identifies the Church of England with its clergy) his comments are without exception derisive. Betjeman considered "the question of orders as the crucial question" (27) and he also had, on the evidence of Waugh's letters, an obviously strong attachment to his local church and clergy at Wantage. Waugh, in his role of missionary, evidently saw it as his task to point out to Betjeman that the "glimpse of the truth" (28) which the latter was

"being allowed to see" (28) would never blossom into the true faith if he persisted in his allegiance to "the Church of Wantage" (28).

Since, on his own admission, Waugh was "no expert on Anglican orders" (29), he was unable to enter into any scholarly discussion on the subject with Betjeman, who appears to have been studying the question at that time. Waugh writes that "It has never seemed to me an important question" (29). And so when he learns that Betjeman feels satisfied with the thesis of Gregory Dix, an Anglican theologian, in defense of Anglican Orders,⁵⁰ unable to counter any arguments which Betjeman may have advanced, Waugh instead refers him to the Benedictine monks at Downside Abbey who, Waugh blandly assures his correspondent, are quite capable of puncturing "the logical structure of his [Dix's] argument" (31).

Waugh evidently viewed the whole question as inconsequential. The Church of England, he writes, came into being through a mixture of "political, economic and domestic causes" (29), that is to say its origins were both local and secular. At the time of his conversion what he considered to be the insular nature of the Church of England disqualified it, for Waugh, as the true Church because, as he then wrote, "any body which is not by nature universal cannot claim to represent complete Christianity."⁵¹ Betjeman is told that the Reformation was nothing more than "a sixteenth century rift" (33). Moreover, the first ministers of the Church of England had no unifying centre to their beliefs; they "were drawn by a typical English confusion of wrong opinions culled from Luther, Calvin and Zwingli" (29). Since Waugh's mind could not countenance anything which was divergent

from his conception of the thrust of a continuing, universal tradition (whether in the Church or the Arts), any discussion about the aftermath of the Reformation was, for him, simply academic:

Whether any trickle or divine power survived the Reformation and when precisely it petered out are questions of fact to which there is no answer because the evidence is lacking (29).

Whether or not Anglican Orders were valid, an Anglican minister was, to Waugh's mind, an "impostor" (33). His reference to the "handful of homosexual curates" (27) at Wantage was followed by an apology in a later letter, but in this same letter, hard on his apology, Waugh states that "to call these people priests is like saying 'Be a saint (or angel) and fill my glass as you're up'" (29). Betjeman is warned that he "cannot escape pollution from the blasphemous aberrations of most of your clergy by forming a little clique" (27). Waugh does not think that Betjeman's "wretched clergy have any faith themselves" (28). Like Betjeman himself, the Anglican chaplains whom Waugh met during the war "had no grasp of moral theology and were swayed by any sort of 'feeling' in their opinions" (28). The "extravagantly eccentric notions" (29) of its clergy, which he here mentions to Betjeman, were another reason for the unacceptability of Anglicanism for Waugh in 1930:

Any kind of 'crankiness' or individual self-assertion in the ministers of a religious body shakes one's confidence in them₅₂

Betjeman's continued loyalty to, and his consorting with, the very people whom Waugh thus impugned was particularly irksome: "How can

you expect a Cowley Father to instruct you in the truth which he himself lacks?" (29). By waiting to be "convinced of error" (29) Betjeman was "vy presumptuous" (29). He could hardly expect "a divine revelation like Paul's" (29). It would appear that, faced with Betjeman's continually harping on the question of Anglican Orders, Waugh, incapable of taking the Church of England clergy seriously, became exasperated; hence the acidity of his comments on Anglican clergymen.

The final letter on the subject of religion is undated; it was probably written in May 1947. By this time Waugh had spent five months attempting to convert Betjeman. He had not even succeeded in persuading him to approach a Jesuit for elementary instruction in Roman Catholic theology. Waugh's testiness along with his tendency to overstate have been noted. Goaded, perhaps, by the lack of any return for his labours of the previous five months, he concludes this letter by writing "I wouldn't give a thrush's egg for your chance of salvation at the moment" (33). This unequivocal assessment ends the exchange.

Thirteen years later, in 1960, Betjeman reviewed Waugh's biography of Ronald Knox. This review of the life of an eminent convert to Roman Catholicism reveals an attitude of mind altogether different from Waugh's in the matter of religion. In the absence of his letters to Waugh in 1946 and 1947, Betjeman's review of his correspondent's book assumes added significance. For Betjeman the conversion of an Englishman to Roman Catholicism involved, it appears, a confrontation with a socio-cultural problem. The "way of life" of Roman Catholics, because they were, in England, a minority whose

"prelates are often of Irish or of Italian origin[,]...must have seemed foreign to someone as English as Ronald Knox."⁵³ This echoes Waugh's repeated warnings to Betjeman about the "enormous number of features" (27) the latter would find "repugnant" were he seriously to consider becoming a Roman Catholic. By 1960, however, it is obvious that Betjeman had no inclinations in this direction. He speaks of converts to Rome as "those who have had the misfortune to be led to this opinion."⁵⁴

When Waugh wrote of his abandonment of the Church of England, he readily admitted that it caused him no "moral struggle. I shed my inherited faith as lightheartedly as though it had been an outgrown coat."⁵⁵ Betjeman was well aware of this and so, in his review, he compliments Waugh for his sympathetic treatment of the "spiritual agony" which Knox suffered at the time of his conversion: "Mr. Waugh... did not, I think, know the deep affection for the Church of England that was Ronald Knox's."⁵⁶ Betjeman was well aware of the strength of the bonds which Knox finally came to break. Thirteen years previously Waugh was unable to convince Betjeman that he, too, should break them.

Despite his repeatedly exhorting Betjeman to think logically about religion, Waugh well knew that for all converts "the final step must be a step in the dark because you can have no conception of what the Church is like until you see it from inside" (28). Even if Waugh and Betjeman had come to an agreement on such questions as the validity of Anglican Orders and the Anglican eucharist, this "final step" would have had to be taken. Betjeman saw fit not to take it.

When Lady Elizabeth Longford became a Roman Catholic, in 1945,

Waugh wrote a note to her. Like Betjeman, she too was a friend of Waugh's of long standing. The sincerity and graciousness of Waugh's sentiments are evidence of the joy which a friend's conversion to Roman Catholicism brought him:

Please let me join the Saints and Angels in their chorus of welcome. I do not think anyone outside the Church can ever understand the meaning of the Household of the Faith - the supernatural unity in love that exists behind the superficial wrangles. You are certain to find disappointments as you get to know Catholics as one of themselves - the curious contradictions and frustrations in the flow of grace, and disagreements in matters which up to now you have thought essentials. But the love within the community is enormously strong and unemotional. It is a fragment of that love that I send you today. 57

FOOTNOTES

¹Decline and Fall (London: Chapman and Hall, 1928).

Waugh's first book, Rosetti, His Life and Works, had been published by Duckworth's, also in 1928. It was a critical, but not a financial success. Duckworth's refused to publish Decline and Fall unless Waugh made considerable cuts. They considered some passages in it obscene. Waugh took the unbowdlerised MS. to Chapman and Hall. All his subsequent novels were published by them.

²Betjeman gives an account of his encounter with Eliot in "The Usher of Highgate Junior School," in T. S. Eliot: A Symposium, compiled by Richard March and T. Tambimuttu, (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949), pp. 89-92.

Betjeman's comments on the religious faith which he and Eliot shared are of particular interest:

I hesitate to write of his [Eliot's] soul's journey though it travels in the same carriage as mine, the dear old rumbling Church of England which is high, low and broad at once. I know that we are both 'high' and object to certain weaknesses of the system and that we both regard the Church of England, despite these weaknesses, as the Catholic Church of this country...The Church of England is the Church of this country. That is one of its attractions to someone who likes what is indigenous. (p. 89).

³Mount Zion (London: James Press, 1931).

⁴A Little Learning (London: Chapman and Hall, 1964), p. 225.

⁵Daily Express, 20 Oct. 1930, p. 10.

⁶"Come Inside," in The Road to Damascus, ed. John O'Brien (London: W. H. Allen, 1949), pp. 12-16.

⁷"Fan-Fare." Life, XX (8 April 1946), 56.

⁸The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold (London: Chapman and Hall, 1957), p. 7.

⁹Letter #19. All further quotations from Waugh's letters will be followed by parentheses containing the number of the particular letter.

- ¹⁰ Robbery Under Law: The Mexican Object-lesson (London: Chapman and Hall, 1939).
 Waugh gained notoriety in the 1930's for his support of Franco. His reasons for so doing were in harmony with his views on the importance and force of a native tradition (see below). In Robbery Under Law he notes that
 Franco's soldiers have fought under the inspiration of their past; they saw their country disintegrating as their colonies had done, into a group of republics run by men whose politics were derived from abroad and were antagonistic to national tradition (p. 269).
- ¹¹ Work Suspended (London: Chapman and Hall, 1942).
- ¹² Men at Arms (London: Chapman and Hall, 1952).
 Waugh's high opinion of the Royal Marines was not short-lived. In 1941 he wrote to Randolph Churchill that "the only place one feels at peace is Marine Barracks." Encounter, 31 (July 1968), 4.
- ¹³ Continual Dew (London: J. Murray, 1937).
- ¹⁴ Daily Herald, 6 June 1946, p. 5.
- ¹⁵ Helena (London: Chapman and Hall, 1950).
- ¹⁶ The Loved One (London: Chapman and Hall, 1948).
- ¹⁷ The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, p. 19.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, p. 7.
- ¹⁹ Monsignor Ronald Knox (London: Chapman and Hall, 1959).
 Betjeman's review, "Pilgrim's Progress", appeared in the New Yorker, 36 (23 April 1960), 174-176.
- ²⁰ For the following brief account of the rise of Anglo-Catholicism a debt is acknowledged to:
 Alec Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution: 1789 to the Present (London: Penguin, 1961).
 J. W. C. Wand, "Hey-Day of Anglo-Catholicism," in Anglicanism in History and Today (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1962), pp. 134-148.
 Christopher Hollis, Newman and the Modern World (London: Hollis and Carter, 1967).
- ²¹ Keble's sermon on the "National Apostasy", delivered on July 14, 1833 is commonly thought of as the inaugurator of the Oxford Movement. The occasion of Keble's complaint was the attempt by Lord Melbourne's Whig government to amalgamate a number of the Irish dioceses and thus to reduce the total of bishops. Keble was concerned to deny that the State had any right to impose itself upon the divinely founded Church.
 Before the end of August a number of Oxford clerics, Newman and

Pusey among them, decided on a course of action whose object was the rousing of the Church of England to a sense of its danger. In Newman's judgement this could best be done by stressing the value of the ecclesiastical inheritance which Melbourne's government was threatening. He felt that since the Church of England derived its importance from its descent from the Apostles, therefore, in order to allay state interference in the Church's affairs, the doctrine of the Apostolic succession needed to be given wide publicity. The idea of circulating leaflets or "tracts" was Newman's. They were begun in late 1833 under the title of Tracts for the Times.

Between 1833 and 1841 ninety such tracts were published. When in 1841 the bishops of the Church of England issued a series of charges formally censuring the tracts, the Oxford Movement was paralyzed. The power of the church authorities as opposed to the power of the state in ecclesiastical matters had been a primary contention of the Tractarians; hence the crushing effect of the bishops' censure.

- 22 Daily Herald, 6 June 1946, p. 5.
- 23 "Evelyn Waugh," in Living Writers, Critical Studies Broadcast in the B.B.C. Third Programme, ed. Gilbert Phelps (London: Sylvan Press, 1947), p. 147.
- 24 "Come Inside," p. 15.
- 25 Alex Waugh, My Brother Evelyn and Other Profiles (London: Cassell, 1967), p. 191.
- 26 Ibid., p. 192.
- 27 "Come Inside," p. 15.
- 28 Daily Express, 20 Oct. 1930, p. 10.
- 29 Edmund Campion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946), p. 14.
- 30 Ibid., p. 15.
- 31 Ibid., p. 14.
- 32 Daily Express, 20 Oct. 1930, p. 10.
- 33 "Come Inside," p. 15.
- 34 Edmund Campion, pp. 51-52.
- 35 Daily Express, 20 Oct. 1930, p. 10.
- 36 Ibid., p. 10.

- ³⁷Ibid., p. 10.
- ³⁸John Betjeman, First and Last Loves (London: J. Murray, 1952). Waugh's review, "Mr. Betjeman Despairs," appeared in The Month, 8 (April 1952), 372-375.
- ³⁹"Mr. Betjeman Despairs," p. 372.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 373.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 373.
- ⁴²Ibid., p. 373.
- ⁴³First and Last Loves, p. 46.
- ⁴⁴"Mr. Betjeman Despairs," p. 373.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 373.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 374-375.
- ⁴⁷See letter #31.
- ⁴⁸The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, p. 20.
- ⁴⁹"Mr. Betjeman Despairs," p. 373.
- ⁵⁰See letter #67.
- ⁵¹Daily Express, 20 Oct. 1930, p. 10.
- ⁵²Ibid., p. 10.
- ⁵³"Pilgrim's Progress," p. 175.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 176.
- ⁵⁵"Come Inside," p. 14.
- ⁵⁶"Pilgrim's Progress," p. 175.
- ⁵⁷Francis Pakenham, Born to Believe (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), p. 123.
 In the second volume of his autobiography Pakenham wrote that Waugh "did more than any other layman to bring me into the church." Five Lives (London: Hutchinson, 1964), p. 15.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

In editing these letters and postcards, the following procedures have been observed:

1. Terminal punctuation is silently supplied where omitted. Internal punctuation is retained. Although often erratic, it does not usually obscure the sense.
2. Spelling is presented faithfully. All "&'s," however, have been lengthened to "and". Waugh's misspellings are followed by "sic" in square brackets.
3. Datelines have been regularized, this includes the expansion of contractions and abbreviations. Any elements not actually given by Waugh appear in square brackets, where these are conjectural, they are so indicated by a question mark.
4. Ellipses always indicate omissions by the editor.
5. In letter #23, in which he replies to a questionnaire, Waugh's answers to the various questions are underlined.
6. One postcard, #37, contains only one word. An editorial note appears in square brackets in order to explain its significance.
7. Most of the letters are from Waugh's Gloucestershire address:

Piers Court,
Stinchcombe,
Nr. Dursley,
Gloucestershire.

Where no address appears, the reader is to understand that the letter was written here.

8. Some letters are unaddressed. Where this is the case the reader is so informed, the note appearing in square brackets.

WAUGH'S LETTERS AND POSTCARDS

1. Postcard; postmarked 3 Ap[ril,][19]36.

See what the Sinn Feiners did to these fine old Georgian mansions, bad cess to 'em.¹ Coming home soon. Transjordan is full of culture but vy cold.

E.W.

2. Postcard, postmarked 18 Jan[uary,][19]38.

O.k. Look forward keenly to seeing you at Stroud on Wednesday week. What a relief it must be to the monthly nurse, I expect a dozen convalescent mothers a year will hear tales of Uffington (until the falling birth rate puts her out of work altogether when the work house will hear them)

3. Postcard; postmarked 28 Nov[ember,][19]38

It is too long since we saw you. Would you come and stay with us for week end of 10th? or in the middle of the week any time. Without your son but with your wife.²

E.

4. Dec[ember] 15th [1938]

Dear John,

It was very nice seeing you and Penelope. I wish it had been longer.

How clever of you to find the book about Dursley and how charming of you to give it to me. It is full of the kind of

information that will brighten my rare meetings with the vicar.
Thank you vy much indeed.

If you ever find yourself within arms length of the relevant documents, do see what luck Belcher had in the South Kensington Gallery competition of 1879 and try and identify the craftsman whose monogram seems to be A.H.H. or H.A.H.³

Oh dear oh christmas. Letters from missionaries wanting cash by every post.

I loved your Oxford book.⁴ I think you should have mentioned that Campion incorporates the lodging house Micklam Hall (Mickleham?) where lots of upper class drunks used to live and that they have preserved the fountain in the garden where they were usually sick.

I have been vy worried thinking over what Penelope told me - that Connolly had a father living. What a terrible thing for the old man C's common book must be.⁵

Oh dear oh Mexico it is a dry subject.⁶

E.

5. Postcard; postmarked 7 Feb[ruary,][19]39.

On no account miss Sir S. Hoare in this weeks 'Country Life'.⁷

E.W.

6. [1939]

Dear John

Many thanks for the delightful poem. I hope it does not mean that you subscribe to the nonsensical ideas of Connolly that the rich are more selfish and nervous than the poor.

The war seems to be developing into ourselves against the world so we shall all have some fighting to do between our 40th and our 80th birthdays. Meanwhile no one wants us for any purpose except paying taxes. Mr. Popkin⁸ sent me a delightful letter saying that in these difficult times the revenue officers looked to him to carry on his natural work.

Have you considered Evacuation as a theme for a major work ideally suited to yourself.⁹

I enclose the first chapter of a novel I was writing and have discontinued. It would have been O.K.¹⁰

Do you know anyone who would like to take this house furnished for the duration?¹¹

Yours

E.

Please return chapter of novel.

7.

PIXTON PARK,
DULVERTON.
Dec[ember] 4th [1939]

Dear John

Can you please help me? I am obliged to go to the trouble and expense of making a flat for my gardener at the top of the stables at Stinkers.¹² If I was at home it is a thing I could plan with the local builder quite easily, but I go into barracks on Thursday with little prospect of being able to attend to things like that for some years. I can't leave that decent old building to the local builder alone. Do you know of an architect or even an architectural amateur in my district who would take charge? It would be a £250

job with little in it for the architect. As I am now on subalterns pay - which works out at 2/5 a day, - I can't afford to do things in the style of Father D'Arcy.¹³ Would you have the time to do it as an act of friendship? I could pay you travelling expenses of course. Would it amuse you and take your mind off poison gas etc? My gardener through his own folly is homeless so the job has to be done at once. I enclose the builders ghastly plan and estimate. Everything is wrong with it. If you thought of doing this act of charity for me we must meet and discuss it. I go to Chatham first and probably get to London fairly often as long as we are there.

Laura has had a son and sends her love.¹⁴

Yours

Evelyn

Please answer to St James' Club.

8.

ST JAMES' CLUB,
PICCADILLY, W. 1.
[1939]

as from Officers Mess, R.M. Barracks, Chatham.

Dear John,

It is vy kind indeed of you to take on negotiations for me for flat making. Outside price £300. I want Malpars¹⁵ employed.

The Marines are a vy nice force indeed.

Love to Penelope

Evelyn.

9.

ROYAL MARINE BARRACKS,
CHATHAM,
KENT.

[1939]

E. Waugh Esq. R.M.

Officers Mess

R.M. Barracks

Chatham.

That is the way to put it on the envelope. We don't wear blue. We are a force called Marine Brigade that is being used for what we called 'combined operations' ie. Zeebrugge¹⁶ etc. If you think of joining get your father-in-law¹⁷ to write at once to the Adjutant-General. The Brigade is not yet formed and there is quite a chance he could get you in. It would be vry nice to have you with us. I go on parade at 8.10 and get off at 5.30 so I haven't seen much of Chatham or neighbourhood. There is continual dense fog and bitter cold but vry comfortable quarters. We go to Deal for tactical training on 12th.

I go to Pixton - alas - for Xmas leave where Laura is getting better but is not well enough to move.

I have absolutely no money nowadays which I find a bore. Otherwise my life is highly enjoyable.

Marines glory in their dimness. They are practically an hereditary corps.

Billy Clonmore¹⁸ was seen coming out of Westminster Cathedral in a privates uniform, a staff-officers cap, carrying an umbrella.

Love to Penelope.

10.

[No Address. 1939]

Dear John

Very many thanks for the plans, which seem excellent. It is most kind of you take this trouble for me.

One suggestion occurs to me. Would it not be cheaper and more convenient to put the bath and w.c. downstairs in the little harness room? The architect says nothing of costs. What does he think his plan will come to?

I have seen nothing of Chatham as I work from black-out to black-out. We leave here for good on Saturday and go to Deal. I suppose I shall see no friends for a long time. Funny M. Pakenham getting replaced.¹⁹

Love to Penelope

E.

Don't think this snappy [sic] the measure of my affection and gratitude.

Has the architect visited the stables at Stinkers. If so did he say anything about necessary repairs to existing structure.

11.

ROYAL MARINE BARRACKS
CHATHAM,
KENT.

[1939?]

Dear John,

Many thanks for your official letter.

While I have all my limbs I do not want to transfer from a combatant to a non-combatant service, but I think your committee may be very useful to me if I get wounded and am faced with the

prospect of being a garrison institution for the duration of my life.

Love to Penelope

Evelyn.

12.

DEAL & WALMER UNION CLUB,
WALMER.

[1939?]

Dear John,

- 1) You could only join as an officer. We may have plebian officers but at least we are not worried by gentleman rankers.
- 2) Three men can get you the job. W. Churchill, Col. St. Clair Morford,²⁰ Adjutant-General Bourne²¹ in that order. The corps is recruited entirely by influence.

You have left it a bit late. The Brigade forms April 1st. Don't on your life get into a pansy mobile base defense unit. Infantry brigade is the thing. The man you told me said 'wields a goodly graphite' is here in hell. Chetwode, (the Red dupe of Barcelona) is the man to push you. St. Clair Morford is king-pin, as they say. If Red dupe knows him you are o.k.

Again all my thanks for your help with Mr. Prewetts attic.²²

You would love this club.

Morale is low at Kingsdown just at present.

E.

13.

Kingsdown House Camp
Walmer

[1939?]

Dear John,

Very many thanks for Cole's²³ letter. Yes. Wait for Malpars

to get the timber. I have a large ash lying in one of my fields that came down last year. Can't he save that?

Lady Birdwood²⁴ asked me to tea to hear some jews sing We'll hang out the washing on the Siegfried line. She said Penelope was a sweet girl.

If you want to stay in England I am afraid my brigade will be no use to you, but they were some weeks ago, still recruiting temporary officers for a 'mobile' naval base defense unit which should suit your requirements. I rather think they are full up but no doubt your father-in-law could force a way for you. General Bourne, the Adjutant-General R M. is more use than Winston really.

The only way to bring this business to a happy conclusion is to kill great numbers of Germans.²⁵ If we go on thinking only of defense there will be nothing worth defending. Why do you prefer defense? I can't understand it.

The nuns who took Piers Court move out next month. Can you think of anyone who would like to take it cheap?

I am to be bankrupted shortly by income tax man as my half years instalment of tax greatly exceeds my total years income.

I had a molar pulled out by a naval dentist yesterday and so got off night operations.

P. Belloc²⁶ is vy fond of you.

I saw Mrs Connolly at a restaurant. V. thin.

Remember Chetwode to write to General Bourne applying for temporary commission for you in Mobile Naval Defense Corps. (The

corps is mobile not the Naval Base). Failing that there are the 'pioneers'. Lord Birdwoods jews are in charge of a 'pioneer' officer. It made the name of his corps jolly funny I thought. Their camp is near Sandwich.

Love

Evelyn.

14.

R.M. Brigade
Bisley Camp
Brookwood
[1940?]

Dear John,

The gardener for whom I was building the flat at Stinkers has now decided to better himself by making munitions so I shall not be proceeding with the work. This is highly unsatisfactory after all the work you have done on it and I am more sorry than I can say. My gratitude is boundless and I hope you will one day give me the chance to do something of the sort for you.

Now, how do I stand with regard to Mr. Cole? The work at Stinkers is merely postponed. It is the first thing I shall do when peace comes. Should I pay Mr. Cole a fee now for his visit to the house and for his trouble in making the plans and leave the question of the contract percentage until happier times?

Where will you be at Easter? I get five days and shall be in London. Is there any hope of seeing you and Penelope. I am also there on Saturday and Sunday of this week, staying at Flemings Hotel. I long to see you both again.

I went to luncheon with my Brigadier in a Tudor villa and said in a jaggering way "Did you build this house yourself, sir?"

"Build it? It's four hundred years old." I was reminded of our visit to Dunsany.

Love,

Evelyn.

15.

WHITE'S
10 Jan[uary], [19]44

Dear John

I have imprudently promised Debbo Cavendish²⁷ - a girl of flawless beauty - a copy of Continual Dew.²⁸ As it might be a blue rose.

Can you help?

Evelyn

Damn it I gave you a copy of Suspenders²⁹ - a work of less merit but almost equal scarcity.
ring Murray's.

16.

PIXTON PARK,
DULVERTON
Vigil of Corpus Christi, [19]45.³⁰

Dear John,

I am vy glad you like 'B.R.'³¹ I think it splendid. 'Daily Herald' readers wont, unless you say it is a classic. Which it is. Funny their thinking you a Catholic.

I say is it wise to settle Penelope near a Mosque. She's bound to fall in love with the Imam and she's a teetotaler already.

As you [sic] told you I am writing her life under the disguise of St. Helena's.³² I haven't yet reached the middle Mystery Cult

period. She is 16, sexy, full of horse fantasies. I want to get this right. Will you tell her to write to me fully about adolescent sex reveries connected with riding. I have no experience of such things, nor has Laura. I make her always the horse and the consummation when the rider subdues her. Is this correct? Please make her explain. And is riding enough or must she be driven? Are spurs important or only leather-work.

I don't much admire Piper's³³ work but know no one else. If he's too dear do you know anyone else to try? I went to the Academy in the hope of spotting an architectural draughtsman but they were all awful.

Please send address of Edinburgh book shop with illuminations.

I have duplicates of Days Parables, Jesus 46.³⁴ Want to swap?

Vote for Pakenham the old booby.²⁵

Evelyn

17.

WHITE'S
8 June [1945]

Dear John

I have just seen your review of 'B.R.' in the Daily Herald.³⁶

Uncommon civil. Vy many thanks.

Make Penelope send horse revelations.

I am in London now for some time. Perhaps you will be here, too, soon.

Evelyn

18.

ST JAMES' CLUB,
PICCADILLY, W.1.
[1946]

W's "Spires & Towers"³⁷ 2 Vol + additional Vol. 3 Vols. Have bought. 30/-. Good? But lithographs are stone. Should that be "tinting" stone.

Also have bought "Victorian Psalter"³⁸ Owen Jones fl fine except of course back gone.

Hear Penelope is back. Long to see her. When? Communicate.

E. Waugh.

19. Postcard;

postmarked 30 May, [19]46.

I am bitterly disappointed and annoyed by your refusal to go to the Union.³⁹ I only accepted on the understanding that you would be there. I have Audley's Sermon⁴⁰ in two sizes. It is greatly inferior to Owen Jones. I am afraid I cannot come to stay with you. My regards to Penelope

E.W.

20.

11th June, [1946]

My Dear John

There is nothing painful about writing letters provided one writes nothing else. I have given up work of all kind.

That is one objection to the proposal you kindly make. The whole suggestion is repugnant (a) to lunching with Mr Burns. [sic] Where would he take me? Some ghastly London restaurant and starve and poison me I have no doubt and expose me to insult from socialist servants and make me see women in trousers with hair like rubber sponges, and give me no wine. No that would not do.

(b) Broadcasting, supposing it could be arranged without a visit to the Dorchester Hotel, would still be obnoxious. You see the lower classes dont read books but they do listen to the wireless and when they have heard anyone speak they think this constitutes an introduction and warrants their leering knowingly 'Eard you on the air last night Mr. Betjeman. Our Gladys said why if that isn't Mr. Betjeman's voice and we looked it up in the paper and it was.'

Of course in order to earn a living (ha ha) it is unavoidable that one exposes oneself to ridicule and obloquy now and then but the B.B.C. pay so little and expect so much time and trouble that it is not worth while. It is better to write occasionally for the magazines.⁴¹

I have not forgiven you for deserting me at Oxford. In your place they put a facetious negro.⁴² But I stayed two nights with Maurice⁴³ in complete comfort, and bought a nice copy of Edmund Evans 'Chronicle of England'⁴⁴ for 3/6 at the Turl Bookshop, so the expedition was a success.

A queer called Garrett dined with me here.

On Saturday d.v. I go to Salamanca to celebrate the fourth centenary of the death of a Thomist philosopher whose name escapes me.⁴⁵

D'Arcy on Love⁴⁶ much harder to understand than Nancy Mitford⁴⁷ on same subject.

Americans write to me by every post. O God.

My love to Penelope.

I shall be alone in London at Hyde Park Hotel all July. Ask

me out, take me about, draw me out of myself, show me how the other half of the world lives.

Your rival reviewer Ouennell⁴⁸ had a siezure [sic] brought on by sexual excess in the British Embassy Paris - the siezure [sic] was there not the excess.

Yours ever

Evelyn

21. Postcard; postmarked 15 Oct[ober,] [19]46.

I go to Oxford to wait on the Cardinal⁴⁹ at Campion Hall 29th 30th this month. Could I come and spend the night of 31st with you? Could you drive me from Oxford to your house that afternoon? Can you find a hire-car to take me to Eton on following afternoon Nov 1st? All this would be delightful to me if acceptable to you.

E.

22. Postcard; postmarked 18 Oct[ober,] [19]46.

I will bring wine.

E.

23. Farnborough,
Wantage,
Berkshire.
Vigil of Christ the King⁵⁰

Dearest Evelyn.

Will you please fill in and return the questionnaire to be found overleaf with regard to your visit next week.

It will be very nice to see you and you need not bring any rations bar 2 oz sugar and a fender if you want a fire as that is what we are very short of. I mean a fire in your bedroom we have

got a fender for John's library.

Love to Laura.

With love from,

Penelope

I will bring wine and some sugar. I will try and get a fender in Oxford. Why should I not sleep in the library?

1. Are you still dispensed from fasting on Fridays???

Yes.

2. Do you like roast duck?

Yes but no apple sauce please.

3. Would you like to attend Mass in Wantage at 8 AM on All Saints day? There is one at that hour in the Latin church in Wantage and we shall go to one in our church at the same time.

Yes please

4. Would you like to ride on the downs on Friday morning?

Yes please. On second thoughts no. I am too old and stiff.

Let us catch a Cowley Father⁵¹ and exercise him on the long rein

5. If so what sort of bit would you like?

Ward Union. See above. Blinkers for C. Father on the rounds.

6. I have got a taxi to take you to Eton. It will be here at 2 PM on Friday afternoon.

That is too early. I dont want to be there before 6.30. Can you bear to keep me as long as that?

24. Postcard; postmarked 8 Nov[ember,] [19]46.

It was vy kind of you to send on those books you gave me. My heart bled when I found I had left them behind but delicacy forbade my reminding you. They were vy civil at Eton and vy uncivil in London. I am glad to be home. By the way please return the yank article⁵² when you have done with it. Reports from Christine about Gormanston Castle vy encouraging.⁵³

E.

25. BELTON HOUSE,
GRANTHAM.
Immaculate Conception [19]46.⁵⁴

Dear John

Just back from Ireland to find your charming and exhilarating [sic] letter.

Too kind too kind.

It isn't Chapman and Halls fault my books are out of print. The socialists use all paper for forms and posters and propaganda. Have seen nothing of Lancaster cartoon.⁵⁵ Aghast. Gormanston spoilt by holiday camp.

Love

Evelyn.

26. 15th Dec[ember,] [1946]

My Dear John,

I was listening last night in my Palladian villa.⁵⁶ I borrowed a loud-speaking machine from my childrens nurse and for the first and last time it sounded in the drawing-room.

Thank you vy much for all the civil things you said, and

thank you for doing the job at all. I well know the payment made by the BBC does not at all compensate for the trouble, and that you did it purely out of friendship.

I greatly admired the theatrical skill with which you breathed life into the dry old bones of Agatha Runcible and Miles Malpractice.⁵⁷

You had the date of my conversion wrong. It should have been 1930 not 1934.⁵⁸

Laura and I had a delightful but unsuccessful journey to Dublin. Gormanston was a fine, grim, haunted place and we had just decided to purchase it when Mr Butlin⁵⁹ announced that he had acquired a site a mile from the castle and was setting up camp there. The news came just in time to save us and ruin poor Lord G's young widow.⁶⁰

Your' memory's green in the Emerald Isle. Everyone I met longed for your return.

I am postponing my quest for a house until I return from California in the spring when I shall go over with a motor-car and make a wide tour. Come too.

My love to Penelope.

I enclose a seedy kind of Christmas card.

Yours

Evelyn

Can I please have the 'Life' article back.

27.

22nd. Dec[ember,] 1946.

My Dear John

Thank you vy much for your Xmas card and the promise of 'The Pavilion'.⁶¹ What you do not send and what I want vy much is my article in 'Life'. Please please send it back.

I have been painfully shocked by a brochure named 'Five Sermons by Laymen'.⁶² Last time I met you you told me you did not believe in the Resurrection. Now I find you expounding Protestant devotional practices from the pulpit.. This WILL NOT DO. You should be thinking of St. Thomas More not of Henry Moore.

I understand that Penelope means to purchase you a years respite from uncongenial work. You must spend some of that time thinking. It is no good saying: 'I dont happen to be logical'. Logic is simply the architecture of human reason. If you try to base your life and hopes on logical absurdities YOU WILL GO MAD. No one goes mad because he works in a factory and eats tinned food, as you suggest, though these acts are symptoms of unreason. But people are going mad and talking balls to psychiatrists not because of accidents to the chamber-pot in the nursery, but because there is no logical structure to their beliefs. Vide Smarty-Boots-Connolly passim.

Your ecclesiastical position is entirely without reason. You cannot possibly be right. Marxist-Atheists might be. Zealous protestants may be (i.e. it is possible to say that from the word go the Church was all wrong and had misunderstood everything Our Lord told them and that it required a new Divine Dispensation in

the sixteenth century to put people on the right track again. That is just possible). What is inconceivable is that Christ was made flesh in order to found a Church, that he canalized his Grace in the sacraments, that He gave His promise to abide in the church as a human corporation, part of his Mystical Body, one with the Saints triumphant [sic] - and then to point to a handful of homosexual curates and say: 'That is the true Church'.

You and I cannot both be right. But every argument you can put forward for your little group in the Church of England is a fortiori an argument for me. This is so self-evident to me that I cannot expound it further.

You say you regard the question of Orders as the crucial question. Why? There is no conceivable doubt that the Catholic Church has valid orders, it is probable that the Orthodox have, also the various Eastern heretical bodies and the Ethiopians, it is highly improbable that the Church of England has. But even if they had they would not be free of the frightful sins of heresy and schism. Cranmer and Luther had valid orders. Did Calvin? I don't know. But valid orders do not confer impeccability or infallibility. Your communion would be sacrilegious if it were valid. A Church is a corporate human association. You cannot escape pollution from the blasphemous aberrations of most of your clergy by forming a little clique (even among whom I believe the most preposterous heresies are current).

You must not suppose that there is anything more than the most superficial resemblance between Catholics and Anglo-Catholics.

They may look alike to you. An Australian, however well-informed, simply cannot distinguish between a piece of Trust House timbering and a genuine Tudor building; an Englishman however uncultured knows at once.

The true Church is unique and indivisible and nothing is remotely like it. This may not be apparent from outside. But I think more violence is done to the mystical Body by those who imitate it than by those who frankly hate it.

You will find an enormous number of features of the Catholic Church that are repugnant to you, for the very reason that it is sui generis. But I do implore you to spend your year in investigating. Then it will be a year of Grace. You may not get another chance. It would be a pity to go to HELL because you prefer Henry Moore to Michaelangelo.

THIS GOES FOR PENELOPE TOO.

Evelyn

28.

Hospital SS John & Elizabeth
N.W. 8
9th Jan[uary,] [19]47.

Dear John

God forbid that I should pronounce damnation on the people of Wantage. No one is damned except by his own deliberate act. Heresy is certainly one of the sins which can damn a man, but it is doubtful how many formal heretics commit the sin of heresy - of seeing the truth and denying it. Many hereditary heretics are in a state of invincible ignorance. They may well receive some of the grace and Mercy of God. I think it is even possible that

devout Moslems and Jews are allowed to approach God in prayer.

The reason I wrote to you as I did was because you seem to me to be in a different position altogether - that you are being allowed to see a glimpse of the truth broad enough to damn you if you reject it now. Intellectual doubt is the least of all the causes of infidelity. Pride, sloth and cowardice all contribute more. I have not myself met the kind of Catholics you speak of who are subject to assaults of doubt. I am sure they exist because there are Catholics of every kind. There is certainly a stage in the mystical life (of which I know nothing) when many saints have had to wrestle with doubt for years. But your doubts seem to me much more terre à terre. They are the natural eruptions of a thoroughly bad intellectual constitution. If you accept an absurdity, as you do in pretending the Church of Wantage is the Catholic Church, and luxuriate in sentimental rapture, you will naturally break out in boils and carbuncles and question the authenticity of the Incarnation. Catholics are irked by church discipline and puzzled by many logical problems but they do not, in my observance, have the sort of fundamental doubt you suffer from.

I have no patience whatever with the plea of duty to a sinking ship. If your group at Wantage are the Catholic Church they are not sinking. They are with the angels and saints triumphant. If they are sinking it is because they should never have put to sea. There have been hundreds of mutinous ship loads in the last 2 thousand years who have set sail with a great hullabaloo and

salutes of guns. 4 centuries is about their life afloat. Honour among thieves is complicity in crime. If you realize that you are in a pirate crew your only duty is to desert at once however endearing you find your shipmates.

You cannot rely on a death bed conversion. Every hour you spend outside the Church is an hour lost. I well know the vast handicap of having started my Catholic life 27 years too late. Think what it must be like for poor Charles II who only had a few minutes Catholic life!

I don't believe your wretched clergy have any faith themselves. I met a number of protestant chaplains in the war. None showed any special knowledge except some acquaintance with German textual critics - Tübingen 1870⁶³ - they had no grasp of moral theology and were swayed by any sort of 'feeling' in their opinions. Chris Hollis⁶⁴ is peculiarly tender towards these people - pietas to Wells Cathedral Green combined with votes of Wiltshire rectors.

This is a rambling letter for I am on a sick bed. What I want really to say is that you must give yourself time to take lessons in the rudiments of theology. Don't follow emotions follow reason. The final step must be a step in the dark because you can have no conception of what the Church is like until you see it from inside. Father Devas at Farm Street⁶⁵ would be a good instructor in the catechism. Remember that anything the mystics wrote was written from inside the Church. All the structure and discipline of the Church is accepted as given, before they go on to higher speculating. If you read the utterances of the mystics

from outside you will miss the point and incur dangers. So leave all that aside and get the elementary theology and history clear first. After that every luxury of devotion is available.

Perhaps this is not even legible. I will write again when my hand is steadier.

I am here another week. Pop in if you are passing.

Evelyn

29.

Hospital SS John & Elizabeth
N.W.8.
14th January [19]47.

My Dear John,

Thank you for the handsome art publication. What a lot of ladies you know named Mfwanwy [sic].⁶⁶ I suppose your poems bring you into correspondence with them. I admire your article vy much also Wests. Not so keen on snails.

I am no expert on Anglican orders. It has never seemed to me an important question. It is certainly one on which we cannot get an infallible answer this side of grave. The papal condemnation is simply an expert opinion.⁶⁷ I do not even know what you believe their authenticity derive [sic] from - some renegade Dalmatian Bishop in the middle of the seventeenth century is it not?⁶⁸ I don't know either how they jumped the two hundred years to Pusey⁶⁹ etc. Plainly 'intention' is an essential part of ordination. Otherwise it become [sic] simply magic like the people in fairy stories who rub a lamp by chance and find a genii at the elbow. Do you seriously believe those periwigged 18th century bishops intended to produce sacrificing priests? Do you

believe that a genuine Bishop repeating the words of ordination in a hypnotic trance would produce a priest? Whether any trickle of divine power survived the reformation and when precisely it petered out are questions of fact to which there is no answer because the evidence is lacking. Anyway I don't see the importance. Almost all the great heresiarchs have had valid orders - Arius⁷⁰ etc. You genuinely don't know what Catholicism means. It is as I described it before in comparing you to an Australian unable to recognize the marks of genuine architecture.

Perhaps I was wrong to speak of a small group of homosexual curates. No doubt there are thousands of them at the moment but they are still a pretty small group when assembled with all their colleagues since the Act of Supremacy. And where are their Saints and Miracles. To call these people priests is like saying" 'Be a saint (or angel) and fill my glass as you're up.'

What you are saying is: 'When I am convinced of error I will receive instruction?' Are you expecting a divine revelation like Paul's. It is very presumptuous. How can you be convinced of error without instruction? And how can you expect a Cowley Father to instruct you in the truth which he lacks himself. You say, 'what more can I learn at Farm Street than I learn at Wantage already?' I say 'everything'. But if you feel it disloyal to take instruction while you still have a 'confessor' I suggest this: Go to a Roman Catholic priest (I recommend Devas) and say to him: 'Don't teach me anything specifically anti-Anglican at the moment. Just go through the creeds with me and the catechism. Teach me

the morals and the faith which I believe we have in common.' Then when you have had a few months of that ask yourself seriously 'Is this the Faith of Wantage or is there something here radically different?' I am sure you will peep into a different world.

Because the validity of a sacrament is objective and not subjective, the personal virtue of the priest does not affect it. It would clearly be insane to think that Fr A's wafer was more the Body of Our Lord than Fr B's because Fr A is the worthier man. Thus a priest in mortal sin can say mass and give valid communion to a man also in mortal sin to the damnation of them both, whether the mortal sin is adultery or heresy.

I can't write a history of the Church of England for you but I presume we agree that it came into existence through a mixture of political, economic and domestic causes. The apostate priests who founded it and its earliest ministers were drawn by a typical English confusion of wrong opinions culled from Luther, Calvin, Zwingli⁷¹ etc. In order to achieve some sort of shape they accepted the principle that the King was the supreme temporal and spiritual authority and that his decisions on doctrine were the tests of orthodoxy. And to this day the head of your church becomes a Presbyterian the moment he crosses the Tweed. You would also agree, I take it, that many of your clergy, higher and lower, entertain extravagantly eccentric notions. You say that 2 to 1 are what you call Catholic. I am astounded, but I do not know many parsons and you know thousands so I must believe you. I was educated at Lancing which was said to be the most 'Catholic'

protestant school. Many of the clergymen-masters were devout and virtuous but none at all like priests. The various chaplains I met in the war seemed to have no sense of the supernatural at all. I think the difference is that. But even if you see some similarities you still have to answer the question 'What are the Wantage group doing in the same gallery as the Coventry Group?' If yours is a Church at all, which I don't think it is, it is a living corporation. We are members one of another and by adherence to Bishop Barnes⁷² etc. I am doing public violence to my convictions.

All this 'waiting for God's good time' is intolerably wet. Time is a human conception and limitation. We make God's time for him.

Almost everyone who becomes a Catholic makes sacrifices. Some very large ones. Yours I think would be greater than most for you have build [sic] your life and learning and art around the Church of England. I can well understand your reluctance to start a new life in middle-age with every literary and artistic predilection the other way. It is easy to say 'Well I'll just wait until an Archangel is sent to make the announcement to me personally in God's good time. Meanwhile I'll believe in the Incarnation on two days a week and continue my catalogue of Anglican Churches.'⁷³

Finally, do consider my first letter. (1) We may both be wrong. (2) We can't both be right. (3) You cannot be right and I wrong. (4) If I am right you are wrong. Which of these statements do you deny? A real protestant could deny 3. But your

Wantage waifs don't and can't.

But there is ten years painful transition ahead for you if you decide to follow your mind instead of your emotions. You may shirk them.

Evelyn

30.

[No address. 1947]

Dear John

Just back from Hollywood. Did you get the Forest Lawn album?⁷⁴ Thank you for the civil things you say of me in Strand Magazine⁷⁵ but why do you persist in cutting down my Catholic life. I was received in 1930.

O. Lancaster's sketch good in conception but poor in execution.⁷⁶

I am obsessed by american morticians (undertakers) and am starting a book about them.⁷⁷

Do you feel disposed to come on a house-hunting jaunt in Ireland with me at my expense soon after Easter?

I can't sleep. Can you?

Awful about your obduracy in schism and heresy. Hell hell hell Eternal damnation.

Love to Penelope

Evelyn

31. Postcard;

postmarked 8 Ap[ril,] [19]47.

I met an ex-Anglican clergyman making his first communion at Downside⁷⁸ on Maunday Thursday. I told him a friend of mine was being kept from Grace by Dicks [sic] of Keble.⁷⁹ He (the convert)

had had a similar impediment until he studied a Benedictine commentary on Dicks [sic] which prints in full texts quoted in part by Dicks [sic] and, he assures me, quite disposes of the logical structure of his argument. As I say I can't help you on the point but the Downside Benedictines can and would if you asked them.

E.

I lived entirely among morticians in U S A.

32. Postcard; postmarked 18 Ap[ril] [19]47.

I propose of [sic] start castle hunt 28/29 April. Your handwriting leaves me in doubt about where you are going 1st May. If to Ireland why not travel with me and stay with me in Dublin for two or three days?

E.

33. [No address 1947.]

Dear John

I wish you had come with me to Ireland. I saw three houses a day for a week and have boiled down the choice to three - Kiltinan, Tipperary [sic], a romantic slum, Lisnavagh, Carlow, a practical Early Victorian Collegiate building, and a fine ugly 1870 Italianate villa on Lough Dourg called Slevyre, the home, believe it or not, of General Sir William Hickey [sic].⁸⁰ Lord Wicklow tried to avoid me but failed. When trapped he showed me a letter of yours from which it is plain that you have refused the aid I suggested in overcoming the pit dug for you by Dix. I am appalled by the danger of your position. You have seen the light and

rejected it.

Can you not see how preposterous it is to go for advice to the
 vy people whose position is in question? I say 'They are
 impostors and can prove it.' You say: 'Well I must ask them
 first whether it is all right to examine the proofs.'

One deep root of error is that you regard religion as the
 source of pleasurable emotions and sensations and ask the
 question 'Am I not getting just as much out of the Church of
 England as I should from Catholicism?' The question should be
 'What am I giving to God?' Nothing less than complete
 abandonment is any good. His will is plain as a pike staff that
 there shall be one fold and one shepherd and you spend all your
 time perpetrating a sixteenth century rift and influencing others
 to perpetuate it. I wouldnt give a thrush's egg for your chances
 of salvation at the moment.

Yours

Evelyn

34. Postcard; postmarked 28 May, [19]47.

Blind worm, who are you to lead? You should humbly follow. If
 village life is an occasion of sin, fly from it and mortify
 yourself in Park West like the fathers in the desert.

I have almost decided to purchase Lisnavagh, a large early
 Victorian baronial mansion near Ratterley. I feel a foreigner in
 Stinchcombe and but for Laura would go further afield to Africa.

Hinc non habemus manentem civitatem.⁸¹

E

The physical privations in Ireland are as bad as the English.

35. Postcard; postmarked. 14 July, [19]47.

Have you seen the PreRaphaelites [sic] in Birmingham? I go on Wednesday of this week by motor-car. Could we not meet there and you come back here for the night? It is too long since I saw you.

E

36. Postcard; postmarked. 26 July, [19]47.

I shall be on the move at the end of next week. I stay with Pam Berry⁸² for August bank holiday. Shall I come to you Monday night? Would it be possible to send a hire-car for me? Or would you be visiting her too perhaps. Maurice⁸³ will be there. I am no good on stained glass you know.

E

37. Postcard; postmarked. 18-8-[19]47

Hell.

E W

[Recto is photograph of the Council Room in the City Hall,
Stockholm]

38. ST. JAMES' CLUB
PICCADILLY, W.1.
[1948]

Dearest Penelope

I think you must have miscounted your children. I have five. I do not believe you have. Or perhaps some of the distressed Dutch children have renewed ancestral bonds.

It will be vy nice to visit you. Will you be so kind as to arrange for a taxi to fetch me from Pam Berry's dude ranch on Monday afternoon.

I listened to John on Aberdeen and thought him vy good except for the insane statement that Edinburgh is finer than Rome.⁸⁴

Best love

Evelyn

39.

19th Sept[ember,] [1948?]

Dear John

It will be a joy to see you here and Penelope if she can come.

I have to go to filthy London on Monday returning on Thursday. After that I am here continuously and free for all nights except 14th and 7th next month.

Why not come down with me on Thursday. I don't know how you live. Are you in London at the middle of the week? Or could I meet you in Oxford and take a car (yours or I would hire one from here to pick me up) from there on Thursday?

Will you, if not there, come by motor? Oxford-Stroud is a painful train journey.

The Chapel of St. Anthony the Eremite sounds a treat. Have you a duplicate? Do you want to swap I have a copy of O. Jones Victorian Psalter, needs rebacking. Also a few small duplicates.

Another idea. Should I be welcome at your house for a night - Wednesday - to see your collection and then you come on here and see mine Thursday? Let me know at Whites.

I have a fine oil painting of a Jewess being baptised in the

Lateran circa 1850 but I am taking it to be cleaned so it wont be here.

Also I have a fine huge water colour of Durham I want your opinion of.

Answer to White's if by letter or better telegraph here before Sunday. At the worst telephone here The number of this paper is not up to date. It should be Dursley 2150. But better telegraph really.

Yours

Evelyn

40.

Beefsteak Club,
9 Irving Street,
Leicester Square, W.0.2
27th Sept[ember,] [1948]

Dear John,

You said that perhaps you would like to join this club. Would you?⁸⁵

The entrance fee is £15- 15 and the annual subscription another £15- 15. For these modest sums you have the privilege of lunching and dining with the very greatest bores in England - bores on a really monumental scale whom I am sure you would relish. Hugh Sherwood⁸⁶ is anxious to second you and I can guarantee your election. So if you would enjoy it - I am sure you would - give the word and I'll put you up.

Yours

Evelyn.

41.

31st Dec[ember] [1948]

Dear John

I have just returned from America to find your charming present of the latest book.⁸⁷ You know how much I admire almost all your poems and of course I am full of resentment at Sparrow's omissions. But I like his preface. Far more discerning than Auden's⁸⁸ (whom by the way I met for the first time in New York and, despite strong prejudice, rather took to). I saw M. Bowra who lives a life of great squalor at Harvard queing [sic] for his food with a plastic tray in his hands.

I say what about Mr Stokes's chariot? Does Penelope know him?

New York life - the pleasure momentary, the posture ridiculous, the expense damnable. I return there almost at once. Sir O. Sitwell has grown his hair like Einstein's. I asked why Sachie was not with him. "He is High Sheriff [sic] of his county and therefore unable to leave England."⁸⁹

Millicent Fenwick's 'Vogue Book of Etiquette'.⁹⁰ 650 pages and not a dull word.

Love to you both

Evelyn

42. Postcard;

postmarked. 18 Jan[uary] [19]49.

'Jaunty sub-aestheticism' was a villainous phrase. What I meant was that BBC jauntiness of the Tom (Glad he's dead) Handley⁹¹ sort was infecting aesthetics and pushing it below the surface into popular underworld. But how badly I said it. I don't think E. Sitwell a great poet, I think Auden a particularly bad one. Just

off to USA.⁹² Why not come too. You wouldnt like them but they would like you and you would find many architectural peculiarities. Bowra is there in hideous squalor - perhaps I told you - queuing for his food among students with a plastic tray and no wine. He drinks Spanish brandy before luncheon. Did you tell Hiram Winter Bottom⁹³ to lay off me? If so I am most grateful. He has left me entirely at peace for months. Good about Derwent.

E

43. Telegram. Sent from Knightsbridge Post Office.
Dated: 8 Dec[ember,] [19]50

PLEASE ARRANGE WITH MAD BOY FOR ME TAKE WARM BATH ARRIVAL FARINGDON

WAUGH.

For BETJEMAN MAD BOY.

44. Jan[uary] 9th, 1951.

Dear John

If I wrote about Picasso you would not print it. It would just be 1000 words of obscenity. But thanks awfully for asking.

I took in Time and Tide for six weeks but have stopped the subscription. I hoped it would be all new poems by you and lubricious nudes of Mrs Piper, but it seemed to be written entirely by Church of English clergymen.

Would you like to hear about my health? Yes? Well I have felt so feeble lately that at last I called in my medical man who took my blood pressure and said it was the lowest ever recorded - in fact that of six months' foetus. Full of sudden Hope I cried: 'Does that mean I shall soon die?'. 'Quite the contrary, you will

live almost for ever with daily increasing melancholy.⁹⁴

It is really vry odd about Bowra's elevation.⁹⁵ After all he has done nothing except become head of the very worst College and write some unreadable books about poets he cannot read.

Do you think the socialists still remember his beastly behaviour in the General Strike, which won Lindsay of Balliol a peerage?⁹⁶

Many thanks for I dont like his work either.

Just off to Jerusalem. Will pray for you at the Sepulchre.⁹⁷

E.

45. Postcard; no postmark.
[Recto is not addressed.]

Do you not think that his friends should celebrate the Warden of Wadham's elevation to the Equestrian Order with the gift of a horse? Nothing vry expensive. I should tbnk four pounds a leg ample for the purpose. Penelope should . . . choose and present it. I will readily subscribe if you will organize the affair.

Very sorry to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not recognized your services to the party or should I say parts.

E

46. Postcard, postmarked. 1st May [19]51.

Lady Rathdonnell⁹⁸ who I think must be balmy asks me to tell you that she will be at 47 Gloucester Place on 3rd May for a week and is anxious to see you. Well I have now told you. Happy Festival to you all. E.

If you read the lessons at the girls school at Wantage ask for a Miss Anna Mackenzie (not pretty) a cousin of mine and please give

her a patronizing pat. I enjoyed that party you took me to in Hertford Street very much.

E

47. Postcard; postmarked. 2 Aug[ust] [19]51
The church of St Peter, Frocester (mostly 1870 perp. restoration, no particular merit) is being demolished and sold piece-meal. Now is the time to buy a pulpit and lych quite cheap if you want them for your garden. I am hoping to transport and re erect the East windows.

E

48. ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL,
KINGS CLIFF,
MARINE PARADE,
BRIGHTON.⁹⁹
Corpus Christi 1952.

Dear John

It is sad you can't dine tonight. Come any day. I can put you up. I am here for some time and it is very invigorating. A shy film knight is sometimes with me. He pays¹⁰⁰

Do you know an Anglican painter called Cadogan Cooper - awfully bad and funny? He has a picture called 'Husband disguised as a priest hears his own wife's confession' in this years Academy. I wanted to buy it. What do you think he had the crust to ask? 700 guineas. No sale.

Evelyn

49. Postcard, postmarked. 17 Sept[ember,] [19]53
Thanks awfully for telegram. I was reading a book by a professor which said that Dickens stood dazzled by the gorgeous colours of

the V sisters¹⁰¹ and I remembered them whitish but I remember evy thing [sic] wrong these days so I thought now I have lost my reason indeed but your kind reply has comforted me. My memory is not at all hazy - just sharp, detailed and dead wrong. This affliction leads me into countless humiliations.

Love

E.

50.

Nov[ember] 12th, [1953]

Dear John,

Did you really mean it? Or was it a warm fleeting whim regretted next morning? If the latter, I shall well understand. But if the former, I shant understand at all. It is a benefaction of oriental splendour.¹⁰²

What with having had teeth out that afternoon and having tried to allay the agony with gin, and being full of cocaine and not being able to eat or hear anything, Patrick's¹⁰³ party had me in a daze. I seem to remember repeating myself over and over again to Lady Elizabeth and all the time what consciousness I had was concentrated on that glowing treasure downstairs. Even if its not for me - why should it be? - please tell me again its history.

I come to London again next week. Kind young ladies asked me to parties and I accepted and it means a week off work. Usually to be found in Whites of a morning. Great pleasure to see you.

I so want to show off some pictures and books here. I suggested to Penelope that you might come. But God its cold.

Can't afford central heating or a real cook.

Yours ever

Evelyn

51. Nov[ember] 16th, [1953.]

Well my dear fellow all I can say is I am bowled over. What a present! I will see it never falls into the hands of the V and A.¹⁰⁴

Did you know there is a note on Burges's painted furniture in Waring's Catalogue of 1862 Exhibition, with a plate of a cabinet which looks contemporary with Magnum Opus?

Any chance of seeing you this week? I shall be hanging about White's Wednesday - Saturday.

E.

52. 29th Dec[ember,] [1953.]

Dear John,

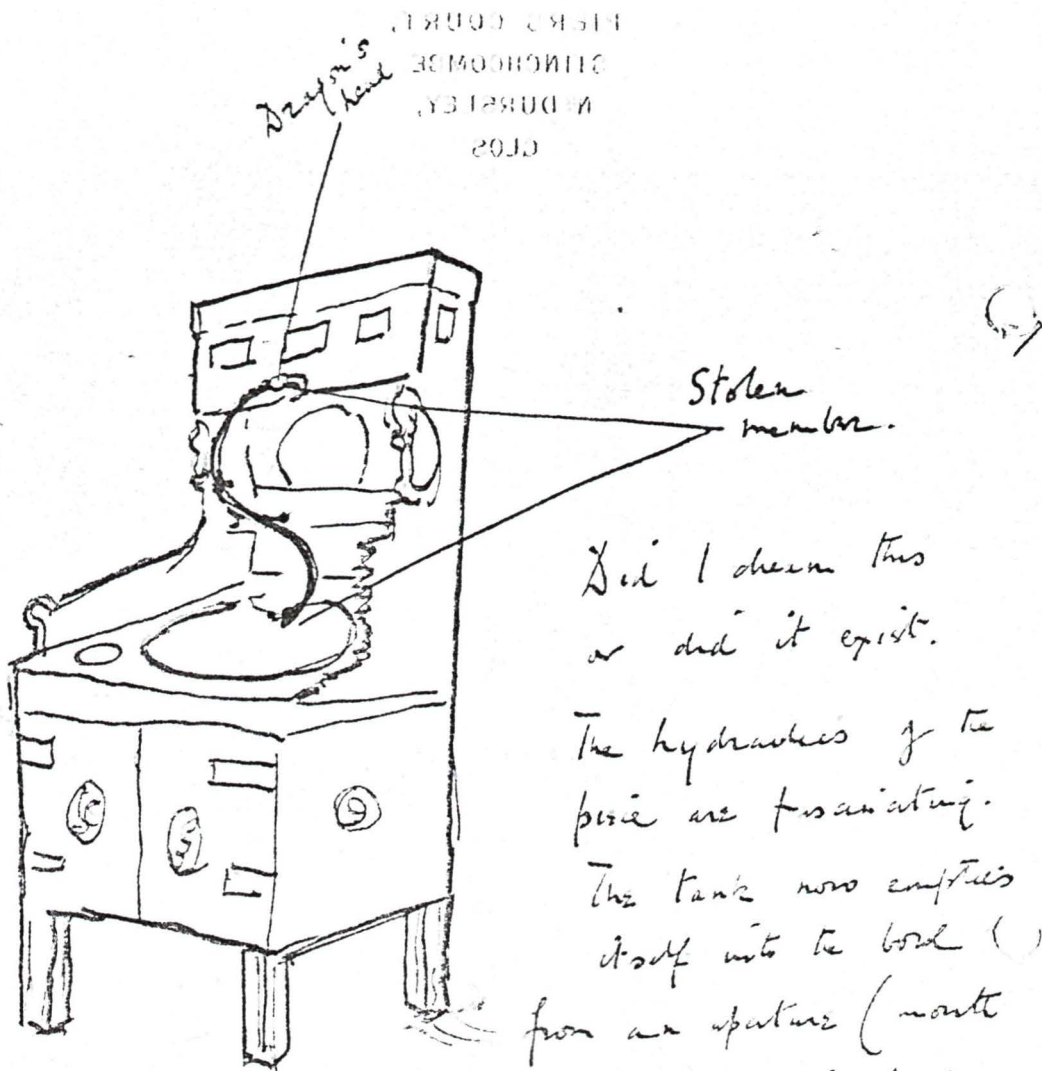
The trouble with Stone¹⁰⁵ is he cant draw. He engraves and writes very prettily.

I am vy sorry to learn of Penelopes accidents and diseases.

Re your Great Benefaction. Patrick has kindly torn out part of his water closet and sent it to me. The missing organ is something quite other - either an halucination of mine or an act of theft on the part of one of his bohemian friends. As I remember the G.B. there was an ornamental bronze pipe which led from the dragons mouth to the bowl below.

See over page.¹⁰⁶

Did I dream this or did it exist.



Did I dream this
or did it exist.

The hydraulics of the
piece are fascinating.

The tank now empties
itself into the bowl ()

from an aperture (mouth

of bearded ~~face~~ face - a wind?) in the bowl
itself. The water shows an aperture which
should lead to dragons mouth. Was there
some division of hot & cold?

The hydraulics of the piece are fascinating. The tank now empties itself into the bowl from an aperture (mouth of bearded face - a wind?) in to bowl itself. The cistern shows an aperture which should lead to dragons mouth. Was there some division of hot and cold?

The piece looks vy splendid against the queer red and gold wall paper (discovered by you).

Sad about Hazelden's death.¹⁰⁷ I thought he would see us out.

Oh yes go to the Holy Land. It is lovely. The Armenian treasury has fine 18th century objets d'art which many pilgrims miss. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is bound to fall down in a few days so go there quick.

Love

Evelyn.

53. Postcard, postmarked. 1 Jan[uary,] [19]54
I must see an alienist. These delusions are becoming more frequent. Wasn't it interesting about Hazelden's father? Director of the Seville Gas Works. Like Mr. Kolkhorst's Lisbon tramway. Dont answer.

Hope you are not begaring [sic] yourself to save Abbey.

London is past saving. Did Balfour's friends steal the holly wreath in W.2. district from American Lady (yesterday's Times)¹⁰⁸

54. Postcard; postmarked 2-10. 1954¹⁰⁹
Your absence here caused great offence, I'm afraid, in spite of all the excuses we could offer. What's more you missed seeing a superb piece of art nouveau sculpture at Pommery's.

55.

14th. Dec[ember] [19]54

Dear John

I have just come across an illuminating reference to Burges in a letter from Gosse to Austen Dobson. p. 147 of Evan Charteris's Life.¹¹⁰ I have little doubt that you know it. If by any chance you don't, and haven't the book by you, I will transcribe it for you as a Christmas card. Burges was blind!

If you see Elizabeth Cavendish,¹¹¹ pray tell her that research has exposed all that Lady Amory told us at Knightshayes as hopelessly garbled.

Christmas love to you both

Evelyn

56.

May 3rd. [19]55.

My Dear John

I am sorry that Penelope forbade our reunion after the Hollis wedding. I wanted to confer with you about (among other things) Charles D'Costa a very nice Jamaican jew with whom I stayed in that island. He boasts (a) that Cyril Connolly was his tutor (b) that you flogged him at Marlborough.¹¹² These high claims have raised him to the intellectual leadership of the Caribbean and N. Coward and I. (Bond) Fleming do him homage.

You will shortly receive an invitation from the Head Girl of St. Mary's Ascot (My daughter Teresa) to amuse the girls there. They are very pretty. I know, less well than you, but pretty well, the horrors of such invitations. But if you accept I will try and provide a jolly dinner afterwards for you and Penelope, Laura,

Head Girl etc. We might perhaps do an effortless humiliating comic debate together? It is the H.G.'s last term of office and it would end in a glow of glory if she got hold of you, to whom the senior girls are deeply devoted. Please think seriously of this.

Do you possess, do you want, the Architectural Review, bound, 1815-1905 (circa)? I am offered it and would give it to you if acceptable.

Anyway it is far too long since you were here. After your duties to the party are fulfilled on May 26th, do please try and find a time to visit us.

Yours

Evelyn

57.

13th. May [19]55

Dear John

D'Costa says you flogged him for not blacking your boots correctly. I must say it doesn't sound like you. But all Jamaica, Jew Christian black and white believes him. Actionable?¹¹³ I doubt it.

Mother Mercedes suggests Ascension Day for your kind visit to Ascot. That suits me. You fix it with her and I will roll up. We wont on any account dine with the nuns. There is a Trust House at the gates where we can get tight after the tomfoolery.

Do you think a debate between us. 'Girls have a better time at school than boys' 'Girls should have university educations - careers in shops.' 'Art is a bore.' Any sort of nonsense like

that. The Architectural Reviews have come 5 vols not consecutive but I should think full of useful reference material for you. I will bring them to South Ascot.

Was that secretary an Ascot girl - or just in your mind at the time of writing.

I bought Plomer's poems¹¹⁴ on your recommendation and think I was a sucker rather.

Love

Evelyn.

58.

14th. May [19]55.

Dear John

Our letters Xed.

Your correspondent is not a motor-car but a num. 'Mother Mercedes IBVM' on envelope, 'Dear Mother Mercedes..'

Commem. Octave of Ascension is Politicians' Day. I expect all the girls will be at the wireless machine and you will be at Lord Camrose's.

Then comes Whit Thursday 2nd. O.K. for me. Then Corpus Christi also O.K. Then 16th June also O.K. Just pick your date.

I tell you what I think the best treat you could give the girls would be to read poetry, yours and others', with comments. I heard great accounts of your performance at Westminster School. Nothing smutty. I would make a graceful speech introducing you. It is you the girls want to see and hear not yours truly. How is that? If you think I'm shirking I will take part in a debate but that means more trouble for you as well as me. No? Yes?

How would it be if you and Penelope came here for the night before the Ascot hell and we went there together? in two motors, Laura and I would sleep at Trust House.

I wanted vy much to go to Dawkins's¹¹⁵ requiem at Exeter today but couldn't as Laura who drives was away. He was enormously kind to me in North Wales when I was a schoolmaster.

Love

Evelyn

59.

Whitsunday [19]55

Dear John

It was remarkably kind of you to come to Ascot and amuse my little girls and their friends. It was plain to me, watching their bright faces, that they enjoyed your poems rapturously and will remember your visit all their lives.

I hope poor Penelope feels better. Do please come here one day soon.

Evelyn

60.

July 4th. [19]55

Dear John

Oh dear I wish I could think of something. Of course we have all the ordinary 'sights' such as castles and Cathedrals but I know you want something more idiosyncratic.

Mangotsfield railway station is well spoken of by that connoisseur Mgr. Knox. Sharpness docks? Tetbury, of course, is admirable as a simple Cotswold townlet. But can't you even come just for a bit of fun for me, without work.

A boy came here the other night - son of your friend Gironard - and as he was shown his bedroom said: 'Burgess, by God' to the Wash hand stand. Not bad.

Do you see the Spectator? I have a very poignant article about Lord Noel-Buxton¹¹⁶ in the next number I should like to recommend to you.

You are the hero of South Ascot.

Love to Penelope

Evelyn

61. Postcard; postmarked 8 Nov[ember,] [1955]
 Tax questions. 1.) Yes (but not particularly helpful. 2.) No. strictly illegal. 3.) Yes. Evening dress, fancy-dress (such as the red lined suit which excited the nuns at Ascot). Tropical dress for visiting niggers. Furs for Eskimoes etc.

I think you should claim to be a theatrical rather than a literary man to get the best allowances.

Is P. Popkin dead? He should be able to help. You can obtain fictitious offices of profit for your children with editors and publishers who employ you.

62. Christmas Eve [19]55.

Dear John

I don't think it at all 'caddish' of you to 'initiate' a Christmas card.

I delight in your proposed reconstruction of the interior of Westminster Cathedral.

We all send abiding love and belated greetings.

Evelyn

63.

ST. JAMES CLUB,
106, PICCADILLY, W.1.
[1957]

Darling Penelope,

Very nice to hear from you again. I thought you had dropped me. I live at COMBE FLOREY HOUSE, Near TAUNTON.¹¹⁷ Please come there instead of Cincinatti. C. is awful. There are bits of the USA with some charm but Cincinatti is not one of them. Go and visit the Grail Maidens at (I think) Graceville, Loveland, Cincinatti. They are excruciating.

John might like the villas on the Hudson River. He might like Milwaukee. You won't like anything except of course the museums in New York and Chicago. You will find it sad not drinking because americans get so awfully drunk.

Tomorrow I go into the courts to sue Daily Express.¹¹⁸ I hope to educate my children on the proceeds. I will send you an interesting book about going barmy in the summer.¹¹⁹

Love and xxx

Evelyn

64.

Combe Florey House,
Nr. Taunton
August 16th. [1957?]

Dear John

I learn that you and a daughter intend shortly to drive into Cornwall. It would cause us great pleasure if you visited us for a night or, if that is impossible, for refreshment on the road.

We live 7 miles from Taunton on the Minehead road, near Bishops Lydeard. I can show you the church where Sydney Smith¹²⁰ sometimes reluctantly officiated and other curious spectacles.

Yours ever

Evelyn

65. Postcard; not postmarked

Please forgive me for having damned you for Knox. Mrs. Wasisburgh seems to have lost your subscription. I enclose £2- 2 for the Victorian Society. Your committee seems to include most of the very worst modernists (e.g. Esher and Casson) and the very worst anti-Victorians (e.g. Hussey). I don't know how they propose to preserve buildings unless they have hundreds of thousands of pounds available. Nevertheless at thy word.

E.

Billy Clonmore has written a frightfully dull study of army life.¹²¹

66. Postcard; postmarked 1 Aug[ust] [19]58

I have sent another guinea to Esher and Co.

The vicar of Bedford Park, Mr. de Lara Wilson, owns the 'Peter and Paul' Missal Ronald Knox used to use when he was an Anglican.

My eldest son is still awfully ill.

Don't answer please.

E

67.

Combe Florey House,
Nr. Taunton.
[1958]

Dear John

I can't get to London on Thursday to see you receive the Cooper Memorial Prize,¹²² so may I send my congratulations (which you mustn't acknowledge) direct?

You are just the chap for the award. Poor old Cooper would have been able to understand and appreciate at least 2/3 of your poetry. I rejoice in your success. I trust the spurs of knight-hood will follow in the New Year Honours.¹²³

Freddy sent me his compilation.¹²⁴ I resent all omissions, but it is a splended book.

My love to Penelope

Evelyn.

68.

Combe Florey House,
Nr. Taunton.
4th. May 1960

Dear John

I have just been sent your review of Knox in the New Yorker.¹²⁵ Thanks most awfully for the kind things you say of it and of me. Ronald of course is an inexplicable figure to the Americans but if anyone could make them see his point, you have done so.

I find now I quite enjoy writing, tho [sic] I am much slower at it. When I was young there were so many things I would rather have been doing - nothing now.

Have you ever made a tour of the Anglican churches of the French Riviera? Too late in the year now, - the Americans are

arriving - but in winter it is a most rewarding enterprise - especially the Royal Extraordinary at Cannes.

I hope you a [sic] writing an ode for private circulation about the Jones wedding.¹²⁶

By the way I don't think there has been an Italian Papal bishop in England since the 15th century. You find them in British Africa, of course, - the Consolata Fathers.

I wish we met sometimes. I would like you to visit this house. There is Comper work very close - Bagborough and Bishop's Lydeard. Anson says there is a hanging pyx at Bagborough. Not true today.

Love to Penelope

Evelyn

FOOTNOTES

¹Recto of postcard is a photograph of crumbling rock cut monuments at Petra, Southern Jordan.

In 1935 Waugh was commissioned by the Daily Mail to report the Italo-Abyssinian conflict. He spent the early part of 1936 in Jerusalem.

²Betjeman married Penelope Valentine Hester in 1933. They have two children; a son, Paul, and a daughter, Candida.

³Not identified. From the context it would appear that "Belcher" figured in "the book about Dursley."

⁴John Betjeman, An Oxford University Chest (London: J. Miles, 1938).

⁵Probably a reference to Cyril Connolly's Enemies of Promise (London: Routledge, 1938).

⁶Probably an allusion to the writing of Robbery under Law: the Mexican object-lesson (London: Chapman and Hall, 1939).

Waugh visited Mexico in late 1938, soon after his second marriage.

⁷Sir Samuel Hoare, "Templewood, Norfolk," Country Life, February 4, 1939, pp. 117-121.

Hoare, the Home Secretary, wrote a description of his newly completed country house.

⁸An official in the department of Inland Revenue. See letter #61.

⁹An indication, perhaps, that Waugh was himself thinking about this "theme." See Basil Seal's profiteering from the depredations wrought by the Connollys, the monstrous child evacuees of Put Out More Flags (London: Chapman and Hall, 1942).

¹⁰Work Suspended (London: Chapman and Hall, 1942).

¹¹Waugh eventually let Stinchcombe to an order of nuns. See letter #13.

¹²Stinchcombe.

- 13 Father Martin D'Arcy, S. J., Master of Campion Hall, Oxford, 1932-1945. D'Arcy instructed and received Waugh into the Roman Catholic Church. Waugh is here alluding to the rebuilding of Campion Hall; it was completed in 1934.
- 14 Laura, Waugh's wife, had a son, Auberon, in 1939.
- 15 Probably the builder.
- 16 A reference to a daring allied raid on a German U-boat base in Zeebrugge, Belgium, 22 April, 1918.
- 17 Field-Marshal Lord Chetwode, who in 1935 completed a distinguished military career as Commander-in-Chief of the army in India.
- 18 William Clonmore, eighth Earl of Wicklow, a contemporary of Waugh's at Oxford. See letter #33 and note 121 below.
- 19 May be a reference to the Earl of Longford, Francis Pakenham, who was invalided out of the army in 1939.
- 20 Major-General Albert Clarence St. Clair-Morford, Commander Royal Marine Brigade 1940-1941.
- 21 General Geoffrey Kemp Bourne, War Office 1938-1941. Despite Waugh's promptings, Betjeman did not join one of the armed services. From 1941 to 1943 he was U.K. Press Attaché in Dublin. In 1944 he worked in the Admiralty.
- 22 Probably the gardener for whom Waugh wanted the flat built.
- 23 May be the architect who designed the flat for Waugh.
- 24 For part of his basic training in the Royal Marines, Waugh was stationed at Deal, Kent. Lord Birdwood was made Captain of Deal Castle in 1935. Waugh, it would appear, was invited to tea there by Lady Birdwood.
- 25 A strikingly similar sentiment to Basil Seal's: "There's only one serious occupation for a chap now, that's killing Germans. I have an idea I shall rather enjoy it." Put Out More Flags (London: Chapman and Hall, 1948), p. 233.
- 26 Peter, son of Hilaire Belloc. He was killed in action in 1941.
- 27 Wife of Andrew Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, née Deborah Vivian Freeman-Mitford, the sister of the writers, Nancy and Jessica Mitford.
- 28 John Betjeman, Continual Dew (London: J. Murray, 1937).

- 29 Work Suspended. See note 10 above.
- 30 A moveable feast in the Roman Catholic Calendar. In 1945 it fell on May 30.
- 31 Brideshead Revisited (London: Chapman and Hall, 1945).
- 32 It is difficult to see any affinities between Mrs. Betjeman and St. Helena in Helena (London: Chapman and Hall, 1950), which Waugh dedicated "to Penelope Betjeman."
- 33 John Piper, the painter, co-edited with Betjeman Murray's Berkshire Architectural Guide (London: J. Murray, 1949), and Murray's Buckinghamshire Architectural Guide (London: J. Murray, 1948). He designed the windows for Coventry Cathedral.
- Betjeman is the author of John Piper (London: Penguin, 1948), in The Penguin Modern Painters series.
- 34 Not identified.
- 35 Francis Pakenham, now Lord Longford, was a close friend of Waugh's. He was Labour candidate for Oxford in the general election of 1945. He was defeated by the Conservative candidate, Quintin Hogg.
- 36 Betjeman's review of Brideshead Revisited appeared in the Daily Herald on June 6, 1945, p. 5.
- 37 Not traced.
- 38 The Psalms of David, illuminated by Owen Jones (London: Day and Sons, 1861). The wrapper bears the title The Victorian Psalter.
- In First and Last Loves (London: J. Murray, 1952), Betjeman speaks of "Mr. O. Jones who designed the pleasant colours of Paddington Station which have now been obliterated by cream paint" (p. 69).
- Jones, like Burges (see note 102 below), may have been of "magisterial status" to Waugh and Betjeman.
- 39 The Oxford University Debating Society.
- 40 Not identified. May be a reference to Matthew Audley, The Full Extent of the Doctrine of Christian Moderation, a sermon preached on September 9, 1750 at the London Hospital (London: H. Woodfall, 1750).
- 41 Waugh made only thirteen radio and television appearances. These span the years 1939-1964. He was, however, a frequent contributor to magazines, particularly the Spectator.

- ⁴² On May 23, 1946, at the Oxford Union Society, Waugh spoke in favour of the motion "That in the opinion of this House, an Englishman is never in the wrong." The "facetious negro" was Fernando Henriques of Brasenose College. The motion (which Henriques was also speaking in favour of) was carried by 258 to 174.
- ⁴³ Sir Maurice Bowra, Warden of Wadham College, Oxford.
- ⁴⁴ Not identified.
- ⁴⁵ Francisco de Vitoria (1483-1546). A Dominican, he introduced Aquinas' Summa Theologiae as a classroom text at the University of Salamanca, supplanting Peter Lombard's Sententiae.
- ⁴⁶ Martin D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love (London: Faber and Faber, 1945).
- ⁴⁷ Nancy Mitford, The Pursuit of Love (London: H. Hamilton, 1945). She married Peter Rodd, a contemporary of Waugh's at Oxford. She is the editor of Noblesse Oblige (London: H. Hamilton, 1956). This contains a piece by Waugh: "An open letter to the Hon. Mrs Peter Rodd on a Very Serious Subject" (pp. 93-123).
- ⁴⁸ Peter Quennell, the author and critic, was a contemporary of Waugh's at Oxford. For a short time he attended the Ruskin School of Art with Waugh.
- ⁴⁹ Probably Cardinal Francis Griffin, who was Archbishop of Westminster in 1946.
- ⁵⁰ A moveable feast in the Roman Catholic Calendar. In 1946 it fell on October 26.
- ⁵¹ The Cowley Fathers is a popular name for the Society of St. John the Evangelist; it was derived from the English town of Cowley, near Oxford, where the founder, Father Richard Benson, had been vicar. The society is the oldest religious community in Anglicanism. It was founded in 1866.
- ⁵² Evelyn Waugh, "Fan-Fare," Life, XX (April 8, 1946), 53, 54, 56, 58, 60. The article is headed thus: "Fan-Fare. A distinguished English novelist, finding his latest book a best-seller, explains himself and his works to his new American admirers."
- ⁵³ In 1946 Waugh wished to leave Piers Court and buy a house in Ireland. In a postcard to Randolph Churchill, December 1946, he wrote that he chose Ireland in order "to find brief shelter from the socialist terror." Encounter, 31 (July 1968), 5.
- ⁵⁴ A fixed date, December 8, in the Roman Catholic Calendar.

- 55 Osbert Lancaster is a well-known British cartoonist. See note 76.
- 56 Betjeman broadcast a talk entitled "Evelyn Waugh" in the B.B.C. Third Programme on December 14, 1946. This broadcast was printed in Living Writers; Critical Studies Broadcast in the B B C Third Programme, ed., Gilbert Phelps (London: Sylvan Press, 1947), pp. 137-150.
- 57 Characters in Waugh's second novel, Vile Bodies (London: Chapman and Hall, 1930).
- 58 Waugh was received into the Roman Catholic Church on September 29, 1930.
- 59 William Butlin, a developer of holiday camps.
- 60 Lord Gormanston was killed in action in France in June 1940.
- 61 Not identified.
- 62 Five Sermons by Laymen (Northampton: J. Dickens, 1946), pp 7-11. This brochure contains the text of five sermons preached at St. Matthew's Church, Northampton in April and May of 1946. Betjeman's sermon was preached on May 5, 1946. The other sermons were preached by C. S. Lewis, Sir Oliver Leese, E. Madagon and R. J. R. Scott.
- Waugh's reference to Henry Moore was occasioned by Betjeman's praise for a statue of the Madonna and Child, by Moore, which is found in St. Matthew's.
- 63 Tübingen is one of the German universities where Catholic and Protestant faculties of theology exist side by side. The German theologian F. C. Baur (1792-1869) was a professor of theology there. In his allusion to "German textual critics," Waugh may have had him in mind. Baur made a study of the origin, composition and date of the various books of the New Testament.
- 64 Christopher Hollis, the author. Hollis, himself a convert to Roman Catholicism and a contemporary of Waugh's at Oxford, is the author of Evelyn Waugh (London: Longman's, 1954).
- 65 Farm Street is the location of the headquarters of the Jesuit Mission in Great Britain.
- 66 Myfanwy Piper, the wife of John Piper, see note 33 above.
- 67 A reference to Session XXIII, July 1563, of the Council of Trent, the nineteenth Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, which proclaimed all Protestant Orders invalid.
- 68 Not identified.

69 Dr Edward Pusey. Pusey was Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford and Canon of Christchurch at the time of the Oxford Movement (see Introduction). Following Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism, Pusey came to be generally recognized as the leader of those who remained within the Church of England.

Pusey was the moving spirit behind the foundation of the first religious communities to be founded in the Anglican Communion after the Reformation. These were the Cowley Fathers (see note 51 above) and the Sisterhood of the Holy Cross.

In his questioning of the validity of Anglican Orders, Waugh, it appears, considered Pusey's role to be vital.

70 Arius was a Christian priest at Alexandria in the mid-fourth century. He was the originator of Arianism, the theory that Christ, the son of God, is not divine but a being created ex nihilo, who at one time did not exist.

71 The three foremost figures of the Reformation. All three laid stress on the authority of scripture as opposed to acceptance of the authority of the Church. Huldreich Zwingli, the most influential figure of the Swiss Reformation, broke with Luther over the question of the Eucharist. Luther felt bound by the words "Hoc est enim corpus meum" to preach that Jesus Christ was substantially present in the bread and wine. Zwingli held "est" to mean "signifies," and therefore did not preach a substantial presence but simply the divine presence of Christ. Zwingli was killed in 1531 at the Battle of Cappel, a confrontation with the Roman Catholic cantons.

The most characteristic thought in Calvin's theology is that the man of faith has been chosen, or predestined by God for salvation and may not claim to contribute either his own decision or any good works to procure eternal life.

72 May be a reference to Richard Barnes, Bishop of Durham 1577-1587. Barnes has gained notoriety because he passed over much of the Cathedral's land and treasures to the crown.

73 Betjeman's "catalogue of Anglican churches" eventually became a book: Collins Pocket Guide to English Parish Churches (London: Collins, 1966).

74 Waugh went to Hollywood in early 1947 to discuss the filming of Brideshead Revisited. The discussions came to nothing. However, Waugh, having spent much of his time in Forest Lawn, the commercialized cemetery of Los Angeles, returned and began, eagerly it seems, the writing of what became The Loved One. Later in 1947 Waugh wrote an article on his impressions of Forest Lawn: "Death in Hollywood," Life, XXIII (September 29, 1947), 73-74, 79-80, 83-84.

- 75 John Betjeman, "The Angry Novelist," Strand, 112 (March 1947), 42, 44.
- 76 Betjeman's article in Strand contained a sketch of Waugh by Osbert Lancaster (see note 55 above). In it a bowler-hatted Waugh is depicted scowling on the steps of a London club.
- 77 The Loved One (London: Chapman and Hall, 1947).
- 78 An English Roman Catholic public school near Bath; it is run by the Benedictines.
- 79 Gregory Dix (1901-1952), an Anglican Benedictine monk - Prior of Nashdom Abbey, Buckinghamshire - and liturgical scholar. The book which appears to have been a bone of contention between Waugh and Betjeman may have been Dix's The Question of Anglican Orders (London: Oxford University Press, 1944).
- 80 Major-General Sir William Hickie. Following his retirement from the British Army, in 1921, Hickie became a Senator of the Irish Free State.
- 81 "Here man hath no abiding state." Source not identified.
- 82 Lady Pamela Berry is the sister of F. E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead (see note 124 below). She is the wife of Michael Berry, the proprietor of the Daily Telegraph and the Sunday Telegraph.
- 83 Bowra (see note 43 above).
- 84 Betjeman broadcast a talk entitled "Aberdeen" on the B.B.C. Third Programme on July 28, 1948.
- 85 Who's Who lists Betjeman as a member of the Beefsteak Club.
- 86 Hugh Sherwood, first Baron of Calverton, was for six years married to Penelope Chetwode, Penelope Betjeman's sister-in-law.
- 87 Selected Poems (London: J. Murray, 1948), chosen and with a preface by John Sparrow.
- Sparrow is the Warden of All Souls College, Oxford.
- 88 W. H. Auden wrote the preface to Betjeman's Slick but not Streamlined (New York: Doubleday, 1947).
- 89 Reference to the Sitwell brothers, Sir Oswald and Sir Sacheverell. The latter was High Sheriff of Northamptonshire from 1948 to 1949.
- 90 Millicent Fenwick, The Vogue Book of Etiquette (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948).

- 91 Tommie Handley, a popular radio comedian of the war years. He appeared in a programme called "It's That Man Again."
- 92 Waugh visited America twice in the winter of 1948-1949. He lectured on Knox and Chesterton at the universities of Notre Dame, Indiana and Loyola, Illinois.
- 93 Not identified.
- 94 Frances Donaldson has published her memories of Waugh as a neighbour of hers. In it she states that Waugh "was the only person I have ever known who seemed sincerely to long for death." Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Country Neighbour (London: Cox and Wyman, 1967), p. 13.
- 95 Sir Maurice Bowra was knighted in 1951.
- 96 Lord Lindsay of Birker, Master of Balliol College, Oxford 1924-1949. Lindsay achieved some notoriety during the General Strike of 1926 by supporting the Archbishop of Canterbury, Davidson, in the latter's appeal for a negotiated settlement of the strike. The appeal represented a different policy from that of the Conservative government, which insisted that the strike should be cancelled before negotiations could begin.
- 97 Waugh's visit to Jerusalem was in connection with the writing of The Holy Places (London: Queen Anne Press, 1952).
- 98 In letter #34 Waugh writes that he has "almost decided to purchase Lisnavagh, a large early Victorian baronial mansion near Ratterley." This was owned by Lord Rathdonnell. He died in 1959.
- 99 Corpus Christi fell on 12 June in 1952.
- 100 In a letter dated June 14, 1952, to Randolph Churchill, from this same Brighton hotel, Waugh speaks of "living here with a nice shy new knight helping him with a film." Encounter, 31 (July 1968), 8.

The "knight" has not been identified; may be Lord Olivier (then Sir Laurence) who has a Brighton residence.

101 Waugh is here referring to York Minster.

102 Waugh is here referring to a massive Victorian wash-hand stand which Betjeman gave him on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday (see Fig. 1, p. 77). It was designed by William Burges with panels painted by Sir Edward Poynton.

In The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, Waugh describes a present given to Mr Pinfold by a friend. It was "a wash-hand stand of the greatest elaboration designed by an English architect of the 1850's,

a man not universally honoured but of magisterial status to Mr Pinfold and his friends" (p. 28). Its panels were "painted in his hot youth by a rather preposterous artist who later became President of the Royal Academy" (p. 28).

In letter #49 Waugh writes: "My memory is not at all hazy - just sharp, detailed and dead wrong. This affliction leads me into countless humiliations." The incident of the "missing organ" - the "stolen member" (letter #52) - is perhaps the most radical example of such a "humiliation."

Waugh was convinced that there should have been an ornamental tap at the top of the wash-hand stand. He writes to Betjeman to confirm his conviction only to be told that it never existed. All these incidents are related in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold.

- 103 May be Patrick Balfour, Lord Kinross, a contemporary of Waugh's at Oxford. See note 108 below.
- 104 The Victoria and Albert Museum.
- 105 Probably Reynolds Stone who did the engravings for The Holy Places.
- 106 See Fig. 1 and note 102 above.
- 107 William Haselden, a cartoonist and caricaturist for the Daily Mirror, 1904-1940. He was a frequent contributor to Punch. He died December 25, 1955.
- 108 A reference to a letter, "A Stolen Wreath," in the Times (December 31, 1955, p. 7). The writer, J. Stewart Cox - according to Waugh an "American Lady" - complained that a holly wreath attached to the front door of her house in Chelsea had been stolen. Waugh links this theft to the "theft" of the "stolen member." Both may have been the work of "Balfour's friends." In the case of the holly wreath, Waugh is perhaps making a joke at his own expense.
- 109 Recto is a photograph of "Rheims Cathedral during its bombardment by German fire shells, 19 September, 1914." This information is contained on verso.
- 110 Evan Charteris, The Life and Times of Sir Edward Gosse (London: Heinemann, 1931).
- 111 Not identified.
- 112 Marlborough is an English public school.

113. "For years it was Evelyn's practice to examine everything written about him in the newspapers in an attempt to detect grounds for a libel action. His interest in the matter was exactly comparable to other people's interest in football pools or the Irish Sweepstake. He regarded it as the only hope of acquiring a large sum of money not subject to tax." Portrait of a Country Neighbour, p. 87.
114. William Plomer, the writer. Waugh may be referring here to A Shot in the Park (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955).
115. R. M. Dawkins; died May 4, 1955. Dawkins was Professor of Greek at Oxford from 1920 to 1939. In A Little Learning, Waugh refers to him as "the much-loved professor of Modern Greek" (p. 179).
116. "Awake my Soul! It is a Lord," Spectator, CXCIV (July 8, 1955), 36-37.
117. Waugh left Gloucestershire for Somerset in 1956.
118. Nancy Spain, a columnist for the Daily Express, was successfully sued by Waugh in 1957. He was awarded £5000 damages.
119. The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold (London: Chapman and Hall, 1957).
120. Sydney Smith (1771-1845), Canon of St. Paul's 1831-1845. He founded the Edinburgh Review in 1802 and wrote for it until he became a canon.
121. The Earl of Wicklow, Fireside Fusilier (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1958). Waugh contributed a complimentary introduction, despite his low opinion of the book.
122. Betjeman received the Cooper Memorial Prize in 1958. The award was inaugurated by the widow of Duff Cooper, the author and politician, on the suggestion of Randolph Churchill.
123. Betjeman was not knighted until 1969.
124. "Freddie" refers to F. E. Smith (Lord Birkenhead), a contemporary of Waugh's at Oxford. He, Birkenhead, compiled and introduced John Betjeman's Collected Poems (London: John Murray, 1958).
125. Betjeman reviewed Monsignor Ronald Knox (London: Chapman and Hall, 1959), in the New Yorker, 36 (April 23, 1960), 174-176.
126. A reference to the wedding of Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon, the former Anthony Armstrong-Jones.

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VITA

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Place of Birth: Cork, Ireland Date of Birth: July 26, 1944

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON	1966	to	1967
.....	to
.....	to

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

B.A. (Honours)	1966	University of Sheffield
Cert. in Education	1967	University of Southampton
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Honors and Awards:

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Publications:

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Letters to a friend: Some letters and postcards from Evelyn Waugh
to John Betjeman, 1936-1960.
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.....
.....

Author



Signature

James O'Connell

Name

May 1, 1973

Date