

A talented, unhappy man

Andrew Horrall, an archivist and writer, has just published (McGill - Queen's University Press) a biography of Alan Jarvis, sometime curator of the National Gallery of Canada. Alan was well known in the Toronto art scene in the heady days of Painters Eleven and all that.

One would meet him in the Yorkville galleries of Dorothy Cameron, Jerold Morris or Av Isaacs, at TSO concerts, in the lounge atop the Park Plaza overlooking the university campus where he had begun a star-crossed career or in a supper club where Peter Appleby might be 'vibro-phoning'.

The handsome and aloof Jarvis, no relation to the old Toronto family of that name, grew up on the High Park edge of Parkdale. His father had died at an early age, leaving two young sons, Colin and Alan, to be raised by a somewhat dominating mother and her benevolent but phlegmatic second husband. Colin, popular and successful at everything to which he turned his hand, was Alan's ideal until his early death from leukemia left the younger boy both fatherless and brotherless.

When I first knew him Jarvis was his mid-forties, a charming, witty but unhappy man with a great future behind him. He had been a Rhodes scholar after being a gregarious but not athletic student at University College. He established friendships with faculty people who provided him with influential contacts in British academia.

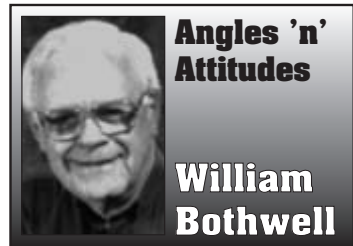
Arriving in England just before the 1939 outbreak of war, Alan escaped the notoriously 'stuffy' atmosphere of pre-war Toronto. An aspiring sculptor and researcher into the relationship between art and war in Western culture, he soon became embedded in the artistic, homoerotic and alcoholic culture of those in Oxford who were young and privileged.

My first conversation with him was about the dangers of good, plain Canadian voices falling victim to 'Oxonisation' or, alternatively, when in Britain to the imitation of BBC announcers. He recalled the objection of some of his over-sea friends to sending their children to safety in Canada. It would, they had been told, ruin their accents and, later, their social and professional lives.

Jarvis himself became the very model of an upper class Brit both in

his speech and his attire. I, too, had been similarly influenced during my time in England. Jarvis suggested that the ideal for Canadian speech and deportment might be 'mid-Atlantic' rather than either British or American. For better or worse, I still have difficulty calling a shop clerk other than a 'clark'. Orthographically, I prefer a programme to be a programme and the intermission at the theatre to be the interval.

After leaving Oxford with great expectations but few accomplishments Jarvis spent the last three



Angles 'n' Attitudes

William Bothwell

war years, '42 to '45, planning adult education projects and doing social work. He won the sponsorship of Sir Stafford Cripps, the most influential Labour Party politician in desperate, post-war Britain, and of Lady Cripps and their family. Through them and others he collected an impressive 'con- nexion' of friends and supporters.

Through work with the Ministry of Information he made the acquaintance of many U.S. news and media people. They augmented the company of Oxford, London and New York friends, all of whom were charmed by his handsome urbanity.

Not a few of them, both male and female, fell in love with him and vice versa.

When Alan returned to Toronto in 1955 he was generally agreed to outclass Cary Grant as he took his part the city's newly multicultural and sophisticated social scene. Even the flamboyant artist, Harold Town, promenading on Bloor Street with his Russian wolfhound on a leash did not turn more heads than did the dapper Alan Jarvis.

Canada's national capital was then undergoing a renaissance to "make it more worthy of Canada's future greatness". The National Gallery's development had been hampered by the cost of two wars, a disastrous parliamentary fire, the Depression and the inadequate support given to its first two full-time curators.

The 1953 report of the (Vincent) Massey Commission on

Development in the Arts spurred the planning of a permanent home for the peripatetic National Gallery and the purchase in Europe of works of art that had been thought to be beyond Canada's competence. A new curator was part of the plan, particularly one who could foster art education throughout the nation. By his own persistence and the recommendation of the likes of Sir Kenneth (later Lord) Clark and an international roster of influential friends, Alan Jarvis secured the appointment in 1955.

His tenure would be short-lived. He had to mediate between the Gallery trustees, the Civil Service Commission that appointed him and federal cabinet members who did not share C.D. Howe's expansive "What's a million?" thinking. And the price of multi-millions for the Prince of Liechtenstein's da Vinci was surreal. Then in 1957 the new prime minister was the puritanical philistin, John Diefenbaker, whom Alan styled, undiplomatically, "the voice of God imitating Porky Pig".

The 42 year old, recently repatriated, martini-drinking, 'socialist' Jarvis was definitely not to Dief's taste. He seemed determined to embarrass the government with unapproved offers to purchase art and to bankrupt the treasury with 'modern junk' from Henry Moore, Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse and young Canadians who knew not the Group of Seven.

The PM's appreciation of art was more that of Prince Albert, Sask. than of Montréal's Rue Sherbrooke. Jarvis said 'The Chief' and his ministers had the aesthetic sense of hardware merchants.

The mills of fate that grind "slow but exceeding small" did their work. Jarvis's contract was terminated in August, 1959. He returned to Toronto and his life from then is reminiscent of that of Oscar Wilde with a spiralling drinking problem.

He did not recover from that final defeat. He died, alone in his bed, at age 57.

Jarvis battled a deep personal insecurity, guilt and anxiety about his sexuality, lack of a clear career focus and what he told me was a soul that had somehow eluded what the poet, Francis Thompson, called the "Hound of Heaven".

Andrew Horrall's biography of a talented, unhappy man is a gripping and disturbing read.

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We should all be appalled with the Liberals

Remember when Premier Dalton McGuinty took over from Tory Ernie Eves and couldn't stop ranting about the fiscal "disaster" of the Eves-Mike Harris years?

Remember the collective Liberal teeth-gnashing over the \$5.6 billion deficit - which, in fact, wasn't really that high, but let's not quibble at this point?

Well, here's something to consider: in the last three months, the projected Ontario deficit under the Liberals ROSE by \$6.2 billion - to a record \$24.7 billion - that's more deficit add-on than during all the years of Tory rule before McGuinty took over.

And, guess what, McGuinty's latest deficit forecast - even if it doesn't go higher, as it undoubtedly will - is almost exactly double the then-record deficit set by the unlamented NDP premier Bob Rae during his disastrous "Rae Days" years.

The problem with numbers of this magnitude is that they are so large they don't often compute. Everybody knows \$24.7 billion is a lot of cash. But how much is it really?

Well, here's a handy guide that you can all understand: McGuinty's deficit means that every man, woman and child in Ontario is in hock by \$1,891 just to carry the deficit, not counting the thousands of dollars you're paying in taxes to sustain the fattest government in Ontario history.

And this guy promised sound fiscal management. Hah!

Sure, there are fiscal problems worldwide - just as there were when Rae was wracking up his deficits - but that doesn't explain away the fact that no government in Ontario history has spent as much as this current crew.

And, as critical as the situation is - and with more taxes looming with the unholy spectre of the HST - McGuinty is still planning to go ahead with such expensive programs as the early-learning program for four-and-five year olds, which, all by itself, will add hundreds of millions of permanent spending to his overbloated budget.

Yes, it may be a good program. But that's not the point.

You may really want that giant screen flat tv to watch the weekend football games or a new family van with all the bells and whistles. But if you can't afford it, then you learn to make do.

Not McGuinty, however. Despite his record deficit spending, he plans to continue spending. Oh yes, he has promised a review of program spending. And there was a hint about cutting program spending by

five per cent across the board. But even there, he's exempting health and education spending - which represent 55 percent of the entire budget - and even if he did cut five percent from the rest of his mammoth \$112.7 billion spending plan - which everybody knows won't happen - that would cut overall spending by just \$2.55 billion, a lot of money, but a spit in the ocean given the overall spending of the Liberal government.

And things could get worse. Because of his record deficit, for example, DBRS, a leading Canadian credit rating agency, has already announced it is cutting Ontario's debt rating by one notch. Quite apart from the embarrassment of it all, it means that it will cost even more than it does now to service that extraordinary debt.

Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, apparently hoping to be taking seriously, said last week that, "We have to look at restraint." No kidding?

Except, why didn't they at least look at restraint during the last several years, particularly during their early salad years, when they could have headed off the current disaster? It's a tad late now, particularly with ongoing plans at even more spending on major social programs.

It's no surprise that the opposition parties are outraged at this Liberal fiscal mismanagement, but in this case, it's more than simply partisan bombast. The Liberal government really has created a mess.

Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak said that if the Liberals do have a strategy for dealing with the fiscal crisis, they haven't revealed it.

"How Dalton McGuinty and Dwight Duncan could come with a straight face, announce a \$25 billion deficit and no plan whatsoever to get us out of this mess is an absolute failure in leadership," said Hudak, adding that Ontarians should expect tax hikes, not spending cuts.

"There's not a frugal bone in this guy's body. There's no doubt that Dalton McGuinty is hard-wired to increase your taxes and increase spending," he said. New Democrat MPP Michael Prue (Beaches-East York) said the Liberals have allowed doomsday scenarios to "fester" while leaving Ontarians in the dark.

"I'm appalled. I listened (Thursday) both in the House and when the finance minister had his news conference and he was asked repeatedly, 'What is your plan, what is your plan?' And he kept saying, 'I am going to study it,'" he said.

We should all be appalled. Particularly the Liberals and those who voted them in.

Turning (Elbow) Grease to Water

It is satisfying to read about people improving their lives by personal effort or in other words picking themselves up by the boot straps. A story in the November issue of the National Geographic focuses on folk struggling, trying to survive on dry farmlands in northern India while in constant fear of drought. Productivity depends on the reliability of rains in the monsoon season. Poor farmers have to guess at sowing time since successful growth of crops depends on adequate ground moisture at the time seed germinates. Miscalculating the start of the monsoon season results in sowing too early, subjecting seed to blistering, dry earth while crops sown too late are faced with flooding and erosion of seed and soil. In either case the result is poverty due to loss of crops and the inability of farmers to repay money borrowed for purchase of seed and fertilizer.

A non-profit group, the Watershed Organization Trust, has been highly successful whenever farm communities have committed time and energy into changing their way of life. Digging terraces requires considerable hard labour and a complete change of farming operation from what people are used to. Terracing restricts run-off water which instead seeps into the earth over a period of years resulting in ground-water replenishment hence reduced occurrences of drought from failure of the monsoons.

Talk about re-inventing the wheel. Our experience in the Machakos area of Kenya many years ago showed the value of such an exercise on water retention and crop productivity. We have pictures of hillside rice farming in the Philippines with

successive flooded 'plateaus' down the slope. I especially remember one large region of Mountain province where a stream supplied terraces with running water. The replenishment of ground water levels extends the growing season of crops.

Water is basic to agricultural productivity but is in short supply in many parts of the world. Many years ago I was told of a star's summer home in a dry region east of Hollywood. A sign warned guests "Don't use water as if it were only money". A research report detailed the accumulation of overnight dew in the Sahara Desert to support a tree nursery. When we lived in Thailand we were dependant on rainy season water from the eaves for household use through the year. I have often observed the use of hay bales in roadside drains to impede rate of down-hill run-off. Shortages point to the need for wise use of available moisture.

We as a society are expending large sums of money both transporting water for domestic use from the great lakes and disposing of run-off through storm sewers. The technology for underground irrigation is readily available and some farmers in arid areas are changing from overhead sprinklers to conserve limited supplies.

Canadians are very fortunate to live in a land well endowed with a high proportion of the world's fresh water. Nevertheless it behooves us to conserve the supplies we have. Like so many others we in rural Ontario often suffer from summer heat causing drought conditions hence the death of our front lawn. Our gardens appear constantly in need of watering.

There are over 30 million peo-



From the Global Classroom

Doug Skeates

ple in Canada living under roofs of homes or apartments. It is surprising that one obvious solution, the use of rain barrels catching water from these roofs to support the lawn and gardens, hasn't been a normal feature of gardening. Certainly septic systems deliver household waste water to at least some of the lawn above the tile beds. With added effort and a minimum of investment, perforated hose lines could be run from rain barrels below the front yard lawn reducing the requirement for pumping water from our lakes and rivers. Added effort of providing mulch from raking the lawn each fall increases the moisture level of the vegetable garden hence crop productivity.

It would be highly beneficial to expend personal energy utilizing rain water to recharge the ground water levels of Canadian properties. It would be of even greater benefit if we all invested muscle power and less money making better use of rooftop rain reducing our dependency on costly water pumped from the great lakes.

Your Weekly Chuckle . . .

By KEITH HUNTER

The customer staggered to the prescription counter, whining: "Say, would you give me something for my head?"

The pharmacist looked up. "Why?"

What would I do with it?"

125 YEARS AGO Thursday, October 30, 1884

The ballot to be used for voting in Dufferin today on the Scott Act requires those desirous of voting to make a mark in the form of an X after the words - "For the Petition" for those who wish to vote for the temperance Act and "Against the Petition" for those who wish to vote against the Act.

The Ladies' Act Society of the Shelburne Methodist Church gave a tea-meeting and entertainment in the town hall Monday night. Owing to the rainy weather and the muddy condition of the roads, the attendance was not very good. Tea was served in the Council Chamber, after which an entertainment was given in the hall, presided over by Dr. Norton. The choir, assisted by several singers from the other churches, rendered some choruses in good style, readings were given by the chairman and Mr. R. Slack; two solos were given by Mrs. Foy and one by Mr. Skelton, and the King Family also gave a couple of

songs, all of which were highly appreciated. Addresses suitable to the occasion were delivered by Revs. Straith and Hughan. A large quantity of eatables having been left, a social was held last night at the residence of Mr. R. L. Mortimer.

100 YEARS AGO Thursday, October 28, 1909

A head-on collision between the southbound passenger train from Teesburne and the northbound passenger train from Toronto took place about 7 p.m. Wednesday of last week, north of Melville Junction. The Bruce and Credit Valley trains proceed on the same rails between Orangeville and Melville Junction. The up-train crew believed the other train had passed and they had the right of way. The train had not got up much speed when it crashed into the southbound train and crews of both engines jumped. Had the Toronto train reached the curve a few yards to the north the loss of life might have been considerable. As it was, the engineers

Dipping Into the Past

CPR passenger trains in head-on collision south of Orangeville

saw the danger in time to apply the emergency brakes and none of the passenger cars was derailed. Several passengers suggested the conditions which led to the collision should be the subject of a rigid inquiry. It appears the only means of communication between Melville Junction and Orangeville is by a telephone in the little house that serves as a station.

Messrs. T. Huxtable, of Horning's Mills and F. H. Silk, of Shelburne, were in Dundalk a few days ago and as a result of a brief interview with the Reeve and members of the Village Council, submitted an offer on behalf of the Dufferin



and taken to Orangeville Tuesday night. The County judge has since allowed him out on bail - himself at \$2,000 and two sureties at \$1,000 each.

75 YEARS AGO Wednesday, November 1, 1934

This is the week of the community effort by Shelburne-area residents to supply a carload of relief supplies for the West, which is in desperate need again. In large sections, drought, grasshoppers, hail and frost have done their deadly work. In many areas this is the sixth season such a situation has developed.

The musical festival held in Orangeville last Friday, in connection with the Dufferin County Teachers Convention and Peel Teachers Institute, attracted keen interest and brought an unexpectedly large number of entries. In all, 30 schools furnished no less than 394 entries. Most of the competitions took place in the Orangeville Public School and Orangeville Opera House.

50 YEARS AGO Wednesday, October 28, 1959

At a special meeting of Dufferin County Council Tuesday of last week, the decision of the committee charged with selecting a site for the Home for the Aged was reversed, and by a 7-6 vote Shelburne was selected as the location. The committee had recommended a site in Orangeville.

Close to 100 representatives of high school boards attended a meeting of the Associated High School Boards of Ontario at Centre Dufferin District High School on Saturday.

25 YEARS AGO Wednesday, October 31, 1984

The Ontario Fire Marshal's office moved in last week and started removing materials from the Broadway property of Howard McMillan.

Dr. David Whitehead of London has been appointed as a factfinder in contract disputes between Dufferin County Board of Education and its elementary and secondary school teachers.