



Maurice Bowra: A Life

Leslie Mitchell

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Maurice Bowra was, according to one's point of view, either the most distinguished or the most notorious Oxford don of the early twentieth century. Classicist, poet, wit, raconteur extraordinary, and Warden of Wadham College for over thirty years, he met nearly everyone of consequence in the worlds of literature and politics and had stories to tell about them all, from Jean Cocteau to Virginia Woolf, from Adolf Hitler to the Kennedys, from Isaiah Berlin to Charlie Chaplin. By force of personality and intellectual range, he influenced the thinking of almost everyone with whom he came into contact.

Above all, brought up in Edwardian England, he was able to chart the ways in which the values of his youth were tested by new democratic ideas. His experiences allowed him to develop and employ theories of education that were startling, and which would mould the thinking of a generation of English intellectuals.

Based upon a wide range of interviews and previously unpublished manuscript material, this is the first ever biography of Bowra, and covers every aspect of his life, from soldier on the Western Front to Oxford classicist, from celebrated wit to frustrated poet manqué.

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