

## Little Nuggets

### ***The Allure of Police Helmets***

Commenting on the behaviour of undergraduates on special occasions as depicted by Wodehouse, the *Times Archive Blog* of November 5, 2009, reproduced an article about Bonfire Night 1908, reporting that nine Oxford undergraduates had been arrested. “It was stated that a defendant hit the constable once on the head and once on the helmet with a stick. The defendant said he had no intention to hurt the constable but only wanted to knock his helmet off.”

### ***The Queen and Jeeves***

In *The Independent* of November 19, Matthew Norman made some trenchant comparisons between the Queen, who, while reading “vacuous drivel” in the Queen’s Speech, “seemed to pause for about 0.07 seconds and raise her left eyebrow 1/16th of an inch”; and Jeeves, who frequently did something similar. Mr Norman pointed out that though diametric opposites, “the one being technically subservient but ruling the roost, and the other nominally boss but entirely powerless”, they are both “older and far wiser than the person who effectively pays their wages, but are never permitted to say so”.

### ***A Fine Notion***

During a House of Lords debate on the Proceeds of Crime Act on December 6, Lord Onslow said: “The agencies are on to a slice of the money seized. The only time I have heard of such a thing before was when Bertie Wooster commented that Sir Roderick Glossop had had a slice of the fines that he imposed in the magistrates’ court.” It was, of course, Sir Watkyn Bassett, not Sir Roderick, but all the same fitting. (Thanks to EDWARD CAZALET.)

### ***Doyle Was Not Wodehouse***

The Winter 2009 issue of the *Sherlock Holmes Journal* included an article on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s ventures into theatre. David Timson described how Doyle and J M Barrie attempted a libretto for a light opera piece but soon found it more difficult than expected: “Barrie knew as much about music as Doyle did, which was virtually nothing. You needed to be a W S Gilbert or a P G Wodehouse to write snappy lyrics, and the two collaborators were out of their depth.” (Thanks to STEPHEN PAYNE.)

### ***Where’s That From?***

On the Radio 4 programme *Quote . . . Unquote* of 15 February, contestants were asked to quote something they wished they had said. David Nobbs quoted PGW: “The bank manager approached like a wall of fog.” JUNE ARNOLD, who sent this reference, commented, “I don’t know where that comes from, but I’m sure you do.” Well, the Editor must confess she is, um, a bit fogged, as is her resident expert. If one of our perspicacious members knows the source of this quote, please share your wisdom with us!

### ***Wodehouse Hits a Nerve***

A *Daily News & Analysis* online article on what makes a book truly funny devotes attention to the works of PGW, “the undisputed monarch of the descriptive sentence”, according to Vinayak Varma. He notes that “the real magic of [Wodehouse’s] writing is in imagery so unpredictable, and yet to appropriate . . . that the effect on one’s ulnar nerve is instantaneous”. (See <http://bit.ly/2mV3Ud>)

## Sports News

### **From *The Guardian*, October 11**

Rob Smyth’s report of a World Cup football qualifier began strangely: “Hello. To steal a line from Wodehouse, permutations are like 74-man orgies: at first they are excitingly challenging and rewardingly mind-blowing, but soon you realise you haven’t got a clue what’s going on, are stabbing hopelessly in the dark, and WANT YOUR MUMMY.”

*Editor’s comment: It’s such a shame that Rob Smyth didn’t mention which member of the Wodehouse family is reputed to have said this.*

### **From *The Sun Herald* (Sydney),**

**November 15** (from Barry Chapman)

A piece on the dangers of Rugby football began with a quote from PGW, who claimed it was “a game I can’t claim to understand in all its niceties. . . . I know that the main scheme is to work the ball down the field somehow and deposit it over the line at the other end and that, in order to squelch this programme, each side is allowed to put in a certain amount of assault and battery and do things to its fellow man which, if done elsewhere, would result in 14 days without the option, coupled with some strong remarks from the Bench.” (Spoken by Bertie Wooster in ‘The Ordeal of Young Tuppy’.)

### **From *The Independent*, November 23**

On the hirsuteness of current sportsmen, specifically in Scotland-Australian rugby, Robin Scott-Elliot wrote: “Murrayfield can rarely have witnessed so many wispy moustaches as sported by the Australians on Saturday. To a man, give or take the odd prop, they managed to look like Stilton Cheesewright, who once struggled manfully to match Bertie Wooster’s dashing ‘tache and so save his engagement to Florence Craye.”

### **From BBC News’s website, December 20**

A description of play during the fourth day of the first cricket test between England and South Africa referred to an incident when a batsman mis-hit a ball from English bowler Graham Onions just over a fielder’s head. The report continued: “Agony for Onions, which sounds like a P G Wodehouse novel.”

### **From *The Financial Times*, January 2**

Golf author Tom Cox described playing a round of golf at Wodehouse’s old club, Addington, and peppered his report with references to and quotations from the Wodehouse golf stories.

### **From *The Independent*, February 6**

Chris Hewett’s A-Z guide to the Six Nations Rugby tournament included under the entry for ‘L’ the 1914 English International Cyril Lowe, and referred to Wodehouse’s poem about him, sympathising with the fact that he never seemed to receive a pass.