

# BY THE WAY



Occasional Newsletters from The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

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## HIM, ANCIENT & MODERN – 2

*When you get to know the family better, you'll realise that there are dozens of aunts you haven't heard of yet – far-flung aunts scattered all over England, and each the leading bluster of her particular county. It's a sort of family taint. (Monty Bodkin, in Heavy Weather)*

*By The Way* No 10, issued in June 2000, dealt with the impressive list of 'Ancient' connections enjoyed by P G Wodehouse. In this issue, we concentrate on his reasonably close relations on his father's side. The information has been gathered principally by our Chairman, Norman Murphy.

### Col Philip Wodehouse (1788-1846)

The Colonel, who fought at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, married Lydia Lea, an heiress, believed to be a Lea of the famous Lea & Perrin's Worcester Sauce, a critical constituent of Jeeves's pick-me-up. They had the six sons and three daughters listed below, including Plum's father, Henry Ernest, and when he died his widow moved with the children to Ham Hill, Powick, in Worcestershire.

### Rev Philip John Wodehouse MA (Cantab)

Uncle Philip – Rector of Bratton Fleming in Devon, where Plum spent some of his school holidays with him and his wife Aunt Marion (née Marion Bryan Wallas, daughter of the Rev John Wallas). They had four children, Helen Marion (see below), Christine Lucy, Philip George and Charles Gilbert.

### Professor Helen Wodehouse

Cousin Helen – The eldest child of Uncle Philip and Aunt Marion, whom Plum met during the summer holidays. One year older than Plum, Helen may be recognised in Florence Beezley (*The Babe and the Dragon*) with whom she was an exact contemporary at Girton College, and subsequently in Florence Craye, Honoria Glossop and Heloise Pringle. She obtained a doctorate in philosophy, was a Principal at Bingley Teachers Training College and became Mistress of Girton from 1931 to 1942. Her 1908 book *The Logic of Will* bears a striking resemblance to the language of *Types of Ethical Theory*.

### Col Charles Wodehouse, CIE

Uncle Charles – Joined the Indian Army, and was based in Bombay. He married Aunt Jemima (née Fawles).

### Rev Frederick Armine Wodehouse

Uncle Fred – Rector of Gotham in Derbyshire and married to Aunt Alice, (née Hon Alice Powys), who was an old friend of the Countess of Bradford at Weston Park, Shropshire. Their grandchildren include Charles and Armine, both members of the Society.

### William George Wodehouse

Uncle William – of the Shrubs, Powick, married Aunt Jane (née Gill).

### Henry Ernest Wodehouse, CMG

Plum's father, and a senior member of the Hong Kong Civil Service, whom Plum only saw for a few months between the ages of three and fourteen. He married Eleanor Deane, and in 1895 took a semi-detached house in Croxted Road, Dulwich, for a few months before moving to The Old House at Stableford in Shropshire (which we visited on the Millennium Tour last year), Cheltenham in Gloucestershire (see over), and finally to Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex. The diligent work of Norman Murphy has shown that the Croxted Road semi was one of a pair of houses converted from a single unit, clearly the inspiration behind the solution to *Sam the Sudden*.

Henry and Eleanor had four children, of whom PG was the third, the older brothers being Philip Peveril John and Ernest Armine, and the younger Richard Lancelot Deane. Information on these appears overleaf.

Col Albert Philip Wodehouse

Uncle Albert – of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers – who married Aunt Amy.

Lydia Wodehouse

Aunt Lydia, who died in London in 1914, unmarried.

Lucy Apollonia Wodehouse

Aunt Lucy – married the Rev Uncle Edward, (né Edward Whitmore Isaac) who was the Vicar of Hanley Castle in Worcestershire. The Isaacs were a well-connected family, with relations who were bankers and Shropshire vicars, and one of Uncle Edward's brothers

owned or was a partner in a family bank in Worcester, close to Hanley Castle. Known at various times as 'Worcester Old Bank', 'Lechmere and Isaac Bank', or 'Berwick, Lechmere, Isaac, Martin Bank', it is regarded as the probable source of PG's detailed awareness of small private banks, as demonstrated in the late novel *Do Butlers Burgle Banks?*

At Hanley Castle, where Plum stayed often, he met the Foster brothers (the cricketing family who became the Jackson brothers in his stories), while his Uncle was the Chairman of Governors at the local school, a suitable source for Gussie Fink-Nottle's memorable scene. Plum also became friendly with his cousin, Edward Swinton Wodehouse Isaac, who went to Oxford and then served articles as a solicitor. It is likely that he was Wodehouse's earliest source of information about solicitors (see *Something Fresh* and *Uneasy Money*).

Harriet Wodehouse

Aunt Harriet – married Uncle Henry, the Rev Henry Bromley Cocks of Leigh Rectory, Worcestershire.

# THE CHELTENHAM CHRONICLE AND GLO'SHIRE GRAPHIC

With Which is Incorporated the "Cheltenham Looker-On."  
GRATIS SUPPLEMENT. Saturday, February 5, 1927.

No. 1362.

## CHELTENHAM THEATRE AND OPERA HOUSE.

This Afternoon (2.30) and Evening (7.30)—"MERCENARY MARY."  
NEXT WEEK: Every Evening at 7.45, Matinee Saturday, 2.30 :  
"Charley's Aunt." Direct from its brilliant London season.

### THE PALACE HIGH ST., CHELTENHAM.

MONDAY, FEB. 7, for 6 DAYS  
Free Prize Competition! The Beautiful "The Crown of Iron" Gown, now being displayed at Simpson and Hodkin's, Colnacre, for Colnacre's Purloining and Entry Prizes of the Palace.

GOLLEEN MOORE,  
In Her Greatest Comedy Success,  
With the World's Finest Fashion.

#### "IRENE."

Part of Red Gown. A First in Show. Last! Spouses with Her. "The Crown of Iron" and "Irene."

The Best Dressed Laugh Show that Ever Came to Town.  
Scheduled at 2.15, 4.15, 6.15, 8.15.  
Douglas Cochran and His Popular Orchestra.

### THE DAFFODIL, Cheltenham's Premier Cinema.



MR. HENRY ERNEST WODEHOUSE, C.M.C., AND MRS. WODEHOUSE.

of Ewart Lodge, Jameson-road, Bezhill-on-Sea, who celebrated their Golden Wedding on Feb. 3rd, having been married on that date in 1877 at St. John's Cathedral, Hong Kong. They lived for some years in Cheltenham, and are the parents of Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, the author, and three other sons.

### WINTER GARDEN CHELTENHAM. 'Phone 7212

ALL THE WEEK,  
At 2.30, 5.30, and 8 p.m.  
Not Continuous.  
Free List Entirely Suspended  
Extraordinary Success!  
Unprecedented Record!

"THE LIGHT OF ASIA,"  
As shown by Royal Command  
at Windsor Castle, and direct  
from Philharmonic Hall, Lon-  
don, after 10 months' run.  
"Most beautiful." Her Majesty  
the Queen.  
"The greatest triumph of  
Cinematography and Screen  
acting." "Referee."  
"One of the first four best films  
of 1926." "Daily Express."  
Book Early to Avoid  
Disappointment.

### COLISEUM CHELTENHAM. 'Phone 3715

6.45 and 8.45 p.m.  
"WHAT'LL I DO."  
Musical Comedy Revue.

### Plum's Brothers

#### Philip Peveril John Wodehouse, CIE (1877-1951)

The eldest of the four sons, he was the first English child born in the Peak district of Hong Kong, where he was to carve out his career. Like his mother's brother Walter, he became deputy commander of the Hong Kong Police, the same position held by George Emerson in *Something Fresh*.

#### Professor Ernest Armine Wodehouse (1879-1936)

The most formidably intellectual of the four brothers, he gained a classics scholarship to Oxford, the Newdigate Prize for poetry and the Chancellor's Essay Prize. He went to India, taught with the Theosophists and had a road named after him. His son Patrick is a patron of the Society.

#### Richard Lancelot Deane Wodehouse (1892-1940)

Also known as Dick, the youngest brother was educated at Cheltenham and is reported to have won the County croquet championship. His daughter Anne (now Higgins) is a member of the Society.

*The final part of this review, concerning PGW's aunts and uncles on his mother's side, will appear in By The Way, June 2002.*