

WOOSTER SAUCE



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E . . . E . . . EVOCATIVE!

If that's the word I want

In Search of Blandings, the tour arranged by the Society towards the end of July, was an event which proceeded like an organiser's dream. Forget the Drones Club Annual Golf Week-end at Le Touquet or Marvis Bay, this was a meeting of men and women expected to stagger humanity, and judging from the way a number of people reluctantly left the coach on our return to London, humanity had been duly staggered.

Alongside this issue of *Wooster Sauce* we are providing an eight-page *Millennium Tour Report* to which many of the participants have contributed. Even our coach driver felt sufficiently moved by the experience to write in with his *First Wodehouse Experience*. Other, even more detailed, descriptions of the week can be found on our website (www.eclipse.co.uk/wodehouse) and also, I understand, in the autumn (or fall) issue of *Plum Lines*, the journal of TWS, the American Society.

All the reports have a common theme. The tour evoked all that is best in Wodehouse, and of the England about which Wodehouse wrote. In a poor summer, what should happen when we reached Weston Park, the grounds of Blandings Castle? The sun shone brightly from a cloudless sky. After a grey morning on Saturday, we arrived at Sudeley Castle, possessed of a fine yew alley (in which the Chairman showed off all the old panache, see Robert Bruce's photo), and guess what happened? The skies cleared, and the sun shone brightly from a cloudless sky. And we found Hanley Castle, the village which is the original Market Snodsbury, still unspoilt but willing to offer a warm welcome to the sudden international invasion.



"I think the thing that stands out the most is the grounds at Weston, and the atmosphere, the aroma, the life, in the gardens – the fragrance of the flowers, and all of it really did bring me back to the Lord Emsworth era" said Gus Caywood, and his fellow-American John Graham agreed: "I am even more convinced than when I read his book that Norman Murphy is right. It has really transformed the way that I'll read all of *Blandings*. It's going to be more real to me than ever it was . . .".

Erik Quick added: "I had no pre-conceived impression of Market Snodsbury, but it brings the whole thing into focus." Wim Duk, a Dutchman, pointed to the family feeling among the wide-ranging group of international travellers, and indeed there was not a cross word from beginning to end, not even amongst the *aficionados* who were beaten to the few treasures discovered by the speedier in the occasional bookshop.

We must let the Chairman, the focal centre of the whole week, have the final say:

"In my account of the 1989 Pilgrimage, I recalled that as we left Cheney Court, John Fletcher said everybody was a winner. The people we visited were delighted (if sometimes bemused by our enthusiasm), we saw places we had pictured in our mind for years. John's remark reminds me of the race in *Alice in Wonderland* where everybody wins. Very few people nowadays get as near Wonderland as we did. I am very proud that some of our pilgrims thought the same this time."

Yes. Evocative IS the word I want.

Indian Influences on Wodehouse

Written by Harshawardhan M Nimkhedkar, an Indian resident member, to mark the 25th death anniversary of the Master on February 14th 2000

Most Indians believe that the nuptial knots are tied in the heavens and no human agency can undo them. They're part of Destiny's Great Game! Plum Wodehouse would have been the first to admit the truth of this quaint notion. His marriage with Ethel wasn't simply a coincidence – it was pre-ordained! How else can one describe their chance meeting in America in 1914, and their subsequent wedding within two months, which was to last for sixty-odd years?

Suppose Ethel's first husband Leonard Rowley hadn't died, and suppose Ethel hadn't met Plum on that fateful day – then, most certainly the Wodehouse saga would have assumed different proportions, and Plum might never have become the Great Master of Humour! No one can deny Ethel's influence on Plum. Their married life might not have been perfect – but it was certainly a happy one. Ethel protected him from the slings and arrows of the outrageous world.

Plum was a great traveller, but he never visited India, either as a gawking tourist or as an Empire-builder. Didn't he ever think of visiting Rowley's grave and show his gratitude? The young Britisher's death – unfortunate and untimely – had, after all, come as a blessing in disguise for Plum, for it not only gave him his Ethel, but also so offered him the lovely Leonora in the process. (What was Rowley doing in India, and can anybody tell me where he's buried?)

Yet Plum always remained connected with India, in a curious and distant way – but the bond was quite enduring. Apart from Ethel (and latterly the Indian-born Richard Osborne), there was his father, who, as is well-known, was stationed in the East and who continued to receive in Rupees his pension also, after his retirement, to the eternal disgust of the family. And, Plum's mother was nicknamed 'Memsahib' – the Anglo-Indian term of respect for white women.

From his parents Plum must have learnt a great deal about the Orient. He was a well-known addict of Kipling and the Wilkie Collins-brand of writer, revelling in the romantic, fantastic, and at times untrue or bizarre, tales from India. But I don't understand why he didn't make any literary capital of this.

And Armine, his elder brother, had actually lived in India for some time, teaching and writing. He was a practising Theosophist and doubtless it's through him Plum gained some knowledge about the Hindu spiritual practices and the Yogis.

Although there doesn't seem much of Indian origin in the Wodehouse canon, still, it's worth a dekho in the light of this background.

The earliest reference is in *The Girl On The Boat*, albeit indirect. Mrs Horace Hignett of this book was 'a world-famous writer (and lecturer) on Theosophy' and I suspect Plum modelled her on Dr Annie Besant, or Mme Blatvatsky, or both.

A more direct reflection is in the pages of *Ring For Jeeves*. Captain Brabazon-Biggar is fond of uttering strange oaths, picked up in the East, which include the curious Sanskrit phrase: "Yogi Tulsiram jaginath". Where did Plum learn it? Was it his own coinage, or Armine's? Yogi means a holy man, Jaginath is a proper noun (though spelt in the book with a lower-case 'j') meaning the Lord of the Universe (or God) from which the word 'juggernaut' is derived, and Tulsiram is another proper noun – but there was no such famous holy man. Perhaps, he meant Tulsidas, the poet-saint, who lived several hundred years ago. Tulsi is, of course, our most holy plant – sacred basil or *Ocimum sanctum*.

The reference to Theosophy in *The Girl On The Boat* was quite contemporary, as the movement was at its peak around that time (1922). *Ring For Jeeves* is dated 1953, and Plum apparently still hadn't lost his grip on the Anglo-Indian lingo, as many words, typical of the Raj period, in this and other books show. They include, among others, 'quai hai', 'subahdar', 'ghazi havildar' and 'fakir'.

The immortal classic *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934) has another contemporary reference. This was when India was deep in the throes of her struggle for freedom. In chapter 11, Bertie facetiously advises the ravenously hungry Tuppy Glossop, "to think of Gandhi, who hasn't had a square meal for years". And Tuppy, rather brusquely, exclaims "Gandhi, my left foot!" (The non-violent Gandhi, who spearheaded the liberation forces, often observed "Fasts unto death", as a means of penance, or protest.) In Plum's private correspondence, one

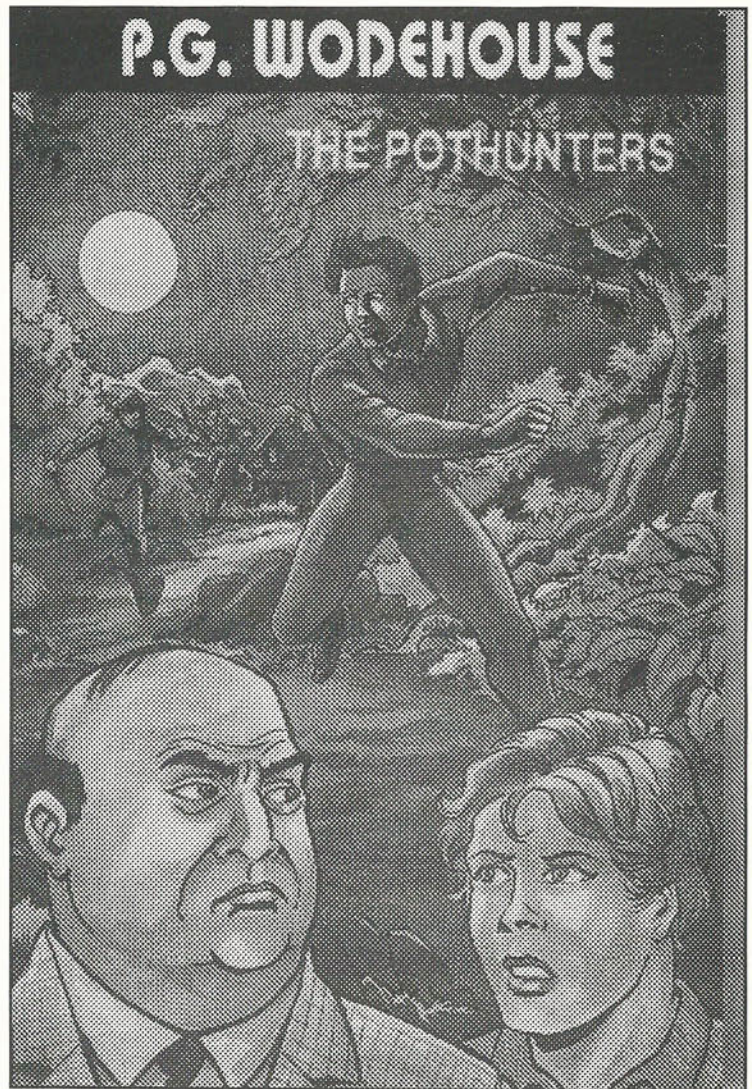
finds a reference to the Indian situation, in the letter dated August 27, 1946, to Bill Townend, but that was in the Kipling context.

Although neither Plum, nor any of his major characters, ever visited India, we are told in the story *Bertie Changes His Mind* (from *Carry On, Jeeves*), that Bertie's sister Mrs Scholfield would shortly be coming back from India with her three little girls. (Was she like Aunt Agatha or Aunt Dahlia?) And I wonder whether Bertie's ocean liner did indeed dock at Bombay during his round-the world cruise, as hinted in *The Code Of The Woosters?* Because, in chapter four, Bertie actually mentions the Tajmahal by name.

The canon is, of course, full of passing allusions to the famous, or infamous events, customs and things in India, having a strong historical or cultural flavour. Plum repeatedly refers to the 'suttee', the 'Black Hole Of Calcutta', the 'Sepoy Mutiny', the Sieges of Lucknow and Cawnpore, the Tajmahal, the Shalimar, the Indian Love Lyrics (*Pale Hands . . .*) and the mystics who disappear in one place and reassemble in another. Though he never elaborates, it shows his intense familiarity with life in British India.

And the famous Barribault's Hotel continued to be haunted by visiting Maharajas from India, even after their tribe became extinct in 1947; while the broad-shouldered, square-jawed Empiwallahs, retired Army Officers, and intrepid, death-defying Shikaris or Big Game Hunters also continued to parade through the canon long after 1947. They were throwbacks to the Halcyon and glorious days of the British Raj in India, and to me it is a matter of everlasting grief that Plum never fully exploited their true potential – to him, they were always of secondary importance.

Leaving apart the Edwardian and the Georgian eras, had Plum ever fancied to visit India after 1947, not only would he have received a red-carpet welcome from millions of his fans here, but he would have also been able to meet a new breed of Indian Sahibs: brown, this time, comprising the post-Independence politicians, bureaucrats and babus.



A number of Plum's books have been reprinted in India, including many of the school stories, by the publisher Jaico

It takes my breath away just to imagine what uproarious and rib-splitting tales could have gushed out of the Master's mind, had he cared to explore such a rich and fabulous gold mine. I defy anyone in the world to exhibit a more grotesque gaggle of ghastly gargoyles, and a weirder Muster Of The Vultures!

The Smile That Wins

Favourite Nifties – 12

"I may be wronging Comrade B, but I should be inclined to say that my presence in the Senior Conservative Club tonight irritated him. There was no *bonhomie* in his manner. He seemed to me to be giving a spirited imitation of a man about to foam at the mouth."

From *Psmith in the City*, 1910

Suggested by Kirsty Bennett

Plum and the Comic Strips – 2

Stu Shiffman continues his review with his thoughts on the origins of Baby Blobbs

There is certainly enough about frightful-looking babies in the various works of the master. Remember in *Sonny Boy*, where Bingo saw his son:

Introduced to his child in the nursing home, he recoiled with a startled “Oi!” and as the days went by the feeling that he had run up against something red-hot in no way diminished. The only thing that prevented a father’s love from faltering was the fact that there was in his possession a photograph of himself at the same early age, in which he, too, looked like a homicidal fried egg.

Pretty scary stuff, indeed!

In *Leave It to Jeeves*, published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1916 and also known as *The Artistic Career of Corky*, the pestilential portrait of his uncle’s new baby painted by Corky Corcoran is turned to good account by the end of the tale as the basis of a new comic strip, *The Adventures of Baby Blobbs*, in the *Sunday Star*.

Wodehouse in Woostershire (volume 6 of the great Millennial work) makes reference to:

OUTCAULT: the amount made by ... out of Buster Brown suggested to Corky Corcoran that he had discovered a goldmine.

Richard F Outcault (1863-1928) is credited with the creation of the first newspaper comic strip superstar, the *Yellow Kid of Hogan’s Alley*, a nightshirted Irish street urchin who debuted in the *New York World* in 1895. Outcault’s cheeky Kid was the first comic strip character to appear in color in a continuing titled series and with a regular supporting cast. The Yellow Kid’s phenomenal success launched a publishing war between William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer that gave birth to the term ‘yellow journalism’ and to parallel Yellow Kids under each banner. George Luks drew the Yellow Kid in *Hogan’s Alley* and Outcault created a new neighborhood called McFadden’s Flats for Hearst’s *Journal*.

The merchandising of the character was another innovation, and the Kid appeared on cast iron toys, games, cigarette advertising pinbacks, postcards, trade cards and advertising signs for various products from soap to whiskey. He also was adapted to the stage.

In 1902, Outcault further showed that lightning could strike twice by creating another even more successful comic strip feature, the more upper class Buster Brown, which he produced until 1920. If you think that cartoon character licensing is new, then you have a big surprise. Outcault had a booth at the 1904 World’s Fair in St Louis where he hawked the licensing rights to Buster Brown to great financial success. All that remains today of this huge commercial legacy are the licensed corporate heirs of Buster Brown shoes (“I’m Buster Brown; I live in a shoe. This is my dog Tige; he lives there too.”) and Buster Brown brand clothing for children.

Wodehouse in Woostershire also references the success of ‘Bud’ Fisher (1885-1954) of *Mutt and Jeff* (1907-1983) fame as an inspiration to Corky Corcoran. Fisher was phenomenally successful and was one of those strip creators who partied for decades while assistants produced his work.

As to the source of Baby Blobbs, I exchanged some e-mail with Tom Heintjes, editor of *Hogan’s Alley* (a quarterly magazine on comic strips and comic strip history that unfortunately has yet to come out quarterly). Like me, he was instantly reminded of *Parlor, Room & Bath* by Billy DeBeck (creator of Barney Google and Snuffy Smith) and its character of young Bunker Hill, Jr. He is known as Bunky, and is a particularly goofy looking child with a gigantic nose and a dab hand at prose.

However, I think that an even better candidate is the strip known as *The Newlyweds – Their Baby* (1904-1918, and brought back in 1944 as a co-feature of *Bringing Up Father*) among other variant titles, by the cartoonist George McManus (1884-1954). McManus is best known for his *Bringing Up Father* and the characters of Maggie and Jiggs. I believe that the baby in *The Newlyweds* is the ideal Blobbs. This baby, known as ‘Snookums’ is described by Maurice Horn in *100 Years of American Newspaper Comics*:

The infant (known as Snookums), with his one tooth, bulb nose, and moronic expression, had a face only a mother could love.

Definitely a homicidal fried egg with a face to stop a clock! Mr Newlywed had simian looks that would not have been inappropriate for Alley Oop, while his

Society Goods for Sale

There remain available for sale some 40 of the whisky tumblers specially purchased as souvenirs for the recent tour. These heavy lead crystal glasses are etched with the 'Low' bust of Wodehouse enclosed in the legend *In Search of Blandings*, and may be obtained on application to Norman Murphy

with a cheque payable to *The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)* for £10 each post-free in the UK, but with the addition of £1.50 in Europe and £3.50 outside. It may be possible to arrange payment in dollars: contact Nick Townend

There also remain a small residue from the first batch of ties which were commissioned for the Tour. We were delighted at the response not only from tour participants but the membership at large, and as a result only 20 are still available.

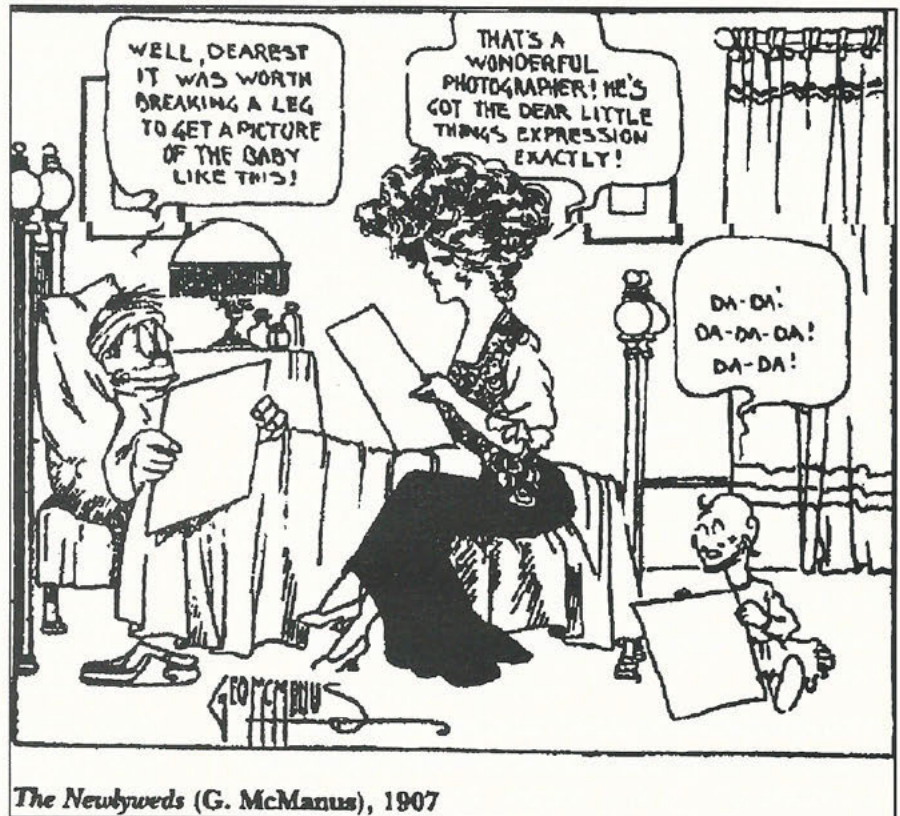
Those members lucky enough to have one will appreciate the spectacular background colour which we must admit was a little more mauve and a little less burgundy than we might have expected. It is nonetheless an impressive acknowledgement of Society membership, and can be obtained from Nick Townend, address opposite, in exchange for a cheque to the Society for £15 (post-free worldwide).

Plum and the Comic Strips, continued

wife, Mrs Newlywed, evoked the great illustrations of Harrison Fisher or Charles Dana Gibson. The strip was later known as *Their Only Child* and *Snookums*.

A stage production was done around 1907-1908, as *The Newlyweds and Their Baby* by Paul West and produced by John Leffler. I don't know if this was a different show than the 1908-1909, *The Newlyweds and Their Baby* with book by Aaron Hoffman and Paul West, music by Nat D Ayer and John W Bratton and lyrics by Paul West and Seymour Brown which was produced by the Leffler-Bratton Company at the Majestic Theater in New York for 41 performances and for many years after in eastern and western touring companies. Licensed coloring books by Saalfield were produced, as well as bisque figurines and serving dishes. One of these coloring books, *The Newlyweds and their Baby's Comic Pictures For Painting and Crayoning* (The Saalfield Publishing Co, 1917), was recently available for auction on the online eBay site.

In many ways, the strip almost seems to be an inspiration for the Bingo Little and Rosie M. Banks stories. The title of *Their Only Child* also seems to be echoed in the title of Plum's *Their Mutual Child* (as published in *Munsey Magazine*, 1914) as much as Dickens's *Their Mutual Friend*.



The Newlyweds (G. McManus), 1907

I suspect that Plum became familiar with the strip and musical theater adaptation during his sojourns in New York. I wonder what contact he might have had with the comic strip and humorist community in New York in the teens and twenties, aside from seeing their creations in newspapers and magazines. We know that he was not inclined to be a social lion and regarded such social grease as 'slacking' on his work (see his comments on the Algonquin Roundtable set).

The Mystery of the Missing Meal

Joe Harkins concludes his investigation into the calorie shortfall

In Part One of this article I put forward the argument that George Cyril Wellbeloved stands accused of endangering the health and wellbeing of our much loved Empress, by callously, and with malice aforethought, drastically reducing the amount of calories of her daily intake.

Let us consider the character of the man. He left the employ of Lord E to go over to the sworn enemy and tend the Queen of Matchingham . . . for higher wages, no less! He extorted the sum of three pounds two shillings and tuppence from poor Jerry Vail, then in double-quick time ratted on the fellow for harbouring a stolen pig. He was the first fellow on Lavender Briggs's mind when she was gathering her gang of pig-snatchers. The list goes on and on. So, given that the Empress – kind heart that she is – may have shown some finer feelings for the man they were certainly not reciprocated.

In that short spell we have greed, extortion, treachery, police informing and pig-stealing. Damning evidence indeed. In fact, let me put it to you that the same GCW was also responsible for another puzzling mystery at Blandings.

Did GCW hightail it to the publishers and steal an “f” from Wolff-Lehman and replace it with a sub-standard “e” (*Sunset at Blandings* Chap 12)?

Did he kidnap Augustus Whiffle, steal his two “f’s”, hold him till he agreed to change his name to the less mellifluous Whipple (which sounds like a Northern dog breeder) and force the self-same Augustus to amend the amount of calories to varying degrees in the Feeding Standard in order to throw confusion into the ranks of his successive servants of the Empress?

Having established the wherefore we must now consider the why. What causes a man to behave like a bohunkus? Is it a genetic weakness? Surely anyone whose progenitor (Ezekiel) takes his trousers off on a snowy day and gives them away, in the belief that he won't be needing them as the world will end at 5:30 that day, must be affected by some deficient gene or other? As the tree is bent so is the twig inclined, as they say. And as for his father Orlando, well . . . we don't want to know about him!

What can one expect from a man who has the reputation of being thoroughly untrustworthy, is without scruples of any sort, would do anything for money, would not sell his grandmother for tuppence

when he knew full well he could get at least a couple of bob for her and pilfers his employers' cigarettes and whisky? But then again, in his defence, if you had a broken nose, a sinister squint, a mouth like a halibut and were afflicted with the ideology of communism wouldn't you be a touch misanthropic and rather lacking in the milk of human kindness department?

I suspect that it is his fondness for the demon A which is behind his reprehensible behaviour. The price of all those pilfered calories and meal, for who knows how many months or years, would provide a tidy sum to finance his hobbies of thirst slaking and falling over into gutters. The money he made from selling the missing meal would most assuredly have contributed to his retirement to the public house in Wolverhampton, where he is no doubt selling watered-down beer and short measures. Undoubtedly, the man would have bought the pub cash down! All this tosh about it being left to him by a kindly aunt is mere smokescreen. How else could someone who is only 29 years old be able to retire, I ask you? There he is, passing his days supping beer paid for by his ill-gotten gains whilst the Empress disappears at a faster rate than a daily bath of Slimmo could ever cause. Is this the reason why we have no mention of the 90th or 91st Shropshire Agricultural Show results??

Lord E himself proudly stated to Vanessa Polk when asked to attribute the secret of the Empress's triple success in the said Show . . . “Careful feeding!” With the Wolff-Lehman scale going up and down like a barometer in a draughty doorway, untold damage has been done to the Empress and her fully perfected frame. Locals say that Sir Bob Geldof has been seen in the area, with even talk of a benefit concert being mooted. It is rumoured that Gus Whiffle, traumatised by his kidnap by GCW and the subsequent alterations to the Feeding Standard he made under duress, has gone to ground somewhere in Devizes and has changed his name to the unlikely sounding Stokeschaye (which sounds like some community service sentence for recidivists). There he spends his days incognito, slinking about in a manner which would turn Percy Pilbeam emerald with envy. Augustus is a broken man indeed.

What deductions can we come to then? Was GCW still in the pay of Tubby Parsloe? Was this some long-term disingenuous plan to turn the Empress into some slimline sow who couldn't cross a cattle

Down with the Dastardly Dusters

demands Murray Hedgcock

Did you go to Tiffin School with Alec Stewart? Was Darren Gough your drinking partner in an Ilkley pub? Did your daughter learn ballet alongside Nasser Hussein's dancer sister?

If so, The Gold Bats urge you to recruit one (or more) of these useful players to strength the society team when it faces The Dulwich Dusters again next summer.

Desperate times call for desperate measures, and action is essential if we are to preserve our honour, after the tactics employed by the Dulwich Common Room on June 16.

Smarting at defeat in 1999 they imported one of Australia's outstanding players – the Victorian Sheffield Shield wicketkeeper-batsman Darren Berry. Nice bloke – of course. Quick to smile – and plenty to smile about, as he hit a crisp 33 (compulsorily retired), fielded brilliantly (at least having the decency to give up the gloves) and exuded an air of professional menace that eventually got to our gallant lads.

The Dusters won by 91 runs, arguing that Berry was qualified as he had spent the summer coaching cricket at the college. Very funny.



The Gold Bats, bloody but unbowed, after their match

Photo: Stephen Fullom

Will the ICC deal with ring-ins fielded by a team allegedly imbued with the public school spirit? Is this a matter we can ask Roger Knight, MCC Secretary and Old Alleynian, to take up on our behalf? Meanwhile – we implore society members to recruit at the highest level for next year. It seems our only way to regain face.

Dulwich Dusters 192/9 (Wickes 37, Berry 33, Callendar 32, Knight 32; Miller 2/13) beat The Gold Bats 101/9 (Bloxham 42, Adams 22; Churcher 3/8) by 91 runs.

The Missing Meal, (continued)

grid without disappearing . . . or was it simply a printer's error?

Perhaps there are those among you who feel I have been too hard on poor George Cyril? Is the real culprit some first year apprentice typesetter whose teenage mind was somewhere between formulating an acne ameliorating application and how to chat up the gorgeous young assistant in the village bakery shop without fainting?

Is George Cyril much maligned or is he as guilty as a one-armed Iraqi who has just resigned from the Baghdad branch of the Honourable Guild of Thieves (motto – *A Helping Hand*)?

Like the Meaning of Life, some things are destined to remain a mystery.

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges – 15

Agravaine listened intently.

"Who was it I did see thee coming down the road with?"

"Who was it thou didst see me coming down the road with?"

"Aye, who was it I did see thee coming down the road with?"

"Who dost thou think thou art?"

"Who do I think I am?"

"Aye, who dost thou think thou art?"

Agravaine could make nothing of it. As a matter of fact, he was hearing the first genuine cross-talk that had ever occurred in those dim, pre-music-hall days.

From *Sir Agravaine (The Man Upstairs and Other Stories, 1914)*

Suggested by Olivia Barclay of Kent

Wodehouse in Russia

by Dr Natalya Trauberg, a member living in Moscow

In the twenties life in the Soviet Union, with all its horrors, was quite unstable (or peculiar). There were still small publishing houses that produced popular titles 'for mass consumption' which included P G Wodehouse, G K Chesterton and even Somerset Maugham. (Sinclair Lewis, G B Shaw and H G Wells were 'serious authors' because of their pro-leftist ideology. That is why they were published in the national publishing houses).

Those popular books had their dedicated readers in the bohemian young people that resembled their American and English counterparts. In poetry, theatre and cinema they conducted left-wing experiments, and were quite willing to stuff them with the 'revolutionary ideology'. The most talented of them, such as S Eisenstein, left a strong, even a snobbish dislike toward that ideology. But this is a topic I treat in various articles.

My father Leonid Trauberg was at that time a young cinema director, the co-founder, with Gregory Kozintsev, of FEKS (Factory of an Eccentric Actor). He read with great fervour the books of Wodehouse. True, they were hastily translated, abridged and vulgarized, but all those 'young men in spats' lived the very life that their unfortunate Soviet counterparts were dreaming about. To that I can testify, for I was growing up among them.

The year of 1927 saw an especially large number of those little books, and my mother, pregnant with me, was reading them. About three years before she was renting a room from a rather *avant-garde* artist, Valentina Khodasevitch. It was then and there that my mother (her christian name is Vera) heard two young men laughing and one of them, Leonid Trauberg, told her that they were waiting for the landlady and reading an excellent author named Wodehouse. It was the first meeting of my parents.

Then the thirties came, which were much less laughable. Wodehouse was declared 'a writer for *bourgeois*' (*literatura dlya zhyrnykh*, 'fat tummy literature') and no longer published. He did bate the Bolsheviks in one of his stories, but I don't think that played a role in the prohibition. That particular story was never translated. Simply all *bourgeois* books were prohibited and the small publishing houses abolished.

As for his fans they found themselves in the Soviet trap, and sought to deny the eccentricity of their recent past.



After WWII I studied German and Romance philology at the Leningrad University. We were reading English books one after another, both classic and detective stories of the Golden Era. The summer of 1946 I discovered in a library *A Damsel in Distress*, and fell in love with it. My father was delighted, but warned me to be careful, as he said Wodehouse 'had collaborated with the Nazis'. I did not believe this for a second, and began reading all of PGW. I cannot express what a comfort his books provided in those difficult times. For that alone I'll always be grateful to him. More than anyone, more than Chaucer, Dickens and Chesterton, he opposed the horror of those days.

Besides, from my early childhood I believed in God. That was the legacy passed on to me by my maternal grandparents. So, strangely or not, Wodehouse became to me an angelic, heavenly voice. My friends, however, did not fall in the some kind of love with him. They were not fans of the regime any more than I, but apparently were not childish enough.

Almost all my life my only job was translating English and Spanish novels for various publishing houses. Sitting at home was perhaps the safest thing to do in times like that, even after 1953 (the death of Stalin). I have translated several books of G K Chesterton, but that is a different story.

In the sixties my father gathered up courage to write to Wodehouse and in return received autographed books and two photos.

God is merciful, and even the 70s and early 80s, horrible in a new way, ended. It was late in 1989, almost exactly at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall, that I decided to translate a story about my beloved character Lord Emsworth. It was *Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend*. (I never thought that Wodehouse could be translated into Russian.)

That's how it began. Within six years I was able to translate all of the Blandings novels, except *Leave it to Psmith*. Then one small publisher who had produced a 5-volume G K Chesterton set expressed interest in Wodehouse. To these translations I added four more novels, about Lord Ickenham.

Success exceeded everyone's expectations. Not only my students (I do teach English literature now) but even my fellow church members always eagerly wait for the next volume.

Now a Moscow publishing-house, *Ostozhje*, has begun a sizeable series of Wodehouse. Mrs Inna Bernstein, an outstanding professional (she acquainted the Russian reader with Thomas Malory and *Brideshead Revisited*), leads the translators who work on the *Jeeves & Wooster* stories. Within this group the talent and the humor of Julia Zhukova (*The Code of the Woosters*) should be mentioned.

Among non-Wooster translations, those by Ekaterina Dobrokhotova-Maikova (*Bill the Conqueror*, *Something Fishy*) deserve high praise. Introductions are usually written by me, as someone totally crazy about Wodehouse.

The *Khudozhestvennaja Literatura* publishing house that used to hold a virtual monopoly on translating classics in the Soviet era, has published a 3-volume set of Wodehouse. The first volume includes: *Psmith* (I.Gurova) and *A Damsel in Distress* (translated by Alexander Dorman); the second several Blandings novels, and the third several Jeeves and Wooster novels (translated by Zhukova and Bernstein). Magazines usually welcome his short stories, so quite a few have already appeared there.

I cannot think of a better time than now to introduce Wodehouse to Russians. That unique combination of a rarely found freedom and rarely found innocence is exactly what we've been seeking for such a long



The Russian edition of *Quick Service and Girl in Blue* to which Dr Trauberg contributed

time. And think of his kindness, his unbelievable professionalism, his unmatched simplicity! If it is indeed true that *non angli sed angeli*, then he is the first among them.

Here is something that gives us hope: Russians have come to love him. True, it is only *intelligentsia*, but it is good begining. Isn't it time to stop pretending that you should only read *Ada* and *Ulysses*? Yes, both books have by now been published, praise God, but can you really imagine someone reading them with the same gratitude and sentimentality as reading PGW.

May I repeat: Wodehouse is the surest medicine against the rubbish that our minds and hearts were fed. Where else will you find such a *meek* writer?

The youth that know him love him dearly. Here's Mikhail Kuzmenko, for example, who discovered Wodehouse through the *Jeeves and Wooster* series in Russian. We met with him quite by chance (or, rather providentially, if you please) through the Internet, and now he has done so much good for the cause. He puts together catalogues of Wodehouse publications in English and Russian. Through him we receive the Wodehouse materials from other countries.

New Book on Wodehouse Commissioned

Robert McCrum starts work on an authorised biography

The Wodehousean spotlight has fallen on Robert McCrum, Literary Editor of the *Observer*, with the announcement that he has been selected to write an authorised biography of Sir P G Wodehouse which should emerge in 2004, nearly quarter of a century after that of Lady Donaldson.

Robert has the highest credentials for his task, starting with a First Class Honours degree in History from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, followed by an MA in Modern History at the University of Pennsylvania. Moving into publishing, by 1989 he had been made Editor-in-Chief of Faber and Faber, where he was the first to publish such contemporary writers as Peter Carey and Kazuo Ishiguro.

At the same time, from 1981 to 1986, he conceived, co-wrote, co-produced and researched *The History of English* for BBC TV and PBS. This was filmed throughout the English-speaking world, and was accompanied by a book which sold in excess of half a million copies, before itself being translated into many languages. He has also written six novels, a children's book, and a non-fiction work describing how he recovered from a stroke.

More recently, Robert moved into journalism, has contributed to a wide range of journals and newspapers on the international scene, and has been the Literary Editor of the *Observer* since April 1996.

And, most importantly, he has enjoyed reading Wodehouse for much of his life, and wrote the introduction to the new (2000) *Penguin* edition of *Hot Water*. Nevertheless, although he says that he is unlikely to see eye to eye with those who are not amused by Wodehouse, he has no preconceived ideas as to the nature of the man and his family. His publishers – his book is likely to appear first in hard cover under the *Viking* imprint and then as a *Penguin* paperback – evidently believe that the time is ripe for a new biography, and Robert says that he hopes to expand on certain aspects which he feels earlier works did not explore sufficiently. These include his early life and days at Dulwich, his life in London in the 1920s, and the role played by his wife Ethel, particularly before the second world war.

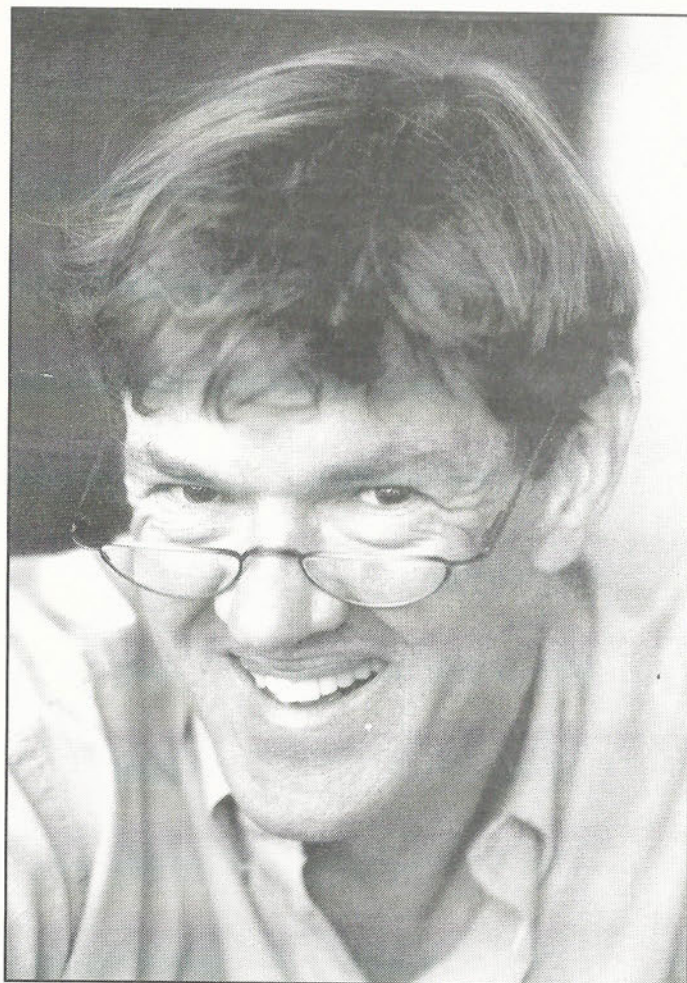


Photo: Jane Bown

Robert, the lucky man, expects to spend the next few months rereading the entire opus before he starts his serious researches. However, he would like to make early contact with anyone who met Plum or Ethel and may be able to offer a new anecdote or provide a unique insight into some aspect of their lives. He has already made one trip to the USA during which he was able to interview a number of those in a position to help, but would like to meet more.

Furthermore, if any members have, or have access to, any documentary material (including letters) of an unusual nature, Robert would be delighted to hear from you. Please write to him at 12 Eldon Road London W8 5PU.

Right Ho, Jeeves: Fiction or Non-Fiction?

Are PGW's characters so real so that one could go along and introduce oneself? Derek Pedder has pointed out that an advertisement for the BBC Radio Collection lists *Right Ho, Jeeves*, rather disconcertingly, as 'Non-Fiction!'

Beyond a Joke *opens in Guildford*

In newspaper-land a dull lie is seldom detected, but an interesting exaggeration drives an unimaginative rival to hysterical denunciations.

So wrote Edgar Wallace in *The Four Just Men* (1905), and the philosophy expressed seems to have been taken to heart by the Press over the years when dealing with Wodehouse's German broadcasts. The big question for those attending the new play, *Beyond a Joke*, by Roger Milner, was whether he would have fallen into a similar trap.

The group of fifteen members who attended the first night had disparate views of the production. One called it "The best play I have seen for years"; another referred to it as "brilliant". A member with relatively little knowledge of Plum's life felt that as a piece of drama it was very effective, and never implied that he was guilty of anything beyond naivety. Other members, less enthusiastic overall, could not agree why they felt that way. One or two said the first act was all puff and no substance, but the second act was strong; another said with great authority that "the second act was a mess". Yet others felt that the increasingly hysterical reaction put in the mouth of Duff Cooper in the second act made his character less credible and left the audience somewhat confused.

It is clear, then, that the reaction to the play is very much a personal one. There were undoubtedly some strong performances from Anton Rodgers, as Plum, and Angela Thorne, as Ethel. In the view of Edward Cazalet, who knew them better than anyone else, Anton Rodgers' physical portrayal of Plum was excellent, but he comes over as more wily, more worldly-wise, than the reality. This shows up in a number of subtle remarks which, according to Edward, Plum just would not have made, and, accordingly, this unjust portrayal makes Plum appear to have been more aware of the impact of the broadcasts than was indeed the case.

The need for dramatic conflict does, of course, lead to the use of imagination and invention, without which there would be no play. We could point to many minor points which were clearly erroneous or based on unlikely suppositions, but on balance most were somewhat harmless.

There were, however, two or three misrepresentations which are harmful to Plum as far as the audience reaction might be concerned, and which could cause the less well-informed to arrive at the wrong conclusion.

Perhaps the most disturbing is the firm implication that on making his first statement to MI5, Wodehouse had denied that he had received any payment for the broadcasts, and that it was only at a later stage that he agreed under pressure that he had received a payment of 250 marks (about £20). This misrepresentation contradicts the specific evidence contained in the MI5 report, which makes clear that in his very first statement Wodehouse had disclosed the payment of 250 marks to Cussen. The scriptwriter compounds the error by having Malcolm Muggeridge say that Werner Plack of the German Foreign Office told them about the payment whereas Plack was later to deny that any money had passed hands. It is both disingenuous, and unfair to Wodehouse, even to suggest that Wodehouse's testimony was duplicitous.

A second point, equally unfair in its effect on the audience, occurs in a discussion of why he was released just a couple of months before his sixtieth birthday. The scene cried out for a response that he would have been released shortly anyway. But for Plum to have made this obvious point in the play would have negated the impact of a later fictional account of how two fellow-internees, once friends, had claimed Plum was a collaborator.

Most of our group enjoyed all or part of the play, and all were pleased they had seen it. The guarded conclusion is that the playwright had avoided the worst of the potential traps, but had still felt it necessary to distort certain events to provide what he saw as adequate dramatic tension. For example, his account of the circumstances surrounding Leonora Wodehouse's death on an operating-table in London, coupled with Plum's and Ethel's reaction to the news, could not realistically have reflected the relationship between the three.

It is clear that there is no intention to try Plum and find him guilty. As Anton Rodgers said, as he left the theatre to get some well-deserved sleep, "P G Wodehouse's reputation is higher now than ever."

For an excellent, more detailed, account of the play and its cast see that posted by John Fletcher on our website (www.eclipse.co.uk/wodehouse) and click on 'Wartime Controversy' for a transcript of all the delightfully humorous broadcasts and a factual statement of the context in which they were made.

Lord Bosham Remembered

by Murray Hedgcock, who saw that the Manor was for sale



Photo: Hampton's

Bosham Manor – presumably home of Lord Bosham, the Earl of Emsworth's rather fatheaded son and heir George – has just been sold. Agents Hamptons International will say only that it brought seven figures, and it may have been substantially more. Bosham is four miles from Emsworth, in West Sussex, and both are adjacent to Chichester Harbour.

It's difficult for a Plum buff to imagine, but the Manor lays claim to even more illustrious antecedents than its logical Wodehouse links, because King Canute is believed to have stayed there when he provided his grovelling courtiers with a reminder that even he could not command the sea.

Hearing loose talk to the effect that he could, Canute ordered his throne carried to the shore at Bosham – and when the tide ignored his call to stop, the King waggled his wet feet at his courtiers to confirm he was not in command of everything. (Canute did not, as many believe, tell the sea to stop in belief that he actually held that power).

The Manor has traces of Roman occupation, but its recorded history dates from the 11th Century when it was owned by Canute's chief counsellor, Earl

Godwin of Essex. Harold, the last Saxon King of England, inherited the Manor and when killed resisting William the Conqueror at Hastings in 1066, is thought to have been buried in an unmarked grave in Bosham Church.

There has been a series of manor houses on the estate but the present building, which is Grade II listed, is thought to date from the early 17th Century. It now has 13 bedrooms, five reception rooms and a four-car garage, plus gardens of 2.6 acres. The old stable block has been converted into a three-bedroomed cottage, and there are also a swimming pool, tennis court, walled vegetable garden, and an artist's studio. Remains of a moat can be identified, and traces of the ruins of Godwin's original manor are visible by the millstream west of the current house.

Pictures suggest an idyllic spot, ideal for a sufficiently wealthy older son to live in comfort rather than risk the potential bullyragging by endless aunts back at the ancestral home.

FOOTNOTE: Bosham is of course pronounced "Bozzam".

Report of the AGM, and the Accounts

A brief summary of the salient points

The Third Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Dulwich College on 16th June 2000, and was attended by 18 members. The Chairman and Officers reported briefly on the achievements of the Society during the past year, including events at Guildford and Emsworth and the dinner at Dulwich. The plans for 2000/2001, including the Millennium Tour, the meetings in Glasgow and Cambridge and the formal dinner in October were also mentioned.

Following the Annual Election to the Committee of members and officers, the list now reads:

<i>Chairman</i>	Norman Murphy
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Helen Murphy
<i>Treasurer</i>	Nick Townend
<i>Editor, Wooster Sauce</i>	Tony Ring
<i>Other Members</i>	Tim Andrew Hilary Bruce Sir Edward Cazalet John Fletcher Oliver Wise

The major contributions to the Society's welfare made by David Herboldt (Database Administrator), Chris Reece (Website Manager), and Murray Hedgcock were publicly recognised.

Due to holidays it had not proved possible to present the Society's full accounts for the past year to the meeting. However, a summary of the Society's income and expenditure, taken from the accounts (which were signed by John Wilson as being 'In accordance with the books and vouchers of the Society') is set out below.

A copy of the complete balance sheet and income and expenditure account can be obtained from the Treasurer,
Chapel, Cr

Income and Expenditure: Year ended 31 May 2000

<i>Subscriptions</i>	£ 8,390
<i>Donations</i>	330
<i>Sales of publications</i>	397
<i>Bank interest</i>	40

TOTAL INCOME	£ 9,157

<i>Printing costs</i>	£ 3,182
<i>Postage, copying and stationery</i>	3,076
<i>Insurance</i>	35
<i>Net cost of dinner</i>	48

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 6,341

SURPLUS FOR YEAR	£ 2,816

The Society's bank balance at the end of May was unusually healthy, distorted in part by prepaid subscriptions for 2000-2001 and to an even greater degree by prepayments for the Millennium Tour.

Since it seemed that there had been a satisfactory level of subscription renewals by members, it was reasonable to expect that there would be no need to increase the annual subscription in the coming year.

Wodehouse Playhouse: *Response from the BBC*

We have had a further response from the BBC, dated 4th July, in our quest for a commercial video release for the superb *Wodehouse Playhouse* TV series from the 1970s. The relevant paragraphs are as follows:

"I am currently investigating the potential of releasing *Wodehouse Playhouse* and have commissioned some research from our archive about the rights situation regarding the programmes and the quality of the masters.

This has taken much longer than expected to arrive and I am in the process of finding out exactly when I can expect to receive the information I require.

As soon as I have this I will be able to consult with our marketing and sales departments to find out whether *Wodehouse Playhouse* will make a viable video release."

We can do no more, except encourage individual members to write in support of our campaign, to

Warwickshire v Yorkshire

Hope Gaines and Murray Hedgcock investigate the origin of Jeeves

Readers familiar with the 1930s novel *Laughing Gas* will be aware that it represents Plum's principal foray into the realms of science fiction, (with *Unpleasantness at Bludleigh Court* and *Honeysuckle Cottage* representing short stories in the same genre). Its entire plot depended on the simultaneous visit by two characters to the murkier areas of the fourth dimension, and it seems that the book has proved a true-to-life inspiration for Hope Gaines and Murray Hedgcock.

Around the time in mid-August when Murray was tapping 'Percy Jeeves' into the internet search engine *Google* and being directed to an entry for The Old Stone House Hotel, which claimed to be the inspiration of our Jeeves, Hope, who was touring the rest of England after enjoying the Millennium tour, was staying in the very same Old Stone House, which sits about a mile up a hill from the village of Hawes, in North Yorkshire.

One day, on the way through the vestibule, Hope noticed an old newspaper article, laminated and tacked casually on the wall. It was from a York paper in 1981, and the name 'Jeeves' leapt out of the headline. It seems that Percy Jeeves had played outstandingly for the Hawes Cricket Club and was hired by the builder of The Old Stone House (it wasn't old then) as his groundskeeper or houseman or something – the current owners weren't clear. The said builder had been a cricket fanatic of the highest order and had his house sited precisely on the hill so that the front garden provided a clear unobstructed view of the village cricket grounds. Hope points out that this is fairly obvious once it has been indicated, as all the land slopes down towards the village except for one section, which is flat as flat can be and just the right size for a pitch – now regrettably all part of the sheep pasture, but still there. Anyway, the theory which she learned is that Plum was a pal of this Stone House builder, and that as a result Hawes may be the place where he met the legendary player.

CHAPTER 8

The Unplayable Jeeves

In the late summer of 1910, my father, then Warwickshire secretary, was on a walking holiday in his native Yorkshire and stayed one night in the village of Hawes. Using his murderous cut-throat razor, he had mistimed a stroke while shaving; a visit to the local doctor was necessary. The doctor, having dealt with the cut, prescribed a visit to the afternoon's cricket match, and here, on the lovely ground at Hawes, my father saw a young cricketer whose effortless grace as a bowler told something of his potential. At the end of the innings he said to him 'How would you like to play for Warwickshire?' That was how the Jeeves saga began.

Meanwhile, Murray had delved into his library, and dug out *Cricket Calling*, written in 1995 by one Rowland Ryder, whose father had been secretary of Warwickshire County Cricket Club for many years. Chapter Eight, *The Unplayable Jeeves*, is devoted to the short career of Percy Jeeves, and its opening paragraph is reproduced above.

Murray prefers this explanation as to how Percy came to be in the Warwickshire team which PGW was to see in action at Cheltenham in 1914, that momentous day when a legend was born. So while both Hawes and The Old Stone House Hotel may have a claim to be associated with Wodehouse's adoption of Jeeves, the connection may be somewhat more peripheral than their account seems to suggest.

In *Laughing Gas* the impact of the fourth dimension was negated when one of the characters affected, the original Lord Havershot, was knocked head over heels by a motor-bike ridden by the stripling, Joey Cooley. There is no equivalent denouement to this story, Hope (actually) and Murray (virtually) each having returned safely to their respective homes, thousands of miles apart. But it does demonstrate how widely spread are the Wodehousean tentacles, and how the alert member can follow an allusion or reference to the benefit of us all.

Fairways and Fables

Dominic Coffey, from Ireland, recalls Wodehouse on Golf

“At the risk of becoming a P G Wodehouse type bore may I again play the national trophy victory card.”

These somewhat derogatory words emerged from the pages of a recent newsletter published by a prominent golf club, stirring in me a feeling of ire, indignation and thoroughgoing vexation. Did the penman responsible, one asks, a club official in high office and a person of lofty education and considerable knowledge, pause for even a moment to judge just what he was so flippantly desecrating? Was this exalted and honoured follower of the Royal and Ancient game of golf hinting for even a second that we disciples of the gifted and widely revered Wodehouse were mere ‘types’, and, as such, idiots to be bypassed, shunned, and even avoided at every opportunity? Perhaps the misguided golf club chappie was merely endeavouring to exercise his wit (if you will pardon the expression) by tattling about some of the characters to be found within the pages of many PGW novels, but even here again we must challenge the uninspired jester as he goes his verbose way.

To simply bracket the many entertaining individuals one encounters within the chapters of a Wodehouse text as ‘types’ is as far from the mark as to refer to say Greta Garbo, of film fame, and the late alluring Cleopatra of Egypt, as creatures of the same mould and species. We can allow the unfortunate fellow to grade several members of the Drones Club as being somewhat short of par rating when matters called for heavy thinking of the brand made popular by a certain Professor Einstein, but there are far too many disparate and diverse beings popping up within the pages of say a Wooster classic than justifies linking the lot under the heading of typical ‘types’.

The insult to our mentor, be it real or accidental, is made all the more sinister by the fact that it arises from what should have been the start of a profound piece penned by the President of a long-established golf links. Was the individual not aware that he has been casting distortions on the name and works of the most dedicated and devoted golfer who ever swung a club; on a scribe who alone was responsible for recording and maintaining the true history of the long game thro’ fairways and foul – through fads, farcical changes, and the passage of decades? It is essential at this juncture to quote the exact findings of our inspired author, penned when he had attained the mature age of ninety-two, as a means

of putting matters into correct focus, and to demonstrate the deplorable dithering of that golf club wallah in a true light – just as the thoughtless raving of an absurd adolescent – unworthy and without cause. Plum, in the course of his Preface to the *Golf Omnibus*, stated:

“Whenever you see me with a furrowed brow you can be sure that what is on my mind is the thought that if only I had taken up golf earlier instead of fooling about writing stories and things, I might have got my handicap down to under eighteen”.

In those simple words is revealed the regret and secret sorrow of a true sportsman; the honest admission of an unwavering adherent to all that is inspiring and magnanimous about linksmanship. He continues to mourn his tardy introduction to golf by confessing (and again I quote):

“It is this reflection that has always made my writing so sombre, its whole aroma like that of muddy shoes in a Russian locker room.”

A lamentation that goes straight to the heart. The ultimate grief of a still devoted dedicated divot excavator to the great game handed down by our inventive and gifted ‘fore’ fathers is surely contained in his summary on the subject, which ponders on the theme further – and contains these reflections:

“Many changes have taken place since I wrote *The Clicking of Cuthbert* in 1916. I believe one still drives with a Driver nowadays, but where now is the Mashie, the Cleek, the Spoon and the Baffy? I like to think that when I got into a bunker (isn’t it called a trap now?) I got out of it, if I ever did, with a Niblick and not a Wedge.”

Are these the unfeeling words, good friends, the idle utterances of an author who aimed his tales at ‘boring types’; one who typed yarns of intricate skill and good humour for the amusement and diversion of a loyal and relishing public – whose narratives overflow with a myriad collection of diverting and unique notabilities – or the sincere unchanging emotions of someone who learned to take the rough with the smooth as he strode the fairways – a master of his craft – always able to differentiate between a hook and a slice – a bore and a bounder?

It is an ‘Open’ and shut case, Mi’ Lud. There can be only one verdict. The defence rests!

News of New Publications

On the 31st August Penguin Audio published abridgements of four Jeeves and Wooster books: *Very Good, Jeeves*; *The Inimitable Jeeves*; *Thank You, Jeeves*; and *Jeeves in the Offing*. All the recordings are three hours long on two cassettes and priced at £8.99. Kirsty Bennett only had the opportunity to listen to one book, *Thank You, Jeeves*, and enjoyed it thoroughly. "One can scarcely imagine any actor more qualified than Simon Callow to read the tales," she said. "His delivery is excellent and the voice he provides for Bertie Wooster is exceptional; he reminded me in no small amount of Hugh Laurie's interpretation in the television series *Jeeves and Wooster*. The stories have been expertly abridged, and while they would be perfect for new recruits to Wodehouse or younger listeners, I would also recommend them to anyone who simply wished to relax in the world of Wodehouse."

Timeframed Ltd is the world leader in the creation of limited editions of themed collections derived from important archives. They plan to market two which will feature original Wodehouse material such as unpublished letters and manuscript pages in framed montages (of around 800mm x 600mm) about the beginning of October. It will be possible to preview them in due course on the Timeframed website (www.timeframed.com). It is expected that they will be issued in editions of 1,000, and the selling price per frame will be in the region of £200.

After the Jeeves and Wooster novels were voted the winners in the Humour category of its *Books of the Century* readers' poll, The Folio Society has issued the remaining five Jeeves and Wooster novels so that all eleven novels are available in matching sets. The titles just released are *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*; *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*; *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*; *Much Obligated Jeeves*; and *Jeeves in the Offing*. The Society was offering 20% off the purchase price for a limited period, but the leaflet we saw offered no information as to how to accept the offer, what the price would be, or when the offer would expire!

A new edition of *Sunset at Blandings* has been published by Penguin in their series of reprints with David Hitch covers. The new edition contains a foreword by Douglas Adams, notes on the origin of Blandings by Norman Murphy, while your editor has updated the original footnotes which had been prepared by Richard Osborne. The *Evening Standard* nominated the book as 'Paperback of the Week' on August 21. The ISBN number of *Sunset at Blandings* is 0-14-028465-6, and it costs £5.99.

The first DVD of a Wodehouse television series will be launched by Granada/VCI on October 23 (ref: GVD 007). The complete first *Jeeves and Wooster* series, on double DVD (260 minutes), with special features including an audio introduction to picture, will retail for £24.99.

Forthcoming Society Events

CAMBRIDGE

The meeting at Cambridge will be held at Hobbs Pavilion Restaurant, Parker's Piece, on Saturday 28th October. Lasting from 2.30 until 5pm, there will be two talks and an illustrated discussion of *A Damsel in Distress*. The event is open to all, but it would be appreciated if you would let _____ know if you propose to attend

BOLTON

Plans are being formulated for a meeting in Bolton next year. If you are likely to be interested in attending, or would care to help with arranging the event, please call _____

COVENTRY

Plans are also in train for a meeting in Coventry next year. Please call _____ for information or to offer help.

Other Matters of Interest

HENRY BLOFELD ON TEST MATCH SPECIAL

Patron Henry Blofeld has done the Society proud during this season by contriving two mentions while commentating on major cricket matches.

During a Test Match being played on the day of the *Gold Bats v Dulwich Dusters* contest, he announced that our game was taking place and we did have additional spectators as a result. Then, during the one-day international cup final, he referred to the Millennium Tour, and wished us well in our attempts to find the sources for Blandings Castle.

CHRISTOPHER ROBIN

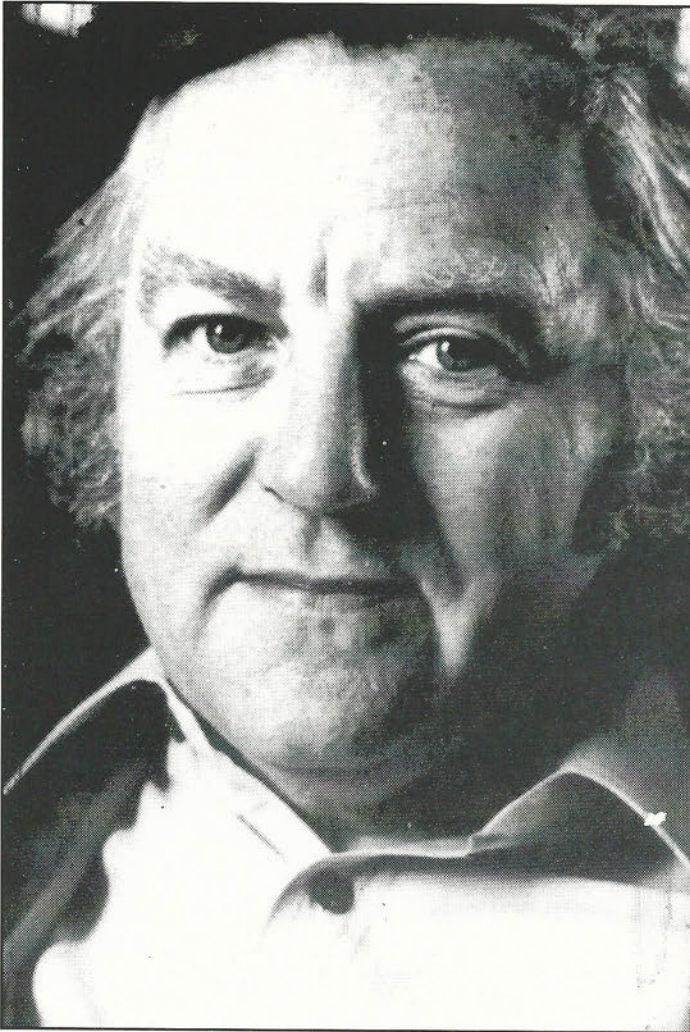
American member James Robinson noticed a letter from A A Milne on the *Antiques Roadshow* which included the words: "Christopher Robin is a darling; top of his form at prep school, able to jump his pony over a three-and-a-half foot hurdle and loves P G Wodehouse." Like son, like father?

PROFILE OF A PATRON

Keith Waterhouse became hooked on PGW in his boyhood as an addict of public school stories from the local library. A preference for big thick books led him to *Mike*, which led him to *Psmith in the City*. Psmith, in due course, led him to Blandings Castle, from whose battlements he surveyed the entire oeuvre.

He believes there is no sensation more joyous than the discovery that a favourite author has written an entire shelf of books, waiting to be read. At the age of 15 he began to write a novel in slavish imitation of the master. Of this mercifully abandoned work he now remembers only two sentences: 'His face was the colour of chalk. Red chalk.'

Wodehouse, however, continued to be influential when Keith became first a journalist, then a novelist, then a dramatist and screenwriter. His best-known novel is *Billy Liar*, and the revival of his play *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell*, starring Peter O'Toole, was recently a sell-out at the Old Vic. PGW's adaptation of Molnar's *The Play's the Thing*, incidentally, was the first straight stage production he ever saw.



Remarkable Events in Glasgow

It is both unlikely and true, however misleading, to claim that those gathered for the Society meeting held in Glasgow on 3rd September drank the Rabbie Burns pub in the centre of that city dry of draft beer. Situated just one block from Central Station, our venue was such as might have been the haunt of an urban George Cyril Wellbeloved, at Bottleton East.

A lack of staff meant that our exclusive room was shared with the regular customers, and though a putative Poppy Kegley-Bassington, belly-dancer, wearing a high fashion outfit of bra top and gauzy trousers, did her best behind the bar, she could not offer bitter or Guinness when there was none. Lager ran out during the meeting.

The character of the pub, and the enthusiasm of those attending, together generated an afternoon of great enjoyment. Joe Harkins, the member given the daunting task of arranging the meeting, master-minded the programme with great good humour, and deserves many plaudits for the event, which attracted members from Edinburgh, Lancaster and London as well as from the environs of Glasgow.

Nick Townend presented a thoughtful analysis of the chronology of the Tales of St Austin's, of which there are 15 apart from Plum's first novel, *The Pothunters*. Such is Nick's detective work that he will soon qualify as a skilled assistant at the Argus Enquiry Agency.

Joe had prepared a fiendish quiz for which those present split into small teams. The questions were of the 'How many of Mr Mulliner's male relatives can you name?' variety, and so everyone was able to earn their fair share of points.

Tony Ring led a presentation, on acetates, of the material used by Guildford Museum for their exhibition on Wodehouse's life last year. The talk could easily be adapted for any audience, so if you want to put on a 'Life of Wodehouse' talk in a library, school, or elsewhere, please contact Tony.

Add in readings of Plum's poems by James Wood, Melvyn Haggerty and Arno Kraft, and of his *Mostly About Haggis*, and the playing of five tracks off the CD-in-progress by Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair, and absentees have cause to rue their other engagements.

My First Wodehouse Experience

By John Psaward

My 'First Wodehouse Experience' was the editor of this esteemed publication. At the time (c 1962) he was known as 'Ring, A', and I answered to 'Saward, J', and together we were serving a sentence in the Lower Sixth of a penal colony for the sons of gentlefolk in Hampton-upon-Thames. One morning, as we opened desk-lids at the start of another day of scholastic salt-mining, I noticed, mixed up with Tony's textbooks, a Penguin edition of one of the works of the man I now revere as Master. Memory has not salvaged the title, but I am fairly sure it was an opus Woosteranum.

Gentle reader, you will find it hard to believe, still harder to forgive, but at the sight of that classic I recoiled with horror. You see, Tony Ring then was what he is now, an upright member of the human race, but I was that ugly item, a Rebellious Teenager of distinctly anarchistic tendencies. If my hormonal resources and the regulations of the school had allowed it, I would have sported a long black beard and waved a banner for the Red Dawn. J Saward liked to curl up with Dark Modern Novels (James Joyce, heaven help us) and Bolshevik tracts for the overthrow of western civilization. Young Saward bore more than a passing resemblance to Old Rowbotham as recommended by Bingo Little:

"A delightful chap. Wants to massacre the bourgeoisie, sack Park Lane, and disembowel the hereditary aristocracy. Well, nothing could be fairer than that, what?"

I glimpsed the PGW in AR's desk, inwardly despised it, but didn't forget it. A seed had been sown, a heavy hint had been dropped, by my over-worked guardian angel (a pure spirit, by the way, whose literary taste is simply impeccable).

By the time of My Second Wodehouse Experience (in about 1970) I was still pretty left-of-field in politics but now a student of theology, more closely resembling a Reverend Stinker than a Revolutionary Rowbotham. I found myself chatting one day with a Dominican friar who was heavy with 'flu and anxious to retire to bed. After greeting me with a monastic "What ho!", the good Father urged me on my way with these unforgettable words: "Must be toddling off. Have to find out whether Gally has rescued the Empress of Blandings."

Now, because of the TV performances of the late Sir Ralph Richardson, I was able to pick up the literary reference, and I have to tell you that it made me

think. "That fellow Wodehouse again," I said to myself, "I must pursue inquiries and leave no stone unturned. What is this Johnny's secret, if even Thomistic philosophers resort to him as a healing balm?" Well, to cut a long story short (as Homer said as he polished off *The Iliad*), I read, I saw, I was conquered.

My Third Wodehouse Experience took place in 1998 in the Mystery Bookshop of the incomparable Bob and Norma Nissenbaum of Rosemont, Pennsylvania. By now I was one of the soundest Eggs in the Drones, a paid-up member of The Wodehouse Society, and a seminary professor who specialized in dispatching Plumological priests to the unsuspecting flocks of Lincoln NB and Corpus Christi TX. As the said Bob (*Wodehousien extraordinaire*) and I discussed the finer points of pig husbandry, he suddenly interjected – if that is the word I am searching for – the remark: "I've just been talking on the phone to a man with an accent like yours. He's called Tony Ring." Well, you could have knocked me over with the notes for an Al Gore speech. I had come full circle – a Ring cycle, so to speak. Once, as a supercilious schoolboy, I had been his critic. Now, as an ageing academic, I could not fail to be his admirer. I positively burst with vicarious Old Hamptonian pride at his achievements in making Pelham Grenville better known and loved. So, dear Wodehouseans, I hope you will forgive this Prodigal Son his youthful indiscretions, and when next you hear Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells denouncing the Younger Generation, remember that the disgusting Kropotkin of today may turn out to be the decent Crumpet of tomorrow.

Professor John Psaward holds the St Francis of Assisi Chair in Dogmatic Theology at the International Theological Institute in Gaming, Austria. The 'P' in his name is silent, as in 'Psardine Psandwiches'.

The Editor has chosen to exercise his right of reply to add that the said Saward was always a leading member of the relatively small group in school whose formidable brains caused the head to stick out at the back. This was accompanied by a refusal to partake of school dinners, presumably because they failed to provide an adequate daily intake of fish. I look forward to another article from John on how he has held a *Great Sermon Handicap* in his Institute, for residing at a place with a name like *Gaming* what else would he do in his spare time?

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

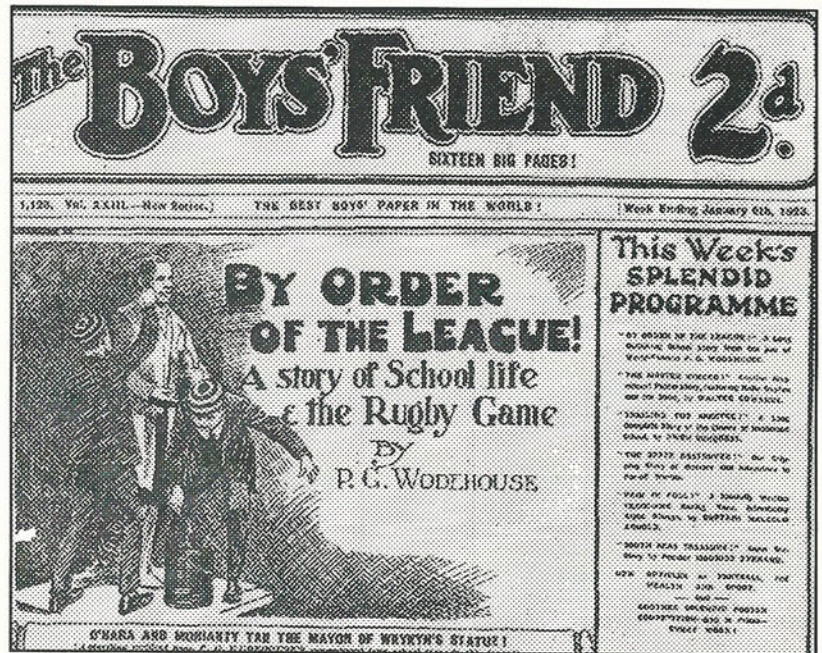
Magazine Appearances of the School Short Stories

Most of Wodehouse's short school stories originally appeared in magazines, before book form publication in either *Tales of St Austin's* (1903) or *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere* (1997). Wodehouse's increasing fame caused several stories to be republished in magazines later in his career, and these reappearances are not always recorded in McIlvaine.

The one story in *Tales of St Austin's* which had not previously been published in a magazine was *A Shocking Affair*: it finally appeared in *Puffin Post* (Q2 1973). One of the stories which had previously appeared, in *The Public School Magazine* in October 1901, was *Author!* Neither of these are recorded in McIlvaine. Among the *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere* stories, *Personally Conducted* first appeared in *Cassell's Magazine* in July 1907 (McIlvaine, D79.1). It later appeared, unrecorded by McIlvaine, in *The British Girl's Annual* of 1918.

McIlvaine does record the appearance of *Jackson's Dip!* and *Out of Bounds!* in *The Greyfriars Holiday Annual*, in 1925 and 1927 respectively (D92.1-2). These had previously appeared as *An Afternoon Dip* in *Pearson's* in September 1904 (D118.1) and as *The Manoeuvres of Charteris* in *The Captain* in August and September 1903 (D77.8: confusingly, McIlvaine only cites the September appearance, but gives the page numbers for both the August and September appearances under the September entry). Two other stories also appeared in *The Greyfriars Holiday Annual*, but are not recorded in McIlvaine. *Scott's Sister* appeared in 1924, being the re-titling of *Playing The Game*, from *Pearson's* in May 1906 (D118.12). *How Pillingshot Scored* appeared in 1926, having previously appeared under the same title in *The Captain* in May 1903 (D77.7).

The *Greyfriars Holiday Annual* was predominantly concerned with the exploits of Frank Richards' Billy Bunter. Another Frank Richards' vehicle (in his guise as Owen Conquest) was *The Boys' Friend*, a weekly paper. (Incidentally, Conquest's stories featured a character called Jimmy Silver of Rookwood. It is not stated whether he is related to Jimmy Silver of Eckleton in *The Head of Kay's*.)



The Boys' Friend is not listed in McIlvaine, but it reprinted several of Wodehouse's stories. *The Gold Bat* was serialised as *By Order of the League!* in eight weekly episodes, from 6 January to 24 February 1923. The Editor introduced this as 'the greatest school story ever written!' Before this, in 1922, six of the short stories, listed below, had already been republished. (These six stories had by that date only appeared in magazine form, and were given new titles for their appearance in *The Boys' Friend*. The Editor therefore felt enabled to describe them as 'a Great New Series of School Stories, by the world-famous author – P G WODEHOUSE'.)

- 18/11 *The Locksley Lines Supplying Trust, Ltd.*
(A Corner in Lines)
- 25/11 *The Cure of the Slackers!*
(The Reformation of Study Sixteen)
- 2/12 *Pillingshot's First Case!* (Pillingshot, Detective)
- 9/12 *Scent Per Scent!* (Homeopathic Treatment)
- 16/12 *The Bluff That Failed!* (Stone and the Weed)
- 23/12 *The Schemer!* (The Autograph Hunters)

It is interesting to speculate how much control Wodehouse had over the new titles chosen for *The Greyfriars Holiday Annual* and *The Boys' Friend*, given his complaint to Bill Townend in 1928: 'Don't you think the tragedy of an author's life is the passion printers have for exclamation marks? They love to shove them in. It gives an impression of febrile excitement . . .'. (*Performing Flea*, 1953, p40)

Right Ho, Wodehouse! *on Stage*

Christopher Owen launches his new show in deepest Surrey

The Editor reports on the reactions of a full house to the opening night's performance.

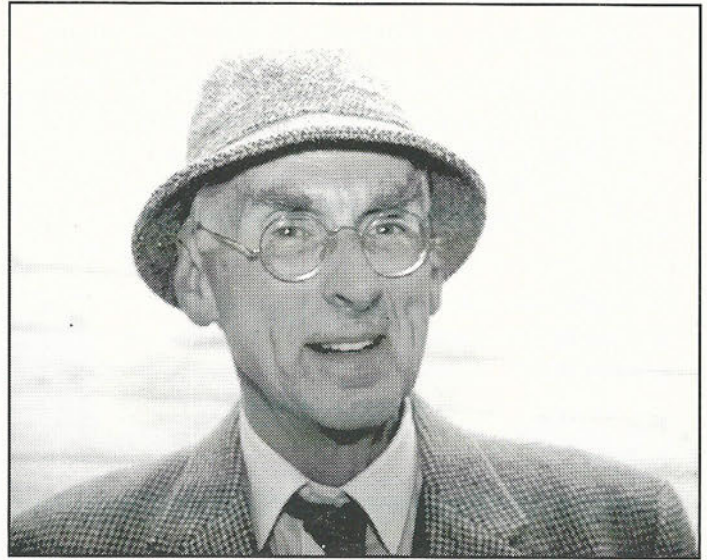
The Parva Village Literary Society (President, Lady Constance Schoonmaker) met at Hammerwood and Holtze Village Hall on June 10 to hear the 9th Earl of Emsworth (Christopher Owen) present an informal talk about the life of his family's diarist, the late Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, D Litt. Remarkably, the demand for seats at the gathering exceeded the Hall's capacity of 72, and there was speculation as to whether the President had placed a three-line whip on all the staff of the Castle and tenants of the outlying buildings.

Fortunately for the Earl, who was arrayed throughout in more casual clothing than her ladyship would have approved, Lady Constance was not actually present, though he could not remember why, nor what message she had instructed him to deliver. Nor, it transpired, was it more than by a stroke of good fortune that Lord Emsworth arrived at all, for his mind was distracted by the refusal of the Empress to eat a potato.

Nevertheless, behind the absent-minded Earl's facade the narration, entitled *Right Ho, Wodehouse!*, told Plum's story with great accuracy and his wartime experience was handled briefly, with tact and delicacy. The life story is interspersed not only with a number of messages from Beach, which permit the occasional quantum leap in the action, but more importantly, with seven of Plum's songs, sung in the reedy tenor voice you would expect.

Although one or two (such as *Sir Galahad* from *Leave It To Jane*) were familiar to the older members of our community, others, such as *It's a Hard, Hard, Hard, Hard World for a Man* from *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* were not. And it was a great surprise to hear the Anglicised versions of two songs, *Nesting Time in Tooting* (from *Oh, Joy!*) and *A Cottage in Kent* (from *The Beauty Prize*), instead of the better-known originals *Nesting Time in Flatbush* (*Oh, Boy!*) and *A Bungalow in Quogue* (*The Riviera Girl*). To hear these two songs performed on stage is alone almost worth the admission money.

And of course, we were kept on the edge of our seats by news of the Empress, as our speaker kept adding another clue to the problem of recalling a method (which James Belford had once explained to him) of overcoming her new policy of starvation.



Christopher Owen as Lord Emsworth

Member Rona Topaz, who also attended the first performance, wondered whether members of the audience who were less familiar with the Blandings stories might have been confused by the constant references to the Empress being off her food and thought they were being short-changed in information about Wodehouse the man. Judging by the reaction of the 140-strong audience at Stevenage on 1st September, Christopher's fifth performance, she need have no fear. His Lord Emsworth has grown significantly in stature, and is drawing increased audience participation. Rona commented that overall the show she saw was enjoyable (and the audience participation worthwhile) and suggested that members should go to see the show to form their own opinions.

Christopher has a lot of engagements in the coming months in many parts of the country, and deserves the support of our members. Many of the bookings were listed in June's Wooster Sauce, and we are keeping an up-to-date list on our website.

Chivers Audio Books

The second new unabridged recording to be issued this year (after *Lord Emsworth and Others*, see the review on page 21) is *Cocktail Time*, read by Jonathan Cecil. They can both be obtained by telephone on Freephone 0800 136919 (or in North America 1-800-621-0182), fax 01225 448005, or by e-mail: info@audiobookcollection.com

Lord Emsworth and Others – Audio Book

A Recent Chivers Offering Reviewed by Kirsty Bennett

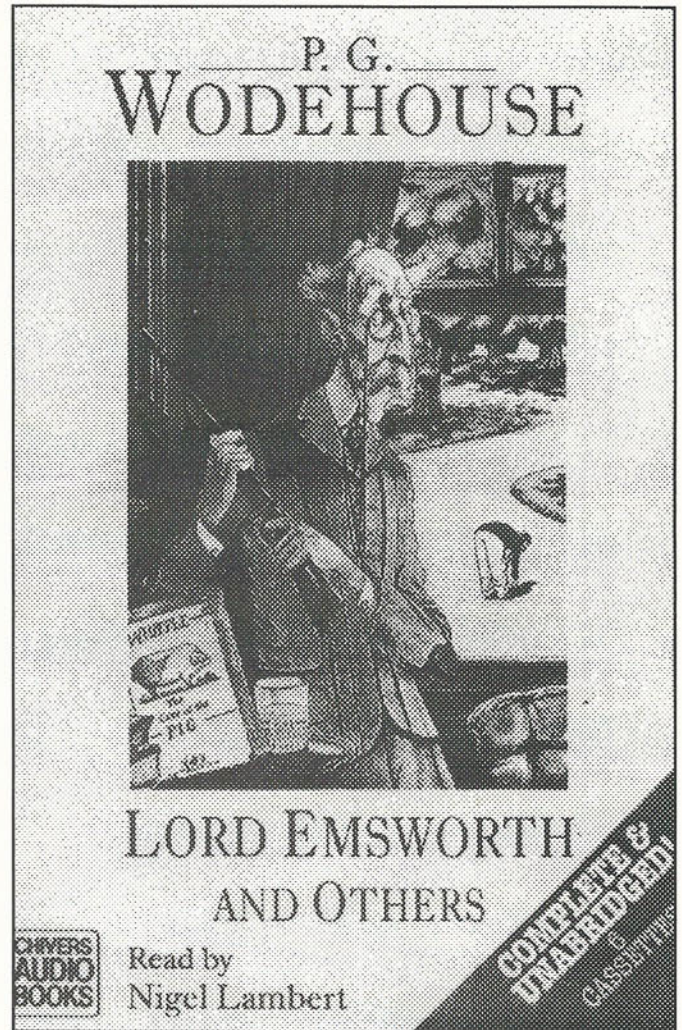
I have to admit I had reservations about hearing P G Wodehouse on cassette. I had quite obstinately created images and voices for the characters in my head, and was apprehensive about hearing someone else's interpretation.

However my fears were soon laid to rest – I thoroughly enjoyed the cassettes. Nigel Lambert's voices were wonderful – his Lady Constance was delightfully shrill and his Lord Emsworth sounded every bit the bumbling innocent that he is. For me the ultimate triumph was the voice of Rupert Baxter – his clipped tone brought the humour to life.

Any P G Wodehouse book has a wide range of characters, yet Lambert met the challenge with a wide variety of voices and tone.

In my initial reservation I had not considered how pleasant it could be to sit back and listen as the world of Blandings Castle is created around you. Time passes quickly, so much so that I spent an entire day listening to these tapes, and I consider it perhaps the best way to pass a lazy day in summer.

It must be a daunting task for Nigel Lambert to characterise the people of whom generations have formed their own opinions. I did not agree with all the voices, no listener would, but Lambert portrays the essence of the characters so we are free to fine-tune the images in our minds.



The Luck of the Bodkins on Radio Four

An unabridged reading on audio-tape of *The Luck of the Bodkins* would last about ten hours, so one can immediately appreciate the magnitude of the task confronting Patricia Hooker as she started to adapt the novel as a one-hour play for Radio 4 in June. It is a tribute to her skill that the production contained all the main characters, the main elements of the plot and a reasonable number of Plum's wittiest exchanges.

No attempt was made to augment the dialogue with narration, which meant that, for example, what may be Wodehouse's best ever opening paragraph had to be omitted, but overall it was the right decision. The play made pleasing listening, and it is to be hoped that Radio 4 will commission further adaptations of his less well-known novels.

A Plea for More Information for the McIlvaine Update

The year is passing rapidly and more assistance is needed with information for the addendum to the McIlvaine *Bibliography* which is being proposed by the International Wodehouse Association. If you have Wodehouse material which you think may be scarce or unusual, or you know it was not included in the original book, and it falls within one or more of the following descriptions, please let the Editor know as soon as possible. He would rather have too much to consider than too little.

The categories are: books by Wodehouse (including rarer paperbacks); omnibuses of stories solely by Wodehouse; plays by him; magazines or newspapers containing his stories, series, articles or poetry; his introductions to the books of another; translations of his books; and commercial audiotapes and videotapes.

Recent Press Comment

America (a Jesuit magazine), March 18 (from David Landman)

In an editorial concerning a new Amtrak train (motto: *Speed and Excellence*) there was a brief review of railroad imagery in literature, mentioning Norman Murphy's use of train timetables in his *In Search of Blandings* investigations.

The Beat Goes On, April (from Nick Mitchell)

In an interview, pop music historian and DJ Mike Read included Wodehouse (along with Hancock, *Blackadder* and *The Simpsons*) in a list of people or series which most made him laugh.

Sunday Times (Culture), May 21

Carried an interview with David Campbell of *Everyman* about the genesis of the Bollinger *Everyman* Wodehouse prize for comic literature.

Daily Mail, May 24 (from Murray Hedgcock)

An article by James Chapman reporting a warning that failing to eat enough oily fish might cause a decline in brain power reminded readers that Bertie Wooster thought Jeeves's superior intellect was based on eating lots of fish.

East Grinstead Courier, May 25 and June 15

Daily Telegraph, June 3

Previewed and reviewed Christopher Owen's one-man show *Right Ho, Jeeves* (see page 20), the *Telegraph* referring to it as 'an absolutely spiffing talk'.

Daily Telegraph, June 1 (from James Wood)

In an article concerning Gordon Brown's attack on Oxford dons at the TUC conference, Boris Johnson reminded him that it was madness to attack that target:

No insult that the Chancellor has endured at the hands of Tony Blair's spin-doctors can compare with the bitchiness and back-stabbing that goes on every day in the Senior Common Rooms of Oxbridge. Dons will spend decades in feuds over the use of the diagma, or whether Anton Chekov was in some way influenced by P G Wodehouse (or was it the other way round) . . .

Daily Mail, June 9 (from Mark Goodfellow and John Hayzelden)

Offered a prize of the first ten books in the new *Everyman* Wodehouse series to the first correct answer opened to a quiz consisting of three Wodehouse-related questions. The answers appeared on June 23.

Daily Mail, also June 9 (from Mark Goodfellow)

In an article concerning the behaviour of King Edward VIII, Piers Brandon suggested that the King's private universe was 'a kind of X-certificate version of P G Wodehouse's Drones Club'.

Financial Times, June 24 (from Hilary Bruce)

Jan Dalley's article 'Comic Master with a Touch of Class' concerning the new *Everyman* series had the sub-heading 'P G Wodehouse is being re-packaged for a new age'.

Saga Magazine, July (from Alexander Dainty)

Clement Freud described Berners Street (north of Oxford Street in London) as a street where 'real hotels have Ruritanian Field Marshals wearing embossed top hats and multitudinous gold stripes'.

Sunday Times, July 2 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Godfrey Smith included in his regular column the item from June's *Wooster Sauce* concerning Sir Edward Cazalet's meeting with the Chief Justice of Bhutan.

Daily Telegraph, July 5 (from Murray Hedgcock)

In an editorial commenting on a headmaster's warning to girl pupils not to sacrifice marriage and motherhood for a high-powered career, which was not universally welcomed by his audience, Bertie Wooster's approach to giving a speech was recalled (ie his suggestion that the girls should bet that "If you can stand outside Romano's in the Strand, you can see the clock on the wall of the Law Courts down in Fleet Street", because they would be able to collect and win a packet), and it was suggested that Bertie's words may prove to have been the more accurate.

Daily Telegraph, July 10 (from Hilary Bruce)

The *Peterborough* column previewed the Society's Millennium Tour, noting that we would be visiting Weston Park and Sudeley Castle.

Channel 4: The Real Queen Mother, July 10 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Biographer Hugh Massingberd said in the television documentary:

The key to the Queen Mother's character is that she is a bit like one of those Wodehousean heroines – Bobbie Wickham or Stiffy Byng – who lived for pleasure, but there is something steely underneath.

Recent Press Comment

Evening Standard, July 14 (from Murray Hedgcock)

An editorial headed ‘Boris Wooster’ commented on member Boris Johnson’s adoption as parliamentary candidate for Henley at the next election. Pieces in *The Sunday Times* and *The Observer* on July 16 each drew a similar comparison.

Sunday Times, July 16

Godfrey Smith, writing enthusiastically of the Royal Opera House’s production of Prokofiev’s *War and Peace*, referred to ‘the glorious voice of the silly ass Count Bezukhov, a lovable Bertie Wooster of the steppes’.

Observer, July 16

Robert McCrum wrote about the job he faces as PGW’s next biographer, saying ‘There is no other English writer in living memory who has so many passionate devotees.’

Evening Standard, July 18

Reported the launch of our Millennium tour.

Daily Telegraph, July 21 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Lord Oaksey wrote in his column that Sir Edward Cazalet was the only High Court Judge ever to ride a winner at Cheltenham’s National Hunt Festival.

The Times, July 25

Golfer R A Morley had a letter published promoting Wodehouse’s approach to the game of golf over that of the paper’s journalist Simon Barnes.

Evening Standard, July 25 (from Helen Murphy)

An article exploring Ben Elton’s and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s new musical *The Beautiful Game* (about football – soccer to Americans) reported Elton’s view that PGW was ‘one of the greatest writers of all time’ and that Lloyd Webber also loved his PGW.

Daily Mail, July 31 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Keith Waterhouse suggested that the government’s new NHS prospectus (a free piece of fruit a day for schoolchildren) was straight from the fertile brain of that PGW creation Stanley Ukridge.

“Imagine, laddie. A satsuma in every satchel. A damson in every desk. A banana on every bean-bag. Think of the soundbites – go to school on a grape. Think of the photo-opportunities of me sharing a pomegranate with an under-privileged tot. I tell you, old horse, it’s the best idea since my dog college.”

POETS’ CORNER

Perfection

Since the day when I first learned to toddle
There has never been much wrong with me.
I have always been reckoned a model
Of what a young fellow should be.
I suppose I’ve attained to perfection
As near as humanity can.
And I’m free to confess that I’ve gained my success
Because I’m a spectacled man.

Dispelled by my magical glasses,
Each criminal tendency flees;
My nature in beauty surpasses
All previous records with ease;
I seldom, if ever, have murdered,
Or stolen, or forged, or told lies;
In fact, I don’t long to do anything wrong,
Because I look after my eyes.

No sinful amusements delight me,
Recreations, if bad, I eschew.
In vain wicked people invite me
To handle the cards or the cue.
I know the true joys of existence,
For me life is *couleur de rose*;
Life can never be sad, things can never be bad
While my glasses are perched on my nose.

Ye youths who twin lenses of crystal
Have up to the present disdained,
Consider how thus you have missed all
The qualities which I’ve explained.
Repent while there’s time for repentance,
Fly, fly to your oculist’s, do!
You may be, by-and-by, just as perfect as I,
If you’ll only wear spectacles too.

From *Evening News and Evening Mail*,
21 February, 1903

Guardian, August 5 (from Peter Wightman)

In a review of member Francis Wheen’s *Karl Marx*, Nicholas Lezard approved of Wheen’s use of Wodehousean analogies, such as ‘There is more than a trace of [Henry Hyndman] in PGW’s character Psmith . . .’

Daily Telegraph, August 19 (from James Hogg)

Commenting on Darren Berry’s achievement in being run out for a duck on his first appearance at Lord’s, *Cricketer Diary* mentioned his performance against our Gold Bats (see page 7) and went on to consider some of Plum’s cricket connections.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

Now until November – Beyond a Joke

Beyond a Joke continues its tour until the beginning of November: see page 11 for a review and June's *Wooster Sauce* for the itinerary.

October 19 – Society Dinner at Gray's Inn

The Society's formal (black tie) dinner will be held at Gray's Inn. Contact Tim Andrew or e-mail: tjandrew@waitrose.com) for up-to-date information on the availability of tickets.

October 21 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Please contact Norman Murphy on for more information and to reserve a place.

October 28 – Meeting in Cambridge

A meeting is to be held in Cambridge at Hobbs Pavilion Restaurant, Parker's Piece, at 2.30, to which all are invited. For more details and a contact number see page 16.

November 14 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting at the Club of which Plum was once a member.

February 13, 2001 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting.

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March 25, 2001 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Please contact Norman Murphy on for more information and to reserve a place.

May 26, 2001 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Please contact Norman Murphy on for more information and to reserve a place.

June 15, 2001 – Annual Cricket Match and Dinner

The annual cricket match against the Dulwich Dusters will be held at Dulwich College, and will be followed by the annual dinner (lounge suit).

July 10, 2001 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting.

Oct 12 to 14, 2001 – TWS Convention, Philadelphia

Advance notice of the dates of the next convention of the American-based Society, to be held at the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel.

October 21 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Please contact Norman Murphy on for more information and to reserve a place.

November 13, 2001 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

This edition has been put together with the most invaluable assistance of Kirsty Bennett, one of our younger members, who stayed at Tilbury House for a week's work experience before returning to college for her A-level year. We wish Kirsty well in her exams next summer, and hope she can find time to make further contributions to *Wooster Sauce*.

James Hogg has pointed out that the middle name of Lord Horder, physician to Edward VII, George V, George VI and the present Queen, was Jeeves. James adds that he doesn't know if he was a Wodehouse fan, but the *Dictionary of National Biography* states that in his teaching Horder emphasised 'observation, precision and logic'. He thinks that the other Jeeves would have approved.

Laura Edwards, who lives in one of the flats into which Plum's Guildford birthplace has been divided, attended the opening night of *Beyond a Joke* in Guildford, and met a number of members.

Murray Hedgcock contributed this confirmation of PGW's accounts of the trials and tribulations of Hollywood writers from an interview given by director Billy Wilder (aged 93) in *Vanity Fair* in October:

"There were a hundred and four writers under contract at Paramount at the same time. There was a Writers' Building, a Writers' Annex Building, and a Writers' Annex *Annex* Building. There were many scripts that were never made, you know. Finished, but they were never made. We made 50 pictures that year, but we wrote 150."

Peter Viggers drew attention to a leaflet produced by the Great Western Society for their Didcot Railway Centre, in which they point out that Didcot Halt became Blandings Halt while the TV film *Heavy Weather* was being made.

The Chairman sent congratulations on the Society's behalf to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother on the occasion of her hundredth birthday.