



A Fine Body of Pig Lore

Murray Hedgcock reports Sir Richard Body's revelations concerning life at the sharp end of Agricultural Shows

Shock-horror! Whiffle is yesterday. Whiffle is out of date. Throw out your treasured, much-thumbed copy of his legendary, monumental work, *The Care of the Pig*. It is passé. It is a late parrot – it has joined the choir invisible. And so on.

This astonishing news was revealed to our select February Savage Club gathering by A Man Who Should Know – Sir Richard Body, who for many years contributed greatly to the gaiety of life by breeding Berkshires (the tribe of that most noble animal, queen of her sex, the Empress of Blandings). Recalling how Whiffle was the constant reading and piggish bible of Lord Emsworth in his never-ending crusade to expand the Empress beyond even her massive native proportions, Sir Richard was blunt: “Whiffle is no good.”

As he is a politician as well as a breeder, we of course took him at his word. The reasoning was simple, logical and understandable even to a Wodehousean:

“Whiffle wrote about the Twenties. Everything has changed since then. In those days, housewives looked for the produce of a good fat pig. Now, breeders need a lean pig to produce lean meat.”

Ah – but what has replaced Whiffle? What should we rush to order from Messrs Popgood and Grooly, to update us on pig nourishment, the modern equivalent of Wolff-Lehmann's Feeding Standard, and all the other *minutiae* essential for satisfactory husbandry? Sir Richard, sadly, did not elucidate. Does he fear competition?

But he talked eloquently of Pigs He Had Known, and pigmen, and the revival of the Berkshire from decline, when it had almost disappeared from English farms, to be refreshed by imports from Australia, New Zealand, and the US of A. Sir Richard made – perhaps unwittingly – one further revelation of Wodehousean significance. Lord Emsworth appears

to have taken an unusually modest role in the actual handling of the Empress, in her endless quest for Silver Medals. Owners always parade their pigs personally when they have a good chance of winning in the ‘vicious world’ of pig-showing, Sir Richard explained. (If the prospects are meagre, it seems that the unfortunate pigman is thrown into the frontline, to bear inevitable rejection, humiliation from his peers, and the hypocritical scorn of his owner). Did we ever actually read of Lord Emsworth parading the Empress at the Shropshire County Agricultural Society Show? Did he, even in the ordinary course of her life, cosset and cherish her in the fashion of Sir Richard with his own animals, other than enjoining Clarence George Wellbeloved and his like to do their very best?

And as Sir Richard explained, to gales of laughter, how even a solid citizen like himself had been unable to control not just one but both his most favoured pigs entered in the Newbury Show, ineptly displayed by their newish owner, we realised it would have been far too much for the irresolute personality and modest frame of Clarence, 9th Earl of Emsworth, to be asked to direct the Empress on her heavyweight way.

On page 12:

*My First Wodehouse Experience
by Frank McCourt,
author of Angela's Ashes*

With a Twinkle in His Eye

Dr Roslyn Handfinger-Kushner of New Jersey, Optometrist, considers certain Wodehouse characters from a professional viewpoint

How many times did you laugh at the title phrase and its many permutations when Plum used it in his stories? These ocular puns are particularly endearing to me since, by profession, I am an optometrist, or oculist as Plum would have called me. It would be quite natural for me to be drawn to his visual allusions, so while I was searching through Wodehouse's vast literary output for a *nom-de-Plum* to adopt (a sort of initiation requirement incumbent upon new members joining Chapter One, the Philadelphia-based chapter of The Wodehouse Society), I figured that my task was a snip.



From the French 10/18 edition of Piccadilly Jim

Finding a character that I could relate to, however, was harder than I thought. After all, how many times did Bertie say that so-and-so could use the services of a 'good oculist'? I hunted assiduously through as many stories as I could but I was stymied. Plum had created so many memorable 'professionals'. His most famous, that eminent loony-doctor, Sir Roderick Glossop, tops the list, followed by such gems as Dr Alexander 'Chimp' Twist, the sham physical culture specialist, and Ivor Llewellyn's osteopathic sister-in-law, Mabel Spence. There was Lord Rowcester's veterinarian fiancée Jill Wyvern, not to mention that gloomy physician who cured Bertie Wooster and Tipton Plimsoll of spots, E Jimpson Murgatroyd. Even Lord Ickenham passed himself off as a parrot podiatrist, with Pongo Twistleton reluctantly playing the role of a bird anaesthetist. But, alas, no eye doctor for me.

While I continued to search, I kept coming across many examples of the vision element in Plum's stories. There was the Efficient Baxter, Lord Emsworth's secretary, whose spectacled appearance was so sinister. Secretaries after Baxter also wore glasses; Lavender Briggs's harlequin pair was almost as intolerable as Baxter's. There was Sandy Callender, who wore

spectacles with plain glass to make her appear older and more authoritative, but to Sam Bagshott and Gally Threepwood they only made her look like 'some horror from outer space'. Lord Chuffnell scared Bertie when Bertie appeared before him as a JP by wearing horn-rimmed spectacles, like those of newt-fancier Gussie Fink-Nottle and millionaire Tippy Plimsoll. My personal favourite, however, is Lord Emsworth himself, who was always losing his pince nez, or even more frequently having them 'leap from their moorings' when agitated. But who could forget the smelly, untrustworthy pig-nanny, George Cyril Wellbeloved, whose visual defect, strabismus (squint, to the lay-person), made him so unlovable.



From the Swedish Bonniers Service with a Smile

In a slightly different vein, there were Plum's monocular characterisations, such as the dapper Gally Threepwood, the elegant Psmith, and that bothersome younger son of Lord Emsworth, the Hon Freddie. Let's not forget Lord Rowcester as 'Honest Patch' Perkins, who wore an eye patch for disguise. Plum's descriptive brilliance reached hilarious heights when he described that big bully, Roderick Spode, as having an 'eye that could open an oyster at sixty paces'. He also used more sophisticated ophthalmic terminology when he had the Hon Galahad envisage the 'Emsworth Arms beer rising before the mental retina' on a warm afternoon.

My intimate knowledge of the ophthalmic field has greatly enhanced my enjoyment of Plum's stories, just as my knowledge of golf has greatly enhanced that of the Golf stories. I suppose I'll just have to keep reading more and more of Plum's works to find that perfect *nom-de-Plum*. I can't help wondering, though, if Plum had a twinkle in his eye, or his tongue in his cheek, when he thought his characters were 'in need of the services of a good oculist'.

The End is in Sight: the Wodehouse CD

A six year project approaches fruition

It was some six years ago that the first serious discussion took place about making a new recording of Wodehouse lyrics to celebrate his place in American Musical Comedy history. Hal Cazalet, PGW's great-grandson and professional singer, adopted the project enthusiastically, and the result, a 16-track CD entitled *The Land Where the Good Songs Go*, should appear on the shelves in May or June.

The songs (see the list below) have been selected from a variety of shows and reflect numerous styles. They are sung with exceptional clarity by Hal Cazalet and the much-loved American soprano Sylvia McNair, whilst the piano of the brilliant Steven Blier stands out in the deliberately understated accompaniment. Lara Cazalet makes a welcome guest appearance with the original, 1917, version of *Bill* from *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*.

With sixteen gems to choose from, it is invidious to select any for special mention, but I would like to draw your attention to two standards from *Anything Goes*, the title song and *You're the Top*. These recordings have used the lyrics from the 1935 UK stage show, which were substantially modified by PGW from Cole Porter's originals.



Steven Blier, Sylvia McNair and Hal Cazalet

The booklet accompanying the CD will feature an *Introduction* by Sir Tim Rice, context notes by Tony Ring and a transcript of the lyrics. And for those likely to be in the vicinity of Washington, DC, on June 20, Hal and Sylvia, with Steven, will be performing songs from the CD at a concert taking place at the Library of Congress.

<i>Song</i>	<i>Show</i>	<i>Sung by</i>
You Can't Make Love By Wireless	<i>The Beauty Prize</i>	Hal and Sylvia
Tell Me All Your Troubles, Cutie	<i>Miss 1917</i>	Hal and Sylvia
Shimmy With Me	<i>The Cabaret Girl</i>	Sylvia
You Never Knew About Me	<i>Oh, Boy!</i>	Hal and Sylvia
If I Ever Lost You	<i>The Golden Moth</i>	Hal and Sylvia
Go Little Boat	<i>Miss 1917</i>	Sylvia
The Land Where The Good Songs Go	<i>Miss 1917</i>	Hal
Oh Gee, Oh Joy	<i>Rosalie</i>	Hal and Sylvia
The Enchanted Train	<i>Sitting Pretty</i>	Hal and Sylvia
Bill	<i>Oh, Lady! Lady!!</i>	Lara
Anything Goes	<i>Anything Goes</i>	Hal and Sylvia
You're The Top	<i>Anything Goes</i>	Hal and Sylvia
My Castle In The Air	<i>Miss Springtime</i>	Hal
Sir Galahad	<i>Leave It To Jane</i>	Hal and Sylvia
Rolled Into One	<i>Oh, Boy!</i>	Sylvia
Non-Stop Dancing	<i>The Beauty Prize</i>	Hal and Sylvia

The Drones and Radical Politics

In December, James Hogg drew our attention to the work of Harry Graham as a possible source for the name of the impeccable chef Anatole. He now suggests that Harry Graham's idea may have inspired another of PGW's well-loved creations.

Also featured in Harry Graham's 1910 publication *The Bolster Book*, which I mentioned in December's *Wooster Sauce*, is a playlet entitled *The Idle Rich*.

Scene: The smoking room of the Celibates Club.

(If you've ever wondered what a political discussion among the dimmer members of the Drones might have sounded like, look no further. The Celibates are the Drones by another name.)

Their hair is swept boldly back from foreheads which would not otherwise be noticeable. They wear the *blasé* air and brilliant socks of the typical *jeunesse dorée*, and are trying to while away that tedious hour or two which must always elapse before the next meal.

Their topic is the threat posed to their way of life by radical politics. This brief exchange gives a flavour of the discussion:

CEL No. 1 If things go on like this I shall clear out! England's no place for a chap! I shall go to Monte Carlo, and stay there.

CEL No 2 This will be a bitter blow for the Government! You'll break it gently to them, old chap, won't you?:

CEL No 1 Don't be an ass!

The Celibates, so like the Drones, were the creation of a writer Wodehouse read and appreciated. Could Harry Graham have given him, as with Anatole, the spark of an idea?

Formation of a German Society

Member Reinhard Koch has started a German P G Wodehouse Society with effect from March 15. Any members who are interested, or know of German resident fans of PGW who may be, are invited to contact

Order Your McIlvaine Addendum

The project to produce an addendum to the *McIlvaine Bibliography* should be completed on schedule. We hope to publish in the late summer a printed edition, incorporating information received up to April 30, which is to be offered on a pre-order basis only. It will be prepared in *Wooster Sauce* A4 format, using similar quality paper, and being illustrated in black-and-white. We estimate that it may be 40-48 pages long, in stiffer covers, and that the price will be in the region of £ 12 to £ 15, plus postage.

If you would like to place an order for a copy, please use the enclosed order form. No money need be paid at this moment, but we must have your order by July 7th at the latest. Our prime target is to ensure that the booklet is available for the October Convention of The Wodehouse Society in Philadelphia.

We then expect to regularly update the data base and be able to supply members with copies on demand in a more workaday format, at a cost essentially set to reflect reproduction costs. Data will be collected from members continuously, and incorporated into the data base twice a year. Copies will be printed to order on ordinary office 80 gram paper, collated but not stapled or otherwise joined, and this version will not be illustrated. In the UK the initial level of cost is likely to be around 10p per sheet plus postage, with a minimum of £ 5. This printing will probably first be available in January 2002.

Theatre Museum: April 22nd

A presentation entitled *PG Wodehouse: Life, Verse and Lyrics*, showing the evolution of his career up to 1939, when he received a Doctorate from Oxford University, will be given at the Theatre Museum, Russell Street, Covent Garden, London, on Sunday April 22nd, starting at 2pm. Concentrating on his development as a leading lyricist in musical theatre, the presentation will include clips from both audio- and video-tapes, and will be interspersed with readings of his light verse and renderings of some of his songs both on record and by guest performers.

Tickets, which are restricted in total to 100, are available to the general public at £10, but members of the Society may obtain them at the discounted price of £5

An Accident Waiting to Happen

Tom Smith discloses his theory as to the origin of a Ukridge story

In my previous article, I explained how competition between the Newnes and Harmsworth newspaper groups had evolved by 1923, when Plum sat down to pen *Ukridge's Accident Syndicate*, and showed how free life and accident insurance policies had been used as tools. But it seemed to me that the existence of these policies probably wasn't enough to stimulate the creative juices.

There were, however, two events in Wodehouse's personal life that might have very well stimulated said juices. It seems that 1923 was an accident-prone year in the family. In a letter to his adopted daughter, Leonora, Plum tells her that he is sorry to hear that an accident she recently suffered would keep her out of the school tennis team for a while. Plum doesn't mention it in his letter, but perhaps Leonora received a small check from *Tennis, Anyone?*

In July 1923, there was another event that seems to strike even closer to home. It was late afternoon on the 22nd when Plum was out for his regular walk from his house to Easthampton, Long Island. Ethel had driven to town earlier in the day, and on her way back saw Plum on the pavement. She pulled over. Plum left the pavement and walked over to the car. Then, something made Plum look up. The Ford following Ethel was about to pass her on the wrong side! Plum tried to jump out of the way, but the Ford clipped him on the leg. Wodehouse was knocked down, scraping his face and nose, left leg and right arm. He quite possibly looked and felt like someone who had been learning the finer points of boxing from Battling Billson.

Next day, he complained in a letter to Bill Townend, that "all sorts of unsuspected muscles and bones are aching, and I can hardly move my right arm". One can only imagine the scenario that followed:

One fine August day, Plum, still sore from the accident, limps down to the Post Office to collect the daily mail. There's an envelope addressed to P G Wodehouse from the Bridgenorth, Shifnal and Albrighton Argus. It is one of those envelopes where the address peeps through a cellophane window. Thinking it's a bill for his subscription (and Ethel takes care of those) he puts it in the inside pocket of his sports coat. The next letter in the postal box is from The Walker's Weekly. Another bill. Then there are envelopes from Pig Breeder's Digest, the Daily Mail, and the Daily Express. How odd, thinks Plum, for all these publications to be sending their bills at

the same time. He tears one open to find a cheque for ten pounds and a short note from the publishers offering condolences and the hope that the cheque may do something towards speeding him to full recovery.

The publishers continue by congratulating Plum for his foresight in subscribing to a paper with one of the highest insurance awards in the business. Plum opens another envelope and a five-pound cheque falls out. He opens another, then another. I think you may see where this is going. On his way back home, as Plum limped along, perhaps he was thinking that this was the easiest money he'd ever made. Sure he was still a bit sore, but when you considered it all he had to do to earn this wad of the ready was take a fall.

These may have been the thoughts going through his head as Plum eased himself, gingerly, into the chair behind the Royal typewriter and pecked out:

"Half a minute, laddie," said Ukridge. And gripping my arm, he brought me to a halt on the outskirts of the little crowd which had collected about the church door.

That might have been the scenario, but alas, it was not. Plum's accident was life imitating art rather than art imitating life. When I sent an e-mail to your Editor about my theory, he reminded me that the *Accident Syndicate* first appeared as a short story in the May *Cosmopolitan* and June *Strand* magazines in 1923. He told me he didn't want to discourage my researches. He koshed them on the collective bean with a sack full of nickels is what he did.

So, we have to go elsewhere in searching for the truth behind this Wodehouse tail. That truth lies not in the life of Wodehouse, but in that of Plum's friend Bill Townend. Plum and Bill, as many Plummies are aware, traded ideas for stories. Plum had given Bill the idea for at least one science fiction story and a few detective-adventure stories. Bill, on the other hand, gave Plum Ukridge. In a letter to Bill, Plum thanked Townend for the ideas that went into the stories published in *Cosmo* and *Strand* in the May and June issues.

So, does anyone know if Bill may have stepped off a kerb into the path of a truck?

Tom Smith has provided an extensive list of sources, a copy of which is available from the Editor.

A Rush to Gloria Swanson's Defence

Louise O'Connor and Brian Porter challenge Eddie Grabham's article in December's Wooster Sauce

Louise O'Connor, of Richmond, writes

Re Eddie Grabham's article *Who was Princess von und zu Dwornitzchek?* (*Wooster Sauce* No 16, December 2000), the simple answer is that she was a character created by P G Wodehouse. Why on earth should Eddie Grabham assume that she must be based on a real person? Does he not give Wodehouse credit for the imagination to create his own characters? Jane Austen used to get fed up with people trying to find real-life models for her characters, and I think Wodehouse might be similarly irritated by this article.

Certainly she isn't one of Wodehouse's best characters. By making her a genuinely unpleasant person, rather than the usual bossy aunt/stepmother type, he introduces a sombre and sinister note into the story, which I think spoils the atmosphere and is not suited to his style.

The suggestion that she might be based on Gloria Swanson is, I think, downright libellous, and it's lucky for Mr Grabham that Miss Swanson is no longer with us, or he might find himself being sued. It is made clear in *Summer Moonshine* that the princess is selfish, cold-hearted, unscrupulous and immoral, and Joe Vanringham believes that she was the cause of his father's death. However strong Miss Swanson's sense of humour, I doubt if she or anyone else would be pleased at being the model for such an unpleasant person. The fact that Gloria Swanson was a strong-willed lady who married more than once does not seem to me to be evidence for the comparison.

Editor's Note:

Both the arch-researcher of the factual history behind Wodehouse, Norman Murphy, and the author of the original article, Eddie Grabham, will reply shortly to these points in the June issue.

Tony Smith, from Winchester, recalls the day he nearly met P G Wodehouse

From 1966 to 1969, I was a choirboy at St Giles, the parish church of Shipbourne in Kent where in 1932 PGW had attended the wedding of his step-daughter Leonora and Peter Cazalet.

If history had been slightly different, I might have seen him at the church in 1968, when I sang at the marriage of two of the Society's Patrons, Sheran Cazalet (daughter of Peter and Leonora Cazalet, and now Lady Hornby) and Simon (now Sir Simon) Hornby. As it was, the most famous guest was probably the film star Elizabeth Taylor.

Let us give Wodehouse credit for creating his own characters, and abandon the futile attempt to pin them down as real people. Realism was not his strong point in any case, and I feel sure he would have wished to avoid any charge that his creations were based on real people.

And from Brian Porter of Luton

Eddie Grabham's proposal that the Princess von und zu Dwornitzchek was drawn from life may well be correct and would certainly fit with PGW's established practice, but the nomination of Gloria Swanson for the original is at least questionable, relying as it does on no evidence at all and with a particularly poor personality fit.

Barry Phelps has drawn attention to the Princess's remarkable character and his comment that "Not even the redoubtable Norman Murphy has suggested on whom she must have been based" surely provokes the thought that, like Blandings, she had more than one source.

Physically, there would have been no shortage of candidates known to Plum at MGM in the thirties, and if Eddie Grabham's general premise is to be accepted Dolores Del Rio and Eleanor Powell spring to mind. The Princess's dominating personality and unfortunate characteristics might also recall the reputation of such big stars as Jeanette Macdonald and Joan Crawford, and the Princess could very well be based on an amalgamation of two or more of these interesting persons.

I was paid, I think, five shillings.

At that time, Peter Cazalet attended the church frequently, and always read one of the lessons. On several occasions the Queen Mother visited him at Fairlawne and accompanied him to church, always attracting larger congregations than normal. I once visited the family at Fairlawne when the choir was invited for carol singing and Yule-tide spirit, but although I was starting to read Wodehouse at that time, I had not yet become aware of his connection with Shipbourne.

The Hammams: Restaurant or Turkish Bath?

Norman Murphy researches an enquiry from an Indian member, Madhur Tiwary

I can remember the time, when I was up at Oxford, when a Covent Garden ball till six in the morning, with breakfast at the Hammams and probably a free fight with a few selected costermongers to follow, seemed to me what the doctor ordered.

So commented the narrator Bertie Wooster, while ruminating on the ability of his cousins, Claude and Eustace, to do without sleep for a whole night, compared to his own self-imposed curfew of two o'clock.

Madhur enquired whether the term 'Hammams' could possibly refer to a Turkish Bath instead of a restaurant.

"As you know," he wrote (immediately gaining a brownie point for flattery), "'Hammam' is the Arabic word for 'baths', specifically public baths, and has been taken from the Arabic into Urdu, Hindi and so on, and as far as my limited knowledge of Turkish Baths goes – we have so few of them here – they too were known as hammams.

They also seem to have remained open at all hours. In *Bill the Conqueror* Bill West takes himself and Judson Coker off to spend the night at Jermyn Street Turkish baths, after he has put Flick Sheridan up at their flat. If they did remain open all night, I wonder if it is reasonable to suppose that they could also have offered their clients some sustenance in the mornings. If so, this does look like an alternative to a restaurant: would restaurants in London have opened early enough in those days to offer breakfast at pre-costermonger-fighting hours?"

To avoid having to show his ignorance of Arabic, Urdu and Hindi, the Editor pleaded pressure of work and set the Chairman on the case. What follows is compiled from his findings.

A good English dictionary, so Norman informs us, shows three derivatives of the Arabic word 'hammam' each of which are used to mean Turkish Bath, ie 'Hammam', 'Hummum' and 'Hammaum'. (The Editor can't resist interjecting here to point out that in the version of the story which appeared in the American *Cosmopolitan* magazine the term was printed as 'Hammans'. You will have to wait until the end of the article to discover whether Norman has a theory to explain this error.)

Around 1900, it seems, there were about 30 Turkish Baths in London where you could stay overnight, possibly to sober up, very cheaply. Tea and coffee would have been available, but probably not much more. The Jermyn Street Baths mentioned in *Bill the Conqueror* were famous and survived until the late seventies. There remain a couple of Turkish Baths in London even now.

The 'Covent Garden balls' to which Bertie referred were fancy dress balls held at the Royal Opera House every three weeks, which had an admission charge of half a guinea. They attracted raffish young men, chorus girls, journalists and music-hall actors and actresses, and were considered very Bohemian. In their prime (1895-1910) a young lady who was a lady might go once with her brother or fiancée but only as a dare, and she would be masked. The balls finished around 5 am, after which you emerged, fought a couple of costermongers and then had breakfast, as described so well at the end of part 2, chapter 7, of *Not George Washington*.

It is interesting to note that on that occasion the small group was headed for breakfast to the 'Old Hummums', whose doors did not open until 5 am, and as a result a substantial queue had already formed outside.

Covent Garden, for those who do not know London, is a square open space with a market building in the centre. The Old Hummums was a well-known hotel which stood in the south-east corner. As the Opera House stands on the north-east corner, you could have come down the grand staircase, gone out into Wellington Street, turned right into Russell Street and found the Old Hummums at the far corner.

It is claimed that the first Turkish Bath in England was built on this site in 1708, but it was converted into a tavern, possibly around 1760. Tennyson stayed there in 1844, Dr Johnson refers to the old place and in Dickens's *Great Expectations* Pip sleeps there. It would seem to have changed its use again from tavern to hotel later in the nineteenth century, and it was still there in the 1920s. Norman believes it was demolished in the 1930s.

And the Cosmopolitan error? 'Hamman', or 'Hammans', reports Norman, appears in the 1907 London Directory as a Jewish surname. Perhaps that was why it was misprinted.

Wodehousean Hotels – The Previtali and Mathis, Arundell Street, Piccadilly Dr John Atkinson completes his investigation

At the conclusion of the last article, John had typed 'Hotel Previtali Hotel Mathis' into an Internet search engine. He continues the story:

There before me, from the *Gutenberg Project* which publishes classic texts on the web was:

The first time he appeared in Arundel (sic) Street in his sweater and flannels he had barely whirled his Indian clubs once around his head before he had attracted the following audience:

- a) Two cabmen—one intoxicated;
- b) Four waiters from the Hotel Mathis;
- c) Six waiters from the Hotel Previtali;
- d) Six chambermaids from the Hotel Mathis;
- e) Five chambermaids from the Hotel Previtali;
- f) The proprietor of the Hotel Mathis;
- g) The proprietor of the Hotel Previtali;
- h) A street cleaner;
- i) Eleven nondescript loafers;
- j) Twenty-seven children;
- k) A cat.

They all laughed—even the cat—and kept on laughing. The intoxicated cabman called Ashe 'Sunny Jim'. And Ashe kept on swinging his clubs.

That evening I went and bought the slim volume *Something Fresh*, the first Blandings novel, published in 1915 and excitedly read the first 10 pages, which give a wonderful description of the little backwater that was Arundell Street.

A touch of sadness mingled with the joy. Wodehouse describes the little street confidently praising its solidity and predicting its immortality. The detail of the description suggests he had actually been there at some time. Later in the book the heroine has tea in the Mathis served by an Italian waiter. Yet by 1915 it had all but disappeared.

A little deduction suggests that, as Wodehouse left for the USA in 1909, and taking into account the number of children the description may have been based on observations from around 1905. In which case my grandmother, her sisters and little brother John would have been in the age range of 13 to 8 years old. Its nice to think that five of the group of 27 mentioned would probably have been my grandmother Flora, Great-Aunts Ilda, Rosalinda, Lidia and Great-Uncle John.

In later years Auntie Ilda and Auntie Linda wrote to me with some of their memories of their childhood. How Giovanni, a doting father, sent back a horse one time because it did not match the other on a carriage carrying his daughters to a treat. How he scoured London one night looking for a lovebird to replace one that had died, only for his efforts to be rejected by an upset and ungrateful daughter.

But also how when the First World War came the foreign visitors stopped coming. And how the street was to be closed to build the Lyon's Corner House. How they left Arundell Street for Streatham Hill and how Giovanni died of a broken heart in 1917. No more lying in bed at night listening to the music from the old 'Troc' (Trocadero) band wafting through the window.

I took Eilidh up to Piccadilly last year and we walked through the site where Arundell Street had been – between Great Windmill and Rupert Streets. Through the gaming machine inferno of the New Trocadero, nothing remains of the place. We went down Rupert Street and found a lovely Italian restaurant where we had lunch. Eilidh had her spaghetti with a glass of red wine topped with orange and we made a toast to Giovanni and Giulia and the family.

Nothing was left and yet . . . Part of the legacy of our interesting upbringing was a marvellous, tolerant, honest approach to people, kind and never prudish. Living in the middle of town next to, what that generation called the 'demi-mode', they always knew about the other side of life. Giovanni would not allow residents in without luggage, for example. In later years as teenagers Elizabeth, Anne and I could always speak to any of the parents, aunts and uncles about anything. They were never shocked and often had wise and amusing responses.

And of course there is the love of life, food and good company with a certain feel for the best, even when you can't afford it. Auntie Linda (Rosalinda) came to our wedding in Glasgow in 1982. By that time she had been a Sister of Mercy for nearly 60 years. It was the first time she had stayed in a hotel since she left Arundell Street. At breakfast the waiter brought her little packets of jam and honey.

She smacked his hand lightly.

Distinguishing between 'meum' and 'tuum'

Sue Deniou of Ross-on-Wye suggests a possible source

In *The Code of the Woosters* (1938), Sir Watkyn Bassett, believing Bertie to be a bag-snatcher, umbrella-pincher and purloiner of cow-creamers, says:

“That . . . is the fundamental trouble with you, my man. You are totally unable to distinguish between *meum* and *tuum*.”

When I came across the following in chapter 7 of *Before the Fact* by Francis Iles, a gooseflesher of which Bertie would have approved, my first thought was that Iles had had the immortal rind to lift a nifty from Wodehouse:

“He might still be a little hazier than most people upon the moral side of *meum* and *tuum*, but he realized at any rate what other people thought about it.”

But it did not take long to establish that *Before the Fact* had been published in 1932. So is the boot on the other foot? If so, I doubt if he would have objected, as he was a PGW fan. In chapter 5 a new character being introduced to the heroine started his conversation with “Hullo. Hullo, hullo, hullo. What?” The heroine laughed, feeling that he ‘. . . must have escaped from the pages of Mr P G Wodehouse.’ Later there is another reference, when the heroine and her soon-to-be lover find they share a number of interests, in ‘travelling, René Clair’s films, looking at cathedrals, chop suey and the novels of Mr P G Wodehouse.’

Two distinct and favourable allusions to another writer’s work surely indicates the greater esteem. I have no doubt that Iles would have been flattered if he had been filched from by the Master.

From Simon Gordon-Clark of London

Unfortunately Helen Fielding is mistaken in asserting that her favourite word, ‘singleton’, was actually created by PGW (*Wooster Sauce*, December 2000, page 22). The dictionary records that the word can be traced back to 1654, and means: ‘A coverlet of cloth of gold used in creating a Knight of the Bath’.

It was however the custom among Knights of the Bath to enter into light-hearted wagers that they couldn’t swing all the way along the ropes over the swimming-pool in the Drones Club while still wearing their singletons. The results could be quite dramatic.

Wodehousean Hotels, continued

“Young man” she stated peremptorily “These are for tea. Bring me some marmalade!”

I use the knives and carvers from the hotel all the time. Sometimes when the heat of a day with young children is over and the yoghurt and tomato ketchup has been wiped off the furniture, I open the cupboard with the glass front, shut my eyes and smell.

Surely, under the waxy, woody smell, that’s sealing wax and greengage jam and old port? As the glasses chink and the cutlery gently rattles can you hear the faint sound of the band from the Troc?

Society Golf Day at Addington

A Society golf event will be held at the Addington Golf Club, about 7 miles from Dulwich, on the afternoon of June 15th, before the Society’s dinner at the College. Wodehouse himself played golf at Addington, and dedicated *The Heart of a Goof* from the sixth bunker there. The event will start at 12.30pm, so as to enable players to attend the dinner at Dulwich in the evening if they wish. The price of the round will be £40. Members wishing to play should contact Nick Townend by 30 April for further details.

Subscription Renewal: 2001/02

The subscription for the year to 31 May 2002 will again remain unchanged at £15. By the end of April, members who do not pay by standing order and whose subscription expires on 31 May 2001 should receive a letter requesting renewal by the due date. Members who think their subscription expires on 31 May 2001 but who do not receive a renewal letter should contact Nick Townend

As an incentive to encourage all members to pay by standing order, the Committee has agreed that, when the time eventually comes to increase the annual subscription rate from £15, those members then paying by standing order will be eligible for one further year’s membership at the old rate of £15. Standing order forms will be enclosed with the forthcoming renewal letter.

Wodehouse and Headteachers

Tim Andrew concludes his review

I am sure that Wodehouse used a great deal of ‘spin’, as we’d now call it, in his dealings with the world at large, because he was essentially a private man. He made sure that he was seen as he wanted to be, and I am certain that much of this has been carried through into his biographies. Nevertheless, several themes shine through accounts of his life, and one of the most consistent of these is the happiness of his time at Dulwich. Clearly Wodehouse did love his days at senior school: if he had hated the place he would not have continued his enthusiastic interest in his school’s progress on the sports field for as long and as earnestly as he did. As late as 1953, more than 50 years after he had left, Wodehouse provided an article that was published in *The Alleynian Literary Supplement*, hardly the act of a man who had disliked his school.

Wodehouse was lucky to be at Dulwich when it was led by one of the outstanding headmasters of his generation, A. H. Gilkes, a brilliant classical scholar. The depth and range of study of classical literature he undertook at school clearly influenced much of PGW’s style. If you don’t believe me, ask Dan Garrison, who, at The Wodehouse Society’s Boston Convention in 1995, gave a paper in which he compared the art of the Homeric simile in the *Iliad* with the writing of Wodehouse. The transcript was published in *Plum Lines* in the spring of 1996.

Wodehouse’s happiness at Dulwich, the fulfilment he found in the classroom, on the sportsfield and through the other ‘extra-curricular activities’, as we’d call them these days, will have left him with no ‘baggage’ to carry into adult life, no ghosts to exorcise in his writing. Pompous senior school heads are good grist to the comic mill, but they are not portrayed as stinkers like the prep school heads of the Wooster stories, nor do they recur as individuals as Upjohn does repeatedly.

The Rev Aubrey Upjohn appears on stage or is referred to in stories published between 1930 and 1966. To anyone who has read much Wodehouse, he is an unforgettable character despite, or on second thoughts perhaps because of, his personality and appearance being unremittingly maligned. He has no redeeming feature: he is a malevolent male aunt of the worst sort. (Yet, I must say that his assessment of Bertie, like Aunt Agatha’s, is often not only understandable, but also reasonable. I mean, how would you feel if you were in your study, your

charges safely tucked up in bed, the stresses of the day fading as you settled down to quiet contemplation, a good book – in my case definitely a Wodehouse – or even to write some reports, when some oik slipped in and started to pinch your favourite biscuits?)

Wodehouse was never slow to realise when he was on to a good thing in a character or plot, and it may simply be that he knew he had created a juicy character that was another good foil to Bertie and his pals. But, I can’t help wondering if there is not more to it than that. Norman Murphy has amply proved to be true his hypothesis that PGW wrote from life. Wodehouse consistently treated prep school headmasters as tyrants, and did so in stories published across a span of more than 40 years. Such consistency of treatment, especially through such a small number of characters, must have deep roots in reality.

On his schooling before Dulwich, Wodehouse’s biographers are almost silent, making passing reference to his time in Guernsey and at Malvern House, a naval prep school near Dover. Hello, hello! Malvern House near Dover? Haven’t we heard of that somewhere before? You bet we have: a fictional Malvern House at Bramley-on-Sea was attended by one Bertram Wilberforce Wooster and sundry of his pals. As an institution it had the singular misfortune to number among its headmasters both Arnold Abney and the Rev Aubrey Upjohn. (Who was head where and when is entertainingly dissected in Tony Ring’s *Wodehouse in Woostershire* (Porpoise Books, 1999).)

When portrayed as the head of Sanstead House in *The Little Nugget*, Abney is tall, suave, benevolent, with an Oxford manner, a high forehead, thin white hands, a cooing intonation, and a general air of hushed importance. Peter Burns, the narrator, observes that “headmasters of private schools are divided into two classes: the workers and the runners-up-to-London. Mr Abney belonged to the latter class.” Later, he says of his colleague, Glossop, that “Properly backed by Mr Abney, he might have kept order. As it was, his classroom was a bear-garden.” These are the comments of an adult looking at the behaviour of another with some disenchantment; in school staff rooms today, you will hear much the same. But then, it is not Bertie Wooster who was describing Arnold Abney at that stage. If Richard

Is Harry Potter really a Modern Mike Jackson or Psmith?

Tristan Godfrey sent in a copy of a long article on the Harry Potter phenomenon which appeared in the October 2000 edition of *Prospect*.

Superbly written by Richard Jenkyns, Professor of the Classical Tradition at Oxford University and entitled *Potter in the Past*, it explores the reasons for the success of the Harry Potter books.

There are two references to Wodehouse. In the first, the writer reminds us that Rudyard Kipling's *Stalky* has had more effect on twentieth century writing than is realised.

He was an important influence on the young P G Wodehouse, who began as a writer of school stories, and on Frank Richards, who took on a good deal of Kipling's invented schoolboy argot wholesale.

Later he comments about the ability of J K Rowling to write about life at the Hogwarts Academy when she had no personal experience of public school life. The following paragraph might be of particular interest to members:

The enthusiasm of the young, and indeed many of their parents, for this apparently traditionalist stuff may make the neophilia of early-period Blairism seem a little sad. But are the world's children, from Stuttgart to Sydney, being unwittingly seduced by a reactionary fantasy? I don't think so. It is no more surprising to learn that J K Rowling has no personal experience of the boarding-school world of which she writes than it is to recognise that P G Wodehouse did not spend his best years shinning down drainpipes with younger sons of earls. And few people, I think, believe that reading about Bertie Wooster and Lord Emsworth is an indulgence in snob-fantasy (as reading Barbara Cartland is). To enter Wodehouse's world, or Rowling's, is to enter an imaginary structure which does not take itself too seriously. What the popularity of Hogwarts does suggest is that people like a lively modernity to coexist with pleasure in tradition, and that a healthy fondness for the past is one in which genuine affection need not exclude a touch of wry irony. That is not such a bad lesson to learn.

Wodehouse and Headteachers part 2, continued

Usborne is right in saying that the voice of Wooster is close to the voice of Wodehouse, then we are given far more of an insight into PGW's own feelings about the attitude of prep school heads towards their pupils in the *Much Obligated Jeeves* view of Abney.

The implication of all this is that to be a resident toad beneath the harrow at the real Malvern House must indeed have been a grim experience, with corporal punishment a special feature of the disciplinary system, even by the standards of the late 19th century. Wodehouse was apparently bored by the lack of sport and amused himself by going for long walks.

It is unusual, if not unique, for a fictional location to bear the same name as the real one on which it is based, and I am not sure what to read into that. It is unlikely to have been an accident for, in the words Wodehouse hoped would be used about him, "he did take trouble". Perhaps by the time he was writing, his years as a pupil at prep school seemed so long ago that he felt safe to name it, or it left such a mark that he was exacting gentle revenge, or else it was one of the private jokes that found their way into his books.

Norman Murphy has, of course, found the name of the headmaster of the real Malvern House: Harvey Hammond, who retired in 1909 and died in 1911. I wonder what it was really like to be one of his pupils?

We are unlikely to record any eyewitness accounts now! Finding out sounds like an interesting job for my retirement, although I'm not sure that laying bare the truth about life at Malvern House counts as a service to mankind.

In the meantime, before every Speech Day, I make sure the seams of my trousers are sound, check the sobriety of my speaker and thank God we don't have a Scripture prize. If it would have done Cleopatra's imperiousness a world of good if she had been outed from the first round of the ladies singles, then by the same token the new national training programme for all headteachers should include the compulsory reading of the bearded bloke's fate at Market Snodsbury.

If nothing else, it would make sure that at least one part of the course was pure pleasure.

My First Wodehouse Experience

We are delighted to have received Frank McCourt's recollections

God bless whoever brought the book into our midst.

Consider the characters and the setting – a group of six schoolboy urchins squatting under a street lamp at the top of a Limerick lane in the nineteen-forties. One of us read aloud from the book and we were serious and attentive till my brother, Malachy, began to laugh.

We looked at each other. What was he laughing at? He said it was the way George crawled out from under the seat of the railway carriage and, after frightening the woman, offered her tea from a flask while singing "Tea for two and two for tea and me for you and you for me". Poor George had to sing like that because of his terrible stammer and that made Malachy laugh so much we asked the reader,

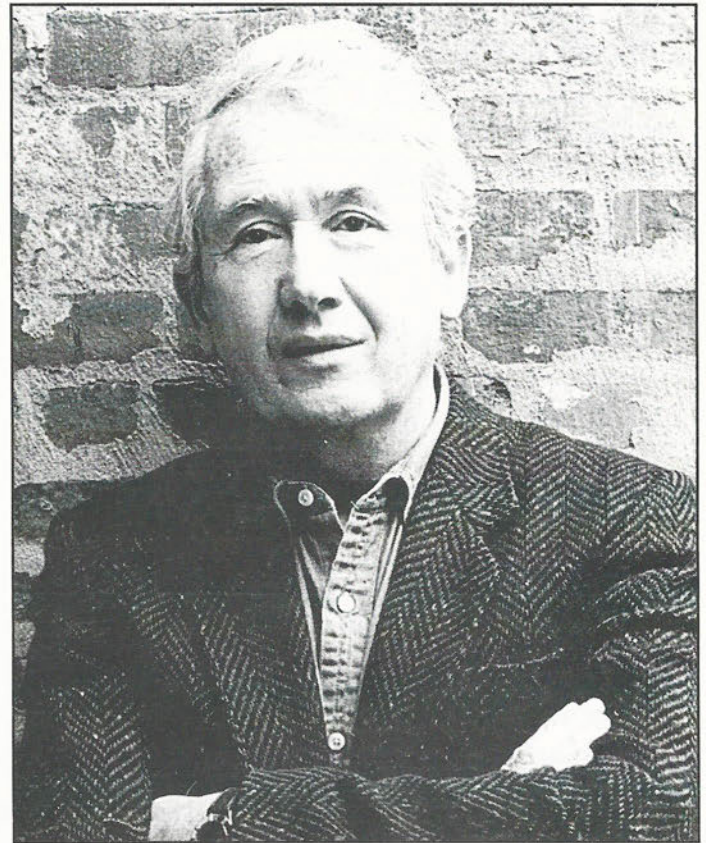
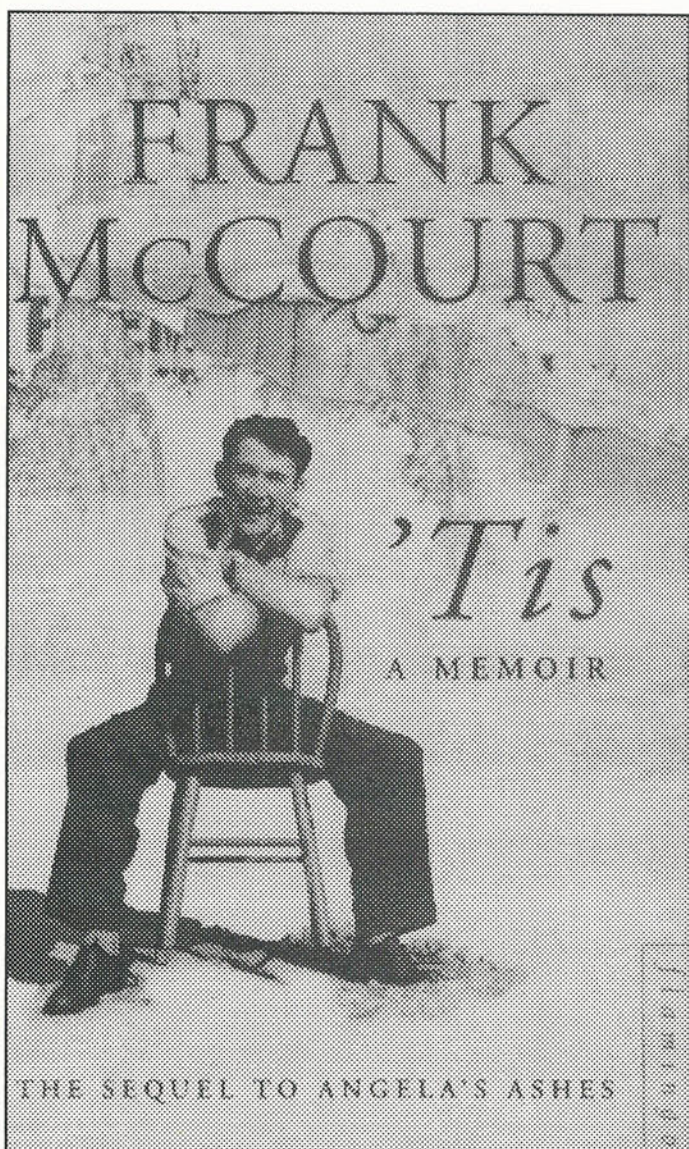


Photo: Jerry Bauer



Paddy Downes, to read the passage again and when he did we joined Malachy in the laughter and laughed the rest of our lives over this book and all the books written by this Englishman.

The book, of course, was *Meet Mr Mulliner* and the author had a strange name, P G Wodehouse. There were nine stories and we had nine merry nights – though not under the same street lamp. Our parents were suspicious we might be enjoying a dirty book, and that meant each night we moved from lane to lane. Neighbours were suspicious and when they tried to confiscate the book we scampered into the darkness.

At that time my mother's feet began to bother her and when she could no longer walk the mile to the Carnegie Library she would send me to get her a couple of nice romances and "not to be bringing home any adventure books or books about Englishmen bothering the poor natives of Africa". The librarians were strict about keeping children from the adult library but once you had a note from 'your poor

Resting – For the Best of Reasons

Actress and Society Patron Lucy Tregear's latest part (and greatest role to date) was alongside actor Terry Wilton in the production of their son, Ivan. Not surprisingly, the performance was for one night only, on January 12, and the reaction of the critics was uniformly favourable, the realistic quality of the sound effects warranting special praise.

It is understood from the management that any suggestion of a resemblance between Ivan (see picture) and either Algernon Aubrey Little or a poached egg will be vigorously denied.

Congratulations to all three.



My First Wodehouse Experience, continued

mother' you were admitted – and watched. A child could easily go astray in a library though my only straying was towards the 'W' section, two glorious shelves of P G Wodehouse. The librarians were now suspicious. Why was this urchin spending so much time with his head stuck in the Ws? They would pluck Wodehouse from my hands and scan the stories: This Mulliner? This Jeeves? This Ukridge? Well, as long as they weren't dirty books, unsuitable for a nice Catholic boy, son of Angela McCourt, a lovely woman who was a credit to her own mother.

Don't ask me what prompted me to start browsing through a book on a lower shelf, that book about a woman wandering around London, looking up at an airplane writing in the sky, thinking of the party she was giving that night, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. (In her wanderings she might have brushed elbows with Bertie Wooster on his way to lunch at the Drones Club.) I borrowed it for my mother but after she'd read a few pages she threw it back at me, saying that she couldn't make head nor tail of it.

Now as I shuffled between Wodehouse and Woolf the librarians became more agitated, worried about my immortal soul. One told me to stay away from 'that Woolf one', that she had committed suicide after living a life that was open to question. "Also," she said, "while we're on the subject, you're spending too much time in the W section when 'tis

looking for books for your mother you should be. We have enough Charlotte M Braeme in this library to keep your mother going the rest of her life." So from then on I was to shun the Ws, limit my romance search to half an hour, take the books to the desk and so home to my poor mother.

A Wodehouse addict at any age is not to be denied, especially when his dosage is limited by librarians or when he and his brother, Malachy, spend hours exchanging lines from Jeeves and Bertie Wooster or quoting whole passages from the buccaneer career of the mighty Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge.

It was therefore the work of a moment to slip under my sweater a mint copy of *The Code of the Woosters* though beneath my intrepid exterior there lurked a nameless dread. As I handed the librarian my mother's romances I forgot to press Wodehouse to my bosom and when the book slipped down down down to the floor there ensued a contretemps – if I have the right word – that even the great brain of Jeeves would have found difficulty of resolution.

The librarians barred me forever from the Carnegie Library and if I was caught within fifty yards of the place the police would be called. The librarians said it was plain from the outset that I was up to no good, reading books about the idle rich in England, books by a suicide with strange ways, books by that man, Wodehouse, who couldn't take anything seriously.

Best-selling author Frank McCourt spent his youth in Limerick, in the Irish Republic, in the depressed 1930s. He returned to his birthplace, New York, in 1949 and has spent most of his life as an English teacher on Staten Island. Having written just two autobiographical works, Angela's Ashes and 'Tis, he has now achieved the apparently impossible feat of having the three top-selling non-fiction works in the UK throughout the year 2000!

Doughnuts and Dingbats

Stu Shiffman concludes his article on comic strip influences

I was a bit confused when it came to figuring out the possible inspiration for The Doughnut Family in *Concealed Art* (Strand, 1915). This comic strip is the secret creation of painter Archie Ferguson.

‘There is Pa Doughnut, Ma Doughnut, Aunt Bella, Cousin Joe, and Mabel, the daughter, and they have all sorts of slapstick adventures. Pa, Ma and Aunt Bella are pure gargoyles; Cousin Joe is a little more nearly semi-human, and Mabel is a perfect darling.’

create the immortal *Krazy Kat* and illustrate Don Marquis’ *Archy & Mehitabel*. In fact, *Krazy Kat* was created in 1910 to fill up some extra white space under *The Dingbats!* The Dingbat family were city apartment dwellers, who lived in a kind of awe and fear of their mysterious upstairs neighbors. These neighbors were never glimpsed, and their many odd activities are only seen and heard through the befuddled and paranoid eyes and ears of the Dingbats downstairs. ‘Pa’ Dingbat (E Pluribus



At first, I had thought that it had to be *The Gumps* (1917-1959), Sidney Smith’s classic family situation comedy strip that served as a structural inspiration to *Amos & Andy* and all the other later situation comedies of radio and television. *The Gumps* featured Andy, Minerva (Min), son Chester and millionaire Uncle Bim. The dates ruled out this fine candidate, as well as other family strips like *The Nebbs* (1923-1946) by Sol Hess or *The Bungle Family* (1918-1942, 1943-1945) by Harry J Tuthill (although the latter did have George and Jo and their grown daughter Peggy).

The unique *Polly and Her Pals* by Cliff Sterrett (1912-1958) is another strong possibility, with its cast of Paw and Maw Perkins and the fashionable Polly.

It does look like *The Doughnut Family* may have been inspired by the strip *The Dingbat Family* (1910 to 1916), also known as *The Family Upstairs*. This outrageous strip was by New Orleans-born cartoonist George Herriman (1880-1944), who went on to

Dingbat) was insufficiently grunted over the situation, and tried many schemes to catch his mysterious and bumptious neighbors. The family also included ‘Ma’ (Minnie), daughter Imogene, son Cicero and the baby. One daily strip even involved his hiring Hershfield’s Desperate Desmond!

The family was named after the term for the tiny symbols used as border, separator or decorative character on a printed page. Webster’s *Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* dates that usage back to at least 1904. ‘Dingbat’ had earlier referred to an early coin and other forms of currency, but is now used most often to describe a stupid, eccentric or crazy person. The latter usage is credited to Herriman’s strip.

While researching the strip in my own library, and in the Seattle Public Library, I was startled to come across strips in the peculiar ‘snake’ sequence of 1911. In one of the dailies, ‘Pa’ Dingbat calls for ‘Ma’ even as a snake falls through the hole from upstairs. By the time she enters, he’s scampered on a pennyfarthing bicycle to ‘Swami Moh-Lhazzes

Khandi, Indian Snake Charmer' to have the serpent removed from his posterior. 'Ma' has entered the parlor to find it empty, and says:

"Well? Huh, he's putting up a 'rannygazoo' on me, the 'rhumbo' – m-m-m-m – If he – well"

As 'rannygazoo' is a word that I've only encountered in Wodehouse, I consulted the vast *Wooster Sauce* brain trust. Rannygazoo is described as an American slang term, the third version of a word given in the 20-volume *Oxford English Dictionary*, that had emerged in the US as 'Ranikaboo' in 1897. Plum's use of 'Rannygazoo' is given as the first usage in that form, but in *Bill the Conqueror* (1924). The original meaning was a term for a misleading newspaper article using half-truthful and half-false facts.

It seemed to be used in the comic strip in the sense of a confidence trick, while Wodehouse appears to use it more in the sense of 'fuss' or 'hullabaloo'. His use reminds me of the Yinglish idiom, 'to make a megillah', where megillah is Hebrew for a certain type of quasi-religious scroll like the *Book of Esther*.

With Plum's immersion in America (and America's immersion in the works of Plum), it is no wonder that his work shows references to contemporary cultural artifacts like the vibrant world of the American comic strip.

There were more than enough comic characters inspired by his works in exchange, but the discussion of that is something for another day.



Remaining Dates for Right Ho, Wodehouse

The remaining engagements in Christopher Owen's spring tour of *Right Ho, Wodehouse!*, the show in which Lord Emsworth tells the life story of P G Wodehouse, are:

March 24	Somerset	Eddington Village Hall
March 25	Devon	St Clare's Centre, Seaton
March 30	Norfolk	Whissonett Village Hall
March 31	Norfolk	Baconsthorpe Village Hall
April 5	Norfolk	Wood Norton Village Hall
April 6	Norfolk	Hockwold Village Hall
April 7	Norfolk	Watlington Village Hall
April 27	Suffolk	Quay Theatre, Sudbury
April 28	Norfolk	Little Theatre, Sheringham

A Substantial Auction of Wodehouse material at Bonhams

The Auctioneers Bonhams held an auction on March 13th which included 65 lots of Wodehouse material, including many first editions, and some interesting theatre material. A detailed note about the outcome

of the auction, including a summary of the main realisations and observations on any surprises which arose, will appear in the June issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

Ou Est Low Wood?

Tristan Godfrey from Kent explains how he finally located the Wodehouse's former property in Le Touquet



Where is Low Wood? That was all I wanted to know. Off on holiday to Le Touquet with my girlfriend Trudi, we thought it would be nice to go and see it. After all, it was a rather famous house in the annals of literary history.

However, I stumbled across a conspiracy of silence as to its exact location. Everywhere were hints, but nowhere answers. The biographies by Jasen and Donaldson were suspiciously vague, Frances Donaldson simply referring to it as 'a fairly seaside villa in a row of others with a garden'. The centre of the conspiracy seemed to be Wodehouse himself. His letters in *Yours, Plum* included a picture which told me it was large and surrounded by trees, and the address was always simply given as 'Low Wood, Le Touquet'. The most I got was a confession that to get the daily papers Wodehouse had to go for a 'four-mile walk' to town (*Yours, Plum*, p45).

Arriving in France I found the French had been bought off as well. None of the local histories and guide books gave a clue where to find it. One had a vivid description of his arrest, but that was all. The most interesting thing I discovered was that a new golf course had been built in 1931 to join the older one from 1904, and I realised the many attractions this place had for him. I wondered if there was the equivalent of an Oldest Member who could help.

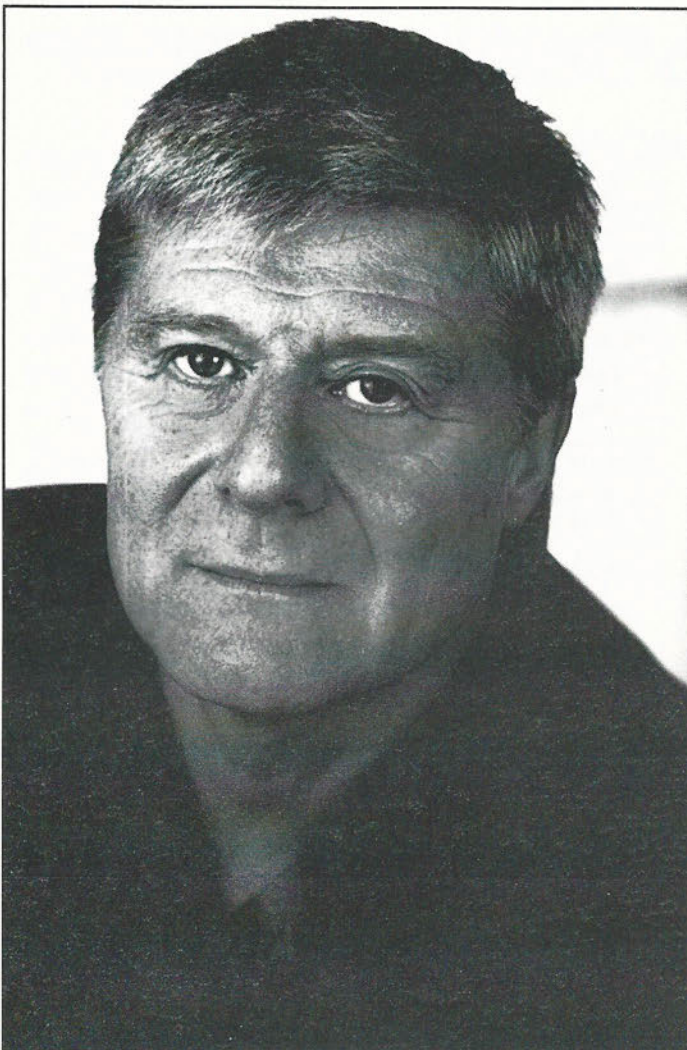
Despondent and doubting I'd ever find Low Wood, Trudi and I went cycling, the best way to see Le Touquet. Heading out into the suburbs along a route selected by my very own Eve Halliday, I suddenly stopped,

nearly causing a multiple pile-up of *velos*. There it was, modest, quiet, subtle and not going out of its way to draw attention to itself, a sign saying 'Low Wood'. The place looked wonderful, at least the trees surrounding it did. The drive was long and the house was hidden, with private property notices providing a final barrier to my goal.

Not to be outdone, we went up the Rue des Amazons, possibly populated by herds of Aunt Agathas. There, attempting to play hide and seek in the shadows was Low Wood, only partially seen down the side of the imaginatively named 'Green Wood'. That was all that could be seen. It was enough. It seemed appropriate that this house, belonging once to one of the most private of men, should remain largely hidden from view, like Wodehouse himself.

The road it was on, by the way, finally bringing an end to the conspiracy, was, appropriately enough, the Avenue du Golf.

Editor's Note: about 18 months ago the Editorial Office received an e-mail informing us that the property, which had been for sale for a while, had been bought by the Mayor of Le Touquet. And, further, that the lady of the household had decided to turn one of the wings of the house into a small apartment to be rented out to visitors, on a 'bed and breakfast' basis. It was not then listed in any of the guide books.



PROFILE OF A PATRON

Martin Jarvis first heard of P G Wodehouse while attending Dulwich College Preparatory School, and considers PGW's writing to wonderfully observe the ludicrousness and blessedness of human behaviour, and to express the joy of life. He has starred in award-winning West End and Royal National Theatre productions of plays by Ayckbourn, Hare, Frayn, Shakespeare, Shaw and Wilde, and has worked extensively with Sir Peter Hall and Michael Frayn. He is highly regarded as a reader of audio-books, his recordings of *Just William* being worldwide best sellers. Examples of his television work are *The Forsyte Saga*, *David Copperfield*, *Nicholas Nickelby* and *Lorna Doone*. Martin's Wodehouse work includes radio (*The Little Nugget* and *Good Morning Bill* for Radio 4), audio-books (six abridged Blandings novels for Random House and *Carry On Jeeves* for CSA Telltapes, winning the prestigious Audie Award in the US), US radio theatre adaptations of Jeeves and Wooster novels, and, in February, he starred as Jeeves in a new production of the musical *By Jeeves* in Pittsburgh. He has recently published an autobiography, *Acting Strangely*, and in 1999 was awarded the OBE.

Romano's – Paradise in the Strand

The Editor has been reading about its history

As all members of the Society will know, the Hon Galahad ('Gally') Threepwood, younger brother of the Ninth Earl of Emsworth, was a member of the Pelican Club. At the start of the twentieth century, many members of this august institution frequented Romano's, a Bohemian bar and restaurant in the Strand. Guy Deghy's history of this social vortex provides something of a flavour of its clientele, and raises a few points of particular interest and possible debate amongst Wodehouseans. One topic will be discussed in each issue of *Wooster Sauce* this year.

The correct pronunciation of 'Romano's' was apparently a matter of debate amongst its patrons for many years. Deghy reports that there were four different factions, each with their own distinctive view. The two pronunciations which had least popular support were the 'frenchified' offering of 'Romanoh's', and 'Ro-may-no's', on which visiting Americans would insist. The other two claimed

equal popularity; the 'Ro-mah-no's' of those with an Italian bias and the 'Roh-mano's' preferred by those men of the world who called the proprietor (Alfonso Nicolino Romano) by his nickname 'Roman'.

A contemporary Solicitor General seemed to have expressed a binding legal view on the issue when he referred to the restaurant in court as 'Roh-mano's'. But that was challenged, it seems, from an unlikely source, the sisters Kitty and Alice Leamar, who sang every night on the Halls a song containing the words:

Romahno's – Italiano's –
Paradise in the Strand
At Romahno's – as Papa knows –
The wine and the women are grand.

It seems to have been accepted by Deghy that this oh so public declaration, which would have reached rather more of its likely habitués than that of the Sol Gen, represented the final word on the matter.

Book Now for the Society Dinner at Dulwich College

The Fourth Annual Dinner of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) will be held on June 15 in Dulwich College, at 6.30 for 7pm. As in 1999, the dinner, whose dress code will be lounge suit, will follow the annual cricket match between the Dulwich Dusters and The Gold Bats, a team representing the Society, which will start at 4pm.

The Hall at Dulwich has a greater capacity than the Inns of Court where we hold Black Tie dinners, and therefore we are able to invite members to bring guests. We are pleased to report that PricewaterhouseCoopers are lending support to the event, and that accordingly the price of tickets, inclusive of liquid refreshment, will be £40 for members, and £45 for non-members.

Patrick Wodehouse, Plum's nephew and a Patron of the Society, will relate some family reminiscences, and we also plan to have a short reading of some Wodehousean gems.

To book your tickets, please complete the enclosed application form and return it with your remittance to Tim Andrew as soon as possible. You will be very welcome to arrive earlier to watch the cricket, or to play in the Golf Event being arranged for members at Addington (see page 9).

Christian Aid book sale in Edinburgh

Member Mary Davidson works tirelessly for Christian Aid and other charities, and helps to organise an annual book sale for Christian Aid at St Andrew's and St George's Church in the centre of Edinburgh. The sale, established in 1974, takes place during Christian Aid Week, this year opening on May 12th, and continuing from May 14th to 18th.

Members and friends of the church give their services, and the whole of the Georgian building, for three weeks. Before the sale there is a fortnight of dedicated round-the-clock sorting and pricing of the many tens of thousands of books and printed ephemera donated. There is strict observance of the 'no-book-sold-before-the-sale' rule.

In the last decade, £ 600,000 has been raised. There are always choice PGW items to be found, and members of the Society are invited to visit, or maybe to donate their unwanted copies to the cause.

Vice-Admiral Norman Atherton Wodehouse CB

On January 12, the *Daily Telegraph* noted that Jed Smith, curator of the Rugby Football Union museum at Twickenham, was trying to trace surviving relatives of Vice-Admiral Wodehouse. In 1913, he had captained the first English team to win the Grand Slam, and his name was to be added to the Wall of Fame at Twickenham before the international match against Italy in February.

Born in 1887, he was the third son of PGW's uncle, the Reverend Frederick Armine Wodehouse, Rector of Gotham. He entered the Navy as a boy, went through Britannia Naval College, and served in both World Wars. He died in 1941.

PGW once wrote that he had not met him, but was proud to claim a captain of England as a cousin.

The Mating Season in Chicago

Why do I get the feeling that news items are cropping up on almost every page in this issue? It must be because the Wodehouse world is so active.

Chicago's City Lit Theatre is staging *The Mating Season* from April 13 to June 10. The Theatre is renowned for an annual excursion into the works of P G Wodehouse, and one thing their productions have in common is that they are pretty close to the plot and dialogue to be found in the books. That in itself is a good recommendation, and the series has proved very popular locally, as is demonstrated by the eight-week run which the cast now command.

If any intrepid members attend and send me a report, I will try to include it in June's *Sauce*.

The Smile That Wins Favourite Nifties - 14

The medicine-man, having given him the once-over, had ordered him to abstain from all alcoholic liquids, and in addition to tool down the hill to the Royal Pump Room each morning at eight-thirty and imbibe twelve ounces of warm crescent saline and magnesia. It doesn't sound much, put that way, but I gather from contemporary accounts that it's practically equivalent to getting outside a couple of little old last year's eggs beaten up in sea-water.

From *Clustering Round Young Bingo*, in *Carry On, Jeeves*

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

Wodehouse's Answers to Correspondents in Tit-Bits (Part 2)

In the December issue, I discussed Wodehouse's editing of the *Answers to Correspondents* column in *Tit-Bits*. This time, I discuss some of Wodehouse's answers to his correspondents in 1908. Typically, correspondents asked about sport, pets, the stage, marriage proposals, the colour or absence of hair, whether certain practices (notably smoking) were healthy, and favourite names for children. The general tone of his answers was that most things were healthy in moderation, fresh air and exercise were the best cures for practically all ailments, and that correspondents should generally buck up.

Wodehouse refers to Gilbert (Black Beetles, 22/8), and quotes from *The Gondoliers* (Dancing, 19/9) and Sam Weller in *Pickwick* (Endings for Letters, 19/9). He mentions NA Knox's nickname at Dulwich (Cricketers' Nicknames, 8/8), and the Douglasses and Wellses, brothers who were at Dulwich (Cricketing Families Again, 29/8). He regularly mentions Sherlock Holmes (Sherlock Holmes and Dupin, 22/8; Sherlock Holmes's Fortunes, 5/9; Air Guns, 26/9). He frequently discusses baldness, often from a personal perspective (Cures for Baldness, 15/8; The Human Head, 3/10; One End of a Man, 24/10). He speaks of Turkish baths from personal experience (Sea Baths, 24/10; Turkish Baths, 31/10; cf NTP Murphy, *In Search of Blandings*, p82). He counsels against keeping parrots (Domestic Pets, 8/8; The Great Parrot Question, 26/9; cf Murphy pp59-60).

A couple of Wodehouse's answers reflect his experience in the bank: "You are not the only young man in London who works all day in an office and finds juggling with ledgers does not provide him with sufficient exercise . . . The best thing you can do is skip. Do not do it in the street, though" (Exercise in London, 8/8; cf Ashe Marson in *Something Fresh* chapter 1). In 'The Workers' (10/10), Wodehouse again speaks from experience: "What? Envy authors and artists 'because they are lazy people'? You say you work in an office, get a good income and have prospects. Don't be foolish. Don't give up a good job, a certainty, just because your sisters think you can write stories better than anything published in the magazines. If the stories really are good, the magazines will publish them quick enough; until they do, wait. As a matter of fact, the average author and artist works far harder than you do. He is at it all day long, and even then he is not quite certain if his work is going to find a market."

Marriages between peers and actresses appear regularly (Peers and Actresses, 19/9; About Actresses, 3/10). In the former, Wodehouse states: "It is interesting to note that no fewer than seven of the actresses who have recently married men of high rank were at one time members of Mr Seymour Hicks's company." Wodehouse himself had worked for Hicks, and this demonstrates that he was writing from personal experience of real life when he had peers marrying chorus girls (cf Lord Marshmoreton and Billie Dore in *A Damsel in Distress*, Murphy pp18-19).

Some unmistakably Wodehousean phrases appear. A bereaved dog owner "shed a few not unmanly tears over the corpse" (Back-Gardens, 8/8). Advising a correspondent on wedding presents, Wodehouse states: "The best thing Harassed can do is stop worrying what to give, and choose a fish-slice or muffin-warmer. It is true that the happy couple will have been given about twenty other fish-slices and muffin-warmers, but that is none of Harassed's business" (Wedding Presents, 19/9). He describes a game in which infants sweep "the mild man off his feet. Highly entertaining for all, except possibly the m. m." (A Happy Evening at Home, 10/10). To the question "How many pores are there in the human body?", he replies: "Precisely how many we cannot tell you, but, if placed end to end, they would cover a mile" (Pores, 31/10). The device of the mangled quote appears: "HLT calls our attention to a certain American fish which is called by naturalists the polydon, but by others billfish, billdon, paddlefish, spoon-billed cat and spoon-billed sturgeon. – We cannot help its troubles. After all, a spoon-billed cat by any other name would be just as much a polydon, as Shakespeare says" (What's in a Name?, 19/9).

One answer (Rewards for Heroes, 10/10) explains Bertie Wooster's fascination with saving people from drowning in order to win the girl. "JLC asks if it is a fact that a fund has been started for the purpose of rewarding men who save people from drowning. – It is a fact. The Heroes Trust Fund was inaugurated by Mr Andrew Carnegie in one of his rare intervals of giving away libraries. It seems to us an excellent idea. No more doubts and uncertainties. No more wondering, as you are rescuing your man, whether this will mean a thumping big cheque as a reward, or simply twopence and a bright smile. So roll up, all you young heroes!"

Details of the Philadelphia Convention

The October Convention of The Wodehouse Society is this year in the capable hands of its Philadelphia chapter, known as 'Chapter One'. Susan Cohen is one of the organisers, and has requested a few lines of explanation. *Wooster Sauce*, unlike tomato ketchup, cannot cover everything, and readers requiring more detail, including the cost of rooms at the convention hotel, and registration for the convention and the cost of related 'extras', are invited to contact her directly. Her details are:

The convention is to be held at the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel, from Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th October. A convention rate, also good for days at either end, has been arranged for those who wish to stay there. Susan can offer general advice on alternative accommodation, but will not be able to book it for you. If you do decide to use the Sheraton, you should ask for the Wodehouse convention rate when booking. The telephone number of the hotel's registration desk from the UK is:

The Wodehouse Society, like its UK sibling, is welcoming, friendly and free of the snobbery which we understand can afflict some literary societies. If you are thinking of coming, but your mate is not

Wodehousean, fear not, for as long as you both remember to bring your sense of fun, you will be surrounded by new friends before you can sing the first verse of *Sonny Boy*.

The more formal part of the convention, with talks on wide-ranging topics including a collection of cow-creamers, takes place on Friday afternoon and Saturday. Also on offer will be two tours of Philadelphia, one general and one concentrating on historic sites, participation in a cricket match, played to TWS's special user-friendly rules, and the opportunity to get together in smaller groups to discuss aspects of Plum's work and life. There will be opportunities to sample May Queens and other suitable beverages, and on Friday night the hotel bar will be turned into the Anglers' Rest and made available exclusively to Mr Mulliner and his acolytes.

In this connection, another of the organisers, David McDonough has let it be known that entries will be welcome from any member of the UK Society, whether or you are not attending, for the 'Great Plum Paragraph Contest'. The simple challenge is to write a 'PGW-type paragraph' in the style of another writer. If you want to know more, ask David

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges – 17

[The sergeant looked up. If he was surprised to hear a human voice when he had supposed himself to be alone with his stamping, he gave no sign of it. His face was a face not equipped to register emotion.]

"Sir?"

"It's about my wallet. I've lost my wallet."

"Next door. Office of the Commissaire's secretary"

"But I've just been there, and he told me to come here."

"Quite in order. You notify him, then you notify me."

"So if I notify him again, he will notify me to notify you?"

"Precisely."

"You mean I go to him . . . ?"

"Just so."

"And he sends me to you?"

"Exactly."

"And then you send me to him?"

"It is the official procedure in the case of lost property."

(Suggested by Maclean Robertson, from *Frozen Assets*)

DVD Competition

A Disappointing Number of Entries

The competition to win a DVD of the first Granada TV series *Jeeves and Wooster* regrettably only attracted one entry. So congratulations to Matthew Chamings of Barnstaple for the following:

"Jeeves."

"Sir."

"Those fellows at the Wodehouse Society are giving away some of our stuff on DVD."

"Indeed, sir."

"Yes. All the lucky winner has to do is name their favourite character. Could prove tricky what with not being able to vote for me. Still, I know who I'd choose. Aunt Dahlia, without a doubt, has got to be the soundest of eggs. You can always rely on the aged A to help young Bertie out of a spot. What do you think, Jeeves?"

"If I may venture an opinion, sir, that tie would better complement the fawn jacket."

Millennium Concordance Volume 7 reviewed

William Dennison considers the merits of Wodehouse with Old Friends

Each of the first six volumes of Porpoise Books' *Millennium Wodehouse Concordance* covered a thematically related group of novels and stories (Golf, Mulliner, School, Ukridge, Blandings, and Jeeves & Wooster). The seventh and eighth volumes will cover the remaining works that fall outside those major series for which P G Wodehouse is best known. The large number of works yet to be covered, as well as their thematic diversity, would appear to present a daunting challenge. However, the sweeping-up process is off to an auspicious start in *Wodehouse With Old Friends*. The unifying theme of this seventh volume, which covers more than fifty novels and stories first published between 1903 and 1973, is that each covered work is said to include one or more characters who re-appear in at least one other novel or story.

TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, The: expressed the opinion that *A Woman in the Wilds* had 315 pages. (MIB ch24)

TIMES SQUARE TATTLE: one of the papers which is incorporated into *Town Gossip*. (TSB ch17)

TIMON OF ATHENS: could have picked up hints from a Drones Club supper guest on the morning after. (USTLB ch2; Passing-TLB; Red-TLB)

TINY FOLK: a Mammoth publication, produced in an annex of Tilbury house. (STS ch13)

TINY TOTS: a magazine in the Mammoth stable which was not averse to carrying a bed-time story written by the proprietor, and which Wrenn sometimes wished he could edit. (BTC ch1; STS ch14)

TODHUNTER, Clarence ('Hash'): the lean and stringy former cook of the *Araminta*, who engendered an inexplicable fascination as far as Sam Shotter was concerned. He was in his early 30s and his high forehead and ruminative eye concealed a strong pessimistic streak. We should respect this man, who won six (or sixteen, depending on the report) shillings from Chimp Twist at stud poker, an achievement that not many could boast. He became engaged to the next door neighbour's maid, Claire Lippett, while living in Valley Fields and despite understandable anxieties about her mother bravely confirmed his intention to carry her off to run a pub. (STS ch1,3,12,16; SatEvePost-SSU; Sunny-STS)

TOLSTOI, Count Leo Nikolayevitch (1828-1910): recommended twiddling the fingers as an alternative to smoking. (PGM ch11)

An extract from page 296

Consequently, even readers whose acquaintance with Wodehouse is limited to the more familiar terrain covered by the first six volumes will find many "old friends" on hand in this latest entry. Monty Bodkin, Barmy Fotheringay-Phipps, Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, and other Drones Club members who have already appeared elsewhere in the *Concordance* in supporting roles, here step into the limelight as featured players. Also on hand is the

imperturbable Psmith, whose school days and Blandings connection were described in earlier volumes, but whose careers in finance and journalism are only now documented in the *Concordance*.

Even among such familiar company, however, readers who are not already committed Wodehouse devotees are likely to be unfamiliar with many of the works discussed in this volume. *Wodehouse With Old Friends* certainly does its part to entice those readers to broaden their horizons. Not all of the works covered in this volume represent Wodehouse at his best, perhaps, but the *Concordance's* by-now familiar style, combining thumbnail character sketches with plot snatches and assorted *bons mots*, effectively makes the case that these tales deserve to be read and, in many cases, re-read. Even for devotees, the book may offer some surprises: among

the covered works are two as-yet uncollected stories that are not listed in Daniel Garrison's excellent *Who's Who In Wodehouse*. The first of these, *Dudley Jones, Bore-Hunter*, is a 1903 Sherlock Holmes pastiche that deserves to be republished; the second, *Signs and Portents*, is apparently a cricket story published in 1906. Previous volumes of the *Concordance* have also revealed a handful of stories not listed in the otherwise comprehensive Garrison book. For Wodehouse completists, the unearthing of these 'rediscoveries' is one of the *Concordance's* principal virtues.

Like its predecessors in the series, *Wodehouse With Old Friends* combines good fun with good scholarship. In addition to noting significant variations in the different versions of the same work and providing thorough citations to original sources, the book includes several appendices containing, among other things, a complete list of documented Drones Club members, a discussion of the various incarnations of the butler Keggs, and an explanation of the complex relationship among *Psmith Journalist* and the US and UK editions of *The Prince and Betty*. All in all, the seventh volume of the *Concordance* fully lives up to the high expectations engendered by the first six.

WODEHOUSE WITH OLD FRIENDS: Volume 7 of the *Millennium Wodehouse Concordance*, by Tony Ring and Geoffrey Jaggard (Porpoise Books, 2000, 371 (+ xvii) pp. £ 22. ISBN: 1-870304-20-9)

Recent Press Comment

Vanity Fair, September 7 (from Jan Kaufman)

In an article headed *The Good, the Bad and the Insanely Fabulous*, the writer said that the epitome of 'It-ness' was whatever patch of earth Gwynneth Paltrow was standing upon, and that she, to 'It-ness' is what Otis is to elevators, or Gussie Fink-Nottle to newt-fanciers.

The Hindu, October 15

A 1,500-word article by T G Vaidyanathan traced the contours of PGW's forays into cricket.

Daily Mail, October 27

Tom Courtenay (now Sir Thomas) is quoted as saying that if banished to a desert island he would take the complete works of PGW.

Writers' News, November (from Joe Harkins)

Cryse Morrison argued that using other writers' thoughts and imagery to inspire and embellish one's own work is not cheating, and used PGW's habit of decorating monologue with 'half-digested erudite allusions' in support of her point.

Daily Telegraph, November 4 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Reported that former Prime Minister John Major had commissioned a bookseller to collect a set of the works of PGW for him.

Daily Express, November 18 (from Victoria Fox)

Drew attention to the new book *Vanity Fair's Hollywood*, which contained PGW's article *A School for Movie Villains* from October 1915.

Telegraph Magazine, November 18 and 25 (from Eric Coulton)

In the series *Social Stereotypes*, the writer Victoria Mather used PGW examples in successive issues. In *The Bookshop Owners* she referred to Clara as 'loving the shop and insisting on opening up the oval grate so that on slow winter afternoons she can warm her bottom while reading the new *Everyman* collection of P G Wodehouse'. In *The Hapless Husband* she described Hugo, who had to ring his wife in New York to ask where the butter was kept, as frequently feeling he was Wooster without the benefit of Jeeves.

Observer, November 26 (from Peter Viggers)

William Keegan's article on the economic position recalls *Sunset at Blandings*, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer complains that he cannot propose marriage because his private detective is always in the way.

Gally Threepwood is quoted as saying: "The trouble with you politicians is that you wrap up your statements to such an extent with double talk that the lay mind needs an electric drill to get at the meaning." Keegan adds that many people have thought this during the present Parliament.

Independent, Early December (from Helen Murphy)

Reported that American billionaire Charlie Munger was a PGW fan.

Weekly Standard, December 4

A 2,000+ word article by Andrew Ferguson about the work of PGW encompasses a review of the new *Everyman* series.

Daily Telegraph, December 16 (from Murray Hedgcock)

The *Arts and Books* section picked up two references from December's *Wooster Sauce* (Eddie Grabham's article about Gloria Swanson, and James Hogg's about Wolff-Lehmann).

Evening Standard, December 18 (from John Baesch)

Named the *Everyman* series of PGW books in a review of 'the funniest books of the year'.

Mail on Sunday, December 24 (from John Baesch)

Incorporated a number of comparisons with PGW into a review of the book *The Raymond Chandler Papers*.

Radio 4 'A Good Read', January 9 (from Mark Goodfellow)

Robert McCrum selected *The Code of the Woosters* for discussion by the panel.

Sunday Times, January 14

A review of the book *Clerical Errors* by Alan Isler carried the secondary headline "As usual he combines almost Wodehousean comedy with painful, unsentimental tragedy."

Times, January 27

A leader, reporting on an albatross (three shots under par on a single hole) secured by Andrew Magee in the Phoenix Open Golf Tournament, suggested how the Oldest Member might have recounted the tale years later.

Daily Telegraph, February 21 (from John Hayzelden)

A reader wrote in commenting on the inability of the British to speak foreign languages and quoting the first sentence of *The Luck of the Bodkins*.

By Jeeves in Pittsburgh

Patron Martin Jarvis played Jeeves in the most recent production of the Alan Ayckbourn/Andrew Lloyd Webber show *By Jeeves*, this time in Pittsburgh. It ran for six weeks, and tickets were 98% sold even before the preview.

The critics were uniformly kind, indeed, more than kind. *Tribune-Review* said it ‘sparkles with wit, vitality, just plain goofy, good-natured fun’. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* called it ‘one of the most curious entertainments devised for the stage in recent times. And one of the most enjoyable. . . . It is far more inventive and alive than a good deal of the stuff that finds its way to New York.’ And the appropriately named PG News (*Post-Gazette*) ecstatically referred to it as ‘the layer cake of our dreams’. Particular praise is heaped on Alan Ayckbourn, the Director, for the demonstration of his stagecraft, with his ‘Jeevesian command of every dovetailed detail’.

It is hoped that a small Broadway theatre will become free for a production later in the year. What an opportunity that would offer to members visiting Philadelphia for the convention in October and able to take a short diversion.

Society Meetings in Bolton and Coventry

We are pleased to report that sufficient interest has been expressed in holding meetings in both Bolton and Coventry later this year for planning to continue in earnest. Full details of location, the programmes and other details will appear in June’s *Wooster Sauce*, but the dates have now been provisionally fixed for:

Bolton	August 18th
Coventry	September 29th

May we suggest that members in those areas keep these dates free, and if they have further suggestions, or would like to help in organising the meetings in any way, they should contact

Further Recordings by Simon Callow

Simon Callow has recorded abridged readings of two further titles for the Penguin Audio series: *Right Ho, Jeeves* and *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*. They will be published in June.

Penguin also announce the publication in mid-April of the paperback edition of the anthology *What Ho! The Best of P G Wodehouse*. This edition contains all the text of the original, including Stephen Fry’s superb *Introduction*, but omits the illustrations. It has been given a vibrant David Hitch cover, matching the remainder of their recent reissues, and will be priced at £ 9.99.

POETS’ CORNER

The Song-Spotter

He stood on the beach with a haggard air,
As the natives sang their lays;
And I asked him the cause of his look of care
(I had marked it on previous days).
“Cheer up,” I said. “Oh, never despair;
Perchance I may heal your wrongs.”
“Alas,” said he, “but it cannot be,
For – shudder – I’m spotting songs.”

“Or ever the earliest shrimp is snared
In the earliest shrimper’s net,
Or ever the primal bather’s bared,
Or the first toy yacht upset,
Or ever the lodgers start up, scared
At the roar of their breakfast gongs,
Here on the strand I take my stand
For the purpose of spotting songs.

“Others may ’scape to the gay hotel,
To the desolate cliffs may flee,
May, if they fear not wave nor swell,
Sail on the songless sea,
Stroll inland with a chosen belle,
Far from the vocal throngs –
I must stay through the livelong day,
My mission is spotting songs.

“That is the reason why I’m depressed,
Silent and grim and sad;
Ne’er may I fly from the noisome pest
(It’s driving me nearly mad).
Never on earth shall I find that rest
For which my whole soul longs;
Evermore must I haunt this shore
For the purpose of spotting songs.”

From *Punch*, 15 July, 1903.

(The writer was commenting on a report about ‘song-spotters’, agents who were sent every summer by music-publishing firms to listen to all the songs sung by entertainers and to note which succeeded.)

Auberon Waugh

Patron Auberon Waugh, who was profiled in *Wooster Sauce* Issue 13 (March 2000), died on January 16th. He had been suffering from a heart condition for some time.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

April 22, 2001 – Theatre Museum, London

Illustrated presentation – *P G Wodehouse: Life, Verse and Lyrics*. See page 4 for details and how to obtain tickets.

May 26, 2001 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

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

June 15, 2001 – Golf Event at Addington

See page 9 for details.

June 15, 2001 – Annual Cricket Match and Dinner

The annual cricket match between the Society team, the Gold Bats, and the Dulwich Dusters will be held at Dulwich College, and will be followed by the annual dinner (lounge suit). *Society members who wish to play should confirm their interest with Bob Miller as soon as possible.*

An application form for tickets for the dinner has been circulated with this edition of *Wooster Sauce*.

July 10, 2001 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting, at which actor Geoff Hales will entertain.

August 18, 2001 – Proposed meeting at Bolton

See page 23 for a contact phone number regarding the meeting to be held at Bolton Little Theatre at 2pm.

September 29, 2001 – Proposed meeting at Coventry

See page 23 for more information about the first Society meeting to be held in Coventry.

October 12 to 14, 2001 – TWS Convention, Philadelphia

The next convention of the American-based Society, which is described more fully on page 20.

October 21, 2001 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

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

November 13, 2001 – Informal meeting at the Savage Club

Advance notice of our regular evening meeting, at which member David Colvin, CMG, who until January this year was British Ambassador to Belgium, will speak about his experiences as Patron of the Belgian Drones Club, and other matters.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

While member Malachy Cornwell-Kelly was on holiday in Italy recently, he bought a luminous pink rabbit from a street vendor. If any member knows the whereabouts of Tuppy Glossop, will they please let him know.

American member Stu Shiffman has drawn attention to a *Seattle Times* article just before the American Presidential election, syndicated by the *Washington Post Writers' Group* and written by Michael Kelly. It included a comment that Bush reminds an observer 'of the amiable but slightly dim young men who populated the novels of P G Wodehouse: Bertram Wooster, Catsmeat Potter (*sic*) and the rest. Regarding Wooster, Wodehouse once noted, one was forced to ask the question whether man was really God's last word. So too with Bush.' It is no part of *Wooster Sauce's* brief to make any political comment, but isn't it extraordinary (ignoring the inaccuracies in the article) that Kelly assumes that his readers will understand the references.

American member James Robinson III tells me that the TV channel *Showtime* recently ran an episode in their *Beggars and Choosers* series entitled *The Woodhouse Conundrum*. A character was required to spy on a co-worker with whom she was having an affair, and had to break into his computer. He had once told her that if he ever had trouble remembering his password, he just thought 'Wodehouse', which she, of course, assumed was 'wood house'. She had already tried 'log house', 'cottage' and other possible words when she saw a series of PGW novels on the shelf, all with 'Jeeves' in the title. And 'Jeeves' proved to be the password.

The *Sunday Times TV Guide* quoted Richard Briers on 14 January, in relation to his active participation in athletic stunts for *Monarch of the Glen*, as saying: "I told the producer, 'I'm very old. I'm a living legend. I must not be pushed around or bullied. No horses or fast cars. I'll be quite amusing sitting in the library.'" For many years to come, we hope.