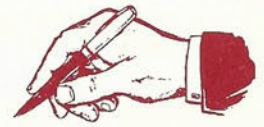


WOOSTER SAUCE



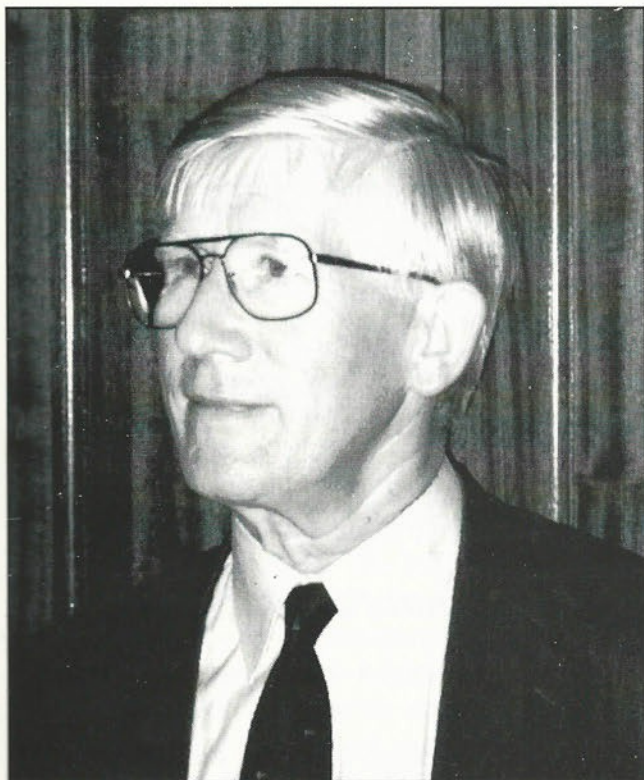
The Quarterly Journal of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Number 27

September 2003

1,000 Members, and still growing

As reported on page 17, at the Society meeting at the Savage Club in July David Heyhoe was introduced to members as our thousandth member. His son James and daughter Louise had arranged a gift membership of the Society for his birthday; he had mentioned to Louise the report in *The Times* of the retirement of our former chairman, Norman Murphy. They included in the surprise an entry for David in the Cow-Creamer Challenge Golf Tournament at Exeter.



David has been reading Wodehouse for many years and the golf stories are among his favourites. His collection consists largely of the Herbert Jenkins editions, of which he has some thirty-five. His reward for becoming our thousandth name was a copy of the hardback edition of the new *A Prince for Hire*, which is rapidly becoming a scarce item. We hope to see David regularly at our meetings in future.

A New Treasurer and a February AGM

The Annual General Meeting for the Society's year ended May 31, 2003, will be held on February 10, 2004, during the Savage Club meeting scheduled for that evening. Further details and an agenda will be given in the December issue of *Wooster Sauce*, but we would like to draw members' attention to one change in the membership of the Committee which will be taking place before that date.

For three years Nick Townend has been our valiant Treasurer, as well as acting as a stalwart supporter of the Bolton meetings and contributing a regular column to *Wooster Sauce*. This year, he achieved what might colloquially be called a triple whammy, a new job, a new house, and an addition to his family, and the most hard-hearted amongst us have to accept that his request to stand down is not unreasonable.

The Committee therefore plans formally to co-opt Alan Wood as a member of the Committee, and Treasurer, at its meeting on October 14. Alan, like all the officers, will stand for election by the membership as a whole at the AGM. Nick Townend will oversee the finalisation of the 2003 audited accounts and then hand over responsibility for the Society's finances to Alan.

Alan Wood, who lives in Colchester, Essex, has been a secret PGW fan since childhood, using his father's ticket to borrow books from the library. In the 1960s, he found that the then flagship bookshop, Foyles, was offering a large number of PGW books going back to the 1940s, and had to confess his hidden past to his wife as being the only way of getting the books into the house. Professionally, Alan worked as an accountant for a London firm for a number of years, latterly specialising in charity accounting and personal tax matters. He maintains that it is purely a coincidence that he moved into semi-retirement shortly after discovering the Society in 1998 but Mr Mulliner, who is still researching any possible family relationship, would surely have called it Fate.

I Felt Among Friends at Toronto

Eileen Jones enjoyed her first TWS convention

What an exhilarating experience the Toronto convention turned out to be. As someone who has never attended a convention before and only discovered the society this year, despite avidly reading P G Wodehouse since I was eleven years old, it was a dream come true. So many people gathered together with information to share on Wodehouse's life and books, presented in a humorous fashion that he really would have appreciated. The weekend had talks, skits, cricket and a marvellous fancy dress banquet to name but a few events and it will stay in my mind forever.

The event kicked off on Thursday with a crowd of people meeting up at the *Windsor Arms*. Everyone was so pleased to see fellow members whom they had not seen for two years and anecdotes were being told by old and young alike. Elliot Milstein was presiding, as the Detroit chapter organised the event, and I introduced myself to him, with an apology for waking him in the middle of the night! This had happened as I had forgotten the time difference when I phoned him before the event for information, only to discover that it was four in the morning! I did point out to him that it was in the spirit of Wodehouse and that at least I didn't wake him by bursting his hot water bottle with a knitting needle, as happened to Sir Roderick Glossop.

Friday morning dawned bright and clear and everyone donned their cricket gear and walked to the pitch where battle would commence. I say battle as I am now nursing my first ever cricket injury. This happened after I miraculously hit the ball, gazed after it in admiration, only to find Pongo Twistleton haring towards me, seriously expecting

me to run too. Unfortunately we both chose the same route, collided and I flew through the air and landed on my face, fortunately falling past the wicket, so not out! The whole event was much more entertaining than most cricket matches. Highlights included Sarah Guthrie fetchingly bowling with one hand whilst holding on to her cap with the other and a York professor (a ringer) hitting the ball so hard it hit a window in the college. Tony Ring ably umpired the match, not succumbing to any bribes and kindly giving people another go if they were out before actually hitting the ball.

The lectures on Saturday were both informative and interesting with Richard Scrimger excelling himself using sound effects of a blender and 'noises off'. This was followed by Curtis Armstrong's very entertaining comparison of modern Hollywood with Plum's story of noddors, who apparently still exist. Jan Wilson Kaufman succeeded Susan Cohen as TWS President.

The *pièce de resistance* of the whole week end was the fancy dress banquet, where costumes ranged from Edwin the boy scout to Aunt Dahlia. Prizes were awarded for many categories, our table winning the most glamorous table award, largely due to Sarah Guthrie and Laura Conran sparkling away, and partly to our having more cigarette holders than any one else.

We were still bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at Sunday morning's brunch, where a Mulliner skit, well up to Hollywood standards, was performed. As everyone took their leave, there was much hugging and kissing and the cry went up "We'll meet again in Hollywood", the site of the 2005 convention.

Wodehouse Events at the Cheltenham Festival

The Cheltenham Festival of Literature, being held this year between 10 and 19 October, is one of the leading events of its type. This year, amongst the 300 events in various categories (including over 50 specially aimed at children) there are two Wodehouse-related talks:

Saturday 11 October, 4 to 5pm, at the Everyman Theatre (Event No 33)

Robert McCrum, *Observer* Literary Editor, discusses his forthcoming biography of Wodehouse with Nigel Williams (author, not bookseller!), accompanied by readings given by Jonathan Cecil.

Sunday 12 October, 4 to 5pm, at the Town Hall (Event No 53)

Martin Jarvis looks at backstage Broadway in the months before and after 9/11 as the New York production of *By Jeeves* came to fruition.

Discounted ticket prices are available for Society members, representing a reduction of £2 on the McCrum ticket and £1 on the Jarvis, if membership of the Society is specified at the time of booking, which can be by telephone to 01242 227979, e-mail to boxoffice@cheltenham.gov.uk or through the website www.cheltenhamfestivals.co.uk

Wodehouse and Sandow's Magazine

Jan Piggott contemplates a bizarre publication

Jan Piggott recently bought for the Dulwich College Wodehouse Collection a run of *Sandow's Magazine* from 1898-1902 containing a number of articles by the young Wodehouse on physical education, boxing and other sports. It is a wonderfully bizarre and absurd publication in itself.

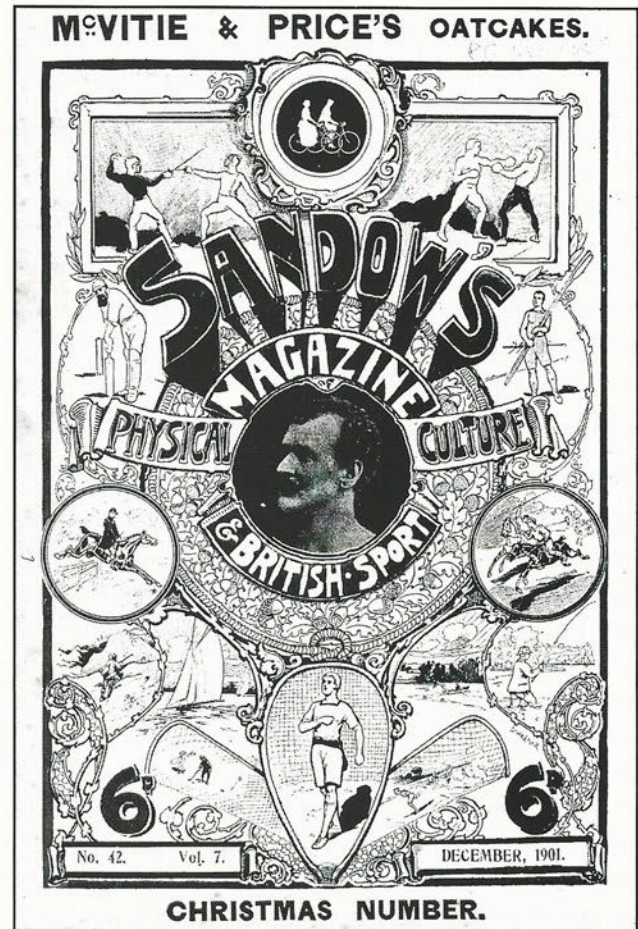
In this paragraph from *Some Football Facts* published in the March 1902 issue, Wodehouse uses his stylistic device of combining two very different frames of reference for comic effect, whereby each world – in this case Venice of the fifteenth century and contemporary Rugby football – appears more ridiculous. This technique was later brought to perfection in *The Swoop* (1909), for example in the scene where a summer seaside beach crowded with trippers on Margate sands is subjected to an attack from the sea by black warriors in canoes invading England, who proceed dexterously to scalp a little boy on the beach; or again in *The Little Nugget* of 1913 where the two worlds of a genteel South Coast prep school and Chicago gangsters are conjoined.

Here is the paragraph from Wodehouse's article in *Sandow's Magazine*:

One of the most remarkable matches that has ever been played took place in Venice in the fifteenth century between two teams of the aristocracy and the people. The City happened to be in a state of siege at the time, and when the referee blew whatever mediaeval instrument corresponded to the modern whistle (possibly a sackbut) for the kick-off, cannon-balls were flying over the field in all directions. Once the game was begun, however, the two teams had little time to notice such trifles. Every member of the people's team had a grudge against the upper fifteen, and as the game was played under the Rugby code, they proceeded to wipe it off. Play opened with a fine run by one Antinori of the popular team. He was tackled by a gentleman whom, owing to the exigencies of space, we shall have to call Jones. Antinori, though fairly held, refused to put the ball down. The referee appears to have been slain by a cannon-ball about this time, for he allowed Antinori and his adversary to indulge in a spirited free fight without interference.

"Thereupon", says the historian, "a bestial rage seized Antinori. Every time Jones told him to put the ball down, he answered with a blow or a kick".

(How like the present day!) In the end, Jones's eyes began, in the naive words of the reporter, to be



Sandow's Magazine for the Christmas issue, December 1901

'bunged up in a most uncomfortable manner.' Subsequently he lost his grip and was led off to the local mortuary, Antinori continuing his run and scoring amidst applause. Play ruled rough throughout. At intervals 'trained menials' would rush onto the field and drag their masters from the scrum 'spitting blood and teeth'. It must have been a really excellent game to watch.

(According to PGW's *Receipts Book*, also held at Dulwich, this article was written jointly with Old Alleynian F Overy.)

Aubusson Carpets

Following the June issue of *By The Way*, listing products in PGW's books which may or may not have been inventions, David Thirlby wrote to say that Aubusson Carpets were made from the sixteenth century at the town of the same name on the River Greuse. He adds that examples today can only be seen in museums and auction rooms.

Plum and Mugg, Part Two

Murray Hedgcock completes his survey

In June's *Wooster Sauce*, I wrote about Wodehouse's first meeting with Malcolm Muggeridge in Paris, and outlined the nature of their relationship. I finished at the point when Muggeridge was appointed Editor of *Punch* in 1952, and he soon invited Wodehouse to contribute regularly. Wodehouse was delighted to be able to resurrect his market for short humorous essays, for the magazines to which he contributed short fiction were difficult to find, and those that did exist would not take material as long as his preferred 7,000 words.

The relationship blossomed, as Muggeridge explained:

When I am in New York, I always go out to Long Island to see Wodehouse and Ethel, whose architectural rebuilding activities continue unabated. . . . As with all imaginative people, there is an area of inner reserve in Wodehouse which one never penetrates. The scars of his time in the stocks are hidden there. In one of his rare references to his experience, he said to me that it had made him feel like a music hall comedian, accustomed to applause, who suddenly gets the bird. This, I think, is what it signified to him, and perhaps indeed, what it signifies.

Muggeridge developed special affection for Ethel Wodehouse, with whom he lunched on her lone visit to Britain in 1948, describing her as a 'mixture of Mistress Quickly and Florence Nightingale, with a touch of Lady Macbeth thrown in – I grew to love her'. When asked by Plum's biographer Frances Donaldson why this was so, he replied: "She was so *game*".

So what sort of topics did Plum write about for *Punch*? Between June 1953 and June 1956, some of the titles of his 66 articles were *Fair Play for Fathers*; *Smokers of the World, Unite*; *You Too Can Talk Convincingly*; *The Snail Situation*; *Onwards and Upwards with the Fiends*; *The Battle of the Bulge*; *Off Broadway*; *Money, Money, Always Money*; *The Meteorite Racket*; *Thoughts on the Crime Wave*; *Canada is So Bracing*. A representative sample of topics, all handled with the gentle ironic, sometimes mildly satirical, humour which has always been such a feature of his journalism.

There is room in this article for only one short extract. The following paragraph, from *Carol and*

Edna, an article about the devastation caused by hurricanes, maintains a freshness today, almost half a century after it was written:

Carol put two hundred and sixty thousand telephones out of action. This was an excellent thing. There is far too much telephoning in America. It is a pleasant thought that for three days Vera (aged sixteen) was not able to ring up Clarice (fifteen and a half) and ask her if it was



true that Jane had said what Alice had said she had said about what Louise had said Dora had said about Genevieve.

In 1960, while in New York on a lecture tour, Muggeridge visited Plum with his editor, Peter Schwed. Of much greater significance, though, was an engagement in 1965, when he interviewed Plum for a thirty-minute BBC broadcast. This was received generally well by the critics, although a number of papers thought the questions posed could have been more testing. While not one of Muggeridge's trademark, terrier-like performances, it nevertheless provided a rare insight into a shy man's life.

The Muggeridge centenary has consisted of a number of special events, including a convention at Wheaton College, where the principal collection of Muggeridge papers is held. Sally Muggeridge, pictured above, assisted by actor Peter Stockbridge, will be speaking about the Wodehouse connection at the Savage Club meeting on October 14, to which all members are invited.

A Kindred Spirit in an Unexpected Place

by Gwendolin Goldbloom

A very unexpected place indeed, in this case, as the spirit in question is that of ETA Hoffmann (1776–1822), author of such fantastic pieces as *The Nutcracker* and subject of Offenbach's opera *Les contes de Hoffmann*. While his sense of humour and his gentle satire of the world in general are among my reasons for enjoying Hoffmann's tales, I was rather surprised when I met some 'old friends'.

It is probably least surprising that Murr the tomcat's views on humans often sound similar to those expressed by cats, and dogs, in various Wodehouse stories.

Then there is a gentleman, not in his first youth, who wishes to get married and, when an acquaintance asks him how he came to choose this particular pretty young lady, begins quoting from an old book. Now while I cannot say whether JHamilton Beamish (in *The Small Bachelor*) had any sources for his booklet on *The Marriage Sane*, I think that if he did, this book might well have been among them, as it contains such advice that 'at the very least, one should not hurry into marriage' and that 'one should converse with the bride-to-be not only once but several times in order to make sure that there should not be any clashes of taste, temperament or opinion'. The book (whose title, by the way, is eight lines long, which is why I'm not giving it here) then goes on to give advice on how the suitor can impress the young lady in question and make himself

invaluable. Needless to say, the lady in this particular case has other ideas and the gentleman's industrious study is in vain.

My favourite, however, is the tale of the young man who goes to university, leaving his bride behind. He joins a circle of would-be poets and aesthetes who convince him that he is the most soulful poet of them all, with dire consequences for his conversation, written style and common sense. His bride, in the meantime, devotes even more time to her vegetable garden than before, and although the young man's love letters confuse rather than delight her, she is modest enough to believe that this is because she is not as highly educated as he is. Even so, it is only after many pages of dangers and confusions that we find them standing side by side in the vegetable garden, he talking soulful nonsense and she deliberating where next to cut with her spade. And then what should happen but that, in her enthusiasm, the bride bops the groom over the head with her spade with the twofold happy result that he stops burbling soulfully and incomprehensibly and that she is so shocked at what she has done that she does not devote her entire time and attention to her garden any more, so they can both concentrate on more immediate matters such as getting happily married.

And all this in the early eighteen hundreds in or around Berlin.

A Letter to The Times

(Not to be reproduced without permission)

Plum's everywhere

From Mr Sam Merchant

Sir, Frustrated at my lack of success in tracing an out-of-print book on the internet, I keyed "P. G. Wodehouse" into the search engine.

The first entry out of tens of thousands it produced was "The Russian Wodehouse Society".

God's in his heaven ...

Yours faithfully,
SAM MERCHANT,
73 Gorsewood Road, St Johns,
Woking, Surrey GU21 8XG.
June 6.

And an Enquiry from John Tatum of Brighton

I have just been re-reading *Heavy Weather* and I came across this passage from chapter 8:

[Beach] . . . chanced to catch sight of Lord Tilbury, who had retreated to the shadow of the inn wall.

Lord Tilbury, brooding there with folded arms, reminded him of The Man With The Twisted Eyebrows in *The Casterbridge Horror*.

The Holmesian reference is obvious, but I wonder if *The Casterbridge Horror* is anything to do with PG's opinion of Thomas Hardy. It would be interesting to know what his opinion was.

*If Readers would like to express their views on this subject, please write to the Editor by e-mail at
or by post to the
address at the foot of page 24.*

What Leonora Said About Plum

In 1933 Leonora Wodehouse was interviewed by Toye Vise of Chums, and we reproduce some extracts

The journal had wished to interview Plum for their *Chums Gallery of Famous Men* feature, but he had replied ‘after some delay, from the comparative safety of the French Alps. Moreover he made it very clear that *there* he was going to stay for quite a long, long, long while.’

He did, however, offer this suggestion:

Why not go to see my daughter Leonora? She knows more about me than I know myself. I’m sure she’ll talk.

Her first comment was that:

Really, you know, Plum is a perfectly impossible person. He’s the most detached creature in the world. He is entirely self-sufficient. You can’t pin Plum down. I’m his daughter – his only child – but I’ve given up trying to manage him.

She added:

When it comes to his work, Plum is very wilful. I try to be his fearless critic. At times it is a somewhat thankless and difficult task. Once we argued about a certain chapter of a book that he was writing. I was for cutting the chapter out, or, at any rate, for drastic revision. He was dreadfully determined to keep the chapter in, and for no alteration whatsoever. It was a ding dong battle between us, and there came a time when I even suspected him of literary sulking. And literary sulks are the worst sulks of all! The battle went on for weeks and weeks. Then, when the book was published, I read, for the first time, the dedication which read as follows:

To my daughter, Leonora, without whose never-failing sympathy and encouragement this book would have been finished in half the time.

Leonora commented, though, that in the domestic circle, the order of precedence was Winks (the Peke), ‘Mummy’, Leonora and Plum, a very bad fourth. She thought, too, that he was rather gullible, that he was always being ‘done’ because he was the very soul of generosity. She gave a rather charming example:

Cleverness isn’t enough in this world. Plum’s a clever – very clever – man; but some people do know how to get hold of him. I’m thinking of the man who played the cornet on the corner. One day he asked to see Plum, private-like. After a little parleying he was shown in. He told Plum

that he was in great trouble as his cornet, his sole means of gaining a subsistence, had been foully stolen. Did Plum know anybody who would buy him another?

Plum replied that he couldn’t think of anybody off-hand who would jump at the chance, but he wouldn’t mind buying him one himself. Plum to the life!

So, Plum bought the cornet man a new cornet. And that was the beginning of it.

A few weeks later the cornet man called again. Plum was out and nobody else would do.

After dinner, that same day, the cornet man was announced. And Plum saw him, alone. The cornet, the new cornet, was in pawn.

Plum got the cornet out.

Then, not very long afterwards, that Wodehouse cornet got itself lost. Left on a bus, I think it was. Plum solemnly came to the rescue with another brand new cornet. I told him that I hoped he wasn’t trying to make a corner in cornets.

And that cornet also led a life of adventure and all at the expense of poor dear Plum.

She made the odd observation on life in Hollywood:

I’m afraid Hollywood bored Plum. They would insist upon asking him to do work that didn’t interest him the tiniest little bit. But Plum and I revelled in the swimming. There was a lovely bathing pool. We swam every day before breakfast. And we swam again before dinner. Plum’s a really magnificent swimmer. And, as I told you, he’s still mad on football. That’s why he came rushing home from California to be in time to watch the Harlequins playing in the Rugby Final. That’s Plum all over. He knows what he wants and goes out to get it. Not a bad motto for man or boy . . .

The remainder of the article considered extracts from the scrap books which Plum kept for his earliest writing, including many portraits of an actress Ethel Haydon, then playing in *The Circus Girl*, which Plum saw at least five times. Though he obtained her autograph, he had to give way to the better claims of George Robey, and he accepted his defeat by including in his scrap book a seven-line newspaper cutting announcing their marriage!

Wodehouse on the Swedish Screen

by Anna Lalic

In Sweden two of PG Wodehouse's books have been filmed – *Summer Lightning* and *Good Morning Bill*. *Summer Lightning* is quite often seen on television. But *Good Morning Bill* has not been shown for decades, and none of your colleagues in the Swedish society has seen the film. We are now searching as best we can in archives, wardrobes and drawers for a copy of the film. Meanwhile we will serve you with a short summary of *Summer Lightning* along with a few words from various film critics.

Blixt och dunder (Summer Lightning)

Dressed in a parachute, Galahad Treepwood lands in his brother's pear tree. So enters the charmer Gally into the Swedish film version of *Summer Lightning*. The film was made in 1938 and contains the crème de la crème of Swedish film actors of that time.

The film follows the intrigues of the book from the beginning until the happy end. But some changes have been made. The setting is a castle in the southern part of Sweden. Clarence and Constance have become husband and wife under the name Pontus and Charlotte Hägerskiöld. Ronnie Fish, Claes-Ferdinand in the film, is now their son – a

young man who has lost a lot of money on an unsuccessful film magazine (in the book a failed nightclub affair). Hugo Carmody, secretary to Lord Emsworth, and Rupert Baxter, his former secretary, have in this film been amalgamated into one character. And what of the Empress of Blandings? She has, of course, one of the leading roles – but dressed in a pink outfit.

Despite these small changes, the director has, in my opinion, succeeded in translating the atmosphere of Wodehouse, and the actors make Wodehouse's characters come alive.

What did the film critics say about the movie?

The characters have a touch of Wodehouse about them. He would have been quite pleased with the Swedish interpretation, especially of Gally Threepwood. And he would be delighted with the Ronnie Fish creation!

Not all were that impressed:

Personally I don't think the book about the sow is witty. And it doesn't get better when I have to see the sow larger than life on the screen!

Plum Misses a Literary Prize – by about a quarter of a century

In June, the winners of the 2003 Heywood Hill Literary Prize, worth £ 20,000, were announced. It was shared between the biographer Hilary Spurling and Mark Amory, literary editor of *The Spectator*.

The presentation of the prize took place at the Duke of Devonshire's Estate at Chatsworth in Derbyshire. According to the report in the *Daily Telegraph* the chairman of the panel of judges, Mr John Saumarez Smith explained that there had been a friendly tussle between the judges, and that in effect they had had 'to choose invidiously between a prize dahlia and a chrysanthemum'. Neither he nor either of the winners would speculate as to which author's work was represented by which flower.

Hilary Spurling said that she felt like the Empress of Blandings, as she received her prize in a muddy marquee. In reply, Mr Saumarez Smith responded that PG Wodehouse, the creator of the Empress and Lord Emsworth, was someone who would have won the prize if he had survived until its first award in 1995.

Enjoy A Weekend with Wodehouse in the Cotswolds

Farncombe Estate Adult Learning College is running a course entitled *A Weekend with Wodehouse* from October 17 to 19. The presenter is member Geoff Hales, who is repeating an event which he has organised with some success in the past. It takes a comprehensive look at Wodehouse's life and career, including his theatrical activities and his periods in Hollywood, and is illustrated by video, readings and a one-man play.

Farncombe Estate are offering Society members a £25 discount on the normal registration fee, which makes the cost per person inclusive of VAT £150 for a single room, £135 for a double or twin room, and £100 for non-residential attendance. Delegates gather for dinner on Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. More details can be obtained from William Reddaway by telephone


or

by visiting the Society website.

Farncombe House is near Broadway, on the A44 between Evesham and Moreton-in-Marsh.

My First Wodehouse Experience

Mr R G Halstead from Queensland recalls his younger days



4 The Daily Mail, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1938.

★ First Day of the Funniest JEEVES Story ★

THE CODE OF THE WOOSTERS

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

the greatest story the world has ever written. You can read it only in the "Daily Mail."

BERTIE WOOSTER

I suppose that when two men of my class will live in close association with one another, there are bound to be a few small incidents. Bertie Wooster popped up in the Wodehouse name. Jeeves has been getting on so well in the "Daily Mail" that I am glad to see it is now being published in the "Daily Mail" in the hope of increasing its circulation. "Jeeves," I said, "this audience must love you."

"Travel is highly educational, sir."

"I don't go with any more education. I was full up years ago. No, Jeeves, I don't go with you. That old Visting with you."

"Possibly someone has been left over from the Debutante of the Day."

"But not for me. I refuse to be surrounded like my own-going home and looked off round the world."

"Very good, sir."

I spoke with a certain what-ness in his voice and I could see that if not actually disgraced, I was far from being granted, so I tactfully changed the

last customer, for a couple of weeks later he inherited a pot of money from a distant relative and retired to the country.

"You have not forgotten that man of yours, Jeeves?" A hard one, eh?

"Possibly the Watsons to be recommended in private life, sir."

"I don't think you know where you like a bell-ringer is always a bell-ringer. But enough of this. Any letters today?"

breath in sharply. Also try clicking the tongue. Oh, yes, and tell them you think it's modern Dutch."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Apparently my something a cow-cream ought not to be."

"She passed, and allowed her eye to roam thoughtfully over my perhaps somewhat companionable face."

"So you were out on the time last night, were you, my little chucker?"

"It is an extraordinary thing—every time I see you appear to be recovering from some detour. Don't you ever stop drinking? How about when you're asleep?"

"I rebuked the girl."

"You wrong me, relative. Except at times of special severity, I am exceedingly moderate in my port-wine. A bowl of port-wine, a glass of wine at dinner, and possibly a liquor with the coffee—that is Bertie Wooster. But, sir, might I give a small barometer time for

place—Tough Tugers, Tom-leigh-in-the-Wald, Gus. He went back there this morning. They're having the wedding at the local church."

"Are you going to it?"

"Doubtful, sir."

"No, I suppose it would be the perfect spot. You being in here with the girl."

"In love? With a female who thinks it's ever time a boy leaves her one a hair of her?"

"Well, you were certainly engaged to her once."

"For about five minutes, yes, and through no fault of my own. My dear old relative," I said, smiling, "you are perfectly well aware of the inside facts of that trifling affair."

"I believed it was an incident in my career—no, wait! I did not care to dwell."

★

BRIEFLY, what had occurred was this:

His niece happened to long associate with her. Cousin had struck from passing his name with Madeline Barrett and had asked me to pass it for him.

And when I did so the "freaked" girl thought I was speaking to her. With the result that when, after that

My first introduction to Wodehouse came via the *Daily Mail* serialisation of *The Code of the Woosters* which first appeared (above) on September 8th, 1938. I was still at school and had just completed my School Certificate exams which had required study of Shakespeare, Dickens and Browning. Wooster and Jeeves came as a delightful surprise after such heavy going. I pasted each instalment in an old school exercise book, sometimes to the annoyance of my father who occasionally found his *Daily Mail* well scissored before he had had a chance to read it.

I was soon on the lookout for books which were in my price range (six old pence, my pocket money for the week). In those days there were many small lending libraries which regularly offered withdrawn

(ie well-used) books for sale at this price and my first acquisitions were *Right Ho, Jeeves* and *Blandings Castle*, which are my favourites. They may be getting a bit shabby, but they have rested on my shelves for sixty-five years and are old friends.

I owe PGW my gratitude for leading me to Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* at an early age, and thereby contributing to my education and entertainment throughout my adult life.

I still have my *Code of the Woosters* exercise book. The *Daily Mail* series was beautifully illustrated with drawings of the main characters including Jeeves. With respect to the many actors who have portrayed him on cinema and TV screens, he should really look like Basil Rathbone.

90th Anniversary of Boy's Life

Recently, the American boy scout magazine *Boy's Life* celebrated its ninetieth anniversary. Since its first issue, as a 5 cent bi-weekly in March 1911, it has repeatedly changed its size, design, typeface, paper and price, but claims to remain dedicated to 'entertaining and educating its readers, drawing them to the wonders of reading'.

Though its style of presentation has changed (not many of its earliest readers will have surfed its website on www.boyslife.org), today's issues still feature a recognisable mix of news, nature, sports, history, science, comics, Scouting — and fiction. Which leads us on to Wodehouse, who had two school stories published in it, neither of which had previously appeared in the USA: *Stone and the*

Weed, which appeared in August 1923 and *Homeopathic Treatment*, in April 1931.

Stone and the Weed was reprinted in both March 1936 and March 1971, to celebrate the magazine's silver and diamond jubilees. It also sponsored the publication of *Homeopathic Treatment*, for its own advertising purposes, as a separate, 16-page booklet, measuring 4.25" x 5.5".

Wodehouse was by no means the magazine's only notable contributor. Others include Rudyard Kipling, Arthur C Clarke, O Henry, Orville Wright, Admiral Byrd, Isaac Asimov and Zane Grey, while Norman Rockwell drew some of the illustrations.

Only eight years until it reaches its centenary. What odds another reprint of *Stone and the Weed*?

The Cow Creamer Challenge

Madeleine Loates reports on a members' golf day

The hotel was full of stout, middle-aged men, who, after a misspent youth devoted to making money, had taken to a game at which real proficiency can only be acquired by those who start playing in their cradles and keep their weight down. Out on the course each morning you could see representatives of every nightmare style that was ever invented.

(from The Heart of a Goof).

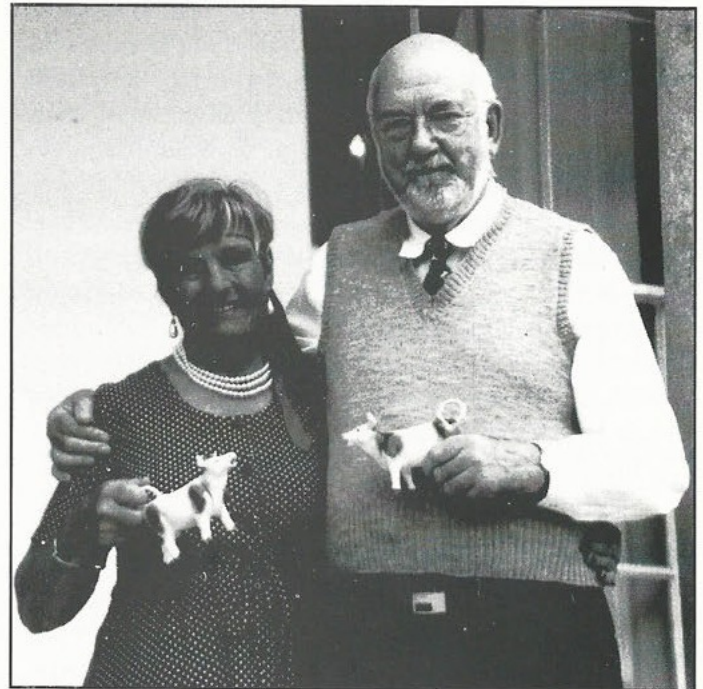
Bob Jevon, Society member, was one of those golfers in whom desire outruns performance (*Archibald's Benefit*), but on the morning of 17th July, he prepared to face his biggest challenge, in taking on one of James Braid's finest courses. Across Devon, he and nineteen other keen golfers donned Plus Fours, skirts of an appropriately modest length, and a variety of hats to protect from the heat of the midday sun. So, kitted out in Black Watch Tartan, a jumper knitted by his mother during the war and a trilby that had seen better days, Bob Jevon strode out to participate in the Cow Creamer Tournament Challenge, a surprise birthday present organised by his wife.

By 11 o'clock the twenty participants had brought the entrance to the Exeter Golf and Country Club to a standstill as drivers stopped to admire the finery displayed. As 11.04 approached Bob grasped his trusted brassie and prepared to play the first shot of the competition. His partner on the tee was Jane Edgecombe, Senior Ladies' Captain (on the well-known understanding that playing with one's partner-in-life is likely to have a detrimental effect on one's game).

His wife, Madeleine, meanwhile, having only taken up golf in the last two years, followed up the field. She was being ably supported by her partner, Geoffrey Bush, who had gamely volunteered to carry her when the going got too much. They would certainly have figured in the shake-up but for her taking seven to get out of a bunker on the 10th, a further eight from a bunker on the 12th, and five putting the 18th!

In the meantime, Bob Jevon and Jane Edgecombe scooped up 41 Stableford points on their way to a cream tea and a bottle of wine at the 19th and were each duly presented with matching Cow Creamers and bottles of strong liquor to celebrate.

The Exeter Golf and Country Club has a fine course of some standing in the County of Devon having



Winners Jane Edgecombe and Bob Jevon show off their Cow Creamer trophies

been designed and laid out by the master, James Braid, in 1929. It boasts 69 bunkers to trap the unwary, and has many fine tree-lined holes.

There were many appreciations of Madeleine's fine organisational skills, and requests that she organise the competition again next year. Charles Wodehouse had been unable to play this year but it is hoped that he and other golfing members will accept an invitation to compete next year, and challenge the current victors of the Cow Creamer Tournament.

Many thanks to all those who entered into the spirit of the occasion on the day, and to the Exeter Golf and Country Club for hosting the event.

The Guide to Living with Cancer according to P G Wodehouse

In *Wooster Sauce* for September 2002, we reported on a talk given by Katherine Shonfield about how she used the humour of Wodehouse to maintain her spirits when diagnosed with advanced cancer. Her account was presented on stage earlier this year at Hampstead Theatre, and a hilarious extract, comparing the hierarchy of the medical profession to the Yes-Men and Noddies of Hollywood, appeared in the Women's Page of *The Guardian* on August 1.

A Day of Fun in Leatherhead

Robert Bruce reports on Pig-Racing and other activities

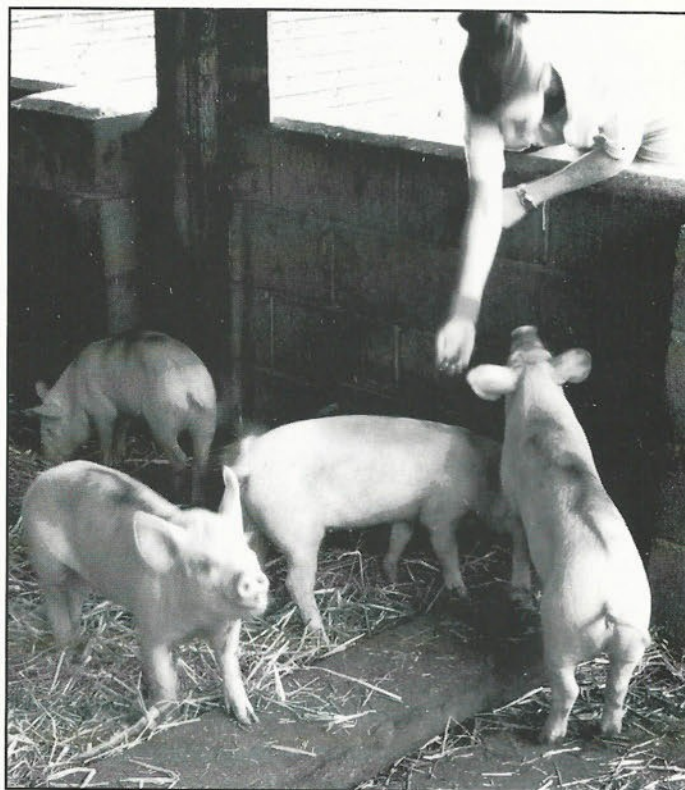
Pig-racing would probably have been anathema to the 9th Earl of Emsworth though there always was that suggestion that by starching a pig's ears and pretending it was a greyhound it might have been eligible for a bit of a run in the Waterloo Cup. So when the Society's committee got a tip-off from a member that pig-racing was a regular occurrence in the wilds of Leatherhead in Surrey they were quick to investigate. They liked what they saw and promptly organised a day at the racing. The races are held at Bockett's Farm which, while a working farm, is also a centre for parents and children to look at a llama, milk a goat and learn about farm animals.

And so it was that on the 18th of July some 30 or so members descended to view the proceedings and, noisily, join in. Louise O'Connor, the local member who had tipped off the Society, said that having brought her young family on several previous trips she thought a punt on the blue or the green pig was the usual winner. She herself was more of a Psmith fan. "I had a crush on him when I was 13", she said. "But I got over it."

The first race was at 12.45. There were six runners, not Black Berkshires sadly, but two-month old enthusiastic small pink porkers with a dash of coloured dye on their backs. The names of the runners were walked around the assembled company. Lord Blicester, Buckingham Big Boy, the Empress of Blandings, naturally, the Queen of Matchingham, Lord Yaxley and the Pride of Matchingham all looked strong but Buckingham Big Boy was reckoned by the assembled Blandings throng to be favourite.

The race is run over half a furlong from a sty at the bottom of the hill. A gentle start leads into a tough uphill back straight before a fearsome left hander leads into the finishing straight to culminate in a pile of pig feed. Flags were waved. And they were off. The enthusiasm with which they tumbled through the course was endearing and though the Empress seemed out of contention in the back straight she came through to finish second behind Lord Blicester, as the finisher declared, by a snout. The Society's Remembrancer, Colonel NTP Murphy, declared the time to be 34.17 seconds.

Members then spent some time walking around the rolling acres and the farmyard. From the top of the hill you could see, in the far distance, the London



Sir Gregory Parsloe's minions interfering with the rivals to the Matchinghams

Eye. Could people at the top of it be focussing their binoculars and saying: "I can see pigs racing", before being escorted from the premises?

Wodehouseans had come from far and wide. Gladys, Lord Emsworth's Girl Friend, had arrived from California and was most interested in which direction the pigs' tails curled. Claudia Rocks had arrived from Germany wearing a T-shirt printed with an illustration from *Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey*. She was also bearing a box of pig-shaped biscuits, courtesy of the absent Gwendolin Goldbloom, which were much enjoyed.

Then, in a lull between races, members gathered in a barn to hear Norman Murphy give a talk on how Wodehouse had based his pig-calling information on a real character from Nebraska called Fred Patzel, who was the star of a hog-calling craze which swept America in 1926. Fred could be heard two miles away in open country, he told us. Members then had their own chance to bring Surrey to a halt in a competition for the best hog-caller. This session, while not raising the rafters from the barn roof, created alarm amongst the unsuspecting public in the café next door. Prizes were awarded. Rona

The Knotty Problem of a New Society Logo

In the June edition of *Wooster Sauce*, we invited members to submit ideas for a new, overall, Society logo which would be evocative of P G Wodehouse's life or characters.

We would like to thank the several members who took up the challenge, either by offering new ideas or commenting on those shown in June. In reviewing the various suggestions, we have realised that our new logo should meet three criteria:

- 1 It must be capable of clear reproduction at a size of 30mm x 25mm by either black-and-white printing or photocopying. This points to the use of clear, strong lines and limited shading, but no text.
- 2 We should obtain exclusive use of the new logo we adopt. Over time, the logo must say to the world 'The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)'.
- 3 We must be satisfied there are no potential copyright issues, which could prove expensive.

We felt that a number of the suggestions made would be difficult to reproduce satisfactorily, either because they were photographs, had considerable detail or a lot of shade. There was some support for a version of the Low portrait but, although we will continue to make use of that on appropriate occasions, we feel it is too well known to be identifiable exclusively to the Society.

A number of people suggested using Plum's typewriter, or a silhouette of Plum with his pipe, typing, which we think have potential. We would invite any members who are skilled artists and would like to help develop these ideas to contact the Chairman,

In the meantime members are invited to propose further ideas for consideration. They should write to

It is now hoped that the ideas will be displayed at the Savage Club meeting on February 10, 2004.

A Day of Fun in Leatherhead, continued



Claudia Rocks enters into the spirit of the Pig-Hoo-o-o-ey competition

Topaz, whose classical singing training was very apparent, particularly as her pig call died slowly away, won the prize for the best call and a novice,

Alexandra Wipf from Switzerland, won a prize for sheer novelty in emulating a Milwaukee call in German, which closely resembled something Norman Murphy had played us to illustrate his talk and which Bach might have written.

Back in the farmyard Norman Murphy found the biggest pig in the farm and with his panama hat marginally askew took to scratching her back with an impeccably furled umbrella over the sty wall. Her look of pleasure as she rose up onto her front legs and gazed gratefully up at her new love was a moment of pure Blandings. If you didn't know beforehand why Clarence sought solace with the Empress you did now.

Then it was time for the second, and last, race. With a bit of drizzle about the going was declared to be soft and indeed when the starter opened the sty door the pigs looked somewhat reluctant about the whole enterprise. But the Society did its bit. Instantly a chorus of raucous "Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey's" rang out and the pigs sprang into life. Another exciting race, with a bit of bumping and boring on the final tight turn, saw the Pride of Matchingham home by a length.

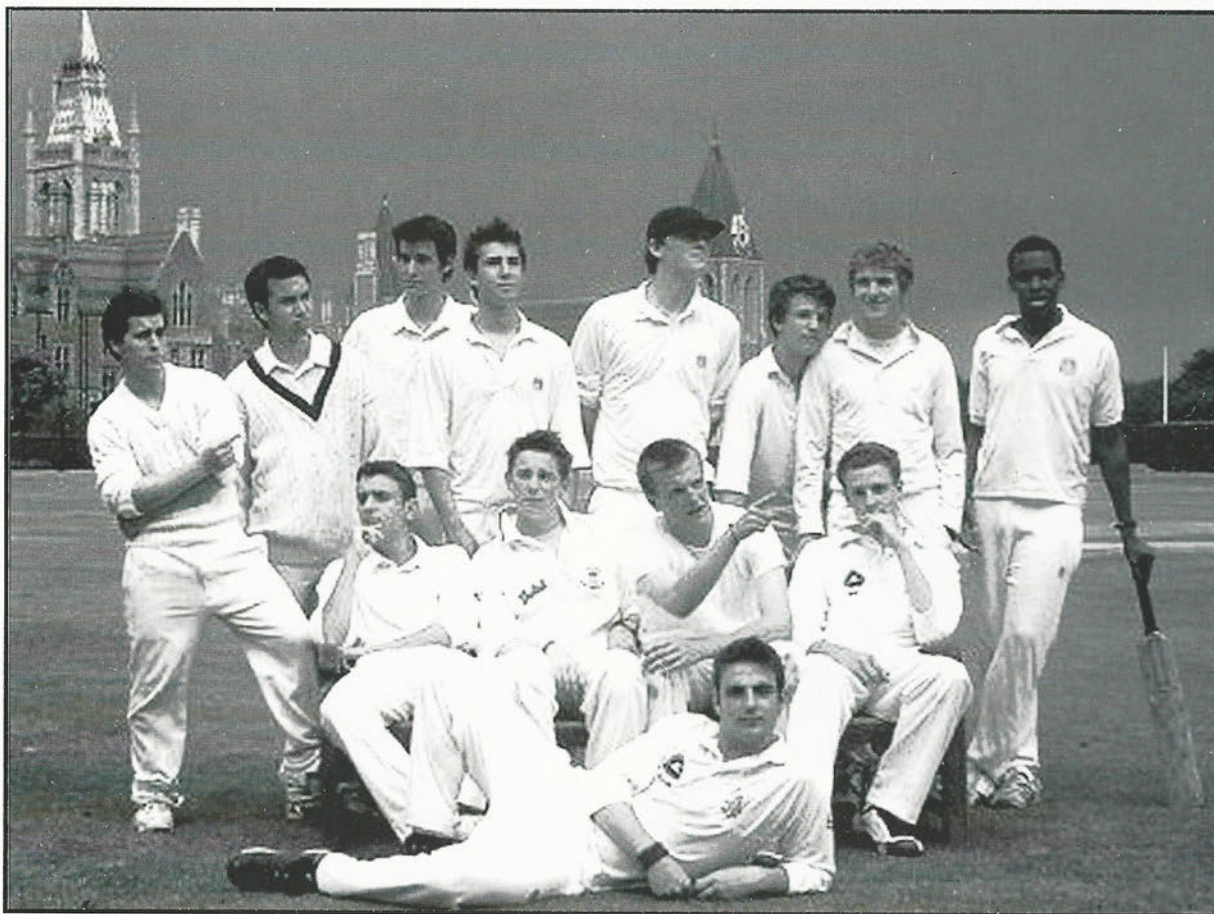
The drizzle showed signs of turning into a downpour and, fearing an outbreak of summer lightning, members headed for home. Another extraordinary Wodehouse day. And one which Lord Emsworth would probably have approved.

The Drones Society at Charterhouse

Introduced by Peter and Philip Hoskin

The town of Godalming, if an inquisitive crow were to make the journey, is but a paltry seven miles from Plum's birthplace of Guildford, Surrey. However, even this negligible distance has found itself shortened, spiritually if not physically, by recent events in that aforementioned hamlet. Nestled among the light-dappled glades, inoffensive housing and multitudinous estate agents of Godalming is a

'The Drones Society' (hereafter TDS). Obviously, such a title has particular implications for a reader of Wodehouse's *oeuvre* – The Drones Club that features in Wodehouse's books being a heady combination of a gentlemanly watering-hole; a decadent convergence of bun-chuckers and the idle rich; and a fortress providing shelter from the steely glares of Aunts, policemen and fiancées alike. TDS is



Members of The Drones Society:

Back Row: O Marshall, R Tan, J Dawes, P O'Kelly, J Motion, D Bourne, S.Furness, J Rwakasiisi.

Middle Row: A Christofides, C Schofield, F Barrow, F Wilmot-Smith. Front Row: M MacKinnon

bastion of the Public School Education – Charterhouse. A short history of Charterhouse would reveal that it was originally founded by a wealthy moneylender, Thomas Sutton, in a large monastic building in the City of London and that, due to fluctuating fortunes, the school moved to its present 260-acre site, in Godalming, in 1872. Indeed, it is in the studious confines of this very educational institution that the current Wodehousean revolution is taking place.

Recent times have seen a new society added to the Charterhouse roster of extra-curricular activities:

all of these as well as being a more conventional Wodehouse-inspired society and offering a certain something that is both innovative and unique.

TDS was established by a Carthusian beak, Dr Philip Hoskin, at the start of the 2002 academic year. The primary aim of the society is to instil in its members a love of all things Wodehousean or, if that love already exists, to encourage and foster it. The ways in which this simple but life-affirming goal is achieved are multifarious, but before these methods are touched upon it is perhaps wise to define the structure of TDS.

Three Wodehouse Shows in New York

We have news of three new New York productions.

From September 19 to October 12 (Tuesday to Saturday 8pm, Sunday 2pm matinée) the American premiere of *Good Morning, Bill* is being staged at the Connelly Theatre, 220 E 4th Street. Book through www.smarttix.com or phone (001) 212-868-4444. The New York Chapter of TWS is arranging events before and after the matinée on 21 September, and another visit on October 12: contact Amy Plofker (see next column) for details.

From October 17 to 19 there will be five concert performances of *Oh Boy!* at the Theatre at St Peter's, 619 Lexington Ave at 54th St including Saturday and Sunday matinées. Book through (001) 212 935 5824. Contact Amy for details of group visit on October 18.

From May 4 to 16, 2004, there will be a concert season of *Have a Heart* at the Sol Goldman 14th Street YMHA (344 East 14th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues) on Tuesdays to Saturdays at 19.30, with Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday matinées at 14.30. The theatre can only hold an audience of 99, so tickets may eventually be scarce. Once again, the New York chapter of the American Wodehouse Society is likely to arrange a group visit, and the contact name will be given in December's *Wooster Sauce*.

The Charterhouse Drones, continued

The members of TDS currently number 14 and each of these affiliates is a student at Charterhouse who has been selected according to his particular attributes and talents. Hence, the society is replete with chaps bearing such titles as 'Chairman of Penmanship' and 'Chairman of Politics'. Indeed, great effort is made for TDS to catalyse the honing and sharing of these skills. Additionally, the society is constructed in the hope that it will forge a hearty amicability and camaraderie between its members. Future years will surely see previous generations of TDS members congregating in order to indulge in wistful reminiscence of their uniformed and bespectacled past spent at Charterhouse.

With this carefully oiled machine of all that is genteel firmly established in accordance with The Drones Manifesto, the next task is to fuel it with the great works of Wodehousean literature. Basically, this entails the dissemination of Wodehouse books among members, who then read these iconic works of art before swapping and discussing them at the next TDS meeting. The opportunity to read such literary marvels is grasped by members of TDS with their characteristic relish and vigour.

Another opportunity that TDS proffers its members is regular excursions to places of interest to disciples of Plum. Thus far, this scheme has precipitated journeys, for members resplendent in their society ties, to such places as Guildford and London.

One area that TDS takes particularly seriously is, in fact, all that is non-serious – including sport and games. TDS has excelled in providing a plethora of gentlemanly sporting pursuits (cricket, golf and croquet) for its provident members and an average

school year will often encompass several tournaments in the said sports. The school sporting facilities (comprising of several splendid pitches, tennis courts, a golf course and a sports centre) are ideally suited to more the more physical facets of TDS membership. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the playing of croquet is a task that is of particular significance to the members of TDS: not only as it is a most noble sport that can fully occupy a student's languorous Summer days, but also as it is an activity that registers a prominent position in the annals of Carthusian history. Indeed, an Old Carthusian named John William Solomon is generally acknowledged as one of the greatest, and certainly the most successful, of all croquet players.

The attitude that TDS adopts with regards to croquet and its place within Carthusian lore is indicative of the pride with which it views and upholds the traditions of a most worthy school. Although TDS aims to induct members into the multifaceted brilliance that is the writing of PGWodehouse, it is also striving to forge them into an assembly of undeniably sterling chaps, who will continue the culture of accomplishment and affability that has been established by such Old Carthusians as William Thackeray, Robert Graves, George Leigh Mallory and Ralph Vaughan Williams, to name but a (distinctly exceptional) few.

Any Wodehouse Society members who would like more information about The Drones Society and/or would like to offer any assistance (providing talks, hosting events, etc), should contact

Plum By Numbers

Barry Day explains the reasons for writing his new book

You'd think when a chap had written about a hundred books, more plays than Maugham or Lonsdale and a slew of letters, articles and reviews, that would be about it. How on earth could he have had the time to squeeze in a share of the libretti for some 20 musical comedies – not to mention the lyrics for three hundred and fifty songs that we've been able to locate and probably a lot more that he binned as not being up to scratch?

The man was a dashed marvel. But then, readers of this journal hardly need to be told that ...

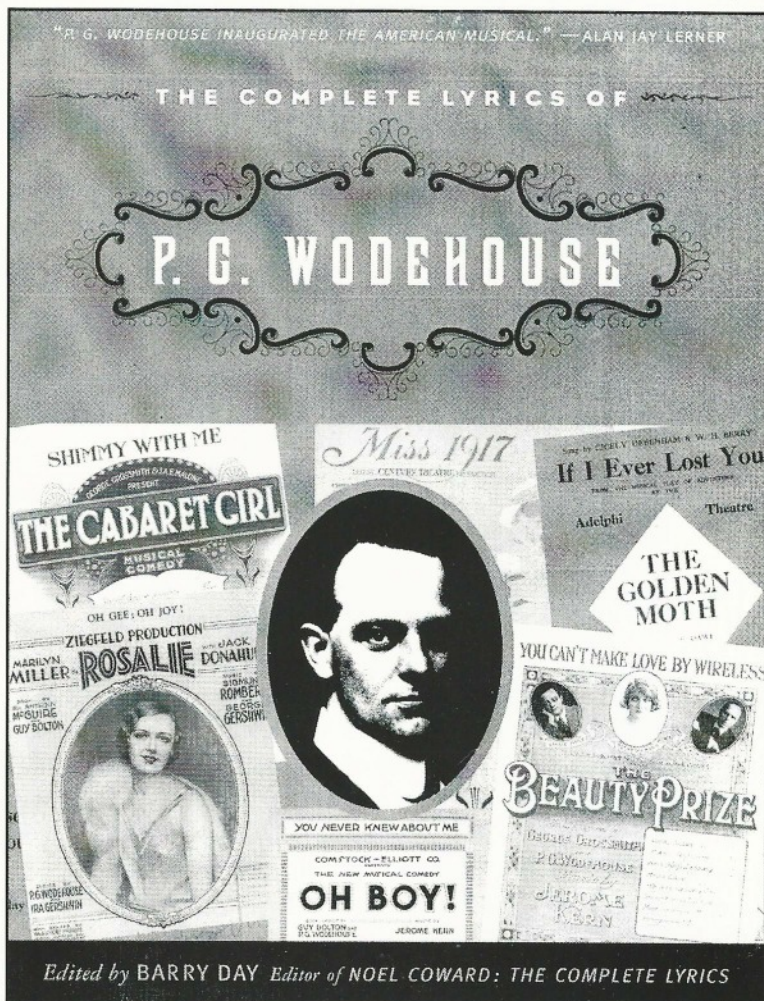
From 1905 – when he contributed his first song to a London show – to the day he died, Plum was fascinated by the medium of the song lyric. Writing the 'book' was fine and fun and he and partner Guy Bolton could have knocked off half a dozen of those before lunch and often in the 1910s seemed to do just that. But the lyric ... that was something else. You had to find the words to fit the piece of music you were given by someone like Jerome Kern, his most fertile collaborator, and not simply find the right number of syllables but the right stresses.

He found the discipline fascinating. When Kern tossed in a few unexpected notes in a song like *Bill*, Plum came up with 'Because he's/I don't know/Because he's just my Bill'. The little colloquial aside made the song memorable.

In fact, it was that use of ordinary language that was his biggest contribution to the art of the song lyric. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

Wodehouse met Kern when they both worked on a London show in 1906 but their true partnership didn't begin for another ten years. Plum was in New York working as theatre critic for *Vanity Fair*. One evening in 1915 he went along to review a musical called *Very Good Eddie*, written by Bolton and Kern. "I enjoyed it in spite of lamentable lyrics" was his verdict – which just happened to coincide with the way Bolton and Kern felt about it. Would he consider writing some for their next show, they asked him? He would and did.

In fact, the trio went on to write a number of shows together over the years but none more significant than the handful they wrote specially for the tiny 299-seat Princess Theatre between 1917 and 1919.



Kern in particular believed strongly in musical 'integration'. He had grown tired of shows where songs were interpolated willy-nilly with no context to them. Songs should emerge from and illuminate plot and character. Bolton and Wodehouse agreed.

They were all tired of Broadway's current musical fare – imported British shows and cheesy Viennese-y operettas. They would write small scale, affordable, accessible contemporary American shows in modern American idiom – 'midget musical comedy'.

What they created between them hit the spot with New York audiences and, indeed, audiences all around the country, where the shows would tour for years. Wodehouse's contribution was in many ways the most significant. His heroes and heroines sang the way real people talked – just wittier. All the song writers of the so-called 'golden age' of American musical theatre that was about to begin acknowledged his pioneer work and regarded him as their mentor ... Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter ... the list is endless.

Plum and a Flirtation with Spiritualism

A temporary interest in the 1920s

As is well known, Wodehouse was a good friend of Conan Doyle, and evidently heard him speak on the subject of spiritualism. So much so, that he accepted three invitations to attend séances arranged by H Dennis Bradley, who described them (and many others) in his book *The Wisdom of the Gods* (T Werner Laurie, 1925).

At the first, on October 12, 1924, other guests included Hannen Swaffer, the journalist and Frances Carson, a celebrated young actress. Bradley reports that a voice that spoke to Plum was so faint that it could not be recognised, but that Plum later wrote and told him how deeply impressed he had been at the extraordinary happiness shown by Frances Carson on receiving a message from her husband.

Plum was emboldened to take Leonora on his next visit, in January 1925, but this seems to have been unsuccessful. Unlike his last reported experience, on April 12, 1925, when, again accompanied by Leonora, he was joined by Fay Compton and Leon Quartermaine, her husband.

A voice ‘Ernest Wodehouse’, apparently belonging to a cousin who had died during the war, claimed to have been with Plum in spirit at Harrogate the previous year. A voice then spoke to Leonora, merely saying how glad it was to see her there, and referring to her by name.

Plum seems to have taken these experiences, and Conan Doyle’s beliefs, to heart. He told Bill Townend in a letter in December 1925 that he wanted to talk to him about Spiritualism. ‘I think it’s the goods.’

Townend evidently followed up the matter for although we do not have copies of his correspondence to Plum, he refers to an event in a letter of March 1927 which caught Plum’s imagination. PGW replied:

That was rather queer about the planchette and Kate Overy. Do you remember she and her brother both committed suicide. I knew her fairly well. Have you had any more results?

A subject to be pursued further by interested members, perhaps.

Plum by Numbers, continued

One’s initial reaction is that Wodehouse’s fiction was the inspiration and the training for his work as a lyricist but he always insisted it was precisely the other way around. In fact, he described his early novels as ‘musical comedies without the music’. So, when you’re re-reading your favourite Wodehouse novel, you owe a distinct debt to a handful of musicals you may never have heard of and have almost certainly never seen.

By the mid-1930s this phase of his career was pretty well over and it was time to concentrate on Jeeves and Bertie, Lord Emsworth, Ukridge, Mr. Mulliner and the rest. Even so, the form still intrigued him.

Even after the war his letters to Guy show a yearning for the crazy days of yore, when they had done ‘twenty-three shows together and met every freak that ever squeaked and gibbered along the Great White Way’. Couldn’t they do one more show? Had the ground rules changed that much? ‘Writing musical comedies is like eating salted almonds – you can always manage one more.’

Plum suspected that, sadly, they had, because he certainly didn’t much care for the few new shows he saw. *The King and I* ‘was a lot of bloody Siamese leaping about and looking perfectly awful’. And look

at what they cost! When the ‘trio of musical fame’ were in their heyday you wrote a show for a star and on it went. Nowadays the writing team had to audition for backers and keep their fingers crossed and their tongues quiet. To his old friend Ira Gershwin he wrote – ‘Ira, we are well out of it!’

He could say that but it was not entirely true. On his bedside table when he died – along with the unfinished manuscript of what became *Sunset at Blandings* – were some song lyrics from the 1919 *Kissing Time*. He was busy re-working them, because – who knew? – it might be time for a revival ...

P G WODEHOUSE: THE COMPLETE LYRICS, published by Taylor Trade Publishing (ISBN 1-58979-054-5) contains some 350 lyrics from 38 shows and around 60 illustrations of those shows. A linking narrative sets the songs in the context of their plots and charts the evolution of Wodehouse’s career in musical theatre.

US publication will be December 2003, with books available in the UK in February 2004. A 20% discount from the UK retail price of £24, shipping extra, will be available to members who call the distributor,

Broadway, Jeeves?

Martin Jarvis's new book about the 2001 production of By Jeeves

Martin Jarvis has contributed significantly to the interpretation of Wodehouse's work over the years, being credited with several audio-tapes and a stage appearance in *The Code of the Woosters* for LA Theatre Works. In 2001 he appeared on Broadway as Jeeves, the only Englishman in the New York production of the Lloyd Webber/Ayckbourn musical *By Jeeves*.

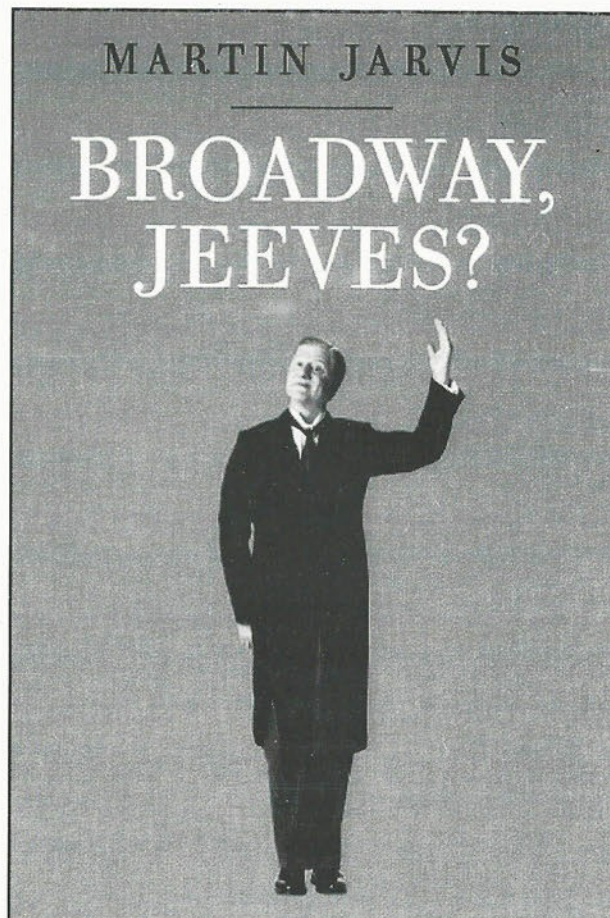
His new book, *Broadway, Jeeves?*, is the record of the evolution of that production. The information sheet provided by the publisher, Methuen, describes it as:

A study of triumphs, failures and mind-bending chaos as cast and crew ambitiously attempt to steer the production from the snows of Pittsburgh only for their arrival on Broadway to coincide with the horrific events of 9/11.

The fear that gripped New York in the weeks which followed that disaster caused perhaps the most serious doubts as to whether the show would ever be produced. The dogged determination of all involved prevailed, however, and each step was faithfully recorded for this book.

Martin Jarvis will be giving a number of talks to promote this book, starting at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, with Alan Ayckbourn on September 27 and the Cottesloe Theatre, London, on October 6. He is also appearing at the Cheltenham Festival of Literature on October 11 (see page 2). See the website (www.eclipse.co.uk/wodehouse) for details of other talks.

The Society is delighted to have arranged for members to buy copies of *Broadway, Jeeves?*, which was published by Methuen on September 25, at a discount from the published price of £15.99.



Members who wish to place orders should contact Methuen Sales by telephone on 020 7798 1605 or in writing to:

Wooster Sauce Offer, Methuen Sales, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ

Price per copy: £13.99. Free postage & packing in the UK. (For Europe and rest of the world, add £4 per book.) Payment may be made by credit card or cheque (made payable to TBS Ltd).

The Smile That Wins Favourite Nifties - 24

“So you’re getting married, eh? . . . Then take this simple toad,” said Oswald Stoker, pressing the reptile in Augustine’s hand. “A wedding present,” he explained. “A poor gift, but one that comes straight from the heart.”

From *The Right Approach* in *A Few Quick Ones* (1959)

Suggested by Anne-Marie Chanet

Fair Exchanges Favourite Nifties - 27

“No chance of Bill Bailey becoming an Earl, I suppose?”

“Not unless he murders about fifty-seven uncles and cousins.”

“Which a curate, of course, would hesitate to do.”

From *Service with a Smile* (1961)

A Savage Evening of Firsts, Planned and Unplanned

reported by Norman Murphy

I just happened to say I looked forward to the Savage Club Wodehouse evening on July 8th. Foolish words, followed immediately by the Editor's comment: "In that case, you won't mind writing the report, will you?"

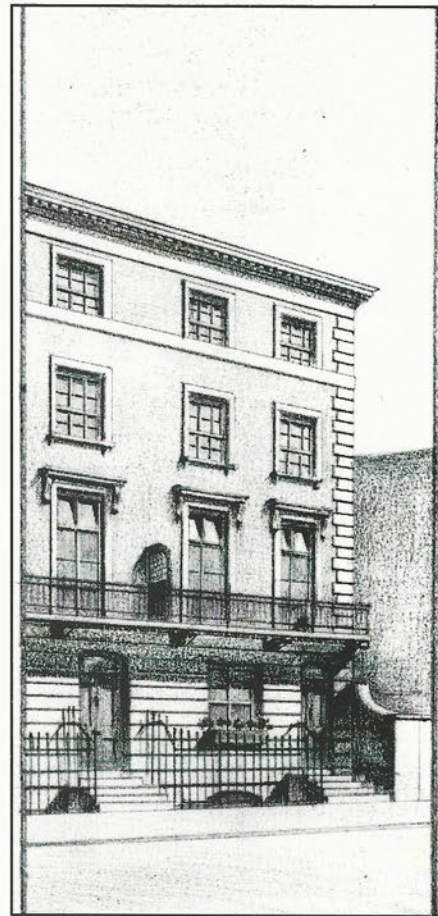
The evening was in full swing when our new Chairman Hilary Bruce (the First First of the evening) called us to order. Her Parish Notices included a forthcoming golf meeting, pig-racing and other attractions and the announcement of two famous victories by *The Gold Bats* (see pages 18 and 19). Hilary went on to announce that the Society had achieved another landmark – our Thousandth Member (the Second First of the evening) who, by a strange coincidence and excellent committee-work, was amongst us. David Heyhoe came forward to receive a copy of the newly published *A Prince For Hire* and expressed his gratitude in exactly the right words. He proved once again how Whitehall trains you, given two minutes notice, to get your point over on any given topic in any given length of time.

Hilary then introduced our speaker, Nicola Beauman of Persephone Books, the first non-member of the Society to address us (the Third First). Nicola's firm republishes forgotten classics including Denis Mackail's *Greenery Street*. She reminded us how Wodehouse had written to Mackail praising his work, of the long friendship that had followed and the happy coincidence that *Greenery Street* commemorated the Mackails' residence in the house in Walpole Street that Wodehouse had lived in 20 years before. She made some excellent points on the accuracy of Mackail's depiction of life in London in the 1920s and reminded us that Mackail introduced Wodehouse to Pekinese dogs.

Hilary thanked Nicola with a copy of Mackail's *How Amusing*, the book which he had dedicated to Wodehouse. (*Summer Lightning* had been dedicated to Mackail.)

Members then demonstrated their usual laudable reluctance to go home. It wasn't till very late that the remaining hard core participated in the evening's Fourth First – a contemporary interpretation of *The Amazing Hat Mystery*.

Member A looked for his bag, could not find it but found one very similar. A further search revealed another bag with an abandoned look. The Chairman leapt into action, forming an emergency sub-committee to work out who, where and when.



23 Walpole Street, Chelsea
Copyright The Estate of Denis Mackail

With Michael the barman taking notes, we had just established the who (from names inside the bags) and were discussing the where (were the owners still on their way home?) and the when (when would they notice their loss?) – when in dramatic tradition, the telephone rang. Member B had noticed he had Member A's bag just before boarding the Norwich train and was returning by taxi. As soon as the telephone was put down, it rang again with Member C asking Michael to hold the third bag for him.

And *that*, despite rumours to the contrary, is why some of us did not get home till very late that night.

Peter Schwed

We sadly have to report the death of Peter Schwed, aged 92. He was P G Wodehouse's literary editor at his American publisher, Simon & Schuster, for more than 20 years. Peter lived in New York throughout his life. In 1996 he published a selection of his correspondence with Plum in a book *Plum to Peter*, produced in a limited edition of 500 copies.

The Gold Bats Did It The Tricky Way

explains Murray Hedgcock

You can liken it, really, to Leyton in 1932, when, against Essex, Yorkshire's Percy Holmes and Herbert Sutcliffe broke the 34-year-old world first wicket record of 554, set by another Yorkshire pair in J T Brown and John Tunncliffe. They reached 555, Sutcliffe threw away his wicket, captain Brian Sellers declared – and then the scorers ruined everything.

Just a minute, they announced – the total was only 554, and not a record at all. Hurried consultation ensued, the scorers were gently leaned on, a missing no-ball was magicked from somewhere – and the world record was confirmed.

It was a touch like that at Dulwich College on June 21 this year, when the annual match between our Gold Bats and the Dulwich Dusters was initially recorded as victory for the Dusters by a single run.

Players were told 12 runs were needed by the Gold Bats from the 20th and final over. Skipper Bob Miller led the way as eight runs were added in five balls, and the Dusters set their field to stop the boundary required from the final delivery. Frank Claydon backed up gallantly – but they could scramble only a single, and the Dusters smiled modestly at yet another famous if narrow victory.

However, we had not yet begun to fight. The Gold Bats had no scorebook, so our own Stephen Fullom had been appointed scoring monitor, to peer over the Dulwich scorer's shoulder. And for the final overs, Steve had to carry the onerous duties single-handedly as all the Dulwich players were on the field – and how splendidly did he manage.

Hold on, he asked, as he checked the book while congratulatory handshakes were exchanged. Steve is a man who knows how to be precise (in an earlier incarnation he was a 'senior mapping and charting officer', where precision was essential).

He then declared in his quiet fashion that the sundries had not been correctly computed, and the magnificent Gold Bats had in fact won by a run – only their second victory in six years of this annual contest.

Dulwich skipper, Danny Kent, was magnanimous in delayed defeat. But he hinted darkly that when he sent the match details to the Wodehouse Society, the result might just read differently, as he would be preparing the scorebook copies.

"Ahah", we told him. "Just you look in *Wooster Sauce*. We write for it".

And so we confirm with enthusiasm this glorious triumph by our gallant lads on a glorious English summer's day, made even more memorable by the equally glorious tea served by Hilary Bruce, with the Murphys as attendant sprites.

The Gold Bats scored a psychological victory at the start, when captain Miller, Machiavellian as leader as well as resolute as batsman and imaginative as bowler, persuaded the Dusters that the game would be enlivened by use of lob bowlers. Lob – or underarm – bowling had probably not been seen at Dulwich since Plum's day, but the impact was immediate. Youthful, athletic masters, confident and assertive in the classroom and on the field, found themselves distinctly uneasy against our leading lobster, Robert Bruce.

The Dulwich tally was kept down to 130 which, as the Gold Bats assured one another – and their considerable cheer squad – was eminently gettable. And it was duly gettable, if in unusual circumstances. Chris Read and Julian Hill each scored the 25 at which batsmen must retire, while Glen Collins made 16 to add to his two wickets.

Victory, as so often, came at a price. Micky Collins, gallantly fielding closer to the bat than looked wise, took a fierce blow on the finger early on, and had to adjourn to the college medical room. It ended his cricket for the day, but he bravely stayed to encourage his fellow Bats.

The last word almost went to Dusters skipper Kent. You had to admire his ruthless ploy, in the best Stephen Potter *Gamesmanship* tradition, of not sending us the scoresheets at all, and then taking off as the school year ended. It may not have converted defeat into victory – but it did rather limit the publicity.

The Gold Bats 130/6 (Hill 25, Reid 25, Gilbert 17, G.Collins 16, Gilkes 15, Miller 14 n.o) beat Dulwich Dusters 129/8 (Hoyle 29, Tickner 26, Thurgood 21: Collins 2/4, Hill 1/9, Miller 1/11) by four wickets.

Book at Bedtime: The Mating Season

The BBC broadcast *The Mating Season*, read by Crawford Logan, as their book at bedtime in ten instalments at the beginning of August. Donald Daniel disliked Jeeves's cockney accent, which Graham Johnson compared to a detective investigating a 'Murder at the Grange', but the latter complimented the reader on his 'surging sea of aunts'.

The Adventure of the Umpire's Finger

The Editor watched The Gold Bats vanquish the Sherlockians



Whether the announcement on Test Match Special that the third match between the Gold Bats and The Sherlock Holmes Society of London was to take place at West Wycombe on June 29 had an effect on the attendance is merely speculation, but the fact is that well over one hundred people were present at the appointed time for jousting to commence. Members of the Victorian Society, in all their glory, added lustre to a perfect summer's day, in which the peace was shattered by little more than gliders and light aircraft from nearby Booker Aerodrome, the appearance during the day of several red kites, who were sufficiently interested in the proceedings to swoop down towards the pitch before retiring, as though they could not believe their eyes.

Bob Miller won the toss for the Gold Bats, and as a number of team members had yet to show, having been held up for various reasons, diplomatically chose to bat. This year the team had no outstanding batsmen, Patrick Gilkes top-scoring with 26 in an innings of 129, in which five team members made double figures. The most memorable comment came from our Chairman, Hilary Bruce, when her husband, after making his best score yet for the Gold Bats, elegantly offered a catch to the opposition. Asked if she had seen his downfall, she said in a resigned voice "I've seen Robert get out before."

During the lunch interval, which by design lasted a full hour and a half, much of interest was learned on many topics, most of which concerned food, drink or other abstract subjects. But one nugget was

offered by Gold Bat Jonathan Fisher, who mentioned that he was a grandson of the youngest Foster brother, the family of seven first-class cricketers who were the inspiration for Mike Jackson and his family in *Mike at Wrykyn* (see *Wooster Sauce* June 2002).

The Sherlockians made their traditional poor start, losing a wicket on the second ball to Chris Read, whose bowling speed increased steadily during his six overs. When he bowled Neil George, the batsman returned to the pavilion muttering "That guy's fast. I would advise a box."

One of the fascinating aspects of this fixture is that it is played to 1895 Laws, including narrower wickets and five-ball overs, while there is a requirement that each team plays an underarm bowler. For the Sherlockians, their captain Peter Horrocks showed the way with this technique, taking a wicket with a grubber which barely left the ground. But Robert Bruce has made the spot his own for the Gold Bats, and contributed three wickets with his underarms, so to speak: stumped, bowled and caught.

The Sherlockian innings was a roller-coaster of hope and despair, and they fell 40 runs short, the Gold Bats skipper Bob Miller appropriately bringing the game to an end by bowling the last man. This was the closest of the three games to date, and the Gold Bats can expect an even tenser contest next year. Until then, however, they can bask in the glory of the team's third successive win in all matches, an unbeaten run stretching back for over a year.

Translation News

Section F of the *McIlvaine* bibliography lists all the foreign language translations of Wodehouse's work which were known to its editors in 1989. The *Addendum*, produced in 2001 by The International Wodehouse Society, added significantly to the list of translations, both newly discovered and new publications, but we have now heard of two more fascinating developments.

The necessary consents are in place for the publication of the first Wodehouse book in Azerbaijani. A selection of stories has been chosen from various sources, consisting of: *Uncle Fred Flits By*; *Jeeves And The Impending Doom*; *The Crime Wave At Blandings*; *Bingo And The Peke Crisis* and *Mike And Psmith Visit Clapham* (ie chapters 15 and 16 from *Psmith In The City*).

More Wodehouse books have been translated into Italian than into any other language. Before the recent Penguin series of reissues starting in 1999 it is quite possible that more titles were in print in Italian than in English. An Italian newspaper, *Liberio*, has recently offered a specially printed version of *Zio Fred in Primavera* (*Uncle Fred in the*

The Jolly Frog

Murray Hedgcock has drawn our attention to a report in *The Guardian* for July 25, in which Matthew Fort sang the praises of *The Jolly Frog* in Leintwardine in Shropshire. He introduced his report like this:

It can have been no accident that P G Wodehouse chose to set Blandings Castle in Shropshire. Even now, the county has a timeless air about it: hedgerows, winding lanes, sleepy villages, half-timbered houses and half-timbered cars and all the rest.

Springtime) as one of a series of books being offered at a cheap price to the purchasers of its daily edition.

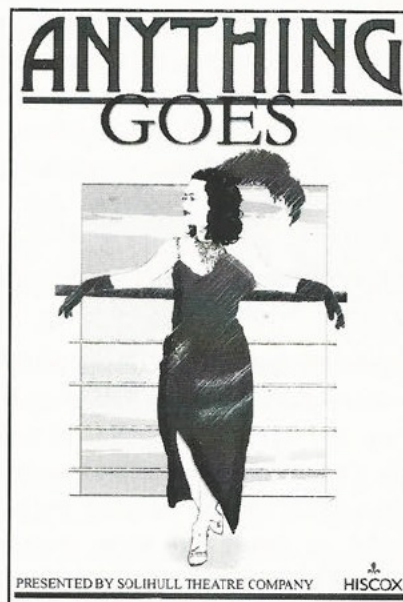
Books have now appeared, or will shortly be published, in the following languages in addition to those listed in *McIlvaine*: Azerbaijani, Bulgarian, Catalan, Estonian, Latvian, Portuguese (Brazilian-based) and Romanian, making a total of 27 languages (excluding those used solely in the special six-volume commissioning of *The Great Sermon Handicap*).

Anything Goes at Solihull

One of the great things about our Society is the willingness of members to help in providing information about Wodehouse related events. Melanie Ring reported to the Editor that a Radio 2 presenter signed off on May 13 by saying that he would be seeing *Anything Goes* at Solihull that afternoon.

A quick scan of the Society's data base and Peter Coleman was identified as a member living relatively close. An e-mail asking him to investigate turned up trumps. Peter was not able to see the production, but he contacted the theatre for information. In due course copies of the programme and the excellent advertising posters were sent along, together with some notes by Ian Page, the theatre company's chairman, who would be pleased to hear, by e-mail from interested members.

The production was staged by Solihull Theatre Company, a ten-year-old amateur group which presents a major musical each spring. Their list of past productions is impressive, including *Guys and Dolls*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *South Pacific*, and they are already planning next year's *Me and My Girl*, which will run from May 11th to 15th.



The Company is proud that all the principal roles in their productions are played by established members, and that they are supported by a four-part chorus skilled in both song and dance. *Anything Goes* sold out and was judged a major success by the audiences, though as no member saw it, we cannot offer a proper review. I would merely add that the programme is of a much higher standard than is generally produced by amateur groups.

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

More Magazine Appearances

In the first half of his career, most of Wodehouse's novels and stories were originally published in various magazines before appearing in book form. In the second half of his career, after the Second World War, the magazine market in general declined. The demise of *The Strand* in 1949 prompted Wodehouse to ask "How on earth does a young writer of light fiction get going these days? Where can he sell his stories?" (*Performing Flea*).

The proliferation of magazines in the first decades of the century make this a fertile area to look for unrecorded Wodehouse. Given the range of magazines in which his stories appeared, it is not surprising that *McIlvaine* has omissions in this area: the *Addendum to McIlvaine* of July 2001 contained some eight pages of additional magazine appearances in English. In this quarter's column I identify seven more previously unrecorded magazine appearances.

In the UK, the summer issue (1 August 1931) of *The Humorist* carried two Wodehouse essays, just over a page in length in total. The main piece was *In Defence of Astigmatism* and this was accompanied by *The Spectacles of Fate*. The first piece had originally appeared in *Vanity Fair* in January 1916 (D67.19).

In America, Wodehouse had several short stories published in *The Pictorial Review*. In September 1910 it published *By Advice of Counsel*, his first appearance in the magazine. This is the only publication of the story in the US, as it was included in *The Man Upstairs* (A17), published in the UK in 1914, but not published at all in the US.

In November 1912, a month after its UK appearance in *The Strand* (D133.24), the short story *The Tuppenny Millionaire* appeared in *The American Strand*. Again, as this story was published in *The Man Upstairs*, it did not appear in book form in the US until 1979, when it appeared in the collection entitled *The Swoop and Other Stories* (B20).

Wodehouse's other early collection of short stories, *The Man with Two Left Feet* (A21), was published in the UK in 1917, but did not appear in the US until 1933. Four stories which had appeared in the UK edition were removed and replaced with three stories from *My Man Jeeves* (A22), another title which was never published in the US. One of the four stories removed was *Crowned Heads*. This first appeared in the US in May 1927 in a magazine



entitled *Hospital Life*, before appearing again in *The Syracuse Herald* on 4 December 1932.

The 25 December 1966 issue of *Family Weekly* carried a seasonal essay by Wodehouse, entitled *Reflections Amid the Christmas Wrappings*. This is an abridged version of *Christmas Presents*, which originally appeared in *Vanity Fair* in December 1915 (D67.18). The essay is accompanied by a small photo of Wodehouse.

Finally, in Australia, *Summer Lightning* (A41) was serialised in nineteen weekly issues in the *Australian Sporting and Dramatic News* from 13 April 1929 until 17 August.

The Next Everyman Titles

The four titles being published this autumn were listed in June's *Wooster Sauce* as *A Damsel in Distress*; *Leave It To Psmith*; *Mulliner Nights*; and *Thank You, Jeeves*.

In March 2004 the series will be augmented by *Much Obligated, Jeeves*; *Quick Service*; *Ring for Jeeves*; and *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*.

Recent Press Comment

Daily Telegraph, May 31 (from Donald Daniel)

Reviewed the novel *The Kaiser's Last Kiss* by Alan Judd (HarperCollins), pointing out that in the evenings the Kaiser read Wodehouse; when he had guests like Himmler he would read Wodehouse out loud. (Donald Daniel, a member with personal knowledge of the Kaiser's descendants, has confirmed that this is part of family lore.)

Indian Express Newspapers (Mumbai), June 12 (from Murray Hedgcock)

An Indian actor, Joy Fernandes, 'a pony-tailed, six-foot, 260-pound hulk' who recently starred as the baddy in a recent children's film, declared that his ambitions include adapting the works of P G Wodehouse and Roald Dahl.

Investors Business Daily, June 14 (from Jean Tillson)

Carried a substantial article about Wodehouse by Sean Higgins entitled *Call Him a Funny-Bone Doctor*.

Observer, July 6 (from Peter Wightman)

In a review of favourite summer reading, Andy Kershaw wrote 'Whenever I'm in one of the world's trouble-spots, I like to be armed to the teeth with Graham Greenes and P G Wodehouses. In 1996, I was surrounded by Unita in rural Angola, and *Carry On Jeeves* got me through.'

Daily Telegraph, July 17 (from James Wood)

In his article about why he hoped Alistair Campbell would remain in Downing Street, Boris Johnson pointed out that Tony Blair couldn't cope without him any more than Bertie could have coped without Jeeves.

Spectator, July 19 (from John Moss and Sir Edward Cazalet)

In his *City and Suburban* column, Christopher Fildes wrote that, 'Like the formidable Roderick Spode in *The Code of the Woosters*, Hartley Shawcross was blessed with an eye which could open an oyster at sixty paces.'

Observer Review, July 27

In commenting on the technological evolution which has made self-publishing easier, Robert McCrum recalled Bertie Wooster's comment that 'All a publisher has to do is to write cheques at intervals, while a lot of deserving and industrious chappies rally round and do the real work.'

Accountancy, July 2003 (from Robert Bruce)

Chris Swinson's article on the theme that some delusions, but not those relating to financial reporting, are harmless, started by commenting on how the annual cricket match against The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) offered another opportunity for Sherlock Holmes Society members to dress as though Sherlock Holmes were still alive.

The Times (Weekend), August 2

In the lead article *The Secret of Sun-Lit*, on the need to take books for pleasure on holiday, Amanda Craig comments on the tendency for books about 'enjoyment' still to be despised by the critics. She quotes a former Booker judge, Kate Saunders: 'People overlook how ferociously well-written *Cold Comfort Farm*, *The Diary of a Nobody* or P G Wodehouse are – they deserve to be treated with greater respect.'

Spectator, August 2 (from Susan Collicott)

David Gardner's article *Plain Hinglish* was an affectionate review of the 'Hindu-inspired dialect that pulsates with energy, invention and humour – not all of it intended'. He claimed Hinglish is full of echoes from Wodehouse, 'whose books are to be found on every bookshelf of every bookshop in India. It is a safe bet that Wodehouse is the inspiration for many standard Hinglish-isms. . . . An Indian acquaintance once playfully suggested that Wodehouse has a place in the elastic pantheon of Hindu gods.'

Boston Sunday Globe, August 3 (from the Swansons)

Carried a lengthy and favourable review by Anna Mudrow of the latest four titles in the Overlook series (the US equivalent of the Everymans).

Radio 4, August 3 (from Hilary Bruce)

In the programme *With Great Pleasure*, Barry Norman illustrated his theme with readings from *Right Ho, Jeeves* and said 'Anyone, anyone, could have written *War and Peace*. Only Wodehouse could have written *Right Ho, Jeeves*.'

Toronto Star, August 10

Carried an extensive report about the opening cocktail party of the US Society's Toronto convention.

New York Times Book Review, August 17 (from Timothy Kearley)

Laura Miller reviewed a book called *Love in Idleness*:

Writing smart light fiction is a thankless art; as with the best kinds of dancing the point is to make it look easy no matter how much effort goes into it. If you succeed, no one thinks you've achieved much. . . . Few genuinely clever writers bother, though when they do – witness books like *Cold Comfort Farm*, *A Confederacy of Dunces* and nearly everything by P G Wodehouse – they can inspire a scarily fervent devotion in certain readers.

The Times (Play), August 23

Eve Best (acting in *The Three Sisters* at the National) wrote that her favourite books are 'anything by P G Wodehouse. He makes me laugh like mad. I love the relationship between Jeeves and Wooster: the delightful pompous, absurd Wooster and the icy calm Jeeves.'

Poets' Corner

The Lotus Eaters

William, my friend in days gone by,
It always makes my pulse beat faster,
When I recall how you and I
Ragged side by side the self-same master,
Shared, without strife, a common key,
Pursued harmoniously the leather,
Brewed in our study mutual tea –
In short, were boys at school together.

And sad it is that two such friends
(I loved you, William, as a brother)
In after life should strive for ends
Dissimilar to one another.
And sadder still, that of the pair
While one (that's you) has prospered greatly,
The other should be doomed to fare
Upon the whole but moderately.

'Tis mine to woo the fickle brief,
To turn my brain to courts and sessions.
To you the calling of the thief
Appeared the noblest of professions.
No lack of skill your efforts marred,
Your work was silent, clean and thorough;
They dreaded you at Scotland Yard,
They idolised you in the Borough.

For years you bore away the palm;
And now, unless the tale's unfounded,
You live a life of fatted calm,
By every luxury surrounded.
With scented soap you idly toy,
Nor e'en the dental brush eschewed is
Your toilet over, you enjoy
The latest novel, fresh from Mudie's.

If to the trencher turns your mood,
A silver bell the meal announces.
You call for farinaceous food,
They bring you two-and-thirty ounces.
Such almost Eastern pomp recalls
That master of the lyric art, Moore.
No wonder men within those walls
Extol thy charms so highly, Dartmoor.

On prison life, it seems to me
That sentimentalists talk twaddle.
Does it depress a man when he
Forgets to walk and learns to waddle?
No! Fortunate I count that man;
Yea, deem him happiest of mortals,
Who passes in a prison van
Triumphant through those fairy portals.

William, I hate my daily toil,
I weary of the constant striving,
The cares that vex, the traps that foil,
The difficulty of 'arriving'.
For ease with dignity I sigh,
For rest and peace I long with fervour –
Tomorrow I go out to buy
A jemmy and a life-preserver.

From Punch, 17 December, 1902

(Written following a piece in *The Gentleman's Weekly* by Dr Yorke-Davies, who bemoaned the fact that prisoners in Dartmoor get so much food and so little exercise that they have forgotten how to walk and merely waddle; and that they get nice cells, good beds, plenty of magazines and books, soap and even tooth-brushes.)

A New Society Initiative: The Schools Project

The Society has been invited by the Wodehouse Estate and its literary agents, A P Watt Ltd, to participate in a project designed to increase the awareness of Wodehouse's work in educational establishments. The first two steps have been identified as making contact with enthusiastic staff and students in schools, colleges and universities; and providing appropriate resources for individual or group use.

Several members have already indicated their willingness to assist in this project, which will initially be led by Tim Andrew, committee member of the Society and Headmaster of Chesham High

School in Buckinghamshire, but we would like to make contact with other members, especially those with connections in education, who feel they have something to offer. Such members are invited to contact Tim Andrew

One aspect of the project will be the creation of a separate active website. We would also like to hear from any member who feels that he or she has the time and experience to assist in setting this up in the New Year, and helping to maintain it thereafter.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

October 14, 2003 – The Savage Club

The Savage Club is in the premises of The National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, and members gather from around 6pm. Sally Muggeridge, niece of the late Malcolm, will, with the help of actor Peter Stockbridge, speak about the relationship he enjoyed with P G Wodehouse. See page 4.

October 17-19, 2003 – *A Weekend with Wodehouse*

Geoff Hales leads a weekend break at Farncombe Estate Adult Learning Centre. See page 7

October 17-19, 2003 – *Oh, Boy!* on stage

Concert performance of *Oh, Boy!* in New York. See page 13

February 10, 2004 – The Savage Club

The first London meeting in 2004, with the AGM.

April 10, 2004 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join one of Norman Murphy's famous walks round Wodehouse's London. Contact him

to arrange your booking and the meeting-place and time.

May 4-16, 2004 – *Have a Heart* on stage

Concert performance of *Have a Heart* in New York. See page 13

June 12, 2004 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Another opportunity to see Wodehouse's London.

June 18, 2004 – Cricket at Dulwich

You can be sure the Dulwich Dusters will want their revenge (see page 18) and put out a strong team for the seventh annual match at the extremely pleasant Dulwich College ground. Contact

if you are interested in playing, or just put the date in your diary to come and watch.

July 6, 2004 – The Savage Club

Advance notice of the date of the summer meeting.

September 11, 2004 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Another opportunity to see Wodehouse's London.

October 14, 2004 – Society Formal Dinner

The proposed date of the biennial formal dinner.

November 9, 2004 – The Savage Club

Advance notice of the date of the autumn meeting.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

One of the unexpected successes in publishing in the last couple of years has been *Schott's Original Miscellany* (Bloomsbury, 2002), now in its 15th printing. Having received my copy on Father's Day, I was delighted to see one of the items included (and sharing a page with the *Classification of Iceberg Size*) was a selection of *Anatole's Dishes*.

Rob Kraitt at A P Watt has drawn my attention to a report (in June) that Mission Pictures have found a distributor and signed stars Sam Rockwell, Tom Wilkinson and Kathy Bates for the film they propose to make of *Piccadilly Jim*, to be directed by Ian McKay. Production is scheduled to begin in October, which suggests a release date of next autumn. But in the film world, there is many a slip . . .

Masha Lebedeva has written from Moscow to say that the State TV channel 'Russia' has decided to repeat (they did it in 1994, if she is right) the *Jeeves and Wooster* series. However, 'the time is about 3 o'clock (in the night or rather in the morning)', she adds, describing this somewhat mildly as 'the most stupid decision'.

Nice to see that the unabridged readings of Wodehouse books are selling well. The July issue of *Audio Times* shows the recent *A Damsel in Distress*, read by Jonathan Cecil, at fifth place in their top ten.

Anne Boardman, John Seward and others drew attention to the *Evening Standard* report of Michael Foot's 90th birthday celebration at number 10. Tony Blair was quoted as paying tribute to the former party leader, referring to the support he received during his first, unsuccessful, parliamentary by-election (at Beaconsfield in 1982). "We had a shared interest in Wodehouse", recalled Blair.

An example of international co-operation at its best. Charles Stone-Tolcher in Australia and Harshwardhan Nimkedkhar in India collaborated to provide the information about *Boy's Life's* centenary (see page 8).

Kit Evans writes in praise of Jean-Claude Zylberstein, who is *Directeur de collections* of 10-18, a major French book publisher, which now has 28 translations of Wodehouse books in print under the *Domaine d'étranger* imprint, far more than the list of any other author from any country.