



Another Cap for Wodehouse Mi.

By Murray Hedgcock

A full century after he reluctantly gave up rugby union because of his burgeoning writing career, Pelham Grenville Wodehouse has achieved sporting recognition by being named in an all-time world XV. Marking the 2003 World Cup in Australia, the former Wallaby Peter Fitzsimmons, now a sports columnist, selected Plum for the challenging role of scrum-half in his team drawn from 'famous people who have played the game'.

Fitzsimmons explained:

Young Pelham played a good brand of rugby for Dulwich College. The school still has match reports he used to write for the school magazine. No-one has ever summarized the game better than PG did in this passage from *Very Good, Jeeves* in 1930:

The main scheme is to work the ball down the field somehow and deposit it over the line at the other end. . . . In order to squelch this program, each side is allowed to put in a certain amount of assault and battery and do things to its fellow man which, if done elsewhere, would result in 14 days without the option, coupled with some strong remarks from the Bench.

The purist might enter a mild objection to Plum's position – traditionally held by a smallish, nippy player – on the grounds that he was big enough to be, in his own words, 'a forward, very heavy for a school footballer, weighing around 170 pounds'.

Plum won his Colours in 1899-1900, later writing: 'We had a great team that year, not losing a school match'. *The Alleynian* assessed him thus:

1st XV. A heavy forward. Has improved greatly, but is still inclined to slack in the scrum. Always up to take a pass. Good with his feet. Still too much inclined to tackle high.

As the high tackle is an offence, regarded as a bit brutal, it is surprising criticism of gentle Plum.

David Jasen records how in his first game for the school:

A nervous Plum, the ball under his arm, raced, dodged and fought his way through the opposing side until, to score a try, he had nothing to do but run on and put the ball down behind the line. But he quite inexplicably decided to take a drop-kick – and missed by 20 yards!

No matter: he enjoyed his rugby greatly, and when he left Dulwich in 1901 and joined the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in Lombard Street, he played both rugby and cricket for the Bank.

One of the Fitzsimmons XV would be a Wodehouse soulmate – Boris Karloff, at No 8. The sole selector explains:

Which team wouldn't want to have Frankenstein charging hard at the opposition? Karloff was one of the founding board members of the Southern California Rugby Union in 1936.

Uppingham-educated Karloff, six years his junior, was, like Plum, a member of the Hollywood Cricket Club.

So who else makes the Fifteen? All qualifying as former players, the rest of the team is –

Bill Clinton; George Bush; Ted Kennedy; rock singer Meatloaf; Jacques Chirac; Pope John Paul II; Idi Amin; Che Guevara; Prince William; actor Richard Harris; James Joyce; former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori; and Sir Edmund Hillary.

And the coach:

Benito Mussolini saw the game played in France in the Twenties, and was instrumental in taking it back to Italy, convinced it would go a long way towards toughening up the population.

We can only dream of what delicious accounts Plum could compile of the doings of such a salmagundi.

P G Wodehouse and the Arts

by Edward Cazalet

Plum wrote about art as he did because he had a basic awareness of a wide range of artistic work. He preferred traditional art just as he preferred traditional forms of writing, giving the impression, as with modern poetry, that modern art was a bit much, and its perpetrators were there to be lightly mocked. His favourite picture was a 19th century oil painting of the Mansion House in the City of London, with much activity in the street, including many horse-drawn carriages and gigs as well as some cows being driven along the street. This picture always hung over his desk – artist unknown. I think it must have evoked for him his early days in London when the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank was generous enough to employ him for two years, after which he wisely gave up any attempt to master finance and became a writer, learning his trade, as he put it, from an early shower of rejection slips.

Not for the first time in an *Inner Temple Yearbook* article I will venture a short stab at some plagiarism of Plum, deriving solace from the thought that Jeeves would have smiled indulgently – aware that no one has ever plagiarised Wodehouse successfully.

“Jeeves,” I said, removing a reflective pencil from my mouth, “do you remember that occasion when my portrait was displayed on posters all over London, and I had to escape to Paris?”

“Yes, Sir. It was painted by Miss Pendlebury. Mr Slingsby used it to advertise his company’s soups. He felt it gave you a hungry look.”

“And then, when we were in America, Corky Corcoran painted that portrait of his uncle’s unexpected baby.”

“I recall, Sir, that Mr Corcoran painted the soul of the child rather than its outward manifestation. His uncle, Mr Worple Snr, was unimpressed.”

“I dare say, Jeeves, I dare say. The point I am coming to is, why do so many of my friends think they are artists? I know a fair number of fellows at the Drones who dabble, and they know others who do the same. Without exception, they seem to be blots on their family escutcheons. The world seems to be bursting with dabblers, Jeeves, and I would have thought there was enough misery in the world without all their efforts. I am no expert, as you know. But even though I don’t know much about art, I know what I like. That’s rather good, you know, Jeeves. Is it original?”

“No, Sir. It is what is known as a cliché or a bromidiom, Sir. In 1907 the American writer Gelette Burges heavily censured all those who used such a manner of speech. Indeed, he identified your particular turn of phrase as one example, Sir.”

Plum used art and artists for his humour as he did so many subjects; not cruelly, as though they were matters for sarcastic or cynical comment, but gently, with an understated affection, for example:

Parker picked up the small china figure of the warrior with the spear, and was grooming it with the ostentatious care of one brushing flies off a sleeping Venus. He regarded this figure with a look of affection and esteem. It seemed to Archie to be absolutely uncalled-for. Archie’s taste in art was not precious. To his unsuited eye the thing was only one degree less foul than his father-in-law’s Japanese prints, which he had always observed with silent loathing.

Another use Plum made of artists was either to involve one as a character, have one of his characters impersonate one or attribute a thought to one. A classic example is to be found in *Summer Moonshine*:

Mr Chinnery sank into a chair and passed his tongue over his lips. His manner was that of a stag at bay. Imagine a stag in horn-rimmed spectacles, and you have Elmer Chinnery at this moment. Landseer would have liked to paint him.

Plum often used well-known works of art for purposes of description. He had his particular favourites. *The Soul’s Awakening* cropped up on many occasions, my favourite being:

The man was goggling. His entire map was suffused with a rich blush. He looked like *The Soul’s Awakening* done in pink.

Not knowing who had painted *The Soul’s Awakening*, I carried out some research through the ever-helpful Christies. I discovered that this picture was painted by Mr James Sant, RA (1820-1916), Painter-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria. His rendering of *The Soul’s Awakening* is said by his *Times* obituarist to have delighted the sentimentality of his public during that era. Then, continuing with the obituary, I suddenly realised that I had struck a big double. Mr Sant had also enjoyed a major success with a picture first known as *Speak Lord for thy Servant Heareth*, which depicted a

sanctimonious-looking boy, deep in prayer. It was said to be very English and ‘in perfect harmony with the Low Church sermons which the populace were in the habit of hearing every Sunday’. The picture, when later published as an engraving, was re-named *The Infant Samuel*, and achieved enormous popularity.

Plum must have read this obituary, for on several occasions he had characters relieve their frustrations at the expense of a sculpted model:

... a loaf of bread whizzed past his ear. It missed him by an inch, and crashed against a plaster statuette of the Infant Samuel on the top of the piano. . . . It practically wiped the Infant Samuel out of existence.

Plum used modern sculpted models as recipients for hidden jewels in more than one book, and was not averse to installing statues in the grounds of stately homes:

“If you came to Ickenham Hall with a hurried need for a nude Venus, I could fill the order without any trouble whatsoever”, said Lord Ickenham. “My grandfather specialised in them. ‘Home isn’t home,’ he used to say, ‘without plenty of nude Venuses.’ The result being that in certain parts of the grounds you have the illusion of having wandered into a Turkish bath on Ladies Night.”



Sant's The Infant Samuel

For several years Edward Cazalet has been contributing an article about an aspect of Plum or his characters to The Inner Temple Yearbook. This article is an abbreviated version of that which has appeared in the 2003 edition.

More on the Infant Samuel

In his book After Hours with P G Wodehouse, Richard Usborne wrote about his visit to a major Wodehouse archive. Amongst the treasures that he found was . . .

I had long suspected that somewhere in Plum’s life, or surroundings, or possessions, was, or had been, a mantelpiece figurine of the *Infant Samuel at Prayer*. As early as 1912, in a story *Pots o’ Money*, published in the *Strand*, an angry young man throws a loaf of bread at a young singer, misses him and breaks a plaster statuette of the Infant Samuel on top of the piano. Again in *The Code of the Woosters* (1938), at Tottleigh Towers, Bertie’s Aunt Dahlia, having learnt that her host, Sir Watkyn Bassett, is trying to get her peerless chef Anatole on to his payroll and into his kitchen, is looking seethingly for something in Bertie’s bedroom ‘to break as a relief to her surging emotions!’ Bertie ‘courteously drew her attention to a terracotta figure of the Infant Samuel at Prayer on the mantelpiece’. Aunt Dahlia ‘thanked [him] briefly and hurled it against the opposite wall’. Well, here is the ornament (if it can be called ornamental) that begot the mentions in Plum’s texts: three inches of curly-headed white plaster innocence, in a nightgown, his hands in the Dürer position of prayer, kneeling on a low stool or hassock, with ten bare little toes peeping from the drapery behind. Ugh! Wonderfully vulnerable and breakable: excellently suitable for an angry aunt, in the house of a hated host, to sweep off a mantelpiece. Here, in the archive, on a shelf, it is, three dimensional and intact.

A New Line

An early Wodehouse article on the topic of petty criminals

The following article written by P G Wodehouse appeared in *Pearson's Magazine* in November 1905. The topic of petty crooks had a peculiar attraction to Plum: apart from those who appeared frequently in his novels, he wrote several songs on the subject including his first published lyric the previous year, *Put Me In My Little Cell*, and several of the poems he wrote in the first decade of the century in response to news snippets in the daily papers had crime, criminals or prisons as a theme. That on page 23 of this issue features pickpockets.

The astute reader will notice at once that the service which James Centrebit performed for the bishop is essentially the central plot idea for a number of later stories. As far as we know, it next showed up in the 1913 Reggie Pepper story *Doing Clarence a Bit of Good* from *My Man Jeeves* (in the US it appeared in *The Man with Two Left Feet*), and it was then comprehensively redrafted first as *The Wigmore Venus* in *The Indiscretions of Archie* (1921), and in 1959, more than fifty years after the *Pearson's* original, as *Jeeves Makes an Omelette in A Few Quick Ones*.

Yet again, Wodehouse is seen to make multiple and profitable use of a single strand of plot.

My friend James Centrebit is a man for whom I have always had a great respect. We were boys together, and went to the same school.

I was expelled shortly after him, and for some time lost sight of his cheery face. It was not till some years later, when I had gone down from Oxford and entered my father's office (he was a partner in Jones & Rowbotham, forgers and begging-letter writers) that we met once more.

I had heard during the interval that he had become a burglar and was doing well at that exacting profession; and curiously enough, it was while he was breaking into a house at which I was a guest that I came upon him. I had gone down late at night to the drawing-room to steal a little silver jug on which I had set my heart, and there was the dear old fellow, as big and rosy as ever, stowing away a pair of hideous vases in a sack.

"Jemmy!" I exclaimed.

"If it isn't old Jack!" he cried. "Well, I *am* pleased. How are you, old chap? What's the game?"

"I'm after that little jug there," I said; "but if you had your eye on it – don't let me – you were here first."

"Not at all, dear boy, not at all. The jug's yours. These vases are all I want."

"Those vases!" I cried. "They're rotten, old man. Come with me, and I'll show you something worth taking."

"No, I only want the vases, beastly as they are. I'll explain, if it won't bore you."

"Come along, then, to the smoking-room. Our host keeps a very decent brand of Scotch and passable cigars."

And in the smoking-room he explained.

"Burglary," he said, "is not what it was. What with electric wires and vegetarian dogs it is becoming played out. 'Pon my word, I was on the point of chucking it and reading for the Bar when the thought of our family name checked me. We Centrebits have always been burglars, you know. I couldn't let the family down. So off I went, and broke into the Bishop of Bayswater's Palace. The old fellow happened to catch me just as I was leaving, and we chatted.

"'Young man,' he said to me, with a shake of his white head, 'you ought not to be doing this.' I explained to him how matters were, and he understood at once.

"'Ah, if it's a case of family tradition,' he said, 'well and good. I would be the last man to stifle a fellow-being's lofty motives. But I think I can see a way by which you can keep up the family credit and still be a credit to the community.' And, by Jove, the old boy brought out the idea of the century.

"'Everyone,' he said, 'possesses certain trifles of which he would be fain be rid, gifts from relatives and the like, and I am sure they would pay you handsomely to break in and abstract them. Now I myself. Some time ago my devoted flock presented me with a portrait of myself. It is not a good portrait. Indeed, if I were sure that I looked like that I should resign my see. I should not consider myself fit to be a bishop. Now, if you could manage – eh?' After a brief but satisfactory discussion of the matter from its financial aspect, I consented to remove the portrait.

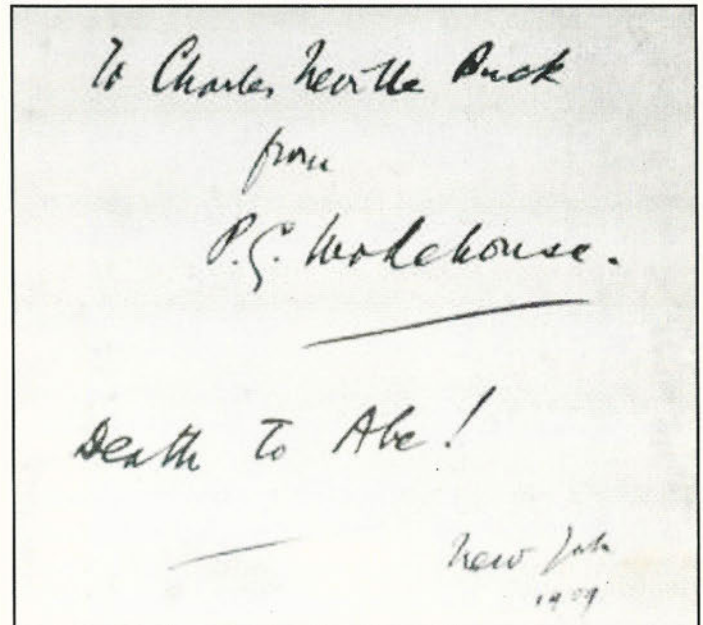
The Chickens Come Home to Roost

Gus Caywood makes a fascinating find

It is well known that when Wodehouse sold his first adult serial, *Love Among the Chickens*, in the USA he used an agent, A E ('Abe') Baerman, who defrauded him by copyrighting the book in his own name, and forcing him to pay \$ 250 for the privilege of buying back the copyright when he wished to sell film rights later.

In *The First Time I Went to New York* (a 1935 book edited by the Hon Theodora Benson and published by Chapman and Hall) PGW referred to, without naming, a writer from Kentucky who had been treated similarly by A E Baerman (though in the article he referred to Abe as 'Jake Skolsky'). If Wodehouse is to be believed, Baerman had actually used the cheque from Wodehouse's publisher (The Circle Publishing Company) to keep sweet the author from Kentucky, to whom he owed an even larger sum.

A copy of the 1909 US edition of *Love Among the Chickens*, inscribed by PGW as illustrated alongside was recently auctioned. The 'Abe' referred to is obviously Baerman. Since Charles Neville Buck's use of the full middle name appeared to qualify him for a successful writing career (under the criteria described by PGW as prevailing during that period), I did a little research and discovered not only that Buck was a writer of short stories and novels but that he came from Kentucky. Furthermore, his early novels, including the first (*The Key to Yesterday*, in July 1910), were published by W J Watt, to whom



PGW had turned in May the same year for his next novel, *The Intrusion of Jimmy*. So *Death to Abe* was a mutual battle-cry for PGW and Buck.

Buck had ten books published by Watt between 1910 and 1919 including such evocative titles as *The Call of the Cumberlands* and *The Code of the Mountains*. In the 20s he moved to Doubleday Page, but by 1929, his publisher, now Doubleday Doran following a merger in 1928, again coincided with Plum's, for George H Doran had published 14 PGW titles, while Doubleday Doran (and post-war, Doubleday & Co) were to be responsible for a further 26.

A New Line, continued

"From that moment, Jack, I have never looked back. I am now a prosperous man. I have two motors, one green, the other red. Everybody loves me, and I am received at all the best houses. Newly-married couples rely on me to edit the wedding-presents. After Christmas I am particularly busy.

"My connection, small at first, has extended until I now number among my clients most of the best-known names in the land. It is the ideal existence. Large profits. No risks. I insist on a cheque in advance, and if I am bitten by a dog of the house in the execution of my professional duties an extra ten pounds is always added. Young couples idolise me. They are no longer haunted by terrible gifts from rich relations, which they dare not lose

or give away. They send for me. I remove the horrors, and the delighted owners explain to the donor that it was doubtless the magnificence and costliness of the stolen article which led the burglar to carry it away and nothing else but it. So that's everybody happy. In the present case, these vases, which I shall abstract when I have finished this really excellent cigar, were presented to our host a week ago by a wealthy aunt. Unspeakably foul, are they not?"

"The burglar", said the local paper, "was probably frightened away before he had time to commit serious depredations. His booty consisted of two valuable china vases and a small silver cream-jug. The police are very reticent, but are believed to have a clue."

The Fosters of Malvern

By Jonathan Fisher, a member of The Gold Bats and grandson of NJA Foster

P G Wodehouse is believed to have based the Jacksons of his Wrykyn school stories on the Fosters of Malvern, a sporting family of seven sons and three daughters headed by the Rev. Henry and his wife Sophia. He may have also been distantly related to them since both the Fosters and P G Wodehouse are descended from Mary Boleyn (sister of Anne), although it is not known if he was aware of this.

The father, Henry Foster, was an enthusiastic energetic cleric and housemaster at Malvern College. He was of upper middle class education and scant middle class means. The seven Foster sons excelled at cricket, football, rackets and golf. All were at Malvern, where the cricket pitches are on terraces dug out of the hillside, and which could have been the inspiration for Wrykyn school. All played cricket (as amateurs) for Worcestershire, at one time colloquially referred to by some as 'Fostershire'.

The three daughters (Mabel, Cicely and Jessie) were good at golf, tennis and cricket – with skills enhanced by bowling at their brothers. Jessie scored 78 playing for Worcester High School (under 15s) and then had bowling figures of 7 for 8 and 7 for 6 in their opponents two innings. Bowling at her brothers gave her an unfair advantage. Cicely played golf for England, and for the family team that beat Worcestershire Golf Club in 1908.

The eldest son – Harry (HK) – was land agent to Paul Foley, who was the driving force behind Worcestershire Cricket Club's establishment as a first class county. He captained Worcestershire for 12 years (scoring over 17,000 runs and making 20 centuries), and the Gentleman in their match against the Players in 1912, and was an England selector. He won both singles and doubles amateur rackets championships many times and was awarded blues at Oxford in cricket, rackets and golf.

The second son – Bill (WL) – was called the 'family rock' because of his reliability. He was a captain in the Royal Artillery and both he and his brother (RE) scored centuries in each innings playing for Worcestershire against Hampshire in 1899.

The third son – Tip (RE) – played cricket for the first XI at Malvern at the age of 15, defending resolutely in one match to enable Malvern to win. In the following season, he made a precocious 69 in the big game against Repton. In his first innings for England, 100 years ago this month, he scored 287 (which exceeded Australia's first innings total of 285). This remained the world's highest individual



The Fosters in 1891: (Back) Harry, Tip, Bill (Centre) Basil, Mabel, Sophia, Jessie, Johnnie (on Henry's knee), Cicely (Front) Geoff, Maurice

Test score for 73 years. He captained England at both cricket and football and scored a hat-trick in a 12-0 win over Germany in 1901.

Basil (BS), the subject of an article in *Wooster Sauce* in June 2002, was a flamboyant cricketer, footballer and an excellent rackets player, winning the amateur double championships five times and the singles twice. As an actor he worked with Wodehouse, playing the title role in *Leave it to Psmith*. He scored a century in only 70 minutes for the Actors in a victory over an Authors team including Wodehouse and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, at Lord's in June, 1907. Wodehouse's two wickets (for 36) included that of Basil – caught by A A Milne.

Geoff (GN) was an excellent all-round sportsman. Like his brother Tip, he won blues at Oxford for cricket, football, rackets and golf.

The last two sons (Maurice (MK) and Johnnie (NJA)) were good cricketers, footballers and rackets players. They could not go to Oxford as the family exchequer had been exhausted by all their elder brothers; instead they went to Malaya to work as rubber planters. On his return to the UK, Maurice was to captain Worcestershire cricket club from 1923 – 1925. He emulated his brothers by scoring a century in both innings against Hampshire! Johnnie preferred playing cricket in the more relaxed atmosphere of matches for the Free Foresters but did captain a Malayan side that beat an Australian XI in 1927.

My First Wodehouse Experience

How I Learned to Love Golf, by Tony Dignam

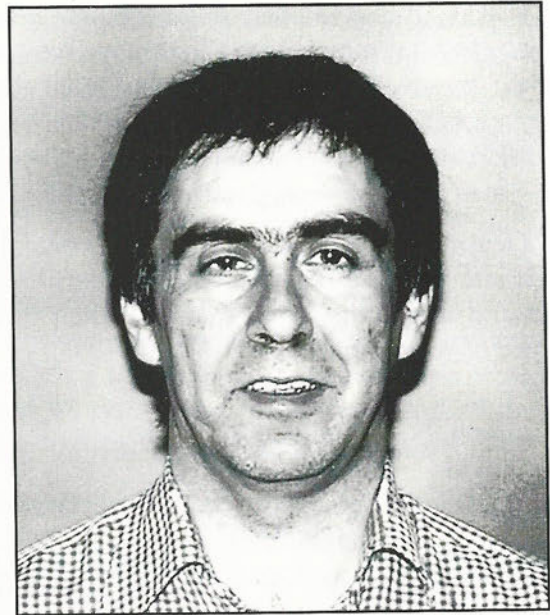
My first joyous introduction to the creator of Jeeves and Wooster came about as a result of my decision to buy a birthday present. My brother-in-law, then a passionate golfer, and still very much so, had reached that age when a man is not quite the spring chicken he fancies himself to be. Puzzled, I wondered what sort of present would be suitable for a person who derives great pleasure from hitting a white ball with a stick into eighteen holes.

On a present-hunting expedition, whilst browsing through the bookshelves at W H Smith, I felt fate lay a hand upon my shoulder. A fat volume with the words *P G Wodehouse – Golf Omnibus* seemed to whisper “You must read me, old boy. You’ll not look back.”

Picking up the book I saw the comic illustration of a golfer in 1920s plus-fours. My eyes fell on the list of contents. The unfamiliar title *The Heart of a Goof* appeared to call for more investigation. I headed for the cash till, dutifully parting with my hard-earned money to buy my brother-in-law’s present.

Nevertheless, on the bus journey home I clutched the *Golf Omnibus* in my hand. Even though I dislike golf, and was incapable of knocking a ball off a tee, I could not resist opening the weighty comic volume and reading the first story. From that moment I was hooked. Not unlike the Ancient Mariner, who inconveniently detained the wedding guest with a glittering eye, the Oldest Member of the Golf Club had pinned me to my seat by my two waistcoat buttons. Or would have done, if I had actually worn a waistcoat.

In the days that followed, the *Golf Omnibus* was my constant companion. I chuckled out loud, drawing some curious looks on one bus journey, as I read the story of Cuthbert Banks, a keen golfer who endured the agonies of listening to depressing Russian



literature to win the hand of the woman he loved. On more than one occasion bursting into a hearty giggle at a passage in the *Omnibus*, my wife gave me a strange look.

“What are you laughing at?” she enquired warily.

“It’s a P G Wodehouse story,” I answered, as though that explained everything.

On the day of my brother-in-law’s birthday I reluctantly handed over the present, consoling myself that it was in the hands of a keen golfer. To this very day I have continued to cultivate an interest in the literature of P G Wodehouse. Over the years I have accumulated a respectable library of titles, ranging from the charming stories of Blandings Castle to the superbly funny Psmith, but have yet to obtain a copy of *The Golf Omnibus*. I live in hope of doing so, but remember with warmth how a birthday present and a complete lack of interest in golf led me to appreciate the finest comedy of British literature.

Monkey Business in Boston

Member Dan Cohen, who was presented with a gorilla costume for all the work he did in connection with the 2001 TWS Convention in Philadelphia, was much taken with a report at the end of September that a 300lb gorilla named Little Joe had escaped from the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston and evaded capture for a considerable time. Even *The Times* had full coverage including photographs. One deviation from Wodehouse’s Mulliner story *Monkey Business*

(*Blandings Castle and Elsewhere*) was that the two-year-old child snatched by the animal was slightly injured, which is to be regretted, and another was that it took several tranquilising darts to subdue the 300 pound adolescent. Dan wrote that he did wonder, for a time, whether the entire event was a publicity stunt by the Newts, the New England chapter of TWS, who were planning a trip to the Zoo the following weekend.

If Wodehouse Had Written . . . Pride and Prejudice

James Goode suggests how it might have started

I was fully engrossed in compiling my diary; when a man gets to a certain age it is highly pleasant and nostalgic to relive his carefree days and remember a time when he viewed the world with something like youthful abandonment. I was so employed when my serving man brought me my early evening brandy.

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, George, that a single man in possession of an absolute fortune is a proud and discourteous companion when in the presence of young ladies.”

“Sir?”

“Surely I told you how Mr and Mrs Darcy first met?”

“Not to my mind. I would of course be delighted to hear it.”

“Jolly good man. Just let me add the finishing touches, then you may read it for yourself and correct any turn of phrase you think inappropriate.”

“Very well sir.” And with a discreet nod of the head George retired from the room and allowed me to read through my account of those first meetings between myself and Jane, Darcy and Elizabeth.

I had only been in Hertfordshire a few weeks when we were invited to the assembly for our first ball. I invited Darcy, my sisters and was obliged to invite that bore of a man Hurst. A hushed silence fell upon our entering the room, dissipated by the start of the music and the first invitations to dance. I found myself immediately charmed by the easy geniality and kind disposition of my new found acquaintances. I proceeded to enjoy several dances with some lovely young ladies before my eyes caught sight of the most beautiful girl in the room. Imagine how pleased I was to note that she was paying as much avid attention to me as I was to her. The evening went thoroughly well; Jane and I danced, exchanged glances and conversation; I knew from that moment that I would be very happy at Netherfield.

Sadly it was not long before I found Darcy up to his old tricks. Not a great one at engaging in conversation and bitterly upset at the untimely death of his Pekingese, he had decided to shun the good people of the ball and only condescended to engage in conversation with his old friends. He absolutely refused to dance with any of the young girls at the ball and if I'm not very much mistaken, he was not

coming across in a very admirable light. I decided to have a few words with the man.

“‘In sooth I know not why thou art so sad,’ Darcy,” quipped I, bringing to mind the late WS.

“I believe it is ‘In sooth I know not why *I am* so sad’ ” responded he with barely concealed contempt.

“Yes, well I can't exactly say ‘I know not why *I am* so sad’ now can I? I am at a loss in remembering the last time I was this happy, while you resemble your aunt's countenance the morning she found me asleep amongst her prized azaleas!”

“Come Darcy,” I pleaded, employing a change of tack. “I must have you dance,” I continued emphatically, with more than a little frowning of the left 'brow. “I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.” With this last little pronouncement the old Bingley foot well and truly stamped its way to the ground from whence it had been raised. Having found the same tactic to be effective when used to end all but the most heated arguments with cousins, aunts or governesses, I was convinced a little foot tapping would put an end to Darcy's immature antics. Sadly my adversary was formed from sterner stuff. A cold glare, followed by a haughty eyebrow ascending as far as its companion's had descended, accompanied the following retort:

“I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this, it would be insupportable.” I noted at this point that Darcy had begun to resemble in colour of face my gout ridden godparent Lord Florian De Mimcy Pomplesnuff; any comment to the same being obviously unhelpful, I resolved to stay the lips and maintain their indifferent stiffness.

“Your sisters are engaged,” continued my mauve friend. “And there is not another woman in the room, whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.”

Now with this last outrageous outburst I felt the need to remark how ill informed I thought he was. We Bingleys, though not so quick to give out unwarranted compliments as to render ourselves guilty of obsequiousness, are none the less all too pleased to pronounce the merits of beauty when it is genuinely encountered. With such thoughts I now embarked upon chastising my friend.

You Can Find Wodehouse Links Anywhere

Christine Hewitt and Anne Boardman augment the pastiche

Lyme Park, where Colin Firth as Mr Darcy jumped into the lake in the TV *Pride & Prejudice*, was owned for generations by the Leghs before the 1st Lord Newton's title was created in 1892. He married Emily Wodehouse, daughter of the Ven. Charles Wodehouse. Emily and the 1st Lord Newton had three sons and two daughters and the eldest son was Thomas Wodehouse, who became the 2nd Lord Newton.

There is a portrait of Thomas Wodehouse as a young boy (looking like a girl in a dress) with a huge dog. Apparently the Lyme Mastiffs (rather different from pekes!) were renowned for their size, and tradition relates that one accompanied Sir Peter Legh II onto the field of Agincourt.

To quote from the National Trust's guidebook:

Thomas Wodehouse, 2nd Lord Newton (1857-1942), who succeeded in 1898, had initially

pursued a diplomatic career, serving as an attaché in the Paris Embassy from 1881, but in 1886 had been elected MP for Newton. Continuing to play an active role when in the House of Lords, he was Paymaster-General and then Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs during the First World War. He was a master of the art of cultivated philistinism, disconcerting his visitors by telling them not to believe that the carvings in his Saloon were by Grinling Gibbons and letting it be known that he preferred grilled herrings to the *sole au vin blanc* lovingly prepared by his accomplished French chef, M Perez.

Thomas married Evelyn Bromley Davenport and in 1920 handed Lyme to his elder son the future 3rd Lord Newton, who in turn gave Lyme to the National Trust in 1946.

If Wodehouse had written . . . Pride and Prejudice, continued

"I would not be so fastidious as you are for a kingdom!" I bellowed, turning Bingley- and Darcy-wards more than a few startled expressions and cocked ears. "Upon my honour," I continued unabashed despite the gathering onlookers, "I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life, as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty."

"You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room," announced my friend with cutting disregard. Coughs and shuffles of embarrassed disdain accompanied the retiring of the spinster duet that had been dancing conspicuously close by.

Now a pin did not at this point drop from startled hand, but if it had a resounding *ping* would have most likely been heard to reverberate with onomatopoeic impropriety; except of course that the musicians, as all good musicians do, played on; and the pin being resoundingly not dropped, such Bingleyesque flights of fancy were not entertained. Even if they had been, I had so utterly lost my train of thought at my companion's allusion to the eldest Miss Bennet, for whom I had developed quite an admiration in the thirty minutes preceding the Bingley v. Darcy tête-à-tête; viz: I had fallen in love.

"Oh! she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld!" conceded I with lavish employment of two exclamation marks. Remembering the general thread of our conversation, I decided to prevent

Darcy the satisfaction of believing all the remaining females he surveyed to be plain.

"But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say, very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you."

"Which do you mean?" asked my friend with pernicious pomposity. Then upon catching Lizzie's eye he withdrew his own with all haste and replied as coolly as a schoolmaster addressing a disobedient boy:

"She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time on me." And off he stormed to the other side of the room where he spotted two rosy-cheeked young girls and proceeded to ignore them.

Not the comment to be expected on first introduction to one's future wife, I think you'll agree, but then Darcy was always anything but ordinary.

I rang the bell.

"Yes, George, I would be pleased if you would read the next installment, a trifling account of my younger days . . ."

The Sylacauga Meteorite

by Nandivada Rathnasree and Charles Stone-Tolcher

It is likely that most residents of Sylacauga, Alabama, are aware of one historical event. The first recorded and verified instance of a meteorite striking a human being.

During November 1954, in a rented house in Sylacauga, Mrs Ann Hodges was taking an afternoon siesta, when a thunderous crash was followed by a meteorite breaking through the roof of her rented rooms. It bounced off the radio and hit her on the stomach, causing quite a nasty burn. After the initial confusion surrounding the event, its significance must have been realised – here was the first bit of extra-terrestrial matter to actually hit a human being. The meteorite became prized and contested property, ultimately reaching the Alabama Museum of Natural History, which still has this meteorite on display today. Replicas are also on display at the Isabel A Comer Museum in Sylacauga.

Meteorite enthusiasts from all over the world would be aware of this incident and appreciate its significance against the smallness of the probability of a meteorite actually hitting a human being.

Other than the Astronomy community there would have been topical interest in this event, when it must have been splashed in newspapers worldwide – in November 1954. It most certainly caught the attention of P G Wodehouse, for he wrote a hilarious article called *The Meteorite Racket* which was based on this Sylacauga incident and published in *Punch*, November 2, 1955. So many of the details worked into that article – Mrs Hodges who was hit by the meteorite, Mrs Birdie Guy, her landlady, and the tug-of-war between them over the ownership of the meteorite – are also mentioned in newspaper reports of this event.

Now, consider the probabilities – the Hodges or Sylacauga meteorite was about 7 by 5 inches in dimensions – that is, 225.8 square centimetres in cross sectional area. The Earth has a surface area of 1,703,089,276,800,000,000 square centimetres. And about 500 meteorites fall over the whole of the Earth in a year. Taking an optimistic lifespan for a human as 80 years – the chances of being hit by a such a meteorite for any human being are one in 5 million million! Maybe Wodehouse did not have this calculated with such precision, but he was well aware of the thin probability of such an event ever taking place.

They are most unreliable things. You can't count on them. Capricious is the word I am trying to



The Hodges Meteorite
Courtesy The Comer Museum, Sylacauga

think of. There are hundreds of people in America who have not been struck by a meteorite.

Not so Mrs Hodges. According to Wodehouse, after the event, she was always to be found, waiting patiently, lying on the sofa, for the meteorite to strike twice. She had heard of lightning never striking the same place twice – but was unaware of the required probabilities for a meteor to turn in a repeat performance.

A year after this incident, there does seem to be a claim by an Alabama woman of being bruised by a meteorite. There are newspaper reports from the *Nevada State Journal*, dated October 22, 1955, which mention a meteorite almost striking a woman, in Mobile, Alabama. It seems meteorites do strike twice, even if they do not live up to the promise of lucrative possibilities that they opened up for Mrs Hodges, as touched upon by Wodehouse, in the *Meteorite Racket* article.

At \$2,700 per meteorite per person per day, that would be \$985,500 a year. Nice money.

One thought stands out here. Why did Wodehouse become so interested in this incident and why turn the event into an article? He had never shown any interest in the skies. There are hardly any references in the canon, to any happenings in the sky. There is just a brief and rather disparaging mention of the Planets and Constellations, in *Leave it to Psmith*:

The stars – bright, twinkling and – if I may say so – rather neatly arranged. When I was a mere lad,



Mrs Hodges shows off her injury

someone whose name I cannot recollect taught me which was Orion. Also Mars, Venus, and Jupiter. This thoroughly useless chunk of knowledge has, I am happy to say, long since passed from my mind.

That was Psmith, attempting to get Eve Halliday to say something other than “Yes” or “No”.

There is another reference in *Love Among The Chickens* to a lone star twinkling on the horizon, with which Garnet has an interesting, if one-sided, conversation.

Other than these references, there is never an indication that Wodehouse paid any attention to happenings in the sky.

So, why the falling star over Alabama? Wodehouse’s sense of fun was perhaps triggered more by the subsequent court case over the ownership of the meteorite than by the event itself. There was the landlady, Mrs Birdie Guy, who made counter claims on the meteorite, as she owned the house. According to Wodehouse, Mrs Hodges’ answer to this was that she owned the stomach. Newspaper reports of the day talk of Mrs Hodges’ calm statement “I think God intended it for me. After all, it hit me.” They also talk of her not so calm intention of suing Mrs Guy for damages, if she persisted in her claims on the meteorite. As it happened, they settled out of court and Mrs Hodges retained ownership of the meteorite, which she later donated to the Alabama National Museum. All of this is turned to humorous account, in *The Meteorite Racket* article.

You will find her (Mrs Hodges) lying on the sofa in the suit of chain mail which she now habitually wears, looking up at the ceiling and hoping for the best. Good Luck, Mrs Hodges.

And good luck, too, to Mrs Birdie Guy, who is down in the cellar, listening for the crash and waiting for her cut.

There is another point of interest that may indicate that Wodehouse became interested in this event sometime after the actual descent of the meteorite. Some of the events immediately following this descent are not mentioned in the article. For instance, the fury of Mr Hodges when he returned home from work and found that the meteorite had been taken away by the Air Force, for conducting tests. He immediately hired a lawyer to retrieve the meteorite from the Air Force, and Mrs Hodges was subsequently given possession of her space rock after tests were completed on it.

The *Meteorite Racket* article appeared in the November 2, 1955 issue of *Punch*, fully a year after the event, also indicating that it was, perhaps, the court case by the landlady, rather than the event itself, that caught the interest of Wodehouse.

One could easily dispense with lightning or meteorites that refuse to strike more than once, but one does wish for easy availability and unlimited supply of amusing articles like *The Meteorite Racket*, striking from Wodehouse’s pen.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to sincerely thank Dorothy Veil for visiting the Isabel Comer Museum, Sylacauga, and painstakingly copying all the information displayed at the museum about the Hodges meteorite.

Nandivada Rathnasree is a Director of the Nehru Planetarium, New Delhi. Charles Stone-Tolcher is a Society member resident in Australia. The photograph of Mrs Hodges was found on web page <http://www.positron-press.co.uk/c3-5.htm>.

The Smile That Wins Favourite Nifties - 25

“It’s got so nowadays,” said Ukridge, with a strong sense of injury, “that you’ve only got to throw a girl a kindly word, and the next thing you know you’re in the Lord Warden Hotel at Dover, picking the rice out of your hair.”

From *No Wedding Bells for Him* in Ukridge (1924)

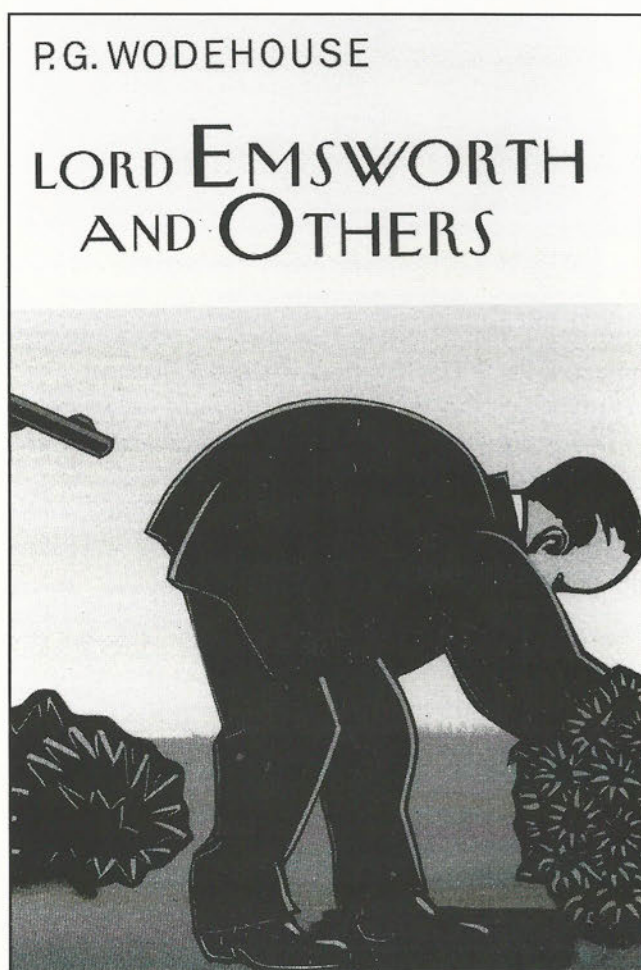
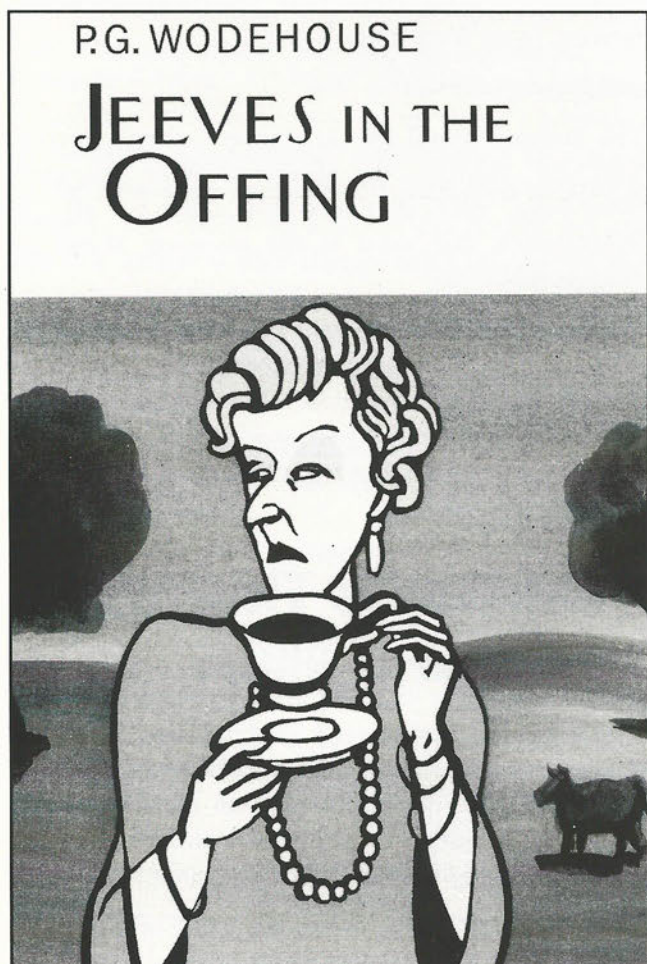
The Everyman Wodehouse:

David Campbell is the man behind the project and

For as long as I can remember, P.G. Wodehouse has been the author I throw into my suitcase to read when travelling, sometimes to the consternation of my fellow travellers as I laugh volubly or roll about in my seat. Wodehouse's happy world I have always found to be a perfect antidote to the trials of the overcrowded trains and delayed planes that constitute modern travel. He is also, of course, the perfect companion with whom to relax on a summer weekend under the shade of an ancient tree - and one of the rare authors my son and I have discussed regularly since he was eight years old.

So, when David Astor & John Saumerez Smith of that incomparable bookshop, Heywood Hill, in Curzon Street, Mayfair (a good Wodehousean address of course) suggested I might publish an Everyman Wodehouse a few years ago, I leaped at the idea. Astonishingly, it appeared that there had never been a complete uniform edition of the master's novels and stories in hardback, because, as every reader of *Wooster Sauce* will know, he had at least two publishers in his lifetime in the UK and still more in the US.

If ever there was an author who needs and deserves a well printed, permanent hardback edition to read and reread, and perhaps to give to friends and relatives who don't fully know the joys of the Wodehouse world, without the pages falling out or turning an unattractive tea-dregs brown, it is surely the creator of Blandings, Jeeves, Psmith and so many others, useful though paperback editions can be.



Everyman's General Editor, Peter Washington, was an equally devoted admirer and set about the interesting task of correcting the many small errors that had crept into editions constantly reprinted over the years. In the first place this meant returning to the original English editions, though even here there were often mistakes or obvious inconsistencies. It seems that the early publishers of Wodehouse were not always far-sighted enough to recognise a classic in the making when they saw one. Editing the texts raised all sorts of thorny and unexpected problems and could not have been achieved without the encyclopaedic knowledge and the enthusiastic support of members of the Wodehouse Society.

Ambitious and Necessary

he explains how it evolved from dream to reality

P.G. WODEHOUSE

THANK YOU, JEEVES



We also set out to design an edition which would in some way reflect and match the supreme elegance of Plum's prose. The Herbert Jenkins format seemed appropriate, not least for its great familiarity, but not the thick wood-based paper which has a tendency to discolour. An old friend, Tony Cobb, Professor of Design at the Royal College of Art, whom I consulted on the choice of a designer for the jackets introduced me to Andrzej Klimowski, a brilliant Polish designer with whose woodcut designs & cinema posters I immediately fell in love. Andrzej, of course a keen Wodehouse reader, swiftly came up with some designs which seemed absolutely right.

Now into designing the 29th to 33rd Everyman Wodehouse jackets it has been one of the greatest pleasures of the last few years to get Andrzej's quarterly visits to our offices to bring us his latest designs. His jackets are, I am convinced, the best that Wodehouse has ever had; some of them featured recently in an exhibition of Andrzej's work over the last 25 years at the National Theatre on London's South Bank.

With the growing support of Wodehouse readers in the UK, US & much of the rest of the world (PGW is one of India's most popular authors), I very much hope that we shall be able to publish all of the master's prose in a definitive edition which will last for centuries.

Titles in Print

The first 28 titles published in the series are:

Blandings Castle	Lord Emsworth & Others
Carry On, Jeeves	The Luck of the Bodkins
The Clicking of Cuthbert	The Mating Season
The Code of the Woosters	Meet Mr Mulliner
A Damsel in Distress	Mulliner Nights
Eggs, Beans and Crumpets	Pigs Have Wings
A Gentleman of Leisure	Psmith in the City
Heavy Weather	Right Ho, Jeeves
Hot Water	Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves
Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit	Summer Lightning
Jeeves in the Offing	Summer Moonshine
Joy in the Morning	Thank You, Jeeves
Laughing Gas	Ukridge
Leave It To Psmith	Young Men in Spats

The programme for spring 2004 is:

Much Obligated, Jeeves	Quick Service
Ring for Jeeves	Uncle Fred in the Springtime

Offers on the *Everyman* Series

Longstanding members of the Society will recall that when the series was launched in March 2000, members were able to obtain a 25% discount from the cost of the series (now £10.99 per volume) by placing a standing order for future issues.

We are delighted to announce that this offer is being reintroduced for all subscribers from Spring 2004. **AND**, to encourage newer members who have not yet taken advantage of this opportunity, Everyman are offering a special deal of **ANY 20 TITLES FROM THE FIRST 28** at a price of £165, POST-FREE in the UK. To place an order, and check the shipping cost outside the UK,

Everyman's new postal address is 2nd Floor, Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT.

St. Mugg at the Savage Club

by Murray Hedgcock

The burst of delighted laughter which engulfed the Savage Club room and must have rattled the foundations even of that massive edifice, the National Liberal Club itself, told its own tale.

It was precisely 7.23 pm on Tuesday, October 11, and we had just watched and heard Malcolm Muggeridge launch into reminiscences of his first meeting with Plum and Ethel Wodehouse. Except of course that it was not Muggeridge, gone these 13 years. It was the remarkable Peter Stockbridge, a teacher-turned-actor of 83 who has developed a presentation so realistic, that from the first words and gestures, we felt we were seeing 'Saint Mugg' himself.

The characteristic movements of head and shoulders, arms and hands, the grimaces, even the features themselves, brought Muggeridge into our midst, and we welcomed him with that unanimous roar of recognition. Prompted by John Ford as his 'interviewer', Peter gave us a version of the show he has presented around the country, except that for our benefit, the theme and content were focused on the world of Wodehouse.

Major Muggeridge of Military Intelligence entered that world in Paris in August, 1944, when required to check the activities of the Wodehouses under the Germans – and both Plum and Ethel became particular friends from that point. We heard the story as Muggeridge recorded it, more or less, gaining a clearer impression of the fascinating relationship that resulted.

Peter was introduced by Sally Muggeridge, Malcolm's niece, and President of The Malcolm Muggeridge Society, launched in this, his centenary year, to keep alive the work and character of a remarkable man of letters and of thought. She told us of his birth into a solid, socialist, Croydon home where he was the only one of four brothers who could be financed to university – returning from his first Cambridge term to address his startled parents in a plummy voice as "Pater . . . Mater".

Muggeridge became a much more serious and substantial figure from that pretentious beginning, producing a remarkable range of writing in everything from newspapers and magazines to books. He made an enormous impact on a wider British audience in the Fifties and Sixties, having fallen in love with television when it bloomed, to be 'seldom off it', as Sally conceded. The contrast with

the reticent Plum, who would evade interviewers and visitors and even friends, while Muggeridge would leap into print or debate at the least opportunity was remarkable – and yet they became remarkably close.

The strength of their friendship was outlined in recent issues of *Wooster Sauce* (June and September), but it added enjoyable life to the topic to hear Sally Muggeridge tell of her remarkable uncle, and how he warmed to the Wodehouses.

Society News

Christine Hewitt of London, a regular attendee at Society events, has been co-opted on to the Committee. She will formally stand for election at the AGM, which will be held during the Savage Club meeting on February 10, 2004. The agenda for the meeting has been circulated with this issue, and includes approval of the 2003 accounts, a brief summary of the Income and Expenditure statement of which appears below.

The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

Income and Expenditure

Year ended 31 May, 2003

Subscriptions	£ 12,225
Sales of publications, <i>et al</i>	224
Bank interest	31
Donations and sundry	266

Total income	£ 12,746

Printing costs	£ 5,032
Postage, copying and stationery	3,860
Insurance	262
Formal dinner & Dulwich exhibition	782
Room hire and sundry	927
Bank charges	24

Total expenditure	£ 10,887

SURPLUS FOR YEAR	£ 1,859

Wodehouse in Large Print

Notes on the Magna Editions of the 1970s

Though much has been written about most aspects of Wodehouse's bibliography, one area which has had very little attention is the large print edition which appeared at the end of the 1970s. A publishing company named Magna Print, a small family company which started business in Pudsey, Yorkshire before moving to the Yorkshire Dales (it is now based in Long Preston, near Settle), started producing limited runs of popular books in 16 point typeface (see the example from the beginning of *Very Good, Jeeves*) with their sale almost exclusively to public libraries, including those in the United States.

Although the company, now part of the Ulversoft Group, is still going strong, adding 20 titles a month to its portfolio, the Wodehouse titles have been long out of print.

Between 1974 and 1978, Magna produced 8 Wodehouse large print books, with one exception in a standard format of glossy, single covered boards. The first, *The Clicking of Cuthbert*, had a separate dust jacket and dull boards. There is news that in the reasonably near future, two Jeeves titles will again be produced on large print format for the benefit of those of us with failing eyesight. The complete list is given in the box below.

Chapter One

Jeeves and the Impending Doom

IT was the morning of the day on which I was slated to pop down to my Aunt Agatha's place at Woollam Chersey in the county of Herts for a visit of three solid weeks; and, as I seated myself at the breakfast table, I don't mind confessing that the heart was singularly heavy. We Woosters are men of iron, but beneath my intrepid exterior at that moment there lurked a nameless dread.

"Jeeves," I said, "I am not the old merry self this morning."

"Indeed, sir?"

"No, Jeeves. Far from it. Far from the old merry self."

"I am sorry to hear that, sir."

He uncovered the fragrant eggs and b., and I pronged a moody forkful.

Date	Title	Colour of boards	ISBN Number
1974	<i>The Clicking of Cuthbert</i>	Pale blue dust jacket	0 8600 9 011 6
1975	<i>Ring for Jeeves</i>	Salmon boards	0 8600 9 012 4
1976	<i>Jeeves in the Offing</i>	Yellow boards	0 8600 9 057 4
1976	<i>Thank You Jeeves</i>	Pistachio boards	0 8600 9 042 6
1977	<i>Stiff Upper lip, Jeeves</i>	Mauve boards	0 8600 9 014 0
1977	<i>The Inimitable Jeeves</i>	Pistachio boards	0 8600 9 069 8
1977	<i>Very Good, Jeeves</i>	Pink boards	0 8600 9 088 4
1978	<i>Right Ho, Jeeves</i>	Cream boards	0 8600 9 081 7

There is evidently a need for books of this type. It is good to know that Wodehouse was once available in this format, and encouraging to find that plans are in hand to correct the fact that each of the titles has been out of print for many years. We hope that Magna will be able to persuade the public libraries of the need for a further reissues.

A Keen Production of Good Morning, Bill

Peter Cannon attended the 1927 play's US Première

On Saturday, September 20, just a few blocks south from Manhattan's Little Church Around the Corner, Wodehousean man-about-town John F Baesch married Evelyn Herzog in a nuptial mass at the Church of St Francis Xavier. The groom beamed at the congregation throughout the hour-long ceremony, though with rather more control than Gussie Fink-Nottle when he held centre stage. A reception was held afterwards at the General Theological Seminary, which with its Tudor arches and inner courtyard is about the nearest thing New York City has to offer to a traditional English university college. It should be noted that it was the couple's mutual admiration of Sherlock Holmes that brought the two together, the bride being the head of ASH (Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes), the all-female scion society. Nonetheless, many of the guests wore Plum purple, and those ladies wearing that hue gathered for a photo session on the marble staircase leading down from the grand reception hall.

Around noon the next day, members of the newly formed New York chapter of The Wodehouse Society, some of whom had been present at the previous day's wedding festivities, started to gather at Perbacco, an Italian restaurant in the East Village. After an informal get-together in an Upper East Side library basement over the summer organized by Amy Plofker, this was the inaugural meeting of what the new president, retired professor of English Philip A Shreffler, persuaded the rest of us to agree to call the *Broadway Special* chapter. (A Broadway Special,

mentioned in *Jeeves and the Unbidden Guest*, is both a man's hat and a train of the era.) The waiters got off to a late start serving an array of delicious tapas dishes, with the result that dessert and coffee had to await the conclusion of the day's main event, a matinée performance of the US première of *Good Morning, Bill* (first performed in London in 1927 and from which Plum derived the novel *Dr. Sally*), a few steps away at the Connelly Theater.

The youthful and spirited cast of the Keen Company, led by Heidi Armbruster in the role of Dr Sally Smith and Jeremiah Wiggins as her smitten suitor, did a smashing job in front of a full house. The sets and costumes would have been worthy of a Broadway production. On stage afterwards, Carl Forsman, the director, moderated a panel on Wodehouse as a playwright consisting of David Jasen, author of *PG Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master*, and our Editor. To everyone's delight, Tony Ring had brought excised passages cut by the British censor (for risqué content) at the time *Good Morning, Bill* had first been staged in London. After a quick scan, the cast members read these passages aloud, and the audience joined in the debate over whether the deleted material ought to be restored. Certainly, the extent of Bill's redemption, not to mention the depth of Sally's initial dislike of him, is much more understandable when it's even clearer that Lottie, the floozie character, was a kept woman. May the publishers of the text some day revert to the original and let the show be produced as Plum originally wrote it.

Geoff Hales Responds to a Question on Thomas Hardy

John Tatum enquired (*WS* 27, September 2003, page 5) whether anything was known about PGW's opinion of Thomas Hardy. He did refer to his works on a number of occasions, such as that in *A Pelican at Blandings*, ch10, when the narrator, describing Lord Emsworth as 'feeling calm, confident and carefree' went on to add 'but a wise friend, one who had read his Thomas Hardy and learned from that pessimistic author's works how often and how easily human enterprises are ruined by some unforeseen Act of God, would have warned him against any premature complacency'.

Shortly afterwards, after Emsworth had put his foot on a tray paved with glass and china outside his sister's bedroom, he added 'Thomas Hardy would have seen

in the whole affair one more of life's little ironies and on having it drawn to his attention would have got twenty thousand words of a novel out of it.'

The same gag ('life's little ironies') had been put into Kipper Herring's mouth in *Jeeves in the Offing*, Bertie as narrator commenting 'I knew nothing of this T Hardy of whom he spoke . . .', but in *Fixing It For Freddie* (*Carry On Jeeves*) a slur is cast on the depth of Hardy's imagination, for it was said that he would not in a thousand years have thought of kidnapping Tootles Kegworthy as a way of reuniting Freddie Bullivant and Elizabeth West. In *Pigs Have Wings*, we learn that he used to write about misunderstandings, and there are further references in a couple of the short stories in *Plum Pie*.

Oh, Boy! What a Concert Performance

Tony Ring just happened to be in New York

One of Wodehouse's most famous musical comedies, the 1917 show *Oh, Boy!*, one of the classic series of 'Princess' musicals, was recreated in concert for five performances in New York from October 17 to 19. It was staged by The York Theatre Company as the first in a series of three *Musicals in Mufti*, this generic title giving the clue that it was a concert performance, with few costumes or props, no chorus and an orchestra reduced to the talents of pianist Darren Cohen.

The show was adapted by Barry Day, author of the forthcoming *The Complete Lyrics of P G Wodehouse*, and he managed to incorporate into it all the songs that are known to have featured in either the pre-New York tryout, its Broadway run, or on the road, where there were five companies touring. Jerome Kern's score provided Wodehouse with an excellent platform on which to display his lyric-writing skills, producing undreamt-of rhymes and fitting unlikely word combinations into occasionally challenging musical phrases.

The cast of the show had only rehearsed for four days before the first performance, as with all the *Mufti* series, and accordingly it is understood that the performances improve each time. They are, of course, holding their (very heavy) script books, which contain both the libretti and the music, and mistakes do occur as they valiantly balance the needs of reading the text with eye-contact with the audience. I attended the second of the five, and assume that the main opportunity for improvement will be a reduction in the relatively small number of stumbles which resulted from this.

The songs, which are not precisely of a style with which the cast was familiar, were sung with spirit and skill. The two principal male actors, Hunter Bell playing the hero George Budd and Jim Stanek playing his friend Jim, showed engaging personalities and very convincing performances. Jacky, the girl who breaks into George's flat to escape the policeman she has assaulted and becomes the cause of most of the farcical misunderstandings in the show, was played by Vanessa Lemonides, and she seemed the most accomplished of the female parts, whether reading, acting, singing (to me her voice fitted such songs as *Till the Clouds Roll By* and *Rolled in One* perfectly) or merely smiling! She deserved to be paired off with Jim at the end. Bridget Beirne, as George's secretly-married wife Lou-Ellen, rather disappointed me with her singing. In the first act,

her renditions of *You Never Knew About Me* and *An Old-Fashioned Wife* seemed harsh and strident, though in her second act solo, *Words Are Not Needed*, she seemed more relaxed. Elizabeth Stanley as Jane, and Miki Yamashita as Polly (the two parts taken in the original by Marion Davies and Justine Johnstone) were almost as one in their duet and the seven songs for which they played the equivalent of the chorus!

The show was directed by Brit Simon Jones, who also played the compromised Judge Carter, and he clearly had full control over the whole proceedings. There was a comic cameo by Viola Harris as George's Quaker Aunt Penelope, when she mistook three glasses of martinis for lemonade, and reaped the rewards of alcohol on an empty stomach and a life of abstinence. Spontaneous applause broke out as she rolled off the stage to lie down. Tom Toner, Randy Redd and Darrie Lawrence were confident in their roles as Briggs, Sims and Mrs Carter respectively, the latter offering a frightening glimpse of the personality of Bertie's Aunt Agatha.

The production showed that with a little bit of care, musical comedies with a lightweight plot (the book was by Guy Bolton and PGW) but delightful scores can entertain today as they did when written. We look forward to further opportunities to see or hear recordings of these early shows.

And Almost an Encore in Houston!

At the same time as we lucky ones were enjoying *Oh, Boy!* in New York, an announcement was made in Houston that the Main Street Theater (Chelsea Market) would also be presenting a concert performance of the show, from December 31, 2003 to January 17, 2004.

The Drone Rangers are planning a New Year's Eve night out, with the show, dinner, champagne and 'party favors' included in the ticket price of \$75. (The price for the show only on other nights is obviously much lower.) Favourable rates at the Sheraton Galleria Hotel are being offered to members who wish to travel to Houston for the event.

'A Charming Book, Warm and Clear'

Lucy Tregear's verdict on Broadway, Jeeves? by Martin Jarvis

A theatrical diary is by its nature packed with anecdote. Anecdote is a form of gossip, and gossip of course relies heavily for its interest on whether or not you know the gallery of characters involved. I come armed with an insider's knowledge of the show and in this esteemed journal rest assured the readers are more informed on matters Wodehousean than it is possible for me to be.

Having played Honoria Glossop in the original Scarborough and London productions, I was somewhat wary what my reaction would be (resentment? envy?) upon reading this tale of the American journey of *By Jeeves*. It's a testament both to Martin Jarvis's cheerfully readable account, and the enduring magic of the show, that any proprietorial emotions were swept away from the start.

The book charts the bumpily eventful progress of the show opening in Pittsburgh and trying to get to Broadway, with an American cast except for Jarvis playing Jeeves, against a backdrop of events that altered world history. As a diarist Jarvis does not aim to investigate the broader political response to September 11. Instead he presents a very personal, 'somewhat hermetically sealed' world of day to day theatrical life. He admits candidly 'despite current horrors, the struggle to survive within our own business is what finally exercises so many of us'. Amidst the Wodehouse frivolity, the plea from the ensemble that Anglo-American solidarity predominately drives their hungry pursuit of the Broadway run chimes a little uneasily.

The artistic focus draws us into a daily quest for more rehearsal time, warmer winter woollies, comfortable lodgings and above all, a plentiful supply of nightly wining and dining. Martin Jarvis

is a fabulously successful, versatile and, I assume, well remunerated actor, whose remorseless pursuit of his contractual entitlements are fulsomely documented with great good humour.

The (real-life) characters are all colourfully and lovingly sketched. It's hard to judge just how compelling the details of the show would be to those without prior knowledge of the project. I certainly delighted in the familiar litany of anxieties, rumour and heartfelt messages flying between cast and management in the desperate bid to give the show every possible chance to continue and flourish.

Jarvis is particularly sharp on the Alan Ayckbourn experience. He captures both the warmth and passion of the man, as well as paying proper tribute to his genius as writer and director. I understood exactly what he meant by Alan's seemingly elliptical 'pointers' in the rehearsal room. Honoria's very special vocal and physical centre suddenly began to fall into place for me when Alan muttered the phrase 'open air' to me.

In spite of his constant battle with nerves and ankle twinges I have little doubt Martin Jarvis gave a splendidly urbane and unflappable butler. Probably a part he could play standing on his head (even his 'little dance'). I was, however, truly bowled over by his casual remark about preparations for an audio book in which he didn't flinch at the job of intoning thirty different characters in a variety of Norwegian accents. Now, that's a rare talent indeed.

BROADWAY, JEEVES? is a charming book, written with warmth and clarity, permeated by Jarvis's own charm and geniality. He shares his passion for a piece which remains in its own way a minor comic masterpiece.

The Drones' Search for 'Gentlemen'

The Belgian Wodehouse Society, the Drones Club, is making progress with its project first to produce a definition of 'a gentleman' and then to seek a person, real or fictional, to adopt as their mentor for gentlemanly behaviour.

On October 25 the Club held a dinner at Milfleet Hall to discuss the candidacy of ten Wodehouse characters for inclusion in a short list of ten from whom the final choice will be made in October next year. Intense discussion explored the qualities, both

positive and negative, of the candidates, who bizarrely included such unlikely names as Aunt Dahlia and Ukridge.

Nobody present was terribly surprised when Bertie Wooster came top of the poll. In view of his lack of backbone, some eyebrows were raised when Lord Emsworth beat off the challenge of pedigree runners such as Psmith, but the real surprise, the outcome which confirms how unpredictable the Drones' members are, was that Jeeves claimed third place.

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

Something Fresh

Of all the Blandings novels, *Something Fresh* probably enjoys the most interesting bibliographic history. Originally published as *Something New* in the *Saturday Evening Post*, the most prestigious fiction journal in the United States, it was a pivotal novel for Wodehouse, being the first of fourteen serials he was to have published in the *Post* and the one that really established him as a comic writer. After its serialisation (from 26th June to 14th August, 1915) the book was published in the USA by D Appleton on 3rd September 1915; a rather different version from Methuen (though no magazine serialisation) followed in the UK on 16th September.

The Methuen first edition had plain blue-green cloth with black lettering, and was printed by Butler & Tanner. It incorporated an advertising supplement, separately printed by Morrison & Gibb, dated 8/5/15. The book was reissued within a month in a Colonial edition which had a red cover and specified 'Colonial first edition' on the title page, but which was otherwise identical to the first edition.

CHAPTER XI

THE Earl of Emsworth sat by the sick-bed, and regarded the Hon. Freddie almost tenderly.

"I fear, Freddie, my dear boy, this has been a great shock to you."

"Oh, what? Yes, rather. Deuce of a shock, governor."

"I have been thinking it over, my boy, and perhaps I have been a little hard on you. When your ankle is better, I have decided to renew your allowance, and you may return to London, as you do not seem happy in the country. Though how any reasonable being can prefer——"

The first Methuen edition, 1915

The UK edition differs significantly from the US edition, as about 20 pages included in *Something New* were removed from *Something Fresh*. A scene from chapters 48-51 of the earlier book *Mike*, which had only been published in the UK, had been reproduced in its entirety in *Something New*. Virtually the only changes had been the names of the characters in the scene, which now involved Ashe Marson, Lord Emsworth and Baxter, rather than Psmith and the schoolmasters Mr Outwood and Mr Downing. Methuen wisely decided that this scene should be omitted, a quite straightforward task as it was self-contained and had little carryover effect.

All American reprints of *Something New* up to and including the 1931 edition published by A L Burt had the original text, but later editions, starting with the Ballantine and Beagle paperbacks of 1972, adopted the English text whilst confusingly retaining the American title. At least they did not specifically state that they were printing the original text, an unforgiveable claim (as mentioned in *Wooster Sauce* soon after publication) made by Dover Press in the USA for their 2001 paperback, which omitted the 20 page scene.

Dover did not even deign to use the text of the UK first (or any Methuen) edition, relying instead on the first Herbert Jenkins printing in 1969. This can be identified easily by the omission of the second paragraph, a single sentence, in the final chapter! Methuen had managed twenty editions and Tauchnitz a further one, in 1933, without achieving anything quite so dramatic. With their omission, Jenkins made the last page of the book rather difficult to follow.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

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The Hon. Freddie started, pop-eyed, to a sitting posture.

"My word! Not really?"

His father nodded.

"Yes. But, Freddie, my boy," he added not without pathos, "I do wish that this time you would endeavour, for my sake, not to make a fool of yourself."

He eyed his offspring wistfully.

"I'll have a jolly good stab at it, governor," said the Hon. Freddie.

The first Herbert Jenkins edition, 1969

Extraordinarily, this error has been followed slavishly by all later publishers in both the UK and the USA:

Mayflower (1970); Ballantyne (USA, 1972); Beagle (USA, 1972); Hutchinson (1982, 1987); Penguin (from the Ionicus cover in 1979 to the latest David Hitch cover); and Dover (USA, 2001).

But from an inspection of the layout of the last chapter, it appears that the problem was avoided in the three post-1969 translations of which I am aware, in Hungarian, Swedish and Russian.

Wodehouse at the Cheltenham Festival

Reported by David Herboldt

A return to Cheltenham was on the cards for Sir Aylmer Bostock, which would suit Lady Emily, as she preferred its gay society to that of the country. (Uncle Dynamite)

And it was this gay society (in its original sense of the word) in which Plum's parents probably found themselves when they lived for a short while in Cheltenham, only a five minute stroll from the Everyman Theatre, now one of the venues for the internationally renowned Cheltenham Festival of Literature. And on a lovely sunny Saturday afternoon in October, one of its events was a threesome between Nigel Williams (the author), Robert McCrum (*Observer* literary editor and more importantly new biographer of Plum) and Jonathan Cecil (actor, known to us also for reading many unabridged Wodehouse audio books).

Considering the event was in direct competition with Tony Benn in the Town Hall (a popular event on his previous visits), the 400-seat theatre was satisfyingly three-quarters full – and as might be expected of Plum's fans, the age range of the audience was from around 12 to 90.

Nigel Williams first introduced Robert McCrum, who mentioned the previous 'classic' biographies by David Jason and Francis Donaldson. He said he referred to the Master throughout his book as 'Wodehouse', because he felt Plum or PGW would be over-familiar with someone he'd regrettably never met, hence the book title – likely to be called simply *Wodehouse*.

He talked about his amazing childhood (Plum's, not Robert's!), virtually never seeing his parents, and the way he loved Dulwich, which became his home and family. It was here he gained his classical education which saw the inclusion of literary quotations on nearly every page, from Shakespeare to Gilbert & Sullivan, stopping at Virgil on the way, and sometime so mangled or out of context that it highlighted the humour and emphasised further his skill with words.

Not surprisingly, Robert mentioned 'the war', as he discovered that when he told people about his current *magnum opus*, this subject was their first question. Some discussion followed, one of his points being that none of the books written during or just after Plum's incarceration made any reference to it, but remained the normal, classic, humorous stories. He felt that any other author would have brought their experiences into at least one book.

Robert also made clear that Plum was one of the most famous, and probably richest, authors at the time, putting the likes of even a contemporary J K Rowling in the shade, but in spite of that he still retained his simplicity and modesty. Perhaps surprisingly, most of his early wealth came not from his books but from his lyrics, film and stage work.

The discussion was interspersed with a couple of impeccable readings by Jonathan Cecil, the first being the first chapter from *Right Ho, Jeeves*, and the second being 'Gally' Threepwood's classic discussion about tea and its inherent dangers; much safer sticking to whisky & soda! And listening to Jonathan's readings in the theatre makes you realise again Plum's skill, managing to evoke a laugh from nearly every sentence. Other writers need to introduce jokes to get laughs, but he uses his mastery of the language to achieve it, apparently effortlessly.

The final part was thrown open to the audience to ask questions, which ranged from "What was the inspiration for Jeeves?" and "Did the Queen Mother visit him in America before he died?" to "What other sports did he love apart from boxing and cricket?" – all answered by one or more of the three on stage.

All too soon the event was over. The applause was loud and richly deserved. And it leaves me waiting with baited breath for next year and the publication of the book. I believe this Festival event is unlikely to be repeated next year, but if you spot a similar gathering anywhere near you – don't miss it!

Editor's Note: For the first time The Cheltenham Festival had Ottakar's as its Title Sponsor. Their support was most impressive, ranging from a giant Book Tent to making relevant books available at many of the locations used for individual events and presenting many book signings.

Fair Exchanges

Favourite Nifties - 28

"By the way, father, what was the speculation you were into?"

"It was connected with a mine. A good mine, but incomplete. It had no gold in it."

From *The Pro*, an unrepublished story dated 1906

Forthcoming Theatrical Productions

Amateur production of Anything Goes

Although the highly acclaimed National Theatre production of *Anything Goes* has returned to London (the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane), members in the west country should not feel left out. A production is also being staged at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter, from January 27 to 31, by Exeter University Footlights Society, who previously put on a successful production of *Me and My Girl*. The Director will be Phineas Pett, son of member John Pett, and possessor, claims John, of one of the few names *not* used by PGW in any of his works!

The Play's The Thing, over Christmas

Whereas Wodehouse's most-performed play in the UK is *Good Morning Bill*, in the USA it is *The Play's the Thing*, and remarkably two productions were scheduled in the same city, Chicago, within weeks of each other. Borealis Theatre Company ran for about three weeks in September, and the City Lit Theater Company, who have an annual Wodehouse production, will be presenting it from November 13 to January 11.

John Fletcher has recalled that in *The Play's the Thing* (1926), there appears the sentence:

"I love you as the church steeple loves the cloud that settles above it."

He has pointed out that in the 1969 novel *A Pelican at Blandings*, Lady Constance Schoonmaker used the same words in drafting a love letter for the Duke of Dunstable to send to Vanessa Polk. She added that her father's secretary, Bertie Weaver, had used the very words to her one evening when they were walking by the lake, but as he was not the poetic type, she supposed he was quoting from some play he'd seen.

Book and Magazine Collector

The November 2003 issue of *Book and Magazine Collector* includes a 15 page article (with numerous colour illustrations) by Tony Ring and Nick Townend entitled *The School Stories of P G Wodehouse*. This is the sixth article on Wodehouse in just over seven years, the others being: *The Blandings Books of P G Wodehouse*, July 2002; *P G Wodehouse, Storyteller*, August 2001; *Right Ho, Jeeves!*, February 2000; *Weekly Wodehouse*, May 1998; and *Wodehouse in America*, May 1996. All back copies are available by contacting:

News of Recent and Imminent Publications

The Book People's Bargain Offer

Not, strictly speaking, a new publication, but a very tempting opportunity to fill some gaps in your collection, or provide some cultural Christmas presents to your friends. *The Book People* have produced an offer of 10 books from the present *Penguin* range at a total price of £9.99 + £3.25 postage within the UK.

The titles selected include six Jeeves and Wooster books and four others. The full list is:

<i>Aunts Aren't Gentlemen</i>	<i>Big Money</i>
<i>Jeeves in the Offing</i>	<i>The Clicking of Cuthbert</i>
<i>Right Ho, Jeeves</i>	<i>The Girl in Blue</i>
<i>Ring for Jeeves</i>	<i>Piccadilly Jim</i>
<i>Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves</i>	
<i>The Inimitable Jeeves</i>	

Orders may be placed through their website: www.thebookpeople.co.uk, or by telephone to

P G Wodehouse: The Complete Lyrics

A reminder that this book, compiled by Barry Day (see *Wooster Sauce*, September 2003 for the story of its evolution) will be published by Taylor Trade Publishing (ISBN 1-58979-054-5) and will contain some 350 lyrics from 38 shows and around 80 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 by February 2004. A 20% discount from the UK retail price of £24, shipping extra, will be available to members who call the distributor, Plymbridge, on _____ and quote the code 'RLPG08BB'.

Broadway Jeeves

Members who wish to place orders for the book by Martin Jarvis (reviewed on page 19) should contact Methuen Sales by telephone on _____ 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).

Recent Press Comment

Tribune, February 7 (from Peter Viggers)

David Mills's *Parliamentary Column* started with the PGW nifty about Scotsmen and rays of sunshine and, returning to it in the final paragraph, managed to mention Nelson Mandela in the same sentence.

Sunday Times, August 24 (from Murray Hedgcock)

Ferdinand Mount described Susan Watts, the science editor of *Newsnight*, as seeming to belong to 'that daunting, old-fashioned type of woman who used to progress unstopably from head girl to headmistress to end up as one of those redoubtable aunts whom P G Wodehouse describes as calling to one another 'like mastodons bellowing across primeval swamps'.'

National Trust, Autumn (from Marilyn MacGregor)

Included in an article on servants in great houses the comment: 'By the time you get to the twentieth century, deference to the aristocracy was truly on the wane and the 'servant problem' had come down to one plain fact: you couldn't find them for love or money. Their public image had changed forever. By the 1920s, P G Wodehouse's character Jeeves, the gentleman's gentleman, is a darn sight more clever than his boss, Bertie Wooster. And Wooster is not just aware of this, but grateful ...'

Sunday Times, September 7

Author Jonathan Raban included *The Mating Season* in the short list of books he has on his bedside table in Seattle. 'Wodehouse and Waugh are as necessary for me as wine and water – both brilliant verbal craftsmen, both sublimely funny, at least on their good days.'

The Times, September 10

In an article on the memorial mass for the late Sir Paul Getty, his oldest friend Christopher Gibbs said in an address that 'his heroes ranged from Churchill through Wodehouse, Swinburne and Brunel to Denis Compton ...'

Times Magazine, September 20

In a column entitled *University of Pop* (What songs teach us about life, the universe and everything), Chris Campling quotes from the title song to *By Jeeves*:

By George! By Jove! By Jeeves!/
Our collective IQ of
around 42/
Cannot cope, to be perfectly frank/
All true leaders of men/
Delegate now and then/
Try to keep their minds totally blank

Spectator, September 30 (from Richard Heymann)

A competition in which readers had to incorporate the following eleven words in 'a plausible piece of prose' was won by a Nicholas Hodgson with some Bertie-Jeeves dialogue. The words were: apraxia, apres-ski, apricot, apron, apropos, Capri, caprice, Capricorn, paprika, Sapristi, taproom.

Sunday Telegraph, September 28 (from Murray Hedgcock)

In an article about a major retrospective exhibition of the work of Ronald Searle about to open at the Chris Beetles gallery, Searle comments that, despite living in France for 32 years, he has never considered taking French citizenship. 'If they said you can only stay in France if you became French, I'd say "Not possible". It's like saying P G Wodehouse should be French. You simply can't put a nationality in a jacket. I remain extremely English whatever happens.'

Saga Magazine, October

Keith Waterhouse contributed an excellent article regretting the lack of fiction magazines for short stories, similar to those which PGW and others wrote for in pre-war times, but added that many of the stories themselves are preserved in omnibus volumes readily – and cheaply – available from second-hand bookshops.

Daily Mail, October 2 (from Murray Hedgcock)

The *Ephraim Hardcastle* column mentioned that Iain Duncan Smith has two dogs, one a collie named Captain Biggar after PGW's character in *Ring for Jeeves*.

Wall Street Journal, October 3 (from Sophie Glazer)

The *de gustibus* column opened thus:

I sincerely doubt that Laura Bush . . . ever imagined that one day, as she arrived in Paris as the first lady of the United States of America, the very large, very tall president of the Republic of France would bow to her and lift her hand to his lips in the classic European manner and that the moment would provide a photograph so charming that it could possibly, as Bertie Wooster once said to Jeeves, 'toss a little petroleum on the troubled w.'s of US-French relations'.

Daily Mail, October 10

Michael Coveney's review of the Theatre Royal production of *Anything Goes* said that the sensational production sailed into the West End with all guns blazing. Simon Day, who performed at one of our Society dinners, was described as 'hilariously controlled as the aristocratic ass discovering the gipsy in his soul'. Other very positive reviews can be found in most of the dailies.

Steve Wright in the Afternoon (Radio 2), October 15

In *The Big Quiz*, a contestant from Colchester correctly identified PGW as the author who wrote about Jeeves and Wooster and had been born on that day in 1881. (But see *Editor's Tailpieces*, page 24, for a less successful outcome.)

The Times, October 15

Carried an 18-line entry about PGW in the Birth Anniversaries column of *The Register*, before mere mentions of, *inter alia*, Virgil, Akbar I, Friedrich Nietzsche and Marie Stopes.

The Times, October 16 (from John Hayzelden)

The Times Guide to the HSBC World Match Play Golf Championship mentioned PGW's golf stories.

Press Comment on Apley Park

The press reported almost to a man or woman the presentation by the UCL PhD students Daryl Lloyd and Ian Greatbach to the Royal Geographical Society. (We are pleased to be able to report that the pair, who are both members of our Society, will be summarising their arguments in a future edition of this journal.) They had used computer analysis of geographical features mentioned in the books to identify Apley Park (to, according to some reports, a 98% confidence level) as the original Blandings Castle.

Most of the reports also carried Norman Murphy's response that Apley Park did not meet most of the necessary criteria; and that he had ruled it out quite early on during his own extensive search for Blandings.

The following summary identifies the dates of the press reports which appeared:

APAlert Friday September 5
Report by Jill Lawless, circulated on the press wires

BBC Today Programme Friday September 5
Norman Murphy interviewed by James Naughtie. (The Lloyd/Greatbach findings were reported on the *BBC News* website)

Daily Telegraph Friday September 5
Report by Graham Tibbetts, with illustrations

Shropshire Star Friday September 5
Report by James Whittaker, with illustration

The Guardian Friday September 5
Report by Paul Brown, with illustrations

The Independent Friday September 5
Report by Charles Arthur

The Times Friday September 5
Front page report by Lewis Smith entitled *Jolly Bad Show Over Blandings*, with illustrations

Birmingham Post Saturday September 6
Report by Sarah Probert, with illustration

The Guardian Saturday September 6
A rather humourless leader, querying what was the point of the entire exercise and seemingly disapproving of the mere idea that anyone should enjoy the pursuit of harmless trivia.

Yorkshire Post Saturday September 6
Unattributed report, with illustrations.

Poets' Corner An Open Letter

Unhappy sir, I grieve to note
Your quite mistaken plan
Believe me, it is not the coat
That makes the gentleman.
No thinking soul will praise, I wis,
Neat 'bags', and such like frippery,
If but the heart they cover is
Deceitful, black and slippery.

Ah, better thirty shilling suits,
And made-up scarlet ties,
And paper cuffs, and yellow boots,
Though painful to the eyes.
Better a hat without a band
Than one acquired by trickery;
Oh! better far an ungloved hand
Than kids and pocket-pickery.

Relinquish the frock coat of shame
Oh, shun the glossy tale;
Avoid (I use the tailor's name)
The 'dressy Bond Street style'.
Go in no more for raiment bright:
One suit – are you aware of it –
Will last a really honest wight
A year, if he takes care of it.

The words of wisdom which I drop
Would meet with more success,
If gaol offered greater opportunities for dress.

Your clothes are chosen for you. Still
When hands have ceased to trouble you
Remember what I've said. You will?
That's right.

Yours

P G W

From *News Chronicle*, 25 March, 1904
(Commenting on a press report that one pickpocket frequently changed his attire during the day.)

Kid Brady Stories

Members of the Society who have renewed their membership at least once should find a *Kid Brady* story enclosed with this distribution. Number 6 has been printed for the first time this year. New members can look forward to next year, when, in appreciation of their renewing their membership, they will receive the first of the elusive stories from the American *Pearson's* magazine of 1905 to 1907.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

January 27 to 31, 2004 – Exeter

Exeter University production of *Anything Goes*, see page 21.

February 10, 2004 – The Savage Club

The first of the trio of London meetings in 2004. Helen Murphy will present her paper from Toronto: *Wodehouse – a Male Thing?* The Savage Club is within the premises of the National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, close to Charing Cross and Embankment stations, and members meet from 6pm.

April 10, 2004 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join the first of this year's walks round Wodehouse's London conducted by Norman Murphy. 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. Contact Philip Shreffler on carfaxhope@comcast.net

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 and put out a strong team for the sixth annual match at the extremely pleasant Dulwich College ground. Contact

if you are interested in playing; otherwise put the date in your diary to come and watch.

June 27, 2004 – Cricket against Sherlock Holmes

The provisional date for the cricket match between The Gold Bats and The Sherlock Holmes Society of London at West Wycombe, Bucks. Contact Bob Miller if you want to play.

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 2004 – Society Formal Dinner

The date of the biennial dinner has yet to be confirmed.

November 9, 2004 – The Savage Club

Advance notice of the date of the autumn meeting.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

Murray Hedgcock was reminded by a report in *The Sunday Telegraph* of an exhibition of portraits of servants which would be opening soon at the National Gallery that 'Menservants were the last males (other than lunatics and Peers) to be given the vote' in the UK. He asks whether this meant that Jeeves was unable to bend his mighty brain to the governance of England and Empire even while he was dabbling, as he expressed it in *Ring for Jeeves*, in WWI. Uncertain as to whether his researches are comprehensive, Murray has assumed that Jeeves and his peers (though not the Peers) may have been enfranchised in 1918 when the property qualification was abolished, but would welcome clarification.

While chatting to David Jasen, Wodehouse's first biographer, while in New York recently, I learned that Plum's favourite dish was corned beef hash, which he would regularly choose while dining at the Savoy Grill. On his first visit to England, David followed in his footsteps but failed to find corned beef hash on the menu. Mentioning this next time he saw Plum, he received the comment: "Well, they have to send out for it."

One consequence of holding the TWS convention in Toronto has been the welcome formation of a Toronto chapter of The Wodehouse Society, which calls itself *The Pale Parabolites*, after the first line of one of the poems of that famous Canadian character Ralston McTodd in *Leave It To Psmith*. Any members interested in joining the Toronto chapter, or wanting to contact a Wodehousean prior to a visit to that delightful city, should e-mail

When, during *University Challenge* on October 20, Jeremy Paxman asked Jesus College, Cambridge "Who was the Wodehouse character who belonged to the Junior Ganymede Club?", the less-than-confident reply was "Bertie Wooster?"

Patron Ian Carmichael received his OBE from the Queen on October 22.

On October 24, a Guardian review of a new CD by Sophie Ellis-Bextor pointed out that in a world obsessed with maintaining 'street credibility', she began her career 'carrying on as if she were a character from P G Wodehouse', emphasising her private school background. Gally the rapper next?