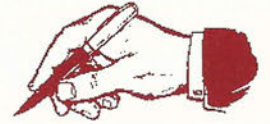


WOOSTER SAUCE



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

Number 36

December 2005

Did You Ever Wonder How It Was Done?

David Jasen provided this very interesting letter about the genesis of one story

Aug 12. 1947

53 East 66 Street
New York City

Dear Mr Summers.

With most of my stories your question 'How did you come to write it?' would be a hard one to answer, but it so happens that 'All's Well With Bingo' was based on an experience of my own and I can remember the various steps which led to the assembling of the material. I was in the Casino at Le Touquet one night, wandering about and occasionally risking a small sum at one of the tables, and zero came up when I was backing Black, and at the same moment I happened to get into conversation with someone, and it was only some time later that I observed a pile of counters on Black and realized that they were mine. My gratification at scooping in the stuff was heightened by the immediate realization that I had got the core of a story.

Obviously, the hero's gambling would have to be on a larger and more important scale than mine, so I started hunting around for a means of heightening the drama. This soon led me to Bingo Little and Mrs Bingo, and everything fell into shape without any trouble. Feeling that the drama could stand still another shot in the arm, I tried to think of something that would make the winning of the money vital to Bingo, and hit on the bookie stuff. And so on.

My stories don't usually come out that way. As a rule, I start by saying to myself that I will write a story about one of my characters and then sit and hold my head till I have found what happened to him. But this one started with a scene and I worked from that. That way of composition is much easier, but the trouble is you have to have the 'scene', and it is not often that 'scenes' drop out of a blue sky. In fact, the only other one I can remember in my books is the bit in A Damsel In Distress (if anyone remembers A Damsel In Distress, which I doubt) where the girl jumps into the hero's taxi and he has to hide her.

The thing that makes writers of humorous stories pick at the coverlet is the haunting fear that they have overlooked something and laid themselves open to the question 'well, if your hero was in this jam, why didn't he do so-and-so?', the inference being that, if he had, there would have been no story. But in 'All's Well With Bingo' I think that, given that Bingo could not simply draw himself to his full height and defy his wife, the thing hangs together.

Best wishes
Yours sincerely

Copyright © 2005 by the
Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate

P.G. Wodehouse

In Defence of Eleanor

by Chris Garner

There's no doubt Victorian parents were a pretty tough bunch. When they weren't poking their offspring up the nearest chimney, they were tucking half a sovereign into his nappy and sending him off around the world to arrange his own education. All in the name of sturdy independence.

You've only to look at the size of the families to realise they subscribed to the view that there were plenty more where that came from.

Wodehouse's biographers seem to have assumed that Eleanor Wodehouse was very much of that ilk. When it came to the wholesale abandonment of children, they imply, she could have written the correspondence course.

Jasen tells us that in 1883 Eleanor 'rented a house in Bath, deposited her three sons in it in the care of a Miss Roper, and went back to Hong Kong'. Green has the incident taking place a year later when Eleanor 'placed her three most priceless possessions in the charge of a perfect stranger called Miss Roper'. Phelps informs us that 'the lack of maternal instinct in Eleanor Wodehouse was extreme'. He reminds us that in 1883 'she rented a house in Bath, hired a Miss Roper (hitherto unknown to her) as governess to her three children and returned to Hong Kong'. Donaldson in her biography has no qualms in calling Eleanor 'a stupid woman', whose 'emotions were as undeveloped as her intellect'. She reports that in 1883 Eleanor, 'rented a house in Bath where she engaged a Miss Roper, a complete stranger, to look after them'.



A modern view of 17 Sion Hill
Photo by Chris Garner

You could only draw one conclusion from these references, that Eleanor was a callous and uncaring

mother. However, it may be possible to look at the records and draw a slightly different conclusion.

The census of 1881 (taken on April 3) reveals some interesting information. In the Walcott district of Bath an entry appears for 17 Sion Hill. The names listed at that address are Philip P J Wodehouse aged 3, born in Hong Kong, China; Armine Wodehouse aged 1, also born in Hong Kong, China; Emma Roper aged 31, an unmarried nurse born in Corsley, Wiltshire; Mary Derham, a 23-year-old unmarried housemaid from Somerset; and Ann Day aged 15 from Bath who was employed as a nursemaid.

The entry makes it clear that Peveril and Armine must have accompanied their mother on her trip to England in 1881 rather than remain in Hong Kong as McCrum suggests. 'In 1881, having given birth to baby Plum unexpectedly early at a sister's house in Guildford, Eleanor took her child to join his brothers in Hong Kong.'

It also seems clear that Miss Roper was not the 'complete stranger' biographers suggest when she was employed to look after the Wodehouse children in 1883.



Near neighbour: 20 Sion Hill
Photo by Chris Garner

Another interesting point comes to light on the very next page of the census. Here we find the entry for 20 Sion Hill where the head of the house is listed as John B Deane born 83 years ago in the Cape of Good Hope. The other eleven members of the household include his wife Louisa, his daughters Mary and Anne, and his grand-daughters Violet, Dorothy and Marjory. The family are ably supported by a cook, a

Valley Fields and the Suburban World of P G Wodehouse

by Murray Hedgcock

When I staggered home from Kingston University on July 16, feeling much like Bertie Wooster after his brush with *Types of Ethical Theory*, I had just taken part in the symposium *Literary London 2005*, discussing *Representations of London in Literature*, hosted by the University Department of English and the Centre for Suburban Studies.

An invitation to deliver papers with links to London suburban life seemed a good opportunity to spread the Wodehouse gospel. Besides my paper, the conference presented the thoughts of academics from America and Canada, the Continent, and up and down the UK.

‘Academics’ is the key word.

Our simple Wodehousean found himself lost in studies such as: *Suburban Mnemonics – the Rhetoric of Remembrance on Graham Swift’s Everyday Wimbledon*; *Continual Fusion – Blurring Lines between Divergent Perspectives in the Development of Place*; *An Urban Regeneration Scenario for London’s Lower Lea Valley*; and *The Painted Backdrop of the Suburbs – Utopian Visions and Dystopian Nightmares*; feeling that a more appropriate title for the last would have ended in ‘*Dyspepsian Nightmares*’. And so on – including the Professor from Florida who announced, apropos of nothing much: “I am interested in Schopenhauer”.

I tried to present a factual alternative to the complex theorisings of the PhDs on parade, such as:

We know that London in the Wodehouse canon primarily means Mayfair and the West End, where his young members of the Drones Club enjoy their empty-headed lifestyles, with the occasional excursion to the East End, and of course much time spent at great country houses.

But there is a surprisingly extensive use of the suburbs, offering more confrontation and conflict than in the West End or those stately homes. There are brawls, assaults, householders coshed or administered mickey finns, burglaries, dogs chasing innocent and guilty alike, citizenry locked in rooms or cellars, guns flourished, breakings and enterings, frenzied pursuits, character assassination, crooks pretending to be curates and detectives, illegal gambling, people pushed into ponds, characters deprived of their trousers – an astonishing variety of mayhem.

The suburbs are a world in which every prospect pleases – and only man is, if not vile, then certainly volatile.

Which is where the story really starts . . .

I left Kingston unsure whether to feel relieved or regretful that I did not go to university. Bit like Plum, really.

In Defence of Eleanor, continued

housemaid, a parlour-maid, a charwoman and a kitchen-maid. John Deane was, of course, the Rector of St Helens and St Martins and the father of Eleanor Wodehouse.

It would seem that Eleanor had sufficient concern for her children to ensure that they were looked after in a house not seventy yards away from her father’s home. Even if Miss Roper was unknown to Eleanor when she employed her in 1881, there were sufficient family members on hand to ensure she looked after her charges properly.

Rate-books show that 17 Sion Hill, which was also known as Arbutus Lodge, was rented from April until October 1881 by Henry Ernest Wodehouse. By this time Eleanor had given birth to Plum in Guildford on October 15th and some time later the whole family had returned to Hong Kong. Eleanor was certainly satisfied enough with Miss Roper to

employ her again when the Wodehouses returned to England in 1883, this time to leave their children for good.

Although the census is of little use in shedding light on this visit, rent records show that, once again, Eleanor appears to have made some effort to ensure that her children maintained contact with their relations. Finding number 17 let, Ernest and Eleanor settled on number 30 Sion Hill as a suitable home for their sons, once again choosing a house in close proximity to the Deanes. The records show that Ernest rented number 30 until October 1886, when the children were moved to Croydon. By this time Peveril was nearly nine years old and Armine nearly seven, and the question of their future education needed addressing.

Perhaps these records allow us to take a slightly kinder view of Eleanor than we have in the past.

Wodehouse and India – the Affection Endures

by Sushmita Sen Gupta

An article appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph* some months ago, marvelling at the continuing popularity of Wodehouse among young Indians working in the IT industry. That's all very well, but what about the rest of us, the non-IT wallahs? What about our enduring love for all things Wodehouse? Truth to tell, there are tens of thousands of Indians for whom "Tinkerty-tonk" is a perfectly acceptable way to say goodbye. And it's entirely possible that you'll find a few Indian families where a female relative has quietly been dubbed 'Aunt Agatha' behind her back.

The Wodehouse Effect – if I may call it that – is inescapable. Every Indian bookshop I have been to has a shelf full of Wodehouse titles on display. You'll see them in bookshops on railway platforms, nestling up against astrology magazines and Hindi murder mysteries with lurid covers. Pavement stalls are always good for a Jeeves & Wooster book or two, which on exploration often turn out to be pirated copies. That is the true test of an author's popularity. Have the pirates got him on their best-seller list? Wodehouse has been there for decades.

For most of us, meeting other Wodehouse fans meant family and friends. The sole Wodehouse Society in India was never as widely known as it deserved to be. The advent of the Internet changed all that. Suddenly, a few searches began to throw up online groups of fans, keen to share their passion. I know of two such groups set up by Indians, and am a member of one of them – WodehouseIndia on yahoogroups. Our membership is largely Indian, with a few from other parts of the world. In fact, some of our members in Bangalore were interviewed for the *Sunday Telegraph* article.

We began slowly in 2000 with maybe a grand total of ten messages posted in a week. Then, our membership began to grow and with it, the volume of mails. We actually posted 2700 messages in February, 2003 – over 90 messages a day. Admittedly, the subject is not always Wodehouse. We describe ourselves as a combination of Liberty Hall and Colney Hatch and truly, 'Anything Goes'. But the core of our interest remains Wodehouse's works and life. Followed closely by – no prizes for guessing – cricket!

We ask our newcomers how they discovered Wodehouse. The most frequent answer: "from family and friends". Either a parent or an uncle or aunt or an elder sibling or cousin would be spotted



Sushmita seen pursuing her second interest, at Lord's, during the summer

laughing their heads off reading a particular book. Or one of them would shove a slim volume under the youngster's nose to keep them quiet for a bit. And that's all it takes – they're hooked. Like fans elsewhere on the planet, we divide the human race into two – those who are addicted to Wodehouse and those who aren't. Poor souls.

School libraries and, most often, the British Council Libraries in our larger cities, have contributed enormously towards keeping the Wodehouse flame alive. Our members talk of loitering with intent around the 'Returned Titles' shelf, to grab the first Wodehouse book returned, because his books always seem to be issued out.

We at WodehouseIndia are a vocal, vociferous lot, with opinions and arguments whizzing across cyberspace. Of the 200 odd members (and some of them are very odd!) only about 30 are regular participants, the rest, as we say, have gone Trappist. A poll conducted two years ago threw up *Leave it to Psmith* as the reigning favourite, with *Sam the Sudden* a close second.

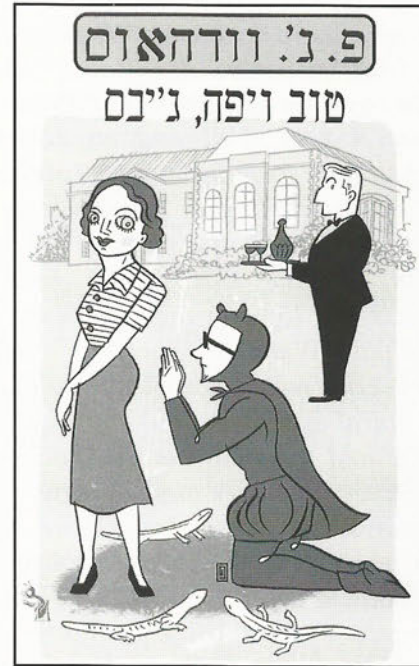
Early on, we took a leaf out of PGWnet's book and began the custom of adopting 'noms de Plum'. Around 100 members have chosen noms, with the favourite characters getting snapped up within a few days. For some reason, every third newbie wants

Right Ho, Jeeves translated into Hebrew

Judy Oppenheimer has produced the first translation of Wodehouse into Hebrew. *Right Ho, Jeeves* was published as *Tov Véyafé, Jeevs* in August, 2005. This title's more-or-less literal translation is *Very Well, Jeeves*. Its appearance brings the number of languages into which complete Wodehouse books have been translated to at least 26.

Judy found, as all translators find, that some of the idiom Wodehouse uses cannot be translated literally, or anything approaching literally. She also faced the problem that in *Right Ho, Jeeves*, a 1930s book, several of the topical references mean very little today.

She expressed the hope that although Wodehouse has been forgotten in Israel and is totally unknown there, it is not too late to encourage the reading public to take him to their bosom.



Wodehouse and India – the Affection Endures, continued

Psmith as a nom and the original owner has to guard it zealously. We are very liberal when it comes to noms. Crossing genders is fine – our Clarence is a young woman, so is Soapy Molloy. We have both a Bertie and an Alpine Joe. Bertie happens to be the ‘revered founder’ of the group. Our Sally switches at will between Sally Painter, Doctor Sally Smith or any other Sally. We have a Crumpet, a Twenty-minute Egg, a Monocle and a Tankard of Stout. And our Swordfish doesn’t want a Roderick Glossop around!

With our daily interaction via email, it was inevitable that we should begin to meet ‘in the flesh’ as it were. Initially, we met in twos and threes. Then, sometime in April, 2002, five of us met for dinner in Delhi, sparking off similar gatherings in Bangalore, Mumbai and Chennai. We don’t have a regular schedule, a meeting can happen if a member from another city is visiting, but most often, it’s an impromptu decision. What we’ve dubbed ‘minutes of the meeting’ are then sent out to the rest of the group, and more often than not, are a figment of the writer’s imagination.

With our friendships and sense of camaraderie getting progressively stronger, we organised our first ‘convention’ in December, 2002 and the second one in October, 2004. Both were in holiday resorts on the outskirts of Bangalore. The first one saw ten of us congregating and the second had fifteen. In keeping with the informal, happy-go-lucky character of the group, we decided against any

structured events. Some of us read from the canon, we persuaded two of our VBC’s (Very Brainy Coves) to set a quiz, we watched a few videos together, a cricket match was attempted and rain stopped play! Some nearby flowerpots were at risk of grave injury and lemon-coloured pyjamas actually made an appearance. Some members who couldn’t come to the meet called in on a speakerphone and joined in the fun. Our real aims were to talk of Wodehouse, remind each other of favourite bits, share many laughs and forget the rest of the world, amid the browsing and sluicing. In this, we succeeded happily.

So, why is Wodehouse still popular in India? Our colonial past and high levels of comfort with the English language are only part of the story. Many theories have been advanced. Indians can empathise with the upstairs-downstairs scenario of a Blandings Castle, as Indians in the past were awfully feudal. (Some still are!) Even middle class and upper middle class families have had old family retainers, so a Jeeves was a familiar sight. Extended, multi-branch families are the norm, with friends and neighbours always dropping by. And there is often a genial Uncle Fred helping a romance along.

Yet, these are only theories. In the end, we Indians love reading Wodehouse because he makes us laugh. His prose is the closest it gets to music of the written word. And his work has helped each of us create a special corner in our minds where joyous, innocent fun always reigns. Tinkerty-tonk.

Blofeld's Plum Teams

by Oliver Wise

Oliver Wise, a member of the Committee of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) and an accomplished barrister, naturally spent the best part of the summer at Lord's, contemplating in his scholarly way all matters cricket. The question of whether the Bangladesh national side would have beaten Wrykyn was one topic; a more difficult one was whether Shane Warne's variety of devious and twisted deliveries would permit him to hide at will behind a spiral staircase. But the most complex problem he had to solve was the outcome of the match proposed by Henry Blofeld, between Beach's XI and Jeeves's. As winter draws near, and a few months of Work once again beckon, Oliver presents his conclusions.

Henry Blofeld's after-dinner speech at the Gold Bats/Sherlockians gathering earlier this year gripped and amused. The main theme was his selection of two teams drawn from the Wodehouse canon to play a cricket match: Jeeves's XI versus Beach's XI. In the June issue of *Wooster Sauce* Robert Bruce reported the speech, set out the teams and reawakened the anticipation one feels when inspecting the scorecard at Lord's just before an important match.

The contest would certainly be keenly fought. Which side would win? Could a side captained by Jeeves ever lose anything? His knowledge of the psychology of the individual would exceed even Brearley's. There again, could a team containing both Psmith and Uncle Fred be beaten? Much, perhaps, would depend on the umpires; but Henry Blofeld does not reveal their names.

Of all the players, Mike Jackson is plainly the star. 'A cricket genius', we are told. 'A style like Trumper', according to Wyatt in *Mike*. In *Psmith in the City* he scored 148 for Surrey against Middlesex on his first-class debut. He is specifically described in *Mike* as 'that future all-England batsman', so I think we can conclude that he played Test cricket at some point during or after his university career.

After him in Beach's XI is Psmith, a 'slow left hand bowler with a swerve'. He would have been 'a certainty for Lord's' in his final year at Eton. No less a judge than Adair, the Sedleigh captain, said: 'He must be jolly good if he was only just out of the Eton team last year'. Psmith seems to have justified the praise with 35 for Sedleigh against Wrykyn in the first innings and at least nine wickets in the match. He carried on playing cricket 'in a rather desultory way at the university'.

What other positive cricketing elements can one find in Beach's XI? Gally Threepwood and Uncle Fred will surely be more athletic openers than Glossop and Bassett. Beach, who suffers from his feet (sorry, Feet – I forgot the use of the upper case in *Something Fresh*) and other ailments is surely a liability in the field, along with the absent-minded Lord Emsworth, and the American Soapy Molloy. I can see no suitable wicket-keeper among them, unless the Duke of Dunstable reveals an unexpected talent in that department. There have of course been excellent wicket-keepers of high rank: for example, the Hon Alfred Lyttelton and Lord Loreburn, the Lord Chancellor, who, as R T Reid, kept wicket for the university.

What of Jeeves's XI? I am inclined to agree with Henry Blofeld that Barmy Fotheringay-Phipps and Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright will be 'an unstoppable combination with the new ball'. We know that Potter-P has the 'willow figure' to bowl fast. He is a high-earning actor who 'selected the sock and buskin' because it 'would ensure the three square meals a day and give him some time to play county cricket'. Any successful actor could expect to limit his county cricket to a taxi ride from theatres in the West End, which means playing first-class cricket at Lord's or the Oval, the home grounds of two of the stronger first-class counties. I think that in putting him in to bat at 11 below his cricketing and social inferiors and even a French cook, Jeeves (or Blofeld) is deliberately annoying him in order to get a ferocious spell of fast bowling out of him. Unless Mike Jackson can stay in and retain the strike against Catsmeat, I think that the latter will bowl out Beach's XI in one spell.

Strong batting support will come from Bertie Wooster. All rackets blues have a very good eye for a ball, and many are extremely accomplished batsmen. I suspect that Bertie was in the Twenty-Two (the Eton 2nd XI – possibly with Psmith), and I have a feeling that Psmith's crafty bowling will eventually get him out. The Jeeves's XI tail should wag. We know that Jeeves was willing to run after Harold, the speedy page boy, in *The Purity of the Turf*. How close he was in all-round cricketing ability to his namesake, Percy Jeeves of Warwickshire, it is impossible to tell.

Nothing in Wodehouse's writings leads me to think that Gussie Fink-Nottle has any talent for or interest in cricket. Simon Barnes's *A La Recherche du*

Modern German Humour

Is this the funniest opening sentence in any German book?

In die Miene des jungen Mannes auf der Terrasse des Hôtel Magnifique in Cannes hatte sich ein Ausdruck verstohlener Scham geschlichen, jener unsicher, zerknirschte Ausdruck, der ahnen lässt, dass ein Engländer gleich französisch sprechen wird.

It is the start of *Monty im Glück*, (perhaps more familiar to us as *The Luck of the Bodkins*), the sixth annual volume in the Edition Epoca series of translations by our Swiss member Thomas Schlachter. Beautifully presented in hard covers with orange cloth, it is well up to the standard of earlier titles: *Quick Service*; *Uncle Dynamite*; *Joy in the Morning*; *Stiff Upper Lip*, *Jeeves*; and *Heavy Weather*. Its ISBN is 3-905513-38-2, and Edition Epoca's website is www.epoca.ch. Thomas's translations are clearly having an impact in the German market, as all the previous five titles are into second or later (in the case of *Quick Service*, fifth) printings.

Cleverly Introducing Wodehouse

Stu Shiffman found an interesting dialogue in *The Palace Tiger*, a 2004 book by Barbara Cleverly set in 1920s India. Sandilands, a Scotland Yard officer, is about to have dinner with the Resident of Rajapur and his wife, and consults Govind, his Jeeves-like servant, about a suitable gift:

“Sahib, madam does enjoy reading. And anything that comes from Home is always eagerly accepted.” He smiled, looked calculatingly at Joe, and decided to go further. “I believe that the sahib has amongst his luggage one or two copies of books, recent ones, by her favourite author. She would be delighted to find herself the recipient of, shall we say, *Jill the Reckless* by P G Wodehouse.”

Joe grinned. “Well, luckily I’ve just finished reading it. Good thought, Govind! And perhaps it should be accompanied by *The Indiscretions of Archie* for Mr. Vyvyan?”

Privately, he wondered how many of this author's books Govind had himself devoured.

Blofeld's Plum Teams, continued

The Opposing Elevens

Jeeves's XI

- 1 Sir R Glossop
- 2 Sir W Bassett
- 3 Mr R Spode
- 4 Mr A Fink-Nottle
- 5 Mr B W Wooster
- 6 Mr T P Travers
- 7 Anatole
- 8 The Rev. A Upjohn
- 9 Jeeves
- 10 Mr C Fotheringay-Phipps
- 11 Mr C C Potter-Pirbright

Beach's XI

- The Hon G Threepwood
 Frederick Altamont Cornwallis Twistleton, 5th Earl of Ickenham
 Mr M Jackson
 Molloy
 Mr R E Psmith
 Alaric Pendlebury-Davenport, 6th Duke of Dunstable
 Dr E J Murgatroyd
 Wellbeloved
 Beach
 Clarence Rupert Rochester Threepwood, 9th Earl of Emsworth
 Mr R Baxter

Cricket Perdu contains some splendid cricket pastiches. One of his stories has G Fink-Nottle as a county leg-break bowler, capable of an inspired spell in a Benson & Hedges match. Regrettably, the evidence must be rejected as extra-canonical and therefore inadmissible.

In Jeeves's side one could expect little of use from Uncle Tom or Anatole. Aubrey Upjohn had wielded a cane that bit like an adder, which suggests a modicum, at least, of strength, accuracy and timing for his batting. I foresee some recovery after an early collapse in the Jeeves's XI innings.

I expect that there would be a great deal of betting on the result of this match. In order to avoid any suggestion of funny business the punters would be reassured that the book was made by two men with great knowledge of betting, both of whom inspired enormous confidence at all levels of society: Jeeves and Beach. Large amounts would be staked on both sides to win this match. Some canny punters, with an eye on the adhesive qualities of the two number 11 batsmen, would back the draw.

Jeeves and Beach would then clean up, because the result would be a tie.

Red Hot Stuff – But Where's the Red Hot Staff?

Hilary and Robert Bruce Posed the Question

At the recent TWS Convention in Hollywood, the Chairman, Hilary Bruce, and her journalist husband Robert, presented a paper which had been prepared, with the experience of more than half a century in journalism, by Murray Hedgcock. Suitably adapted to be read rather than heard, it will be serialised in this and following issues of Wooster Sauce.



Robert and Hilary Bruce practising the niceties of Murray's Australian pronunciation

No student of the Press could resist that delightful quotation in *Service With a Smile* introducing us to Tilbury House, home of the Mammoth Publishing Company. This is, we learn

that busy hive where hordes of workers toil day and night, churning out reading matter for the masses. For Lord Tilbury's numerous daily and weekly papers are not, as is sometimes supposed, just Acts of God: they are produced deliberately.

It sums up the essence of the popular Press, whether yesterday's Yellow Press of New York, or today's Redtops of London. Even the most frivolous and rubbish papers are produced on purpose, to meet a popular demand. But note that valid reference – it takes 'hordes of workers' to produce even the rubbish. And this is utterly at variance with the general depiction of publications in Wodehouse.

Ever since discovering *Milady's Boudoir*, *Cosy Moments*, *Wee Tots* and specific Mammoth periodicals, I have puzzled over the astonishing productivity of their workers. None of these publications seems to have more than half a dozen

staff: many have just one, perhaps two. Granted, I've been a newspaper man for a mere 56 years – but I still can't fathom how they do it.

I cite a well-known, long-lived literary and political weekly of today – whose editor is a patron of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK). He was kind enough to inform me that his weekly has 34 full-time staff, of whom a dozen are editorial.

So how many staff do Wodehouse weeklies employ?

We start logically with *Milady's Boudoir*, introduced in *Right Ho, Jeeves* (1934). Costing sixpence each Thursday, it was owned and edited by Bertie's Aunt Dahlia. Contributors come and go, but Dahlia appears to handle production unaided. Tony Ring in the *Concordance* suggests she

seemed to practise her leader-writing skills by sending extensive and numerous telegrams to Bertie, and the ratio of their length to material content could perhaps explain the magazine's relative lack of success.

Whether *Milady's Boudoir* in fact has a leader column is nowhere proven.

News of Japanese Publications

Mike Iwanaga let members know in his article in March that the first recent translation of Wodehouse into Japanese, by himself and Dr Taichi Koyama, was about to be published. Well, it duly appeared during the spring and has already been reprinted three times, the publisher Bungeishunjuu having quickly sold more than 7,500 copies of *The Casebook of Jeeves*.

The book also received excellent press coverage, the general theme of which was to welcome the new translations, eg

‘At long last, we can enjoy one of the masters in contemporary English literature. . . . Japan seems belatedly to have entered the Wodehouse age.’

A series of very positive articles appeared in three of the four major daily papers (Asahi-Shinbun,

Mainichi-Sinbun and Yomiuri-Sinbun) and many other daily and periodic papers.

Some referred to the hidden influence Wodehouse had on foreign authors who have already made their marks in Japan (such as Isaac Asimov, Dorothy L Sayers and Douglas Adams).

The second of Mike’s translations, covering the Blandings short stories (plus *Life With Freddie* and *Uncle Fred Flits By*), will be published by the end of the year, with a Mulliner omnibus scheduled for 2006.

Ironically, another publisher, Kokushokankoukai, has also been active, with *Hiruinaki Jeeves (The Inimitable Jeeves)*, *Yosikita Jeeves (Very Good, Jeeves)* and *Soreike, Jeeves (Carry On, Jeeves)* all being published in 2005.

Red Hot Stuff – But Where’s the Red Hot Staff?, continued

Perhaps the weekly’s fate is sealed when Jeeves succeeded in persuading the Littles’ superb cook, Anatole, to move to the Travers household, so infuriating Rosie Little that she scrapped her agreement to write that promised ‘piece’ for Aunt Dahlia, *How I Keep the Love of My Husband-Baby*.

Contributors were clearly the lifeblood of *Milady’s Boudoir*: you feel it came out almost in spite of its owner-editor, who spent far more time bouncing Bertie, consoling Anatole, cosseting husband Tom Travers, and dealing with associated problems, than in actually editing. Incidentally, we met Aunt Dahlia in action as editor just once – when Bertie delivered his piece, *What the Well-Dressed Man is Wearing*, to her Covent Garden office.

In passing . . . the fact that we never saw more than a couple of the briefest quotations from that lost Rosie M Banks *Husband-Baby* epic is one of the three great losses from Wodehouse record. The others of course are the story of Sir Gregory Parsloe and the Prawns, and that definitive sartorial study by Bertie.

Next in staffing significance on the British side of the Atlantic is certainly *Wee Tots*, whose editor, Bingo Little, must rank as one of the more improbable journalists of the Wodehouse or any world, not least as his entire work experience appears to consist of brief spells as a tutor.

It was in *Bingo and the Peke Crisis*, a story written in 1937 which appeared in the 1940 collection *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*, that Mrs Bingo announced that

an old friend, H C Purkiss, will consider Bingo for the post of editor of his magazine for the nursery. Quite apart from the prospect of a regular salary, Bingo was bucked at being able to throw his weight about a bit. ‘He looked forward with a bright enthusiasm to getting fellow members of the Drones to send in contributions to the *Kiddies’ Korner*, and then bunging them back as not quite up to his standard.’

After inevitable misunderstandings, Bingo acquired the post. Purkiss warned: “The work is hard”, to which Bingo responded: “No doubt I should have capable assistants”. Informed: “The salary is not large”, Bingo came back: “I’ll tell you what. Make it larger.” And there it is, and significantly, Purkiss made no comment to that hopeful query about the presence of ‘capable assistants’ – hence, we have no proof that they exist.

Purkiss did play some part in the running of *Wee Tots*, being signed up by Mrs P (to his protestations) to judge a bonny babies contest as publicity for the periodical, and lushing up personable American writer Bella Mae Jobson, creator of Willie Walrus, Charlie Chipmunk and other fauna, in the hope of signing her for his magazine.

Later he again meddled, seeking to sign Kirk Rockaway, American author of juvenile fiction about Peter the Pup, Kootchy the Kitten and Hilda the Hen. We never learn whether Rockaway did in time write for *Wee Tots*, nor what happened to the publication in the long run.

The investigations will continue in the next issue.

Wodehouse, the New York Times and Ruddigore

David Mackie follows up an Arthur Robinson discovery

Member Arthur Robinson has noted that more American newspapers are making their historic editions available to researchers on the Internet, and drew attention to a letter from P G Wodehouse to the *New York Times* dated February 15, 1920, concerning a recent American production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*.

The paper's dramatic critic, Mr Williams, appears to have supported a decision to have omitted 'Robin's song' in the second act, arguing that

the purport of the song is that a baronet's title is hardly worth the labor of acquiring it. To a New York audience of today this is not a thesis of the most absorbing interest.

Amongst Wodehouse's counter-punches was the comment that:

Considering that *Ruddigore* is all about baronets, that at one point in the second act there are eight baronets on the stage at the same time, a song which touches on the drawbacks to a baronet's life can hardly be considered out of the picture.

He also went on to criticise the use of the name of the town of 'Yonkers' instead of 'Basingstoke', adding that if Gilbert were still alive and decided to substitute an American name for Basingstoke, Yonkers is the last he would have chosen. Wodehouse argued that Gilbert rather made a point of avoiding the obvious, and had deliberately selected 'Basingstoke' at a time when you only had to mention 'Brixton' on the London stage to bring the house down.

He concluded:

It seems odd that managements which revive Gilbert and Sullivan cannot persuade themselves that these pieces are sacred in the eyes of the only people who are going to go and see them. They are not producing a new musical comedy for the general public. They are reviving classics. They are in a position of trust, and they ought to realize it, the blighters.

Another of our members is David Mackie, who was for many years the chorus-master at D'Oyly Carte, and at the Editor's invitation he has provided the point of view of the producer.

From a writer's point of view, PGW would probably ask at the relevant place in the libretto – what does Mr Gilbert say about the problems of

being a baronet? However, many in the audience would merely say – this just holds up the action. Let's get on with it!

This latter viewpoint is one which authors themselves often take. Gilbert and Sullivan cut out many numbers from their operas to improve the dramatic flow. Maybe Wodehouse had himself had the experience of being forced to ditch good lyrics or dialogue to 'improve the flow'. If so, you can see why he would be sympathetic to Gilbert.

The song that PGW refers to ('Henceforth all the crimes that I find in *The Times* I've promised to perpetrate daily') is actually a rewrite of both words and music of a song which began 'For thirty-five years I've been sober and wary – My favourite tippie came straight from a dairy'. Gilbert in particular was unhappy with this version. The strange thing is that they didn't delete it altogether as they did with other numbers in other operas.

Ruddigore was always considered a relative failure after *The Mikado* and was never revived during Gilbert's and Sullivan's lifetimes. If it had been, perhaps the song would have been cut. But the timing of PGW's letter is interesting, for later in 1920, *Ruddigore* was revived in Glasgow, the first production in the UK since 1887. The musical changes, including the omission of this number, were the responsibility of Geoffrey Toye.

The subsequent batch of musical scores to be published incorporated these changes, and every generation since has known only the revised version. Although D'Oyly Carte's 1975 revival reinstated one or two of the original items, the Act II song so apparently beloved of Wodehouse was not included.

This Year's Christmas Present

Long-standing members will be aware that in your second and subsequent years of membership, you receive a special publication with the December distribution. The first seven such presents have been the seven *Kid Brady* stories, and most members will again receive the next in this series. Those who have been with us from the start will be sent the original ending to *Leave It To Psmith*, from the *Saturday Evening Post*, which is being published with the kind permission of the Wodehouse Trustees.

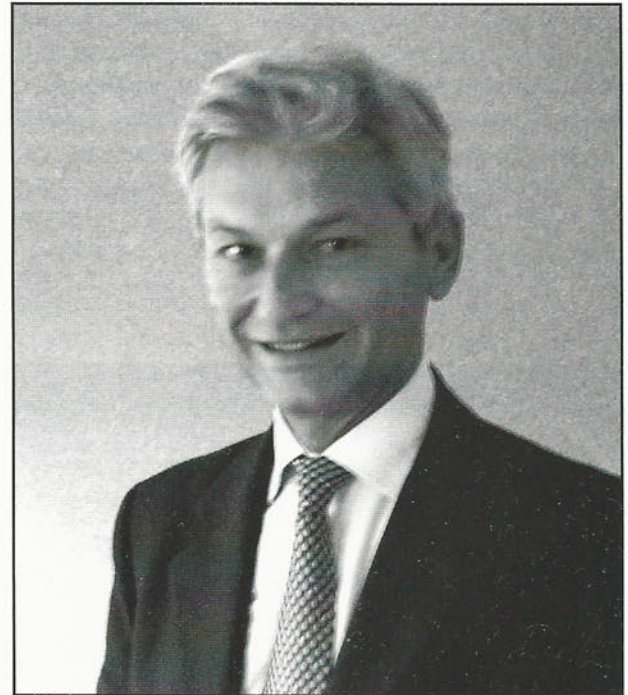
My First Wodehouse Experience

by Mike Griffith

I had wanted to join the Wodehouse society for ages but had supposed it was reserved for literary heavyweights. So I was delighted when a work colleague Magnus Ericson, surely the tallest member of the Society at six foot seven, put the form in front of me and then your Editor, himself a great cricket supporter, asked me to pen a few words on *My First Wodehouse Experience* – what an honour!

My association with PG goes back a long time since he was godfather to both me and my sister Pauline. This was a result of his friendship with my father via the Dulwich College connection, mainly sporting since PG came back to watch school matches in the thirties. My collection of books includes one where PG has written on the frontispiece the results of three Dulwich rugby matches all won by Dulwich by the smallest margin against Haileybury, Tonbridge and Sherborne in 1932. PG was always a great supporter of my father's sporting prowess, vowing that he would one day play, especially cricket, for England. Since he did indeed finish up keeping wicket for England in 1948 it says much for PG's analysis and understanding of sport.

The sporting cricket connection even spilled over to my name. I was christened 'Mike' (after Mike Jackson) – so in a sense my first Wodehouse experience, albeit unconscious, was my christening in 1943. The name is of course, special to me but causes immense trouble with legal documents which are always returned to me asking me to correct the papers to 'Michael'. I have the book *Mike*, only a second edition alas, but one of my most treasured possessions, with a signed picture from PG *To Mike* in the front.



My father had a long correspondence with PG spanning the years between 1932 and 1974, and I understand that the Editor would like to reproduce some of PG's observations from those letters in future issues of the journal.

I myself had my first letter from PG in May 1958, two wonderful typewritten pages mostly about sport and the dogs Bill and Bozo. It is a long letter about his trips to the Oval and only at the end a reference to his new book *Cocktail Time* – 'the best I have done for ages' and just in case at age 14, I was not up to speed with his characters, 'about Uncle Fred'.

What a first experience!

The Smile That Wins Favourite Nifties - 33

The noise of the cat stamping about in the passage outside caused him exquisite discomfort.

From *The Man Who Gave Up Smoking*, in *Mr Milliner Speaking* (1929)

Simon Hoggart wrote in his *Guardian* column on October 22 that this was one of his favourite PGW quotations, but someone had told him it wasn't. He acknowledged in the column on the 29th that the Society had traced it for him.

I SAY!

Favourite Exchanges - 36

The door opened. The office boy appeared. He was a lad whose voice was passing through the breaking-stage.

"Mr Hoke," he announced in a rumbling bass.

And then, in a penetrating treble like a squeaking slate-pencil:

"And Mr Bellamy."

From *Big Money*, 1931

Showing off at Newbury

by Elaine Ring

How fitting that the accolade of Champion of Champions of Berkshire pigs should be awarded at the Royal County of Berkshire Show in Newbury on September 18. At agricultural shows up and down the country champion Berkshires had been awarded rosettes proudly displaying the Society's sponsorship as part of the *Back the Berkshire* campaign, and now Hilary Bruce and several other members were present to see fair play in the contest for the ultimate prize of supreme champion.



Preparations in the pigs' marquee were intense. All, regardless of their age or sex, had been given a complete beauty treatment so that, after several shampoos, they were brought to a glossy shine with pig oil. At ten o'clock sharp, the parade began in front of at least two hundred spectators. Handlers wielding sticks and boards ushered the thirteen champions, ranging from youngsters of nine months to veterans of three or four years, grunting and squealing round the show ring.

The bowler-hatted and highly respected judge, Brian Eeles, has over thirty years experience of breeding and judging Berkshires, and had travelled down from County Durham to officiate. He told me he was looking for a pig "with good underlines, good conformation, a nice head, a straight back, and good on its feet". We, on the other hand, were looking at the direction in which their tails curled, and were delighted to find that, unexpectedly, two tails definitely twined to the right.

The judging was thorough, and we were not surprised to see Mr Eeles on his knees to check some of the finer points. It was a tense twenty-five minutes before his decision was announced: the Champion of Champions is the magnificent Kilcot Royal Lustre 11 (owned by Sharon Barnfield and known at home as Dusty). She is a three-year-old due to farrow at the end of October with her fifth litter. Dusty previously won the title in 2003 and was reserve (ie, runner-up) in 2004. A yearling sow, Jobes Major Royal Lustre 31, also due to farrow in late October, though with only her first litter and shown by Christine Coe (see page 13) and Kevin Major, was proclaimed Reserve Champion. (The

biological state of each of these sows would have enhanced their chances of winning the Fat Pigs class at the show, had there been one!)

So out stepped Hilary Bruce, resplendent in jaunty hat, stylish red shoes and her element, to present the rosettes and winners sash. The Jo Clarke Memorial Berkshire Cup, given in memory of a renowned breeder and judge, was handed to Sharon Barnfield by Jo's daughter, Sarah Martin. Dusty had to be bribed with a juicy Granny Smith to ensure a photographic record.



Hilary Bruce rather hidden as Sarah Martin presents the Jo Clarke Cup to Sharon Barnfield, with Dusty eying up a Granny Smith

After only a short break, it was back into the ring for Dusty in the Inter-Breed Championship, in which she competed against champions from the Gloucester Old Spot, Large Black, Large White, Lop, Middle White, Saddleback and Tamworth breeds, with an additional challenge from the Champion Boar, another Saddleback. Sharon was pessimistic about Dusty's chances ("I'll be lucky to get her out of the pen") and Dusty did indeed make several attempts to return to bed.

Perhaps the judge really appreciated a pig with a distinct personality, for after awarding the Reserve position to the Large Black, to our great delight dear old Dusty was crowned overall Champion. This time a full dinner pail was required before Dusty agreed to be photographed.

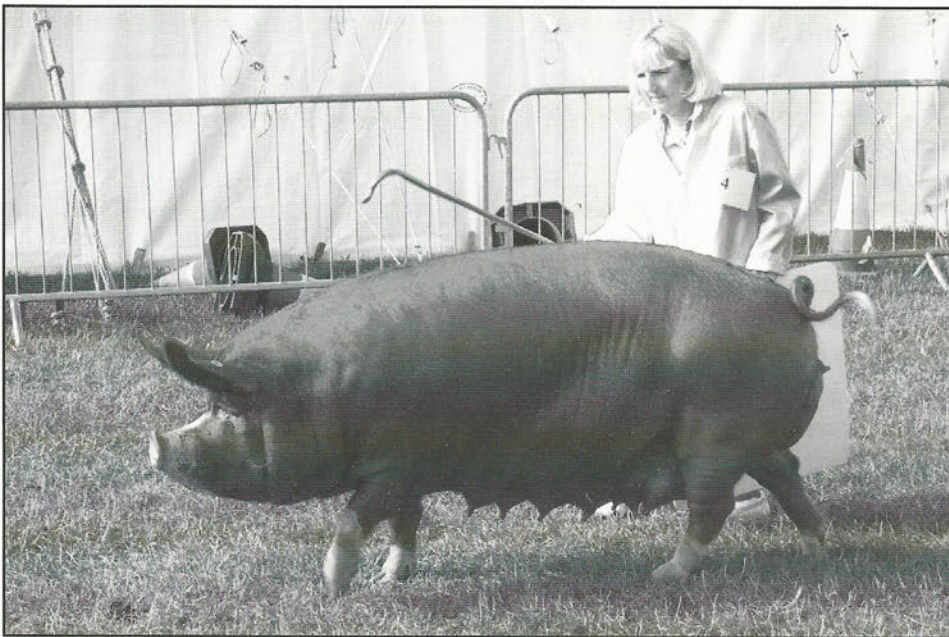
Lord Emsworth would have approved.

The 2005 AGM and Savage Club Talk

Christine Hewitt reports

Our AGM was held on October 11 at the beginning of the social evening at The Savage Club. Happily the Society is solvent and has maintained its membership total of just over 1,000. New members have joined at a steady rate, replacing those who left for various reasons. Three-quarters of new applications result from inspection of our excellent website so in the near future we will have a Paypal account to enable electronic payments to be made directly from our recruitment page.

From Hilary Bruce's major coup in negotiating coverage in *The Times* and on BBC Radio 4's *Today* to the delightful day at the Berkshire Agricultural Show in September (see opposite) we have all enjoyed learning about the Berkshire Pig this year. We were therefore delighted to have breeder Christine Coe talk to us after the AGM. As Reserve Champion of Champions one of Christine's pigs had been presented with a rosette sponsored by us at the Berkshire Show. The difficulty in showing pigs at



Christine Coe urging the Reserve Champion round the ring. Several members regretted her absence from the Savage Club evening.

The Savage Club (there is a revolving door at the main entrance) was overcome by Norman Murphy's well-observed portrayal modelling the rosette. Christine supplied full and complete information on the origin and history of the noble breed, explaining that their genetic input improves all other breeds in Britain. In character Berkshires are sophisticated and have a playful sense of fun which can include using the bumper of the bank manager's classic Jaguar as a scratching post.

In these health-conscious days Berkshires no longer consume 57,800 calories per day but dine on 5kg of nutritious compound feed. Berkshires are registered as 'vulnerable' on the rare breeds scale. Christine and her

husband manage 10% of the UK population on their one farm in Warwickshire. It is thanks to them and some other hard-working breeders that the delightful animals are still with us.

Wooster Sauce remains essential reading for Wodehouse fans and scholars. Members were asked to submit their *First Wodehouse Experience* or contact Tony Ring with ideas for any other articles or features; also ideas for future issues of *By The Way* would be welcome. Even more welcome would be the stepping forward of prospective future Editors to take over when Tony stands down from the post next year.

By the end of which the Society will have been in existence for 10 years. The Committee will be taking time to reflect on change, the future, whether to take steps to increase membership (which has been relatively static for the last two or three years), and the nature of any celebration.

The Committee and Officers were all re-adopted unopposed.

A Distinctive Flavour *reports Peter Walthall*

Following the distribution of the *Back the Berkshire* supplement, Peter Walthall noticed that one of the named retailers of Berkshire pork was a long-standing friend. It was with him the work of a moment to arrange a visit, and subsequently to enjoy a roast shoulder of pork.

'We found it succulent, tender, with a distinctive, almost grainy, flavour, and altogether delicious', wrote Peter.

The Great Wodehouse Material Search

by Bill Cleghorn

The Internet is a source of so much information it is a challenge to develop the best way to search. A Google search is excellent if you can define your problem. Lack of definition, however, generates more answers than are reasonable to deal with. This article will cover the use of periodicals which have released complete archives of their issues in a manageable manner. Many are in the process of development and should be watched. I will discuss one that is complete.

Over the years, I have met many Wodehouse admirers with different interests. There are the browsers and sluicers who love nothing better than to discuss Wodehouse's various offerings, each always ready to tell you why a particular selection is so special. There are the avid readers who have many copies of his work, but have not necessarily made any attempt to collect them all. At the other end of the spectrum, there are the dedicated collectors. This category ranges from collectors of specific material, such as magazines only, to purists requiring only first editions with dust jackets. Finally, there is the enthusiastic optimist who goes for it all. This, of course, is an impossible task but an optimist is ever hopeful. When I tell you that my Wodehouse database stands at over 1,700 entries, you may guess where I stand in this respect.

Periodicals have added much to my collection. For some time, I was only aware of eight issues of *Time Magazine* containing Wodehouse articles and had located these copies. In December 2004, *Time Magazine* archives became available, covering events going back to the first issue in 1923. My number of Wodehouse references expanded to 160. These archives have proven to be helpful in researching people and events, related to Wodehouse, written at the time the events occurred. A significant feature about these archives is that the entire content of each issue is available, including the current week.

Googling 'time magazine archives' gives you access. The search options are presented for articles or covers. You can also narrow your search within date ranges, in category sequence, or by oldest or newest date. In addition, there is an advanced search feature, which allows a finer search breakdown by selection of any of 30 sections. Articles can be printed or sent by email. A phone number is provided for possible purchase of back issues.

Some articles are completely about Wodehouse. For example, the December 30, 1940 issue carried an



article, *Prisoner Wodehouse*, about his capture and imprisonment by the Germans. This is actually a book review of *Quick Service*, but also includes background on his experiences as a prisoner of war. It is interesting that Wodehouse challenged the accuracy of this material 24 years later. There are many other articles concerning the various problems he had until the end of the war.

Other articles include name reference only and apply to other subjects but are still of great interest. An example of this is in the January 2, 1950 issue, entitled *Death of a Tradition*. The article is about the history of *Strand Magazine*. This mentions Wodehouse once, in passing, as one of many *Strand Magazine* contributors. In fact, his work appeared 218 times.

The article opens in 1890, with Arthur Conan Doyle submitting his first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Scandal in Bohemia*, and follows the magazine's progress for the next 60 years until it was finally closed in March 1950. This type of article is of interest since it deals with one of Wodehouse's publishers, George Newnes Ltd, and provides background about one of the magazines with which Wodehouse was so closely associated.

The ‘M’ in Iain M Banks

Harshawardhan Nimkhedkhar spotted a report in August as to why the M in author Iain M Banks’s name was dropped from some of his books.

The author writes mainstream novels as Iain Banks and science fiction as Iain M Banks. He explained that his first editor thought he should remove the M because it might get confused with a character in the P G Wodehouse books.

He said: “It was originally there in a manuscript of my first book, *The Wasp Factory*, but my editor – who was a Wodehouse fan – said it might have a bad connotation because there is a very bad romantic novelist in a Wodehouse book called Rosie M Banks. I think he just thought it was fussy so we took it out. But I got all this grief from the male members of my family because the M stands for Menzies. They thought it was terrible that I took it out, and were saying ‘Are you ashamed to be Scottish?’ So I thought I’d put it back in.”

He added: “Having persuaded my then publishers that I should do science fiction, which I always wanted to do, I said let’s put the M back in because it looks more science fictiony.”

The Snake Has All The Lines

Californian member Neil Midkiff may not be quite as widely read as Wodehouse, but he comes pretty close. Early in the first chapter of *The Girl in Blue*, Wodehouse wrote:

The thought may have occurred to Homer [Pyle] that the shiny young man, like Jean Kerr’s snake, was having all the lines . . .

The source is a book of essays by Jean Kerr, entitled *The Snake Has All The Lines*, published in 1960, ten years before Wodehouse’s novel. It is perhaps one of the more obscure literary references in his works.

Neil points out that Jean Kerr (married to New York drama critic, Walter) was a well-known playwright and humorist, whose previous book *Please Don’t Eat The Daisies* was made into a 1960 film starring Doris Day and David Niven.

He also suggests that Wodehouse would have enjoyed the conversation which provided the title. The Kerrs’ son Christopher came home one day to announce that he was to play Adam in a school play. As his parents, well used to the frictions within the theatre at all levels, enthused about his selection for the lead part, he pulled a face and said “But the snake has all the lines”.

The Great Wodehouse Material Search, continued

There are, of course, many reviews of books and plays. His earliest book review was in June 11, 1923 covering *Mostly Sally*. It received faint praise as not being quite up to his usual standard.

Finally, there are many articles where his name is used as a secondary reference. Expressions such as ‘an ax-grinding P G Wodehouse’, ‘a slightly astringent edition of a Wodehouse hero’, ‘reads like an outburst of one of P G Wodehouse’s apoplectic baronets’ are found in abundance.

Miscellaneous articles are scattered throughout. For a good chuckle, read the entry of May 21, 1926 – *Clubbable*. The February 19, 1961 issue tells us Wodehouse books were banned in Hungary, due to the takeover by the Russians.

When you think of various individuals associated with Wodehouse, you might wander off to see what material there is for Guy Bolton, Jerome Kern, Evelyn Waugh, or Malcolm Muggeridge. Be warned: one thought leads to another and much time can be spent on these side searches for people and events.

I have found no other on-line archives quite as flexible and complete as those in *Time*. *Newsweek* held promise, but it charges an outrageous amount

for the full detail, even if you are a subscriber. Other magazines either had no search feature or a limited number of years archived.

I searched the *Time* archive for the late Herbert Warren Wind, author of *The World of P G Wodehouse*, and found a reasonable amount of information. He was a golf writer for the *New Yorker* for many years. In looking for Wind material in the *New Yorker*, I found a limited online archive. In the fall of 2005, the *New Yorker* published its total archive on 8 DVDs and with a 123-page book, covering the first 80 years of publication, ending in February 2005. An annual update service will be available. Random House is publishing it and it is offered at \$100 but with no Internet access.

Internet references are seemingly endless. The advantage of periodical archives going back 80 to 100 years is that you are able to define and isolate your interest. It should be useful to keep current on your favourite periodicals as to the status of their archive program.

A flexible search capability really helps as you browse and possibly sluice your way to a happy ending. So let your search begin!

More on Wodehouse Names

by Roy Morgan

When Wodehouse lived in Emsworth, Hampshire, from 1904 to 1914, the house he occupied was *Threepwood* in Record Road (see article in *WS*, June 2005). His fertile imagination mentally stored at least 26 local place names for future use; notably ten went into *Something Fresh*, which was published in 1915. These included *Emsworth* itself, *Freddie Threepwood*, *Felix Clovelly* and *Lord Mount Anville*. The names of two new houses built directly opposite to him in Record Road were ‘Clovelly’ and ‘Mount Anville’.

Clovelly was then, as it is now, a tiny village on the north Devon coast. Charles Kingsley returned to the village where he had been brought up when his father was rector, and he wrote *The Water Babies* and *Westward Ho!* from his experiences there. It became a popular tourist venue and place for holidays, which led to its use, as a fond memory, for many house names.

Mount Anville was not so obvious. My first move was to find out who lived there when the house was named. A Directory of 1909 listed Miss Letitia Singer, and an inspection of the property deeds showed that she changed the name from ‘Glendene’ when she moved in. The 1901 Census revealed that she was previously living with her parents in adjoining Havant Road. Her father was a retired

Vice-Admiral (not uncommon in Emsworth, which is only eight miles from Portsmouth) having been born in Dublin in about 1830. A call to a very helpful Librarian in the National Library of Ireland, Sandra McDermott, led to her sending material showing Mount Anville was a suburb in the south-west of Dublin and that many years previously a Rev. Dr Singer had lived there.

Why did Wodehouse latch on to ‘Mount Anville’? A quotation from *Something Fresh* probably answers this point. A discussion was being held below stairs in the Steward’s Room, headed by Beach, the butler. Beach commented that there was a modern tendency of the Lower Classes to get Above Themselves. “You recollect the Havant Case, and when young Lord Mount Anville was sued.”

Wodehouse obviously thought that ‘Lord Mount Anville’ sounded just right in this context. So an innocent Dublin suburb served its purpose. The suburb was transposed to a house, and the house transformed into a character.

All this leads us to speculate as to whether, if Wodehouse had gone to live in Bognor instead of Emsworth, our hero would have been Lord Bognor? And if the house had been called ‘Dunroamin’, would that, rather than ‘Threepwood’, have become the family name?

Good Quality Wodehouse Bookmark

On several occasions recently the ebay auction website has included an offer of a bookmark featuring illustrations of Wodehouse and his books. As they were available on a ‘buy-it-now’ basis for \$8.00 it seemed clear that the vendor was a bookmark maker with a steady supply, and that proved to be the case.

The two sides of the clear laminated bookmark are shown alongside. It is one of the better Wodehouse bookmarks I have seen, and would certainly make a suitable stocking-filler. It comes with a red or a green tassel.

The vendor has agreed to offer the bookmarks to members for \$ 6.00 each, post-free.

(His list encompasses more than 200 subjects, the substantial majority of which are writers.)



Report of a Meeting of the Dutch Society

by the Editor

The meeting of the Dutch Wodehouse Society, which took place at Mulliner's Wijnlokaal on Wodehouse's 124th birthday, had its usual mixture of informal discussion, debate about matters of pressing (or not-so-pressing) urgency, ceremony and a book auction.

The most moving part concerned a tribute to the late Joop Doderer, one of the Society's oldest honorary members, whose recent death had been unexpected, even though he was in his eighties. Joop was a man with fascinating anecdotes about his experiences in the wartime Resistance, and he subsequently became one of the most celebrated Dutch actors of his generation.

Your Editor was then granted Honorary Membership of the Society, and sang a little for his supper with a summary of developments of Wodehousean interest worldwide, many of which are reported elsewhere in this edition of *Wooster Sauce*. After describing the *Back the Berkshire* campaign, on behalf of the UK Society he presented Peter Nieuwenhuizen, the

Chairman, with a framed copy of the photograph of Chris Coe and her Berkshire sow at the Newbury Show which is on page 13.

The auction was of books kindly donated to the Society by the will of a recently deceased Dutch Wodehouse fan, Mr J H Hovy, who left his extensive collection to be sold to members for the benefit of Society funds. The generosity of members during the subsequent bidding made Mr Hovy's gesture all the more profitable for the Society.

Finally, the Dutch Society rewards those who attend by publishing, usually free, an 'attendance premium' for those present. This generally consists of an A4 essay with illustrations on an aspect of PGW's Dutch output, often prepared by the Chairman. On this occasion, members were given the chance to purchase copies of a new translation of *Jeeves and the Yuletide Spirit*, undertaken by Leonard Beuger. This had been published in a limited edition of just 40 copies so they were eagerly sought after.

Look at the Russian Wodehouse Society Website

There are thousands of links to 'Wodehouse' on the Internet. Apart from our own excellent website, we recommend a look at the considerable information which can be gleaned from the long-established site of the Russian Wodehouse Society: <http://wodehouse.ru>.

This is a more ambitious site even than our own, and brings together a plethora of information with a very high accuracy rating. From the main page, the first link is biographical, using material created for the exhibition at Guildford Museum in 1999. This is followed by more than 70 photos of Wodehouse in thumbnail format, and a bibliography.

The bibliography is wide-ranging but somewhat out of date, being based on a version of David Jason's book which does not take account of subsequent publications such as *The Luck Stone*, *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere* and *A Prince for Hire*. Similarly, the list of plays and musicals takes no account of subsequent researches. One excellent feature is a flag to show which titles have been translated into Russian, and we find that an extraordinary 61 books are available.

The site has a link to a filmography of Wodehouse which mentions more than 50 items, including TV material, and it will be interesting to see whether

Brian Taves includes titles which do not appear in this list when his book appears next year. Again, it seems to be not quite comprehensive: no mention is made, for example, of the forgotten BBC TV series of Ukridge stories featuring Anton Rodgers.

There is another link to an extensive quotations section, with over 2,000 cited, in both English and Russian. One is spoilt for choice in seeking to select just one or two nifties from this extensive offering of good material. Links on the page to translations in Ukrainian, French, German and Arabic, though, seem to be projects for the future.

The site then lists texts which are available to be read on computer screens, either through the Gutenberg project or otherwise. Many of these remain in copyright in Europe and elsewhere, and the site warns viewers to check the position as it may be illegal to download the texts. It makes a similar point in relation to a list of almost 100 recent newspaper articles about Wodehouse and his work.

The site concludes with numerous links to other websites and an analysis of the four Granada TV series from the early 1990s. It is a superb source of information, responsibly created and worthy of recommendation by *The Sunday Times* earlier in the year.

Wells Women Welcome Wodehouse

by Pip McCredie

The Chairman suggested that a few words might be in order, to explain how the Editor of Wooster Sauce found himself addressing a ladies' book club meeting in the historic town of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

In an earlier incarnation, dating back to 1979, your Editor was appointed to a senior post in industry, and first met his staff, including his secretary, a couple of months before starting. When he arrived for his first day, he found that the author of this article, then Executive Assistant to one of the Company's senior directors, had pinched that secretary to act as her own assistant, and what was almost worse, also swiped her IBM golfball typewriter, a jewel in the crown. A few years later Pip bought the Editor's family pram for the first of her own two children, and sporadic contact has been maintained ever since.

Let Pip continue the story . . .

When Tony Ring's family were planning a late summer break in Kent, to include visits to castles, stately homes and National Trust houses, he sought my advice on where to stay and places of interest to visit.

Naturally, I felt obliged to exploit his good nature once again. Whilst waxing lyrically on the virtues of such historical and visual delights as Sissinghurst, Hever Castle, Chartwell, Ightham Mote, and similar edifices, I enquired whether he might find an evening to address the ladies of the book club to which I belong on his favourite author.

When he arrived, he found a dozen well-read and receptive ladies. We had been meeting as a book club for over ten years and, during that time had read not far short of 100 set books (and innumerable others). Our remit as a book club is to read and discuss 20th and 21st century novels and this we do approximately every six weeks.

Tony's advice had been to read *Right Ho, Jeeves* or *The Code of the Woosters* and, perhaps, try a Blandings and/or Psmith novel to get a flavour of the different characters and settings that remain so distinctively 'Wodehouse'. His advice was taken and several of the members also dipped into Robert McCrum's 2004 biography, *Wodehouse: A Life*. Most of us are in our forties and fifties and some had read some Wodehouse ('taken from my parents' bookshelves') when they were in their teens and twenties. All of us had seen at least one of the episodes of *Jeeves and Wooster* when these had appeared on the television a decade or more ago.

I, who had lured Tony to share his love of Wodehouse with my friends, felt decidedly nervous a few days before 'D-Day' (or 'W-Week'). To be honest, I had not really been a fan of the great man. From the little of his writing I had read, I had found his humour

childish and even irritating. I desperately hoped that some, at least, of our members would have some appreciation of his genius. I started reading *Right Ho, Jeeves* and found, to my astonishment, that I was enjoying the book so much that I really couldn't wait to see which of the characters would re-appear in *The Code of the Woosters*. I also found enormous admiration for the sympathetic and interesting way in which Robert McCrum has presented Wodehouse in his excellent biography, and this is all the more enticing for having been written so recently.

I was not quite so surprised to find, then, that I was not alone in my new-found appreciation of this funny and clever man and several of the others, like myself, had become converts since reading these books for our meeting. Others had already been hooked during their younger days.

Tony brought with him some original material, with annotations and notes by PGW himself. The girls arrived to the sound of a CD playing songs with Wodehouse's own lyrics, and we saw a short film of someone impersonating Bertie's famous crossing of the length of the swimming pool, but without having to fall into the water.

We are all immensely grateful to Tony. It was a very special and exciting occasion for us. It seems as though a great deal of time and effort goes into not only keeping this talented man's memory alive, but also into discovering new and exciting information about him. Good luck from us all!

Death of Frederick Davidson

Frederick Davidson was the professional name of David Case, a British-born actor living in the USA, who died in October at the age of 73.

He recorded more than 700 audio-books in his career, including more than thirty unabridged Wodehouses for Blackstone Audiobooks, which might be described as the American equivalent of Chivers.

As an Englishman-in-exile, so to speak, he naturally had no difficulty projecting English characters, although the occasional injection of an American pronunciation into, for example, the voice of a Drone, made one sit up. He prided himself on recording without rehearsal, which either kept his performance fresh, or caused some terrible blunders, depending on your point of view!

By Jeeves in East Berkshire

Reported by the Editor

The East Berkshire Operatic Society is based in the Pinewood Leisure Centre, a rather remarkable group of buildings also housing a boxing club, a gymnastics club, a football club, a model railway, a monster scalextric track and other activities. They have only recently obtained a licence for theatrical productions at that site, and their first musical at this location was *By Jeeves*, which they staged from October 4 to October 8.

Julian Hirst, the Director, has long been a Wodehouse fan and felt that this show would be ideal for its 80-seat theatre and its largely young and enthusiastic players. Coupling them with the experience of Adrian McDougall as Bertie Wooster and Ian Crump as Jeeves (and Julian himself, unexpectedly, as Sir Watkyn Bassett when the original selection had to pull out through ill-health) resulted in a splendid show which demonstrated just how versatile *By Jeeves* actually is. I have seen it in the round at Scarborough, at West End theatres, on Broadway, in semi-professional performances at modest-sized theatres, and now at a tiny amateur venue.

The EBOS version held up remarkably well, the improvisation of some of the business making use of the seating area as well as the stage. The *pièce de résistance* of the props, the ladder into the upstairs room which made an appearance towards the end of the second act, was more experienced than four of the cast, whom I understand were playing their first roles as principals, as it had previously been used for the production in Portsmouth during the summer. Generally, the cast clearly enjoyed what they were doing, which is a common reaction from those expressing Wodehouse-based material on stage.

Now that RUG have licensed the show for amateur theatre groups, it may be assumed that there will be several productions each year. Through our website and *Wooster Sauce* we will try to let members know where and when it will be produced. The next one of which we are aware is at St Peter's Civic Hall, Carmarthen, from April 20 to 22, 2006, when it will be presented by the *Just Good Friends* Company. Tickets will be available through Mrs S Morris, by telephone on 01267 237386, or by e-mail to sian.morris@fiscali.co.uk.

Blandings at the Cheltenham Festival

Stephen Bowden was an interested member of the audience at the debate to decide which of four books would have won the Booker Prize for 1935 had there been one. Erica Wagner spoke for *Murder Must Advertise*, by Dorothy L Sayers; Jim Naughtie for *Mr Norris Changes Trains* by Christopher Isherwood; Alexander McCall Smith for *Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway; and Simon Hoggard for *Blandings Castle*. The audience voted for their preferred choices as the discussion continued.

After the initial presentations *Blandings Castle* was in first place and *Murder Must Advertise* was cruelly rejected as an example of genre fiction. James Naughtie then put the boot into Hemingway by comparing to his disadvantage the final paragraphs of *A Farewell to Arms* and *Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey*, which had the audience falling about with laughter. Hemingway left, and Wodehouse had a comfortable lead as the final round began.

There were feeble, if true, protestations that *Blandings Castle* was a collection of short stories and not a novel, and a minority of culture vultures were heard muttering that it wasn't challenging, but neither argument could prevent a resounding success for *Blandings Castle* with 75% of the vote.

Charterhouse Welcomes Robert McCrum

Robert McCrum has toured the country (and elsewhere) promoting his biography of Wodehouse, and on October 12 he presented the Twentieth Sir Robert Birley Memorial Lecture at Charterhouse. He followed a most distinguished list of predecessors who included William Rees-Mogg, Lord Prior, Max Hastings, Lord Hurd and Simon Jenkins.

The lecture was given in the impressive Ben Travers Theatre, with some thirty or forty guests joining the Upper Sixth form, for whom attendance is subject to a three-line whip. Sir Robert was a noted fan of Wodehouse, as is the present Headmaster of Charterhouse, John Witheridge. Robert McCrum had crafted a new talk, entitled *Why Wodehouse?* for the predominantly student audience, and it is hoped that his enthusiasm and endorsement of Wodehouse's writing will inspire at least a few of them to try his books.

Speaking afterwards to some of the teaching staff, it was refreshing to find Wodehouse appreciated in the English department, even though he does not appear on the National Curriculum. Matthew Armstrong, Head of English, told me that all the 15-16 year olds have read at least one Wodehouse, and that the reading assignment for 13-14 year olds over the October half-term is *Right Ho, Jeeves*.

An Acrostic for Christmas

June Arnold has combined her two passions (Wodehouse and crosswords) to produce an acrostic for members to try during the long winter hours. There are no prizes at stake, but please let the Editor know whether you would like to see more puzzles in *Wooster Sauce*. In the file, awaiting your response, is another acrostic, a wordsearch and the first Wodehousean Su Doku.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1																				
2																				
3																				
4																				
5																				
6																				
7																				
8																				
9																				
10																				

The following clues for the words in each line of the top grid will enable you to complete it. Transfer the relevant letters to the lower grid to find a description of the PGW character named in column A.

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Son of Lord Emsworth | A summer meal | A card game |
| 2 <i>The XXXXXXXX Jeeves</i> | A herb | |
| 3 <i>Money for XXXXXXXX</i> | Rigid | A sudden blaze of light |
| 4 Composer who collaborated with PGW | <i>Love Among the XXXXXXXX</i> | Collect |
| 5 <i>The Little XXXXXX</i> | <i>Indiscretions of XXXXXXXX</i> | A song for two |
| 6 The member of the golf club who told stories | Secure | Exhibition |
| 7 XXXXXX Glossop was a friend of Bertie | As was XXXXXXXX Cheesewright | Covered by waves |
| 8 XXXXXX Plimsoll, American friend of Bertie | Repentant | |
| 9 Sister of Lord Emsworth | Footwear | |
| 10 XXXXXX Brackett, the love of Angus McTavish | Stretch of water | Melody |

1S	2M	2A	3I		5C	7B	9N	6O	10H	1G		3C	4G	8M	9K		1O	3Q	7G	
9B		6H	2C	1I	4S		1A	5H	4F	5Q	9C		7C	8H	6B		9J	3L		
2D	7I	3A	10A		7P	1P	6A		9P	8F		1B	9F	1J	4R	3D	2E	5A	10E	
2O	10N	4L	3R		2J	6J	6F	10C	8A	4K		3S	7Q	5O						
2H	10Q	4C	9I	2P	8N		8J	3K	9H	1R	4B	1K	3O		3E	6M		2F	9O	10F
4I	7L	5B	3F	7A	5I	2N		1L	2B	1D		6C	6L	10B	8E	5F	1C	1M		
7S	1F	8L	10L	5E	9A	4O		10J	4D	10P	5L	9G	6D	3P	7E		2L	6Q		
3J	6P	10M		8I	6K	5P	1E	9D		3B	3M		7M	9L	6R	7H	4M			
4A	5M	9Q	7D	1Q	10D	5D		7K	5K	4P		10G	4H	5R	8D	7J	10S			
5J	9E	2G	8C	7R		8B	10I		6I		3G	2I	8K	6E	9R		4Q	7O	10R	4J

The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

The Christmas Wodehouse

This time last year, I looked at the Jeeves and Wooster stories with a Christmas setting. This year, I will examine Wodehouse's non-fiction articles about Christmas.

Wodehouse's first published article on Christmas was a brief piece in *The Captain* in December 1903 (McIlvaine D77.11) entitled *My Ideal Christmas*. This is reproduced below and has never previously been republished.

Wodehouse's next festive article was over a decade later in the US magazine *Vanity Fair* in December 1915 (D67.18). This was published under the pseudonym of P Brooke-Haven and its full title was *Christmas Presents: A Cheery Timely Article, Which We Tried in Vain to Stop the Author From Writing*. The article casts a humorous eye over the annual exchange of gifts ('the first rule in buying Christmas presents is to select something shiny . . . his ideal should be to select something which should be capable of being passed on to somebody else . . . next Christmas'). Long-standing members of the Society may recall that this article was republished in *Wooster Sauce* in December 2001 (under the shorter title of *Christmas Presents*), which in turn led to its appearance in *The Times* (T2 section, pp1-3) on 17 December 2001 (under the new title of *How to choose a Christmas present*).

As Wodehouse moved into his *floruit* period as a novelist, his journalistic essays became much fewer, until he started to write regularly for *Punch* again after the Second World War.

The issue of *Punch* for 23 December 1953 saw Wodehouse writing on *Christmas in New York* (D124.100), pondering not only the subject of Christmas presents ('New York at Christmas becomes a seething maelstrom of people buying each other scarves and ties'), but also department-store Santa Clauses, and Yule logs ('the ceremony of bringing in the Yule log is one that – for reasons of space – has almost completely fallen into desuetude in New York'). Once again, this article was republished in *Wooster Sauce*, in December 1999.

Not surprisingly, Wodehouse recycled the *Punch* article in *Over Seventy* in 1957 (A79b), where it reappeared in the chapter entitled *Christmas and Divorce*. However, he did add a few words on the subject of Tibetan yaks' tails, which allegedly 'are used for making beards for department-store Santa Clauses . . . I find a picture rising before my eyes of some unfortunate yak wandering about Tibet without a tail'.

Wodehouse's final words on the subject of Christmas were contained in an article entitled *Reflections Amid the Christmas Wrappings* in the US magazine *Family Weekly* for 25 December 1966, an appearance not listed in either *McIlvaine* or the *McIlvaine Addendum*. The article contains a small picture of Wodehouse. Perhaps inspired by his own words on selecting Christmas presents which were capable of being passed on, for this article Wodehouse recycled much of his *Vanity Fair* article from 1915.

MY IDEAL CHRISTMAS

The Art Editor of The Captain had had the idea of inviting regular contributors to describe their Ideal Christmas. While not every contributor complied, replies were received from, amongst others, Felix Leigh, Frederick Swainson, H J A Hervey, A E Johnson, Arthur Stanley, Charles W Hastings and Edward J Nankivell.

Wodehouse's contribution was presented first, and read as follows:

I don't think I can improve on Dickens. The Christmas in *Pickwick* has always struck me as the sort of Christmas I should most like to spend, bar falling into the pond, which I could dispense with. My ideal Christmas would be passed solely with people I knew intimately; people who could be relied on to ask me neither to play round games nor to sing. Round games poison any day of festivity. There is one in particular, called *Are you there, Moriarty?* . . . but the subject is painful. Also there must be snow (not too much) and a sharp frost. Finally, I should prefer to spend Christmas in the country. Old manor house – wassail – flickering fire-light – ghost stories, and that sort of thing. That's me.

Recent Press Comment

Washington Post, August 10 (from Kris Fowler)

In the book *Waxwings* by Jonathan Raban, the main character, a professor of English, says that Joseph K of Kafka's *The Trial* is first cousin to Bertie Wooster, and points out that Kafka and Wodehouse are the darkest and lightest authors in modern literature. Michael Dirda suggested that Joseph K seemed marginally smarter than Bertie, 'although neither ever seems to quite understand what's happening around them'.

Times, September 1

Reiewing the new doggy TV programme on Channel 4, Ian Johns recalled a predecessor trainer, Barbara Woodhouse and that, borrowing from her near namesake, she was the kind of woman 'who could open an oyster at twelve paces with a single glance'.

BBC online, September 7

Reporting the nomination of John Roberts as the new US Chief Justice, a long article reviewed his record, concluding that he had a quick intelligence and modesty, and a passion for words. And also a passion for Wodehouse. 'Anyone who appreciates the Empress of Blandings Castle – the story of a pig, you will understand – might turn out to be not the villain of the piece but a prince after all.'

Times, September 10

The Literary Quiz required readers to complete the quotation 'xxx formed on the butler's upper slopes'.

Times, September 14

Hugo Rifkind reported that, according to Dee Simpson, her husband John is a devotee of PGW books, and would make a perfect foil to Bertie Wooster. 'He always has one in his bag and reads it aloud to me. He'd make the perfect Jeeves.'

Christianity Today, September 16

C Stephen Evans wrote a long article entitled *The Life and Art of P G Wodehouse* in reviewing McCrum's biography.

East Bay Business Times (Pleasanton, California), September 21 (from Murray Hedgcock)

One of many reports of the plan announced by the owner of the Ask Jeeves internet search engine to drop Jeeves from its marketing and PR activity.

First Things, October (from Daniel Love Glazer and David Landman)

Included an extremely long and well-written article by the journal's editor, Joseph Bottum, entitled *God and Bertie Wooster*.

Washington Post, September 26 (from Tom Kreitzberg)

At an evening reading to 500 people, Salman Rushdie cited his earliest literary influences as Agatha Christie and Wodehouse.

Times, September 30

After the 82-year-old Walter Wolfgang had been dragged from his Labour Party Conference seat by a couple of heavies, his experience was compared by Jane Shilling to a gathering of Roderick Spode and the Black Shorts.

Quote . . . Unquote, October (various)

Several broadcasts in the recent series of *Quote . . . Unquote* had matters of Wodehousean interest. In the first, Patron Martin Jarvis was asked the source of the expression *Love Among the Chickens*, and in the second Nigel Rees sought the link between PGW, Jerome Kern, Jack Good and Cliff Richard. The answer to the latter was *Oh, Boy!*, the musical comedy written by Bolton, Wodehouse and Kern, and later a TV show directed by Jack Good on which Cliff Richard appeared. A couple of editions later, Christopher Matthews provided two Wodehouse quotations.

Sunday Times, October 2

In the *Bookwise Quiz*, the first question asked the name of the cinema at which *The Vicissitudes of Vera* was showing [The Bijou Dream] and in which book it appeared [A Slice of Life, in *Meet Mr Mulliner*].

Boston Globe, October 3

A write-up on Supreme Court member Justice Stephen Breyer reminded readers of his interest in Proust, the Red Sox and Wodehouse.

Daily Telegraph, October 4 (from Elin Woodger)

Noting that Michelle Wie, a 15-year-old Korean-American golfer, was turning professional, Ben Fenton recalled two of PGW's adages: 'Golf, like measles, should be caught young'; and 'Sudden success in golf is like the sudden acquisition of wealth. It is apt to deteriorate the character.'

Daily Telegraph, October 7

Provided an obituary of Roger Brierley, who played Sir Roderick Glossop in the *Jeeves and Wooster* series.

Times, October 10

Reviewing the film *Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, Dominic Wells said that Gromit stole the show, and was 'the faithful Jeeves to Wallace's Wooster'. Other reviews made similar comments.

Times, October 11

A special supplement on *How to Understand Men* suggested a number of books which women should read, including *Summer Lightning*, which demonstrated that a man with an obsession (ie the Empress), however gentle, doddering and absent-minded, will stop at no skulduggery. A little later in the same supplement there was a recipe for a pork dish, in which there was another reference to Lord Emsworth.

Times, October 17

Reported the Cheltenham festival debate on the Booker Prize for 1935 (see page 19). Simon Hoggart, who introduced the Wodehouse contender, wrote about it in the *Guardian* on October 22.

Independent, October 22

Featured the *Green Swizzle* as number 39 in the series *101 cocktails that shook the world*.

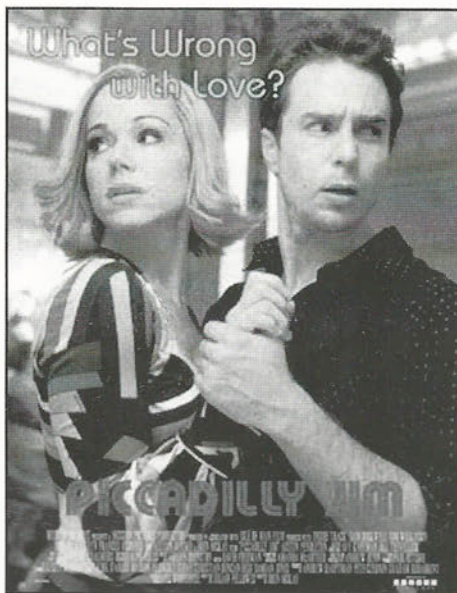
Radio 4 Archive Hour, October 22

In a programme on Anthony Buckeridge's *Jennings* radio series, Alan Ayckbourn said that Buckeridge had been much influenced by PGW.

Disappointing News about Piccadilly Jim

Wodehouse fans generally, and not just our members, will be disappointed by the news that the feature film *Piccadilly Jim* will not now be given a cinema release.

The film, shot principally in the Isle of Man in 2003, has a filmscript by Julian Fellowes, and stars Sam Rockwell, Tom Wilkinson, Brenda Blethyn, Frances O'Connor. Geoffrey Palmer and Pam Ferris also have important roles as minor characters in the film. We understand that faults were found in the physical condition of the materials used during the post-production process, and although they were remedied, a delay of several months occurred. This seems to have caused the makers, Myriad Pictures, and the distributors, UIP, to lose their enthusiasm, and apart from an appearance at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York this summer, it will not be seen on the big screen.



A number of our American members were fortunate enough to attend that screening. Most were pleased with the treatment, although film expert Brian Taves felt rather too many liberties had been taken in order to make it attractive to a young audience.

At the time of writing, it is understood that the release date of a DVD of the film is to be October 31, but this has not been confirmed, and members are recommended to search Internet sources or enquire at their local record stores if they wish to acquire a copy.

The Editor would welcome members' views on the merits or otherwise of the film on DVD, but would request contributors to keep comments fairly brief.

Poets' Corner Society's Latest Movements

Good breeding, of course, is not patent to all
If, therefore, you wish to attest yours,
When you go to a crush or a concert or ball,
You must cultivate curious gestures.
You must borrow your style from the apes at the Zoo.
'Twill pass as the best of behaviour.
Out at Clapham, it's true, you may find it won't do,
But it's sure to go down with Belgravia.

The back that is straight and the pose that's erect
May look, I admit, in their way fair.
But, of course, it is wholly absurd to expect
To do that sort of thing – say in Mayfair.
Such a pose could not fail to elicit remark
It would certainly shock all beholders
And your prospects are dark if you walk in the Park
Without a *chic* droop of the shoulders.

So practise a slouch, wave your arms like a mill,
And especially also – take warning –
Abandon your clubs and your volunteer drill
And your dumb-bells first thing in the morning.
Persevere at your task, and your name, I'll be bound
Writ large in the social roster
Will shortly be found, if your shoulders are round,
And your walk is the walk of a coster.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 19 January, 1903

(It was written to illustrate a report in a lady's paper that ungracefulness of walk and gesture are considered a mark of good breeding in society.)

Copyright by the Trustees of the Wodehouse Estate

Everyman's Spring 2006 Plans

Two of the titles for spring 2006 publication in the Everyman Collectors' series have been selected: *Full Moon* and *The Heart of a Goof*. Further titles will be named in the March issue of *Wooster Sauce* and on our website.

Penguin Birthday Merchandise

John Massingham, of Pershore, reports that the *My Man Jeeves* coffee mug which was produced in traditional Penguin colours of orange and white horizontal stripes a few years ago has been given a new lease of life as one of three mugs celebrating the 70th year of Penguin.

A *Carry On Jeeves* tea towel was also available for purchase earlier this year.

FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

February 14, 2006 Savage Club

Advance notice of the date of the spring meeting. Simon Hoggart, journalist and broadcaster, will speak.

March 17, 2006 Pre-season cricket dinner

Gold Bats players and supporters pre-season dinner at the Cricketers' Club.

April 15, 2006 Wodehouse Walk

Join a walk round Wodehouse's London conducted by Norman Murphy. Contact him to confirm your booking and arrange the time and the meeting-place.

April 25 to May 7, 2006 *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*

The American theatre company *Musicals Tonight* will be staging the Bolton-Wodehouse-Kern musical *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* at the W45th St Theatre, New York.

June 16, 2006 Gold Bats v Dulwich Dusters

The Society cricket team plays its annual match at Dulwich College at 4.30 pm. The famous cricket tea will be on offer to members (ticket applications with March's Wooster Sauce).

June 25, 2006 Gold Bats v Sherlock Holmes

The probable date of the annual cricket match at West Wycombe, starting around 11.30 am.

July 11, 2006 Savage Club

Advance notice of the date of the summer meeting.

July 15, 2006 Wodehouse Walk

Another opportunity to see Wodehouse's London.

September 16, 2006 Wodehouse Walk

Another opportunity to see Wodehouse's London.

October 5, 2006 Formal Dinner

Please note that this is a **REVISED DATE** for our formal dinner, to be held at Gray's Inn. That which was previously notified has been designated a date for admission of new barristers at all the Inns, so is no longer available. Further details will be given in March's Wooster Sauce, and the application form for tickets will be distributed with the June 2006 edition.

November 14, 2006 Savage Club

Advance notice of the date of the autumn meeting.

October 12-14, 2007 TWS Convention

The next convention will be at the Biltmore Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island.

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.

EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

Peter Lobbenberg noted from an article in the journal *Family Law* that there is increasing acceptance of the term 'the Bertie Wooster escape clause' to describe the fact that unearned income is ignored in determining a person's income for calculating child support. Oliver Wise suggests that Bertie himself would be unlikely to benefit!

Brian Taves had a long article in *South California Quarterly* in Summer 2005, previewing aspects of his forthcoming book about PGW's film career.

Colin Niven has just returned from China, where he has been working with Dulwich College's two franchised schools: in Shanghai, where the school was opened in 2003 with 750 students and a waiting list of 500, and in Beijing, where a former Montessori school opened in September under Dulwich Colours with 600 students. The four houses in Beijing have been named after Soong Chung Ling (wife of the late Sun Yat Sen), Amy Johnson, Boris Karloff and . . . P G Wodehouse.

Even Maurice Chevalier had an indirect connection with Wodehouse. In 1917, one Wodehouse-Kern song (*The Picture I'd Want To See*) was included in a Musical Variety show *Hello, America!* Originally, it was sung by Owen Nares, but by the end of the run he had moved on, to be succeeded by Chevalier.

An annual charity pumpkin-growing contest between New Forest villages has been scrapped after 30 years amid accusations of cheating. Milford-on-Sea were accused by Everton of breaking the rules by growing the 819lb reigning champion under glass. What would Lord Emsworth have thought?

Simon Frazer drew attention to a comment in the book *Venetian Dreaming* by Paula Weideger. The author was looking for somewhere to rent in Vienna and telephoned Lady Lauritzen:

'The woman who answered the phone had an upper class English drawl so extreme I felt I'd crossed wires with a P G Wodehouse talking book.'