



WOOSTER SAUCE

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Plum in the Suburbs

by Murray Hedgcock

Murray presented this talk to much acclaim at the Society's meeting in February 2009. It is with great pleasure that we finally print it (in edited form) for the pleasure of Wodehouseans who live in suburbs, the country, or even abroad. This is Part 1 of 2.

As Dr Joad used to say on the Brains Trust when asked his opinion – “it all depends what you mean by . . .”

And it all depends, really, on what you mean by *suburb*.

I am going to be dogmatic and restrict my thoughts to the London suburbs. There are suburbs surrounding all big cities: they even have them in New York, where Plum lived for years. Not to mention Paris and Berlin, where he also spent time. But suburban London is where Plum set several of his books, or where episodes took place, and so London it is.

Plum knew something of Wimbledon; he had been to Kingston; he used a Barnes setting in a couple of his books; and above all, he had lived at, and remembered fondly all his life, Dulwich. But his adult London life was spent in the centre of town, in something like 15 different addresses, ranging from sparse lodgings in Chelsea to increasingly posh apartments in Knightsbridge, St. James's, and Mayfair – plus the Dorchester. My genealogist daughter even found, only a few weeks back on the just-available 1911 census, evidence of Plum's stay at No.99-101 Ebury Street, which had not previously been identified. But I don't think we can count Ebury Street, Victoria, as suburban.

We all know that Plum set his English-based stories largely in Mayfair, or in country mansions. 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. You almost wonder if PGW were taking some dreadful revenge upon that particular lifestyle. And yet

his matters suburban are always resolved, the bad men – and women – are vanquished and the virtuous rewarded, for serenity to reign once more. In the end, it is all very reassuring.

Wodehouse makes it clear through his writings that suburbia embraces varying degrees of affluence, and the class structure ranges substantially. At the top of the pile are the grand houses on Wimbledon Parkside, facing the Common. Bertie Wooster's friend Bingo Little lives there at one point, and so does the impossible Ukridge's fearsome aunt, the novelist Miss Julia Ukridge.

PGW knew his Wimbledon – or at least those big houses by the Common. He used to visit the literary Graves family there, as a friend of Robert Graves's older brother, Percival. In his



'Peavehaven, Mulberry Grove' (aka Acacia Grove, Dulwich), the address of Freddie Widgeon and his cousin George, Stanhope Twine, and Lord Biskerton. Berry Conway, Lord Uffenham, and Keggs lived next door.

autobiography *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves wrote that because Wodehouse had once given him twopence to buy marshmallows, he felt he could not criticise Wodehouse's novels. Such are the influences on literary criticism.

Next to the Wimbledon Parkside plutocrats is the much less affluent but still solid citizenry of Valley Fields, based specifically on Dulwich, where Wodehouse was at school (the citizens' numbers being reinforced by upper-crust transients). There is a sharp divide here, between middle-class Valley Fields, and lower middle-class Dulwich, the worlds of the little castle and garden, and of the house "which seems to exist solely to provide furnished apartments". The class basis is slightly blurred by the Dulwich residence in *Pigs Have Wings* (1952) of the distinctly lower-middle-class ex-barmaid Maudie Stubbs, niece of Beach the Blandings Castle butler, who advanced into the property-owning classes by marrying the proprietor of a private detective agency.

Outside Valley Fields and Dulwich, we meet the Clapham bank clerk, Mr Waller, of *Psmith in the City* (1910), a sort of Mr Pooter, wearing a top hat on appropriate occasions but never quite affluent enough to climb higher. And *Very Good, Jeeves* (1930) introduces us to a class difficult to envisage today – the lower middles who run to a maidservant.

So what were Plum's suburban qualifications?

He entered Dulwich College in 1894, beginning as a boarder, and for a few months in 1895 he lived at Dulwich in the family home, when his parents returned from Hong Kong. Suburbia is seen in his writings first in *Psmith in the City*, published in 1910, just nine years after Wodehouse had left school. The Dulwich it presents is far from the later Elysian Valley Fields.

We know how school cricket star Mike Jackson is deprived of an expected place at Cambridge after happy years at Wrykyn, as his father has lost his money. Mike has to join the New Asiatic Bank – a reflection of Plum's own disappointment in 1900 at going not to university but into the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Mike settles on Dulwich to find lodgings and is shown "a repulsive room. It seemed about the most dismal spot he had ever struck". It costs seven shillings and sixpence a week – coal extra, sixpence a scuttle. This, incidentally, would equate to £27.43 today using the retail price index, but £146.20 on the basis of average earnings.

But of course old school friend Psmith joins the same bank and insists Mike live at his Clements Inn flat. The lads are invited by their departmental superior, Mr Waller, a Socialist who lives near Clapham Common, to visit that spot and hear him deliver impassioned speeches for the Cause.

"The first thing to do," says Psmith, product of a country house, "is to ascertain that such a place as

Clapham Common really exists. Having established that, we must try to find out how to get to it. I should say that it would necessitate a sea voyage." They get there "by taximeter cab" but run into a scrap with local loafers and escape home – whereupon Psmith announces that they are returning to Clapham, for supper at the Wallers.

They find Mr Waller in a semi-detached villa north of the Common. "He had returned from Church, and was still wearing his gloves and tall hat" – a reminder of the dress code for the solid middle classes. Then comes grim suburban reality:

Sunday supper, unless done on a large and informal scale, is probably the most depressing meal in existence. There is a chill discomfort in the round of beef, an icy severity about the open jam tart. The blanc-mange shivers miserably. Spirituous liquor helps to counteract the influence of these things, and so does exhilarating conversation. Unfortunately, at Mr Waller's table there was neither.

Suburbia indeed.

After the school stories and the Psmith spin-offs, and before we really get into the world of Jeeves and Wooster, we meet suburbia in the "light novels". In *Bill the Conqueror* (1924), some scenes are set at Wimbledon, in Holly House, "across the road from the Common", whose gardens are described as "practically a paradise". A dinner party is upset when the hero pursues an anti-hero into the property for reasons that seemed good to him at the time, sparking general mayhem observed by the heroine. Felicity Sheridan, known as Flick, heard

the quiet night filled with noise and shouting. She leaned out of her window, deeply interested. If there is one spot in the world free as a rule from alarms and excursions, it is the aristocratic quarter of Wimbledon, that area of large mansions along the end of the Common where Wealth and Respectability dream, and let the world go by . . .

Drama was stalking abroad in the night as nakedly as in the more vivacious portions of Moscow. Dark figures were racing on the lawn – voices shouted hoarsely. . . . Her Uncle George was bawling to somebody to fetch a policeman. . . . The shouts increased in volume. The flying figures continued to fly. Then suddenly there echoed through the night a tremendous splash. Flick understood immediately. Someone had fallen in the pond. She hoped it was her uncle George.

Bill, the hero, tackles a dark figure crossing the lawn – and discovers it is Flick, the heroine, running away from home. And 190 pages further on, they are happily married, Bill having overcome family objections by returning to Holly House and collaring burglars looting the owner’s library of priceless volumes.

Before we get to Valley Fields, we turn to another suburban setting for a story often voted the funniest of all Wodehouse’s writings – ‘Uncle Fred Flits By’ (*Young Men in Spats*, 1936). Lord Ickenham, on a London visit, informs his nephew Pongo Twistleton they will travel to a “suburban neighbourhood, a place called Mitching Hill. . . . When I was a boy, Mitching Hill was open country.”

Pongo is relieved: “The way he looked at it, was that even an uncle within a short jump of the looney bin couldn’t very well get into much trouble in a suburb. You know what suburbs are. They don’t, as it were, offer the scope.” Many of us would argue to the contrary . . .

Mitching Hill is not clearly located but is thought to be Croydon way. The pair are caught there in a shower outside a villa, The Cedars. Uncle Fred announces himself to a “female of general-servant aspect”, who answers his ring at the door, as the man who has come to clip the parrot’s claws, Pongo being “my assistant, Mr Walkinshaw, who applies the anaesthetic”. The servant pushes off for her free afternoon – and her presence is a reminder of an era when the solid middle classes expected to have at least a maid-of-all-work.

We all know how Uncle Fred resolves the problems of the pink chap who jellies eels and wishes to marry his pippin of a girlfriend, before going on his jaunty way.

Look for Part 2 in the September issue.

Two hundred years ago, when highwaymen roved West Kensington and snipe were shot in Regent Street, this pleasant suburb in the Postal Division S.E. 21 was a remote spot to which jaded bucks and beaux would ride when they wanted to get really close to Nature. But now that vast lake of brick and asphalt which is London has flooded its banks and engulfed it. The Valley Fields of today is a mass of houses, and you may reach it not only by omnibus but by train, and even by tram.

(From *Sam the Sudden*, 1925)

Of Golden-Haired Children



GEOFF HALES writes: I recently came across what may be the origin of Bertie’s oft-repeated references to golden-haired children being snatched from oncoming cars/ horses/ railway engines, etc. (see Gussie’s ‘broken wrist’ in *The Mating Season* which stopped him writing to Madeline). It occurs in a poem by a railway navvy, one Patrick MacGill.

The poem is called ‘The Greater Love’ and it appeared in a collection of 1910 called *Gleanings from a Navvy’s Scrapbook*; it is also quoted by Terry Coleman in his book *The Railway Navvies* (1968). Jim, our heroic navvy, saves a child from an oncoming train and is run down. I quote:

He thought as he would poor fellow, his life was a useless one,
 Many another to labour when he was buried and gone,
 Men were so very plenty, an’ work was so sparin’, or
 Since life had so little to give him, what was he living’ for;
 An’ the child might have brighter prospects . . .

There’s a good deal more of the same.

The Editor replies: This is certainly one possibility as a source of PGW’s use of golden-haired children (golden hair was compulsory in ballads like this). A quick look at songs and stories of the late Victorian period reveals a plethora of such instances. If the golden-haired girl or boy was not being rescued from Gypsies/ drowning/ being killed by runaway horses or railway engines, then his or her happy philosophical acceptance of death from TB surrounded by the grief-stricken family was equally popular. Think of Beth in *Little Women*, who is just one of far too many examples.

Wooster Street

A German member, DR FRANK HELLMANN, sent along a clipping from a catalogue in which one of the company’s addresses was listed as being on Wooster Street in New York City. Dr Hellman was struck by the street name, writing, “Perhaps this is no news to you – for me, it was!”

In fact, it seems a pretty good guess that Wooster Street played an important role in the naming of one of Wodehouse’s best-known characters. Before Reggie Pepper became Bertie Wooster, Wodehouse had been living off Washington Square in New York City – in the same neighborhood as Wooster Street, which he would have known from his walks about the city. Norman Murphy is convinced that Wodehouse saw the possibilities in the name ‘Wooster’ and used it, a theory he supports in *A Wodehouse Handbook*.

As Norman further explains, the street itself was probably named after Charles Whiting Wooster (1780–1848), who was a U.S. Navy captain during the War of 1812 and later commanded the Chilean Navy. His action defending New York Harbor during the war was probably what earned him the honour of a street in his name, though some have suggested it is actually named after his grandfather, David Wooster, who was an undistinguished brigadier general in the American Revolutionary War.



Letters to the Editor

Reactions, Questions, and Thoughts from Our Readers

From Tony Ring

Charles Gould's lead article on 'Wodehouse: The Last of the Great Russians' in March's *Wooster Sauce* is an erudite work, with references to *The Cherry Orchard*, Plautus, *The Comedy of Errors*, a number of G&S operettas, and *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. So it is with trepidation that I suggest that in one small respect he has been guilty of simplification!

But I'm afraid it is true. Referring to the genesis of *If I Were You*, Charles mentions that Wodehouse wrote it as a book before he and Bolton turned it into the play *Who's Who*. True as far as it goes, but he omits to say that Wodehouse's book was itself adapted from an earlier Wodehouse-Bolton play, called . . . *If I Were You*. Although this play was published, probably in 1929, it was not professionally staged, and after the book adaptation had been published in 1931, was substantially rewritten (especially in the last act) before being performed as *Who's Who* for 19 performances at the Duke of York's Theatre in 1934.

From Peter Thompson

Whilst thoroughly enjoying the article 'My First Wodehouse Experience' by Martin Stratford (*Wooster Sauce*, March 2010), I do find the need to allow my natural instinct to cut free and take issue with (and I appreciate this is always a subjective view) Martin's assertion that 'Uncle Fred Flits By' is "probably the greatest comic short story ever written". I am happy to stick in Wodehouse country for this topic. But it is one that has been debated at the highest level by the greatest minds (Mike Snowdon and myself in a pub in Victoria). We agreed some months ago long before this article came to publication, quite independently of each other, that 'Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend' takes that accolade.

I commend this to The House and would be interested to hear Martin's response and any other views or, dare I say it, suggestions for alternative candidates. Whilst it goes without saying that alternative suggestions will inevitably be spurious and without merit, in a democracy it is always interesting to hear alternative views if only immediately to discount them without proper consideration.

From Alan Hall

I have to tell you that your 'Profile' article on James Jarrett in issue no. 53 caused the raised eyebrow and the pursed lips: 'with Wodehouseanesque names' – well, I

ask you! 'Wodehousean' is a perfectly suitable and, I should have thought, proper adjective. I suppose you could, by a stretch of the imagination – some stretch, I admit – say 'Wodehousesque' but somehow it doesn't spring readily from the lips. But, oh, dear, *Wodehouseanesque*! Surely not – even Jeeves would have raised an eyebrow. Or have I been missing something all these years?

Now here's a thought for a future quiz or competition. Select the correct suffix to turn Wodehouse characters into their adjectives: e.g., Spode-ean; Fink Nettle-ish; Simpson-esque; Potter-Pirbright-ly; Crayevan.

From Charles Gould

Picking a minor nit with Mr. Ian Michaud [see March issue, 'Wodehouse Tributes?', p.24]: Mortimer's Molloys may have been minor league, but they were seriously *bad* thugs, unlike the Timsons, who were ordinary respectable criminals. It was the Timsons, not the Molloys, "whose misdemeanours enabled Horace [Rumpole] to keep Hilda supplied with Vim". I don't think Rumpole ever represented a Molloy; if he did, it was a one-time anomaly that somehow benefitted the Timsons – but I don't recall such a case. The Molloys are such bad characters that using the name would hardly be a 'tribute' to Dolly and Soapy.

From Martin Stratford

With regard to the current state of the economy: *Psmith Journalist*, *The Prince and Betty* (UK version), *The Prince and Betty* (US version), and *A Prince for Hire* – four separate novels created from the same basic plot line. Efficiency savings? PGW clearly wrote the correspondence course. Perhaps we should send a copy to the Treasury and Number 11 D S?

From Marco Farrugia

Members of the Society might be interested to know that the restaurant Reflet at the Grand Hotel Krasnaplosky in Dam Square, Amsterdam, currently has Berkshire sow on the menu. I had it, for the first time, last April and couldn't stop thinking of the Empress of Blandings and whether Lord Emsworth would have approved! By the way, it is indeed an excellent meat.

The Editor replies: I couldn't agree more. Those who attended the Society's dinner in 2006 enjoyed Berkshire pork, and it was delicious. Support the Emsworth Paradox! Eat Berkshire pork to help save the breed.

Right Ho, McBean's: In the March issue of *Wooster Sauce* (p.13), we had an article about the Wodehouse blooms developed by McBean's Orchids. Happily, at the recent Chelsea Flower Show, McBean's was awarded a gold medal (the holy grail of such specialist exhibitions). Wodehouseans who saw McBean's display in the Grand Pavilion will have no doubt spotted the Empress of Blandings orchid, among others. Congratulations to McBean's!

Society News

Meeting in July

Come join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, 6 July, from 6 p.m. at the Arts Club, 40 Dover Street, London. A very special entertainment is planned: Paul Kent, former Radio 4 producer and now working independently in the audio business, will present 'Plum, Shakespeare and the Cat Chap', incorporating a plethora of Wodehouse's thoughts on an earlier successful author. He will be assisted in this task by a number of experienced actors, including Society Patron Lucy Tregear. It promises to be another enjoyable evening!

Norman Murphy will conduct an abbreviated Wodehouse Walk through Mayfair prior to the meeting.

Your Membership Renewal

Wooster's subscription? Never late!
 He knew that it was up to date
 'Cos Jeeves told him he simply oughter
 Pay in June by standing order.

Yes, it's that time of year again, as our treasurer, Andrew Chapman, reminds us rather poetically. If your membership has come up for renewal, and you do not already pay by standing order, you might want to consider using that very convenient method of paying so that you never have to think about it again. Those members whose subscriptions are due now should look for the flyer enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*. And though we encourage members to use standing order, of course it is not

essential – payment via cheque or PayPal is also welcome. Thank you for renewing today!

Dash It, Where Are Those Volunteers?

In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, we asked for members of the Society who can contribute to future Society meeting entertainments – a talk on a special subject, perhaps some songs, a reading or two, or whatever inspired idea might strike the noggin – to make yourselves known to the Chairman. So far there has been a resounding silence, which strikes us as rather odd in a Society with more than a thousand members to its credit. No one can call us a reticent lot; as those who have been there know, it is often difficult to make ourselves heard at a Society meeting, and everybody has views on something. Let's hear yours!



We only hold three meetings a year, and we always welcome new faces – old ones, too, for that matter. If you've volunteered before and it's been a while since you've heard some well-deserved applause, why not have another go? Whether for the first time or a repeat performance, your Society needs you! Please step forward and let us benefit from your talent or expertise.

Society Dinner in October



Cheers for the entertainment at the 2008 dinner in Gray's Inn
 (Photo by Ginni Beard)

It seems hard to believe that almost two years have passed since the Society's last formal dinner, but the time has come to make your plans for this year's binge. On 28 October we will return to the splendid surroundings of Gray's Inn to have the whale of a good time we always do. And as always, tickets will go fast. An application form is enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*; to ensure getting a seat, send in your form quickly.

Please note: Cheques will not be cashed until about a month before the dinner. If you wish to receive confirmation that your application and cheque have been received, you *must* enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

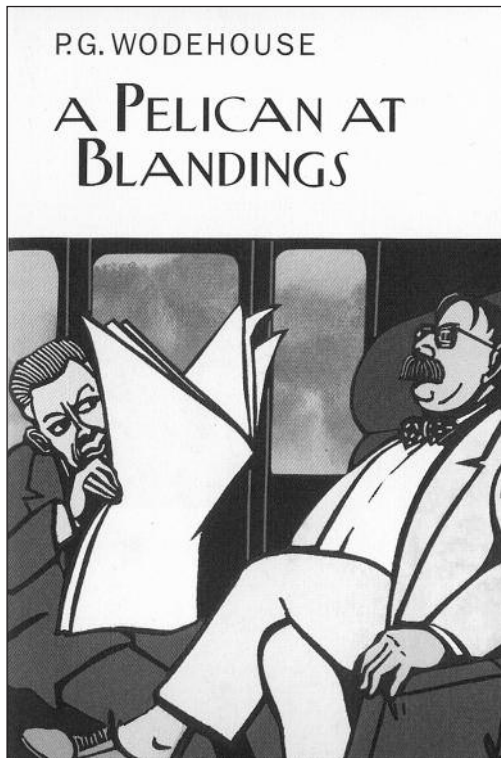
Wodehouse and Everyman

by David Campbell

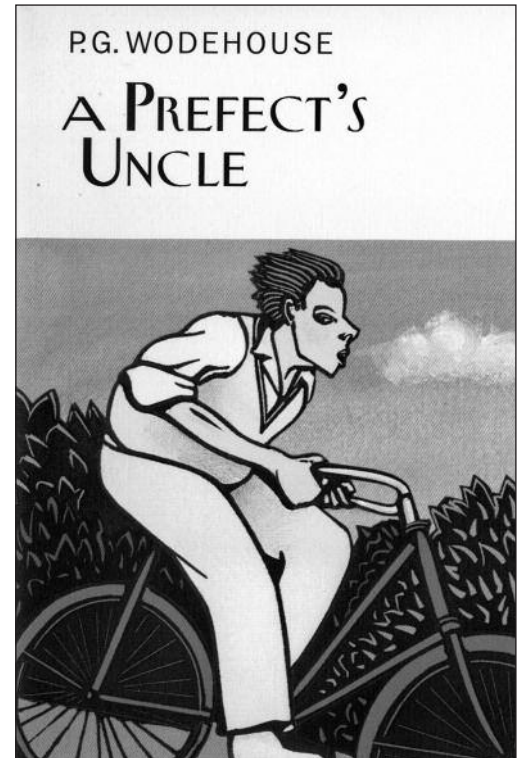
Everyman has just published the 69th and 70th Wodehouse titles in its uniform hardback series of the largest collected edition of PGW's works. David Campbell (Publisher, Everyman's Library) reflects on how this terrific series came to be.

As boy and man, I have always loved P. G. Wodehouse – the only author who has made me and my children regularly fall off railway carriage seats, laughing uncontrollably. When David Astor first suggested to me that Everyman should do a complete edition of the Master, I couldn't quite believe it had never been done before. A quick conversation with John Saumarez Smith at Heywood Hill, who has been giving me brilliant suggestions of essential books to own since I was 16, reminded me that Wodehouse had two, even three publishers; that there had therefore never been a collected edition; that the first editions, collectible as they may be, are not always now so very beautiful, nor that affordable; and that a collected Everyman edition would generally be a very good thing.

Not greatly liking the then available paperback editions, I determined they should be as beautiful as I could possibly make them but, as with the Everyman classics list I had re-launched in 1991, priced within spitting distance of the paperback price, even if printed



Number 70, just published



Number 69 in the series

on a good acid-free paper, sewn, and clothbound. I

immediately rang an old friend (and Professor at the Royal College of Art), Tony Cobb, and asked for his ideas on who might design the jackets – another RCA alumni has designed the typography of all Everyman titles since 1991. Andrzej Klimowski was most happily suggested; a meeting, at which I insisted that Andrzej would have to read the entire Wodehouse oeuvre as he designed the jackets, has resulted in what I think many of you will agree is the finest Wodehouse illustrations ever. They were exhibited at Andrzej's recent exhibition at the South Bank.

Robert McCrum obligingly referred to our editions, rather than the paperback editions, throughout his admirable biography of the Master, though Robert was published by Wodehouse's then paperback publisher. We had taken the rather elementary trouble to go back to the first British edition and correct the many mistakes that had somehow crept into the innumerable paperback reprints over the years. The rest is history and due to Wodehouse fans the world over.

Wodehouse will soon doubtless be available to be read online and perhaps in ways we cannot today even imagine, but I like to think that the Everyman Wodehouse edition will remain in print to be read, treasured, reread, lent, and given to family and friends long after I have joined the publishers in the sky.

Another in Our Occasional Series on Nominations for the Great Sermon Handicap

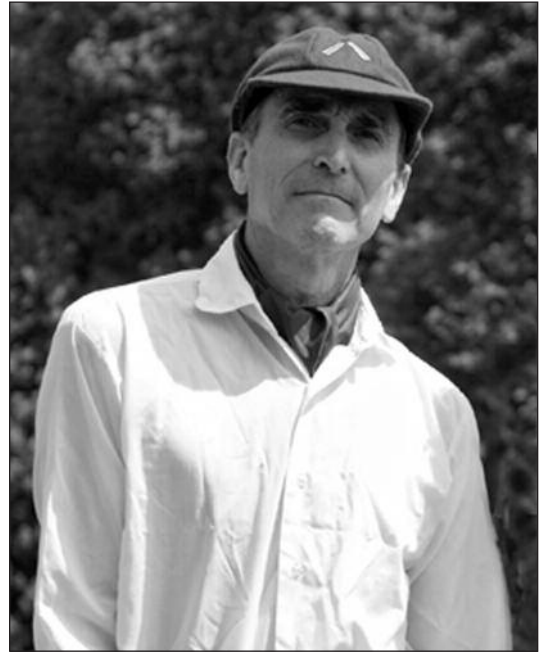
On 1 May 2010, Appointments in the Clergy, recorded in the Daily Telegraph, included: The Rev. Stephen Goundrey-Smith (Diocese of Peterborough), now non-stipendiary minister and priest-in-charge Chedworth, Yanworth and Stowell Coln Rogers and Coln St. Denys St. Andrew, to be non-stipendiary minister (assistant priest) Northleach with Hampnett and Farmingham, Cold Aston with Notgrove and Turkdean, and Compton Abdeale with Haselton St. Peter, and non-stipendiary minister (assistant priest) Sherborne, Windrush, Great Barrington, Little Barrington and Aldsworth St. Mary (Diocese of Gloucester). (Thanks to MURRAY HEDGCOCK)

Profile of a Committee Member

Andrew Chapman

Somewhere in France, an erstwhile French pen friend, Gerard Desilve, may still prize an original 1961 Penguin volume of *Very Good, Jeeves*, given to him that year as a typically English Christmas present by our current treasurer. Andrew Chapman, who has looked after the Society's books since October 2009, was introduced to the delights of Wodehouse in his pre-teenage years, and he cannot remember a time when he did not look forward to withdrawing Jeeves and Wooster books from the nearest library.

Being thoroughly baptised by immersion in such educational joys from his infancy helped Andrew qualify as a teacher at Goldsmiths College in 1966. During that time in London, he acquired the first of his old two-seaters, an MGTD2, which he exchanged after five years for an MGA. After a few years of schoolteaching and even fewer in the business world, Andrew went on to have the time of his life building his own "Guitar Workshops" organisation in West Surrey in the 1970s and '80s, teaching all kinds of guitar to more than 2,000 young people and adults. It was in 1981, a few months after the Abingdon factory closed, that the success of his music enterprise allowed him to fulfil the ambition of buying his one and only new MG, a blue B-GT,



which he still runs today with over 300,000 miles on the "clock", and in which he can still be seen arriving to play for the Gold Bats when enjoying his other passion, cricket. In those days he played for Send in the Surrey Cricketers league, and he remembers fondly a charity match in which he was caught on the boundary by Bernard Cribbins off the bowling of Ken Barrington for 58, watched by Bob Lord, the test umpire, with Tony Britten keeping wicket. Sam Kydd played banjo at mid-wicket between overs.

But, like his innings at that cricket match, all good things come to an end, and Andrew's Guitar Workshops closed in December 1987. After moving to Brinkley Court country and taking some accountancy exams in 1990, Andrew – being obliged like everyone else to justify his existence by attempting to earn a crust – had to opt out of leading a useful, productive life by becoming a tax agent, which, for those blessed citizens who have no concept of what that is, means assisting people to comply with their obligations to HM Revenue and Customs. Attempting to preserve his sanity and mental equilibrium, Andrew married Amy in 2001, and he is generally to be found these days heavily involved, often as treasurer, in all sorts of local clubs and societies. He has been chairman of his local amateur drama society for many years, one highlight of that life being in 2002 when (at rather short notice to fill a gap in the society's programme) he took the opportunity to adapt and direct Plum's 'Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit' for a three-night local stage production. It is rumoured that Andrew has a walk-on part at the 2010 October Dinner Entertainment.

Put Your Hair in a Braid

In *A Wodehouse Handbook*, Norman Murphy suggested the expression 'hair in a braid' came from Wodehouse's classical education, probably referring to the Spartans who tied their hair in a braid before going into battle. While this is certainly logical, Tony Ring has come up with another strong possibility. He recently purchased "a tatty piece of sheet music" from *The Girls of Gottenberg*, a musical play by George Grossmith, Jr., for which Wodehouse wrote additional lyrics. The particular song from the show that Tony bought is 'Queenie, With Her Hair in a Braid', with music by W T Francis and lyrics by John Hazzard. Here are two of the song's refrains:

Queenie was there with her hair in a braid.
All ready for bed – in her nighty arrayed.

Far away from the men –
In her own little den.
Why Queenie was there with her hair in a braid.

Queenie was there with her hair in a braid.
Just her collar and shoes – that was all that had
stayed.
"While I'm up here," she said –
"I'll just wire ahead, –
That Queenie is here with her hair in a braid."

Given his association with the show, Wodehouse undoubtedly would have known this song, and this plus his classical background probably contributed to his frequent use of the expression.

Swedish Exercises or Ling's Gymnastics

by Lennart Andersson

Swedish exercises are well-known to Wodehouse enthusiasts. His young heroes do them, golfers do them, and even the French chef Anatole does them when overwrought. The man who introduced them was the Swedish poet and gymnast Pehr Henrik Ling (1776–1839). His system turned out to be very popular and was used in Swedish schools for many decades from the early 1800s. The figures on the opposite page are from a publication of 1836.

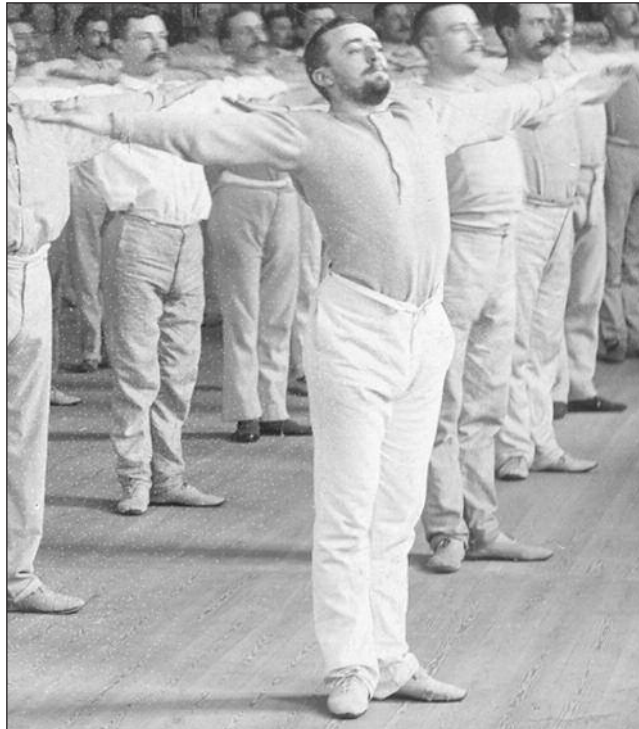
In the early 1900s, medical authorities started to question the quality of the Ling system from a scientific point of view as Mr Ling did not present much written evidence to back up his theories. Among those critics was the Swedish physiologist Th. Resmark. In 1917 he contended that the Ling system was not based on scientific knowledge. To prove that it could even cause harm, he attended a course for one year at the institution Mr Ling had established in 1813. At the end of it, he accused the institution of having caused him considerable problems with his limbs and joints and, further, caused his arches to fall, thus making him flatfooted. Mr Resmark put the blame on the instruction he had received during the course, especially the unnatural requirement to keep one's feet at right angle to each other while performing the exercises.

Resmark's attack on Ling's *gymnastica artificiosa* system was not the only one. In 1924 the British physiologist Marcus Seymour Pembrey, who strongly

opposed the methods of breathing that the Ling system advocated, went so far as complain that "the body is not a furnace". The criticisms were strengthened by the growing popularity of athletics and football, which offered opportunities to achieve health by means of the

gymnastica naturalis methods of breathing and moving that were achieved during these out-of-doors activities.

The well-informed reader may ask why PGW managed to reach the enviable age of 93 years despite practising Swedish exercises as maintained by, among others, Richard Osborne in *Wodehouse at Work*, published in 1961: "At eighty, he still does Swedish exercises every morning." The answer is: He did not! In 1968 PGW was interviewed by Mr Patrick Skene Catling, who enquired about the secret of the Master's good health, upon which Mr Wodehouse went to a chest of drawers and took out a booklet, turned yellow with age, by the former football



In this photo taken around the turn of the 20th century in Stockholm, dedicated Swedish exercisers stand in a way that the army had abandoned decades earlier as too injurious.

player Walter Camp, with instructions on how to exercise. "I have been practising this system called the daily dozen since 1919 for three quarters of an hour every morning. The only thing is," said Mr Wodehouse, "that I suffer from is a funny feeling in one of my legs and a weak knee."

What can be deduced from that? In 1919 PGW was 38 years old and perhaps he did Swedish exercises up till then, hence his problems with the leg and knee. We will never know . . .

"What's all this?"

Anatole did a sort of Swedish exercise, starting at the base of the spine, carrying on through the shoulder-blades and finishing up among the back hair.

Then he told her.

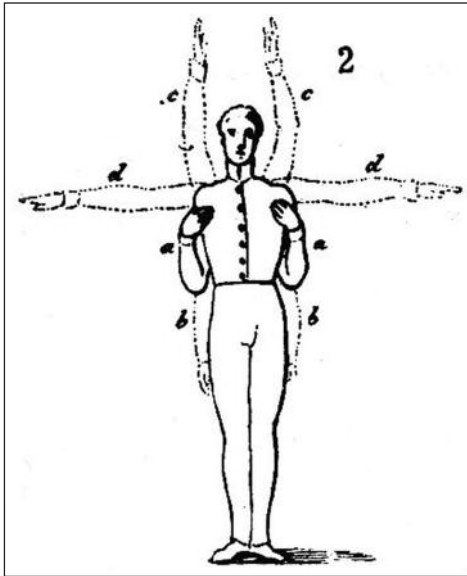
* * * * *

". . . I am somebody, isn't it? This is a bedroom, what-what, not a house for some apes? Then for what do blighters sit on my window so cool as a few cucumbers, making some faces?"

"Quite," I said. Dashed reasonable, was my verdict.

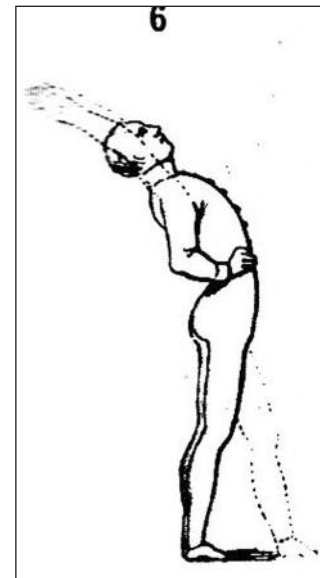
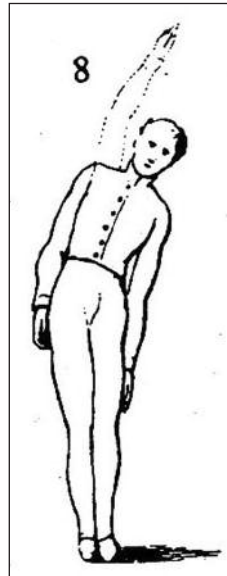
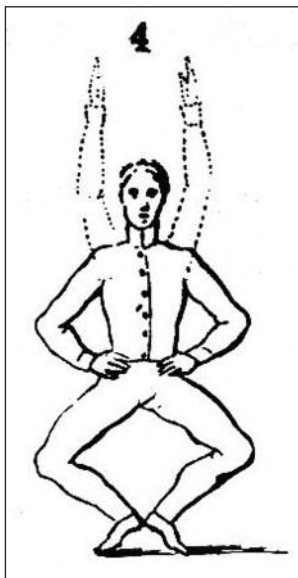
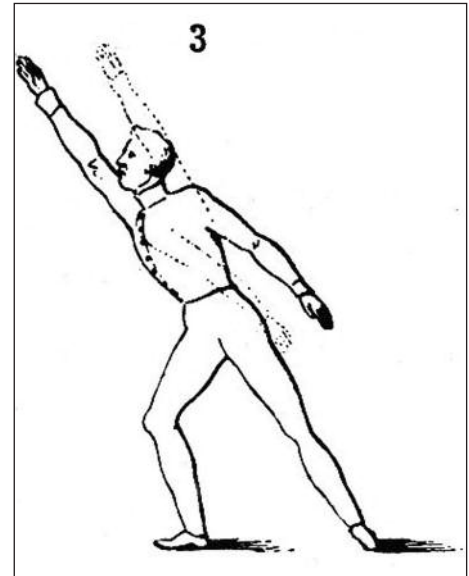
He threw another look up at Gussie, and did Exercise 2 — the one where you clutch the moustache, give it a tug and then start catching flies.

(From *Right Ho, Jeeves*, 1934)



Some typical Swedish exercises, as advocated by Ling and as, perhaps, practiced by numerous Wodehouse characters, including Anatole.

Thanks to the Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences for the photo and illustrations.



Penetrating That ‘Wall of Fog’

The March issue of *Wooster Sauce* (‘Little Nuggets’, page 16) included an item concerning a presumed PGW quotation that comedy writer David Nobbs used on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Quote . . . Unquote*: “The bank manager approached like a wall of fog.” Not being able to identify the source of this quote, we appealed to our readers for help.

NIGEL REES, the host of *Quote . . . Unquote* and frequent contributor to this journal (see p. 21), wrote at once to set the record straight: “I bear some of the responsibility for the confusion, as I did not check out with David Nobbs the source of his supposed Wodehouse quote. Using Google Books, I have checked that there is no such bank manager/wall of fog in the corpus. I think he must have meant the reasonably familiar ‘The head waiter began to drift up

like a bank of fog’ from *Indiscretions of Archie* (p. 186, I believe). I will administer a mild rebuke to DN when next I am in touch.”

But kudos must go to STEVE GRIFFITHS, who, little knowing that he was chasing air, rose to the challenge of tracking down ‘wall of fog’ in the canon. Not surprisingly, no bank managers turned up, but Steve did locate a reference in one of PGW’s lesser-known short stories, published in 1919 as ‘The Spring Suit’ in the U.S. and as ‘The Spring Frock’ in the U.K. At one point in this story, the two main characters, Rosie and George, suffer a misunderstanding, and as they sit in a cheap restaurant, Wodehouse writes: “The constraint between them was like a wall of fog.”

Steve has wowed us before with his detective abilities. I’m beginning to think he deserves a prize.

Strange Resemblance Department: Have any members noticed the similarity between press reports concerning the attempt by the Duchess of York to sell introductions to her ex-husband, Prince Andrew, with Bicky Bickersteth’s similar plan (entered into on Jeeves’s advice) to sell invitations to meet Lord Chiswick in ‘Jeeves and the Hard-Boiled Egg’?

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Iain Anderson

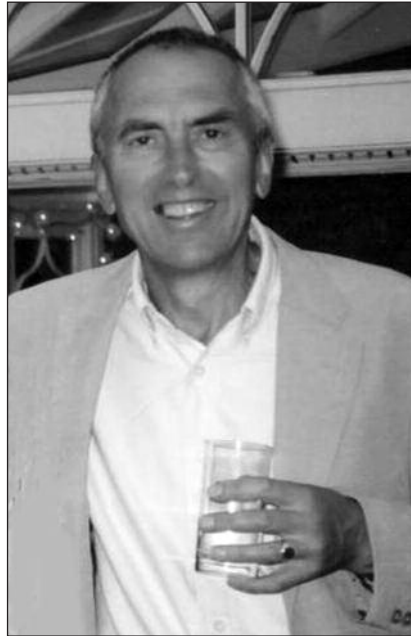
It was my father who formally introduced me to P G Wodehouse at some time in the 1950s, when I would have been in my early teens. I cannot recall which book I read first, but PGW simply streamed silently into my life and flowed imperceptibly through it, and before I could get my defences up I found that from being someone who could take it or leave it alone I had become an addict. Eventually I thought, why don't I join the Society?

Perhaps not surprisingly for a schoolboy, I was particularly keen on the Mike and Psmith stories initially, despite the fact that they stress cricket to a goodish extent, a pastime which was and still is a closed book to me (sorry, Gold Bats). However, this proved to be a temporary seizure, much like that of Lord Emsworth and his prize pumpkin, and I soon discovered that the world for me was that of the members of the Drones – the Eggs, Beans, and Crumpets, the pinheaded young men who discover that their man has carelessly sent them out with odd spats on. I read books by various other authors, but each time I visited our local library, I headed immediately for the “W” section and soon worked my way through their entire Wodehouse collection, and subsequently was obliged to start buying my own copies.

However, a fresh investigation of my personal PGW library reveals a slightly embarrassing shortage of books, which take up only one shelf of a not particularly large bookcase. Even though I have read them all several times, how can I have been so remiss in view of the number of Wodehouse works available? I have now resolved to strain every sinew to rectify this oversight.

Nevertheless, my collection does contain what I consider to be three notable volumes. One is a first

edition (apparently) of *Weekend Wodehouse*, which has been in the family for years, although it is missing the front cover, the spine, and one page. I obtained another first edition when as a stripling of some 15 summers I won a school prize (for French rather than Scripture Knowledge), sadly presented not by a drunken Gussie Fink-Nottle but by a sober local dignitary at Kirkcaldy High. I used the book token to buy *Jeeves in the Offing*, which I re-read quite recently – but dash it all if there isn't a page missing from this one as well!



On my 60th birthday, my wife, Glenys (who is by way of being rather a topper), gave me a copy of the *Jeeves Omnibus* – but only a second edition. However, before you mock and jeer, I would just point out that the book is a signed copy – the flyleaf bears the handwritten legend “With the author’s compliments, P G Wodehouse, Dec 1932”. Needless to

say, but I'll say it anyway, this is my prized possession – I mean, a book which has been in the Master's own hands!

So how can I explain the appeal of P G Wodehouse? The characters, the plots, and the humour are all superb, but to me it is his unique turn of phrase which elevates his writing to such a high level. A casual dip into *Weekend Wodehouse* reveals such quotes as “A susurrantion of blighters, some male, some female” and “Well, he looks a pretty frightful young slab of damnation to me”. I still use expressions such as Old Horse, oojah-cum-spiff, Old Scream – I could go on, but I see that you are glancing at your watch. So finally, one of my favourites, given my ancestry, birth, and upbringing, is “Being Scotch, he never smiled”.

I can assure you that Wodehouse made this “Scotchman” not only smile but laugh out loud at every reading of his books. By Jove, don't you know!

Wodehouse's Technique for Posting Letters Gains Favour Abroad

There have been a few mentions in *Wooster Sauce* recently about Wodehouse's technique of throwing letters out of the window and hoping they will be picked up and delivered by some kindly passer-by, including the results of experiments carried out by national newspapers.

Elaine and Tony Ring recently saw the technique in action while travelling from their hotel near Bandhavgarh National Park in India to a nearby airfield. The taxi driver had an A4-sized package on the seat next to him, and as they passed through a small village, he opened the passenger window and threw it out onto the roadside. Through the back window, Tony watched a villager pick the package up, and on enquiry to the driver, he was told that it was for his sister who lived in the village, and that either the person who picked it up or someone else would take it to her house.

Milady's Boudoir: The Lady or Not?

by Norman Murphy

About halfway through my second Wodehouse Walk, I point out the offices of *The Lady* magazine in Bedford Street, just off Covent Garden in London, and say I would like to state it is the original of Aunt Dahlia's *Milady's Boudoir* but I have insufficient proof. Well, matters now seem to have been taken out of my hands because *The Lady* seems to think it is. The magazine Wodehouse had in mind, I mean.

It was a Society member, June Arnold, who sent the *Wooster Sauce* editor an extract from *The Lady* of 16 February 2010, a celebration issue marking their 125 years. In it is an article by Robert McCrum, who writes that Wodehouse submitted ideas to the periodical in his early freelance days but was always rejected. He reckons that such rejection may have rankled and led to the satirical view he took of *Milady's Boudoir* later.

It is an interesting article, tracing *The Lady's* 1885 foundation by Thomas Bowles, who had launched *Vanity Fair* 20 years earlier, to its success in establishing itself as a popular magazine by the start of the 20th century. Its success at this period is surprising when we learn that the manager of the paper then was David Freeman-Mitford (later Lord Redesdale), better known to us as the eccentric father of the Mitford sisters. It was they who gave us vivid accounts of his frequent attacks of bad temper and his proud boast that he had read only one book in his life. I am surprised that McCrum does not tell us that the reason for the appointment was probably because Freeman-Mitford was Thomas Bowles's son-in-law. The family connection (the Bowles family still owns the magazine) was probably also the reason Nancy Mitford joined the magazine later.

In the same way that many people consider the 8th Duke of Devonshire (1833–1908) as the original of Lord Emsworth because of his famous remark about being so proud of his pig winning first prize in a show, McCrum considers there is “no mystery” about the model for *Milady's Boudoir* because Wodehouse located it “in one of those rummy streets in the Covent Garden neighbourhood”. He believes the “identification with *The Lady* which has never left the ‘rummy streets’ of Covent Garden to this day . . . is unequivocal”.

What he is overlooking is what proponents of the Devonshire/Emsworth theory also overlook. The Duke of Devonshire was not unique. There were dozens, if not hundreds, of landowners just like him who dressed like tramps and took immense pride in the prize-winning cattle, pigs, or sheep they bred on their estates. As a boy

in Shropshire, Wodehouse met landowners exactly like that, and I believe he had in mind an aristocratic neighbour of his who lived close by, the 6th Earl of Dartmouth (1851–1936), an equally enthusiastic and successful breeder of Black Berkshires.

In just the same way, although *The Lady* (all credit



to it) is still in the same splendid building “in one of those rummy streets in the Covent Garden neighbourhood”, there were many other ladies’ magazines in the vicinity in Wodehouse’s early days. In Henrietta Street, just around the corner from *The Lady*, was the headquarters of the Pearson Press, with dozens of magazines. Walk on down Henrietta Street, still bordering Covent Garden, and you come to Southampton Street, which runs down to the Strand. The splendid clock on the left-hand side, whose casing was designed by Lutyens, no less, marks the old offices of the *Strand*

Magazine and about 30 other titles run by George Newnes. In my 1907 directory, within 500 yards of Covent Garden, I found *The Lady*, *Lady of Fashion*, *Madame*, *Boudoir*, *The Gentlewoman*, *Ladies’ Field* (very Aunt Dahlia, I would suggest), *Lady’s Review*, *Lady’s Companion*, *Lady’s Herald*, *Lady’s Realm*, and *Lady’s World*.

It was because of this plethora of candidates in 1907 that I have always been reluctant to nominate a firm original for Aunt Dahlia’s pride and joy. But perhaps I was being too particular. Wodehouse certainly knew Covent Garden very well. The *Globe* newspaper was just a hundred yards along the Strand where the Strand Hotel stands today. Wodehouse called in at the *Strand Magazine* offices in Southampton Street often. He certainly knew the Pearson’s offices in Henrietta Street equally well – and the prominent white *The Lady* building is just yards away from the old Pearson’s office and has its name in large letters over the frontage.

So, unless and until a letter or notebook turns up saying Wodehouse had some other periodical in mind, then – yes – I will go along with McCrum. And if *The Lady* magazine is happy to be the source of *Milady's Boudoir* – then, good for it. And my thanks to June Arnold, who has forced me to come down off the fence at long last.

Ukridge and Christie

by Mark Smith

Martin Stratford's piece on Wodehouse and crime fiction ('The Curious Case of the Missing Award') in the December issue of *Wooster Sauce*, as well as Kenneth Clevenger's article on Dorothy L Sayers in the March issue, had me thinking of another prolific and well-loved British author, Agatha Christie. She was a serious fan of Plum and, I believe, on one occasion paid homage to him by inserting one of his characters into her work.

In *Why Didn't They Ask Evans?*, Bobby Jones and his friend Lady Frances "Frankie" Derwent solve the murder of a man who gets shoved off a cliff. Along the way, we meet "Badger" Beadon, a character based in some respects on Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge.

In one scene, Frankie struggles to remember who Badger is. "Didn't he run a chicken farm and it went bust?" she asks. There could be no clearer allusion to Ukridge's characteristically disastrous business venture in *Love Among the Chickens*, published almost 30 years earlier. Frankie then mentions another couple of escapades in the life of Badger: a month as a stockbroker (fired) and emigration to Australia (returned). Now

Badger is setting himself up as a second-hand car dealer, using as capital a sum of money left him by an aunt. (Here we see a substantial difference from Ukridge, whose Aunt Julia seemed destined never to s. off the mortal c. and give up the goods.) Bobby, a loyal friend of the Garnet/Corcoran sort, agrees to work alongside Badger in the garage. He even declines the offer of a well-paid post in Argentina (muttering the Ukridge-esque line "It's a bit hard" on doing so).

To his father, Bobby defends Badger against the allegation of laziness: "Why, he used to get up at five in the morning to feed those beastly chickens. It wasn't his fault they all got the roop." Roop, the mysterious ailment that struck down the chickens of Ukridge and his alter ego Badger, is listed in the Oxford English Dictionary as "hoarseness". Nothing whatever to do with chickens. I smell a rat.

Plum was a fan of Agatha Christie, too, of course, and she must have written the book hoping he would spot these nods in his direction. She reports herself to have been too star-struck to

say anything meaningful when she met Wodehouse, so perhaps this was her way of saying "Thank you".

Did the reverse ever happen? I have a dim memory of listening to an audiobook featuring Bertie Wooster having a run-in with Hercule Poirot. The dimmest bit of the memory is the identity of the author, whom I suspect was someone other than P G Wodehouse. Did I dream it? Can any fellow Society members help?



The Word Around the Clubs

Bravo, TWS

Earlier this year, using a bequest from a late member, The Wodehouse Society (US) made a gift of books to two Canadian libraries: the Saskatoon Public Library in Saskatchewan and the Spring Garden Memorial Library in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In recognition of this donation, the Halifax Public Libraries organised a P G Wodehouse lecture entitled 'Very Good, Sir: Wodehouse, Jeeves and the Comic Tradition', an event that was announced in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* of 14 February – PGW's birthday, appropriately enough.

A Woman Is Only a Woman . . .

In the *Washington Examiner* of 20 April, the paper's editor, Stephen G Smith, reported that as he was going off to work on a Monday ("a day when all nature cried 'fore'"), his Better Half denounced President Obama for slipping off to play golf the previous afternoon, after his flight to Poland for

President Kaczynski's funeral had been cancelled by the volcanic ash problem: "I am not against a golfing President . . . but he should have gone to church and prayed for the poor Polish president." Smith 'immediately thought of Millicent, a character in a Wodehouse story, who ventured that "golf is only a game". As the author explained: "Women say these things without thinking. It does not mean that there is a kink in their character. They simply don't realise what they are saying."

Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize

This year the winner of the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for Comic Fiction is Ian McEwan for his novel *Solar*, about a physicist who tries to save the world from environmental disaster. The prize – now in its 11th year – is presented to the writer believed to have best captured Wodehouse's comic spirit. On 28 May, Mr McEwan was presented with a Gloucester Old Spot pig, renamed Solar, at

the Hay-on-Wye festival in Powys. Numerous newspapers commented on the triumph McEwan enjoyed by winning the prize. Almost all referred to the irony of his 2008 comment: "I hate comic novels; it's like being wrestled to the ground and being tickled, being forced to laugh."

We Rather Like Him, Too

The *Radio Times* of 13–19 March included an interview with the actress and comedienne Caroline Quentin. When asked, "What rocks you to sleep?" Quentin replied: "I'm obsessed with Jonathan Cecil's *Jeeves* audio books. I can't stop listening to them. If I wake up in the middle of the night, I play them – I can be roaring with laughter at 3 o'clock in the morning." As we all do, of course.



Jonathan Cecil

A Frozen Minute

On the BBC Radio 4 show *Just a Minute* broadcast on 15 February 2010, Gyles Brandreth was given the topic of 'frozen assets'. LYNN VESLEY-GROSS writes: "After some blather about his dog named Phydeaux, he brought in a reference to the 1964 PGW book *Frozen Assets*. He should have been challenged for deviation from topic since his plot summary had little to do with the book, which apparently none of

the other panelists noticed; nonetheless, I was pleased to hear it mentioned, and he got the year of publication right."

Cazalets in Cabaret

In the *Daily Mail* of 24 March, the 'Diary' column reported on the first night's cabaret performance at Bellamy's Mayfair restaurant by PGW's great-grandchildren Hal and Lara Cazalet, along with Society dinner performers Stephen Higgins and Eliza Lumley. A number of Wodehouse songs were included in a wide-ranging programme with a broad 'London' theme.

He Didn't Do Badly in the End

An article in the *Daily Express* of 11 March discussed a newly reissued book, *Could Do Better: School Reports of the Great and Good*, by Catherine Hurley. Wodehouse's report for Dulwich College in 1899 said: "He has distorted ideas about wit and humour, he draws over his books and examination papers in a distressing way and writes foolish rhymes in others' books. Notwithstanding, he has a genuine interest in literature and can often talk with much enthusiasm and good sense about it." (Thanks to MARK TAHA)



Plum at Dulwich

A Little Puzzle for the Logical Mind

by Tony Ring

Recently one of our members purchased a new display cabinet in which to show off the choice items in her Wodehouse collection. It has room for 16 items, in four rows, each with four sections, as illustrated below. From the following information, can you reproduce the look of her cabinet after she had filled it up? (The solution can be found on page 25.)

The Sixteen Items

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Bring on the Girls</i> | <i>Piccadilly Jim</i> |
| <i>The Clicking of Cuthbert</i> | <i>Pigs Have Wings</i> |
| <i>The Code of the Woosters</i> | <i>Much Obligated, Jeeves</i> |
| <i>Good Morning, Bill</i> (play) | <i>The Pothunters</i> |
| <i>The Heart of a Goof</i> | <i>Summer Lightning</i> |
| <i>The Inimitable Jeeves</i> | <i>Ukridge</i> |
| <i>Joy in the Morning</i> | <i>The World of Mr Mulliner</i> |
| <i>Leave It to Psmith</i> | CD of <i>Sitting Pretty</i> |

The Clues

1 *The World of Mr Mulliner* was flanked on the left – as you look at the cabinet – by *Leave It to Psmith*, and on the right by *The Inimitable Jeeves*. *Pigs Have Wings* was immediately above it, and *Much Obligated, Jeeves* immediately below.

- 2 None of the four Jeeves and Wooster books were put on the top shelf.
- 3 You can see *The Clicking of Cuthbert* and *Good Morning, Bill* on the extreme left of their shelves.
- 4 *Joy in the Morning* could not have been further away from *Summer Lightning*.
- 5 You will see *Ukridge* immediately to the left of *Bring on the Girls*.
- 6 *Piccadilly Jim* had *The Heart of a Goof* immediately above it, and *The Code of the Woosters* below.
- 7 *The Inimitable Jeeves* was somewhere above the CD of *Sitting Pretty* in the same vertical column.
- 8 One of the two books of golf stories was on the top shelf and the other was on the third shelf down.
- 9 There should be one remaining space for our member's most valuable book – a first edition of *The Pothunters*.

The Cabinet

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

Any Relation?

by Robert Leiser

Ask any Churchill, Shakespeare, or Crippen, and they'll tell you how often they hear the tedious question "Any relation?" and how *noblesse oblige* requires them to answer each time as if they've never been asked before. Macbeths, Copperfields, and Jeeveses have the additional chore of explaining that their famous namesakes were fictitious. Or so I thought, until I attended the Plum Pie exhibition and learned about Percy Jeeves.

Percy was a Warwickshire cricketer, born in Yorkshire in 1888 and tipped to bowl for England. Plum saw him play and recognised the *nom juste* for Bertie Wooster's personal gentleman. Percy never knew of the honour, as he was killed in action at the Somme in 1916.

A seasoned genealogist, I wondered whether modern-day descendants of this family know of their famous forebear. Maybe there is a young Jeeves somewhere to whom I could give a valuable gift: The next time they are asked "Any relation?", instead of suppressing a roll of the eyes and giving an oft-repeated polite reply, they could answer "Well, yes, actually . . ."

Though Percy's three brothers all survived the Great War, two had to be discounted early in my search for living Jeeves descendants: brother Thomas had a son who didn't marry, while I could find no clear record of Harold. Undeterred, I focused on the remaining middle brother, Alick, and his only child, daughter Norah Jeeves. And as I weaved my way through the various resources available to genealogists, descendants of Percy's family poured out.

I learned that Norah had married and had two sons and a daughter. They produced at least 12 grandchildren, and I turned to Facebook to seek these grandchildren, or their children. This led me to Chloe Huggins, a 17-year-old living in England, who responded promptly that she was indeed descended from Norah Jeeves, but that she had known nothing of the P G Wodehouse connection and was much intrigued by it. And at last she understood who the guy playing cricket in the photo on the mantelpiece was! She put me in touch with her grandfather, Keith Mellard, an

Aberdeen sculptor, who was able to tell me more about Percy, Alick, and the family as a whole. While the Plum connection is known to Keith Mellard's generation, it is Percy's cricketing achievements that are the main source of family pride.

Keith recalled seeing Stephen Fry on an Edinburgh-London sleeper and thought of introducing himself as the descendant of the inspiration for Stephen's most popular role, but he forbore given the late hour. As a patron of The P G Wodehouse Society, Stephen, we hope, will learn of this connection through these pages.

But it was Percy's cricketing achievements that led

to my greatest breakthrough. David Frith, a cricket historian now in possession of Percy's Wisdens, had known Percy's brother Harold before his death in 1980 and, in an old letter, found his son's name: Graham Perceval Jeeves, whom I was thrilled to be able to locate via directory enquiries. Now, if you're an aficionado of the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?*, you might believe that complete strangers introducing themselves with a remote family connection get a joyful reception, and are invited in to have tea and biscuits and look at old photos. My experience is that this welcome is reserved for celebrities with a camera crew in tow. More typically, such approaches are met with suspicion and need to be handled very carefully.

After the briefest moment of

understandable perplexity and caution, Graham Perceval Jeeves proved a delightful conversationalist. Like Keith Mellard (his first cousin, once removed, whom he didn't know), he was well aware and duly proud of Percy's cricketing achievements and unwitting literary legacy. He was delighted that Percy is still fondly and gratefully remembered by the Society, and that this research will reinforce the link with his family.

Reaching the end of my quest for Jeeves descendants was every bit as rewarding as I had hoped, but as ever in genealogical research, the journey was as rewarding as the arrival. I enjoyed contacts with helpful and friendly correspondents, and I stumbled upon some interesting snippets.



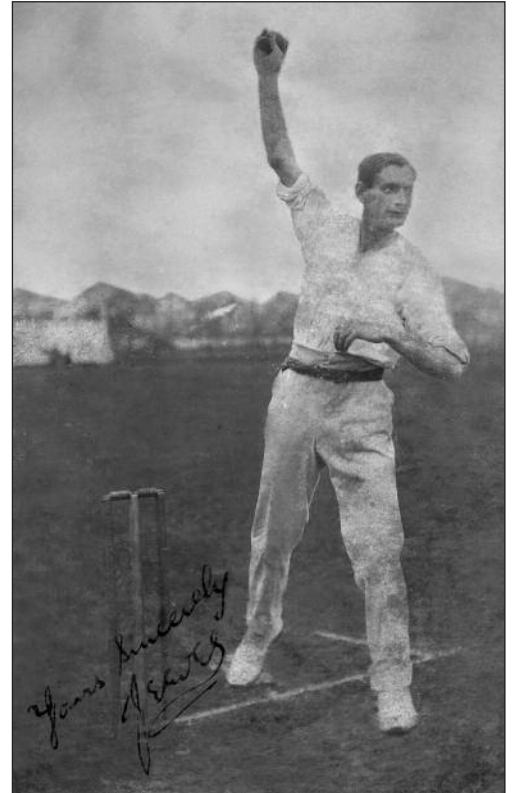
Percy Jeeves (1888–1916)

In 1888, about the time that the seven-year-old Plum was writing his first story, a Reginald Jeeves was born in Wimbledon. Whether he ever learned that another Reginald Jeeves would be immortalised in fiction we can never know. Even more intriguing was my discovery of Reginald's younger brother, born in 1890 – Bertie.

A couple of historical tidbits discovered along the way may merit our attention. Percy's father, Edwin Jeeves, had been born in 1862, and his mother had died soon afterwards. As was common at the time, her children were brought up by various relatives; Edwin, by his aunt Martha Jeeves. Had Martha not remained a spinster, Edwin would likely have adopted her married surname. Had Percy borne a different surname, what would Plum have named Bertie's personal gentleman? It's hard to imagine that another *nom* would have been quite as *juste*.

And would 'Geeves' have worked? Until 1911, illiteracy was so widespread that census records were taken by people going round the doors, writing down the names people told them, with whatever spelling they thought appropriate. (An official's assumption that my ancestor Mark Older was dropping his aitches led to his name being recorded as Holder, the name that branch of the family bears to this day.) In 1901 the census taker decided on the spelling 'Geeves' for the whole family of the 13-year-old Percy. This spelling didn't stick, but if other officials had made the same change, would a Percy Geeves have inspired Plum to the extent that Percy Jeeves did?

So a long and fascinating journey reveals that at least the older generations of Percy's family's descendants are aware of the legacy, and reminds us of the importance of passing on these gems to our children. Moreover, we are now aware of how close we came to not having a Jeeves at all.



Both photos of Percy Jeeves are kindly provided by Keith Mellard.

And Some More on Percy Jeeves

In the March 1999 issue of *Wooster Sauce*, JAMES HOGG wrote about his campaign to see Percy Jeeves memorialised in *Wisden* (in which he was ultimately successful). His article included clippings from Jeeves's own scrapbook, which Percy's brother had given to the writer David Frith; the scrapbook provided poignant evidence of a very promising cricket career cut short by a cruel war.

Upon learning of Robert Leiser's researches, James wrote to provide another interesting fact about Percy Jeeves. He noted that the Stone House Hotel in Hawes, Yorkshire, claims that Jeeves was the gardener there when it was a private house, and it was there that Wodehouse saw him play cricket for Hawes Cricket Club; see <http://bit.ly/dnJfxD>. This is very unlikely for numerous reasons, chief among them being that Wodehouse himself wrote that he first saw Jeeves play at Cheltenham (in August 1913, which was recently confirmed by Norman Murphy). But there is no denying that Percy played professionally for the local cricket side at Hawes, as is shown in this cutting from the *Darlington and Stockton Times* of 21 May 1910. Thanks to James for providing this snippet and clipping.

The Hawes Cricket Club opened their season on Whit-Monday, their opponents being the Pendle Nomads from Clitheroe. The home side declared their innings closed with the score at 205 for seven wickets, and then dismissed their opponents for the small score of 24. Jeeves (108), J. E. Osborne (50), and H. A. Crallan (29 not out), made the runs for Hawes, and the Nomads fell before Jeeves (four wickets for 6 runs) and H. A. Crallan (six wickets for 18 runs). In appreciation of Jeeves' innings the sum of 30s was presented him by the players and spectators.

From the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 21 May 1910: "The Hawes Cricket Club opened their season on Whit-Monday, their opponents being the Pendle Nomads from Clitheroe. The home side declared their innings closed with the score at 205 for seven wickets, and then dismissed their opponents for the small score of 24. Jeeves (108), J. E. Osborne (50), and H. A. Crallan (29 not out), made the runs for Hawes, and the Nomads fell before Jeeves (four wickets for 6 runs) and H. A. Crallan (six wickets for 18 runs). In appreciation of Jeeves' innings the sum of 30s was presented him by the players and spectators."

It was morning in the middle of April, and the Jackson family were consequently breakfasting in comparative silence. The cricket season had not begun, and except during the cricket season they were in the habit of devoting their powerful minds almost exclusively to the task of victualling against the labours of the day. In May, June, July, and August the silence was broken.

(From Mike, 1909)

1941 and All That

by Peter Martin

He had once conceived the design of writing the *Life of Oliver Cromwell*, saying, that he thought it must be highly curious to trace his extraordinary rise to the supreme power from so obscure a beginning. He at length laid aside his scheme, on discovering that all that can be told of him is already in print; and that it is impracticable to provide any authentic information in addition to what the world is already in possession of.

From Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson (1791)

The same may as well be said of P G Wodehouse – what more or what new is there possibly to be found, not least after the magisterial new biography *Wodehouse: A Life* by Robert McCrum, published as recently as in 2004? But the recent Heywood Hill exhibition ‘Plum Pie’ again raised questions about Plum’s wartime activities not even now quite fully explained by, for example, Iain Sproat in his well-researched and wonderfully well-written *Wodehouse at War*, published in 1981, and his subsequent 1999 *TLS* article entitled ‘In All Innocence’, which concluded with the phrase: “Wodehouse made the celebrated broadcasts in all innocence and without evil intent.”

Yet, just maybe, there is something new to say. Not much, but a little.

The broadcasts were made in July 1941. The war was going about as badly as it could. Defeats in the Western Desert, the sinking of merchant ships at sea, the escape of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* up the Channel unattacked, labour unrest at home, defeat in Greece and Crete, and other reverses. The brief lift in spirits of the Dunkirk evacuation and the success of the Battle of Britain gone. The fear of invasion, although diminished, constantly present. The British people tired, a bit dispirited, and hungry.

Throughout 1941, as Sir Max Hastings fully records in his newly published biography of Winston Churchill, *Finest Years*, Churchill’s foremost priority was and remained the enlisting of the United States not just as a supporter of Britain’s war efforts but as a fighting ally. Unless or until the United States joined the war, Britain might avoid defeat but could not win the war. The Germans, by then fighting in Russia, knew this, and therefore the timing of the Wodehouse broadcasts, clearly for propaganda purposes (but unrecognised as such by

Wodehouse), were as much to help Germany avert a U.S. entry into the war – an entry which, when it came after Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, proved ultimately fatal to Germany.

The history of this time is full of references to the efforts being made to persuade the United States to hop off the fence and come to Britain’s aid by fighting as contrasted with providing aid in material terms in the form of shipments of food, armaments, and other necessities, albeit at Britain’s expense and not as any kind of gift from the United States. Wodehouse could have known none of this, isolated as he was in his internment camp. Most of what was happening between Churchill and Roosevelt was in any event diplomacy at the highest level and at its most secret. To make matters even worse, as if they were not bad enough already, Churchill was surrounded in mid-1941 by the old Chamberlain appeasers, the politicians, some newspaper proprietors, and many journalists who believed, and said, that the best way to save Britain from disaster was by a separate peace with Germany.

Thus, in July 1941 the national mood was grim, fearful, determined, but uncertain of the future. And then, unheralded, came the Wodehouse broadcasts – insouciant, cheeky, irreverent, and making no reference, as indeed they could not, to the sufferings of the Blitzed Londoners and others, and none to all the other reverses then being suffered. Is it then surprising that these innocent, light-hearted, essentially harmless, and wholly untreasonable broadcasts should have been taken so much amiss as potentially giving aid and comfort to the enemy? To those like Duff Cooper, Beachcomber, and others who saw a defeatist or an appeaser at every window – no, not very surprising.

My view, and I express it here as best I can, is that none of the commentary on the broadcasts that I have read refers fully and in detail to the then historical context within which, but unknown to Wodehouse, his broadcasts were received – not so much the context in which they were made, since we know the German position, but in which they were received, since we know little of the general British listeners’ positions. Had the listeners and commentators of the time or later critics recognised or thought through that context in full, their criticism might have been – as it should at the time have been – less or none since in fact Wodehouse was wittily pouring subliminal scorn, not approval, on his captors.

Mea Culpa

KEITH ALSOP writes: “I can’t remember the name of Jupiter’s wife, but she has nodded. Surely the date in the subtitle of the piece on page 14 should be 2009?” Keith is referring to the article ‘On the Care of the Pig’ in the March issue of *Wooster Sauce*, the subtitle of which indicated that Professor Tom Molitor presented the paper at The Wodehouse Society convention in June 2010 – a rather neat trick, that. The date of the presentation was, of course, June 2009 as Keith deduced. The Editor apologises for this laughable misunderstanding.

Right Ho, Madeline

Two Poems about the Droopy, Blonde, Saucer-Eyed Gawd Help Us

by Ewart Johns

Jeeves, bring me one of your specials
I must have gone soft in the head
I was misunderstood by Miss Bassett
And now we are slated to wed.

Confronted by the shapely Madeline Bassett
Fink-Nottle's heart descended to his boots
And failing to engage in amorous banter
The silly ass just lectured her on newts.

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Karen Shotting

My description of my first Wodehouse novel cannot be told without sharing some family background and explanation of my darling father's rule of the Shotting household.

I will quickly dispose of the preliminaries: I, like many others, was first introduced to the world of Wodehouse through the BBC's *Jeeves and Wooster* series. It only took one episode, and I knew this was a good thing that needed pushing along.

Shortly after viewing that first episode, I ankled off to South Coast Plaza to check out the W section of Rizzoli Bookstore's Fiction and Literature department. There I was confronted with an embarrassment of riches – a veritable sea of orange back-bindings (the old Ionicus versions of the Master's works) and a wealth of assorted other variations on the Wodehouse theme, for Rizzoli did not stint in its effort to bring the best literary offerings to its Southern California habitués. But how was I to choose the proper starting place? I knew I wanted a Jeeves book, but which one?

This is where we veer off into the Shotting family chronicles (please bear with me). I come from a fairly large family of six children. My father (with the full concurrence of my mother) decided that democracy was an interesting experiment for a large governmental unit such as the United States, but that a similar methodology did not fit on the micro level of the Shotting household – at least not if one wanted peace in our time. So he instituted a regime that the lowest foot soldier will recognize: he gave orders, and we obeyed; majority rule was unheard of and voting anathema. And, like many absolute rulers before him, Dad also conferred upon himself an appropriately august title. He referred to himself as, and issued

regulations and ukases under the authority of, The One, The *Only*, The Inimitable. (I wish you could hear him say it; I can't really do it justice in print.)

This regime was largely successful; however, there was *occasionally* dissension (and, to be absolutely frank, even outright insubordination) in the

ranks. Questionings of the lord and master's authority and/or wisdom/knowledge were easily disposed of: things were done his way, and he knew best, because he was The One, the *Only*, The Inimitable.

OK, I think you can probably see where this is going. Let us return to Rizzoli and the W section of Fiction and Literature. Which Jeeves book did I choose? There could only be one choice for the daughter of The One, the *Only*, the Inimitable – my first Wodehouse book was, of course, *The Inimitable Jeeves*.

I started there and never looked back: I cruised my way through the Jeeves stories;

moved on to Blandings, Uncle Fred, Psmith and Ukridge; and thereafter read any Wodehouse I could get my hands on. At some point, I introduced my father to Wodehouse, and it gave me great pleasure to listen as he chortled over Bertie's sagas and Ukridge's schemes for amassing great wealth. His fondness for Wodehouse also led to his assuming another nickname: he enjoyed leaving messages asking me to call my "aged relative."

On a more serious note, I am sorry to say that The One, The *Only*, The Inimitable is no longer with us. During his last month in the hospital, I brought with me *Wodehouse is the Best Medicine*, but even the best medicine is not always successful, and The One, The *Only*, The Inimitable went to join the creator of *The Inimitable Jeeves* on February 21, 2010.



Wodehouse on the Boards

This is a banner year for *Come On, Jeeves!* Two productions have already taken place and are reviewed below, while another one will be staged by the Pantiles Players at Salomans in Southborough, Kent, from 15 to 24 July. For tickets and further information, call the theatre on 01892 534341, or visit the Pantiles Players website at <http://www.thepantilesplayers.co.uk/>.

At present, there is no information on any other future Wodehouse plays. If members learn of any productions, please notify the Editor. Reviews are always welcome.

Fun and Games at the OSO

by Murray Hedgcock

The Old Sorting Office at Barnes may sound an improbable venue for a Wodehouse night out, but it proved a charming setting for five such nights from February 23 to 27.

Known locally as the OSO, this community centre converted from a Royal Mail depot does not, as similar venues do in Wodehouse, smell of the sturdy English peasantry, Boy Scouts, etc. But it provides the ultimate in intimate theatre, seating a mere 65, and allowing the audience to feel they could reach out and shake hands with the actors.

We would happily have done just that, with enthusiasm, after enjoying the Barnes Charity Players' production of *Come On, Jeeves!*, the play Plum wrote with Guy Bolton. It was the choice of Marc Pearce, in his directing debut at the youthful age of 26, and as he told your reporter, it brought a rush of applicants from Wodehouse-loving Players eager for parts.

Determined to get away from the Jeeves of Stephen Fry in the TV series, Marc was fortunate to have John Mounsey available for this key role which pretty much carries the play. John's Jeeves was exactly right – knowing his place but always aware of his value to his temporary master, Lord Towcester, and conveying the right mix of dignified service. His calmly controlled Jeeves provided a proper balance to the slightly frenetic approach of Andrew Lawston to the role of Bill, who as bookmaker Honest Patch Perkins is pursued by punter Captain Biggar while attempting to sell his crumbling family home.

The eventual purchaser, of course, is the wealthy seeker-after-spirit-world-manifestations Mrs Spottsworth – a delightful performance by Elizabeth Ollier, who played

the over-the-top American abroad with precisely the verve demanded.

Cate Manning's Jill Wyvern, Bill's fiancée, was sweet but somehow short of the poise her career as a veterinary surgeon should have given her. Michelle

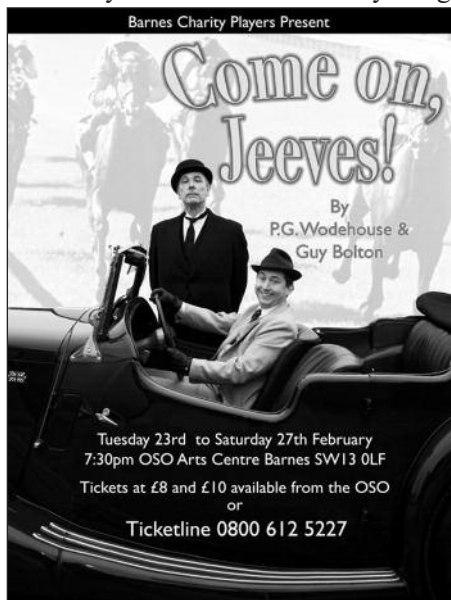
Warren was a little too grand as Lady Carmoyle: it was difficult to imagine her as 'Moke', but she imposed a quietening rein on her real-life husband, Richard Warren, who made Lord Rory Carmoyle less bone-headed than is usual. David Day's Captain Biggar gained authority as the play moved on, and Nicole Shamier, playing Ellen the parlour-maid and Patrick Findlater, as the race commentator, made the most of modest opportunities.

The set and costumes were so right that it was a jarring note when Fergus O'Kelly as Chief Constable Blagden arrived in an inspector's uniform, with no medal ribbons.

Surely Chief Constables of the era wore uniform only on ceremonial occasions, and would then be guaranteed a chestful of decorations?

John Mounsey also wrote the excellent programme notes on PGW, including a welcome plug for membership of our Society and demonstrating a feel for Plum that spread through the production.

Come On, Jeeves! is far from vintage Wodehouse: the plot, frankly, is silly, and the climax, with the policeman desperately seeking the names of those present to the background of shouted encouragement to horses in the Derby, is chaotic and almost impossible to bring off. No matter: even second-best Wodehouse is much better than most, and the Players threw themselves into their task with enthusiasm and enjoyment. A distinctly good effort all round.



Nothing is more difficult than to describe in words a Charleston danced by, on the one hand, a woman who loves dancing Charlestons and throws herself into the right spirit of them, and, on the other hand, by a man desirous of leaving no stone unturned in order to dislodge from some part of his associate's anatomy a diamond pendant which has lodged there.

(From *Ring for Jeeves*, 1953)

Laughs Galore in Crayford

by Elin Murphy

It is rare to get two stagings of a Wodehouse play in succession, but such was the delightful predicament presented to London Wodehouseans when, less than a month after the Barnes Charity Players production, the Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre presented *Come On, Jeeves!* from March 13 to 20. Norman and I, having missed the show in Barnes, went down to Crayford, Kent, to see how the cast at the Geoffrey Whitworth would fare.

And they fared very well indeed. The Geoffrey Whitworth Theatre, part of the Little Theatre organisation, puts on an interesting mix of 10 plays a year, with a very talented bunch of amateur actors. The director of *Come On, Jeeves!* was Society member John Turnbull, whose reverence for Wodehouse was very much on show with a lot of fine touches. He, the cast, and the crew had thrown themselves into this production with great enthusiasm, and it showed, right down to the details of the set – I especially liked the cracks in the walls, hinting at Towcester Abbey’s decaying condition.

Come On, Jeeves!, written by Wodehouse with Guy Bolton, will be familiar to anybody who has read *Ring for Jeeves*. If seeing Jeeves onstage without Bertie Wooster is a bit jarring, one soon gets over it as many familiar elements of a pleasing Wodehouse plot are introduced: an aristocrat with an ancient pile of a house to unload, an intimidating big-game hunter, an eccentric American heiress, relations who offer wry observations on the proceedings, the love interest, horse racing – and, of course, the need for Jeeves to sort out a tangled mess and bring the story to a happy conclusion.

The cast was excellent, with Jon Meakin, as Bill Towcester, and John Wilson, playing Jeeves, outstanding in the lead roles. Meakin seemed very much like he would be at home in the Drones Club, while Wilson combined just the right amounts of gravitas and subtle fun to make his Jeeves an interesting character to watch. As Mrs Spottsworth, Penny Walshe was brilliant, bringing down the house with the line: “Your little rose –



Captain Brabazon-Biggart (Paul Wharton) matches wits with Jeeves (John Wilson).
(Photo by Robert Piwko)

that’s what I am. Pluck me before my petals fall!” The object of her affections, Captain Brabazon-Biggart, was amusingly played by Paul Wharton, while Sarah Tortell and Gary Heron were also enjoyable as Moke and Rory Carmoyle. Perhaps the most difficult role went to Catherine Addy, who played Bill’s fiancée, Jill Wyvern, and the only one who had no funny lines to gain her laughs. Though her voice was perhaps a bit too soft at times, she rose to the challenge of her role, carrying it off with quiet charm.

Other members of the cast included Sally-Ann O’Callaghan, Roger Gallop, Paul Harris, and the delightful Louie, who played Mrs Spottsworth’s dog Pomona. If the first act seemed to drag a bit, it was no fault of the cast, who really revved up to full gear in act 2, which included several hysterical moments. Especially funny was Bill’s exuberantly energetic dance with Mrs Spottsworth, part of his attempt to dislodge the pendant around her neck. The entire play was made even more enjoyable by the period music employed throughout.

In all, this was a production that surely would have earned Wodehouse’s approval.

Think Hard

References to Wodehouse and his work turn up frequently in quizzes, crossword puzzles, and other unexpected places. For Wodehouseans, of course, questions concerning Our Hero are a cinch to answer. So if you don’t get the following at once, then you need to eat more fish.

The *Radio Times* of February 27–March 5 included a pub quiz compiled by Robert Hanks, comprising 21 questions “inspired by literary tipplers”. Question 6 was: “In a series of stories by P G Wodehouse, who retails his accounts of remarkable events in the saloon bar of the Angler’s Rest?” Only slightly more difficult was question number 7: “Staying with Wodehouse, which ‘godlike man in a bowler hat with grave, finely chiselled features’ does Bertie Wooster discover in the saloon bar of the Goose and Cowslip in *The Mating Season*?” (Thanks to ALEXANDER DAINTY)

The following came from a desk calendar for Tuesday, April 6, 2010, headed ‘About the Author’: “A comic writer who enjoyed enormous popular success for more than seventy years, this British author was an acknowledged master of English prose much admired by contemporaries, such as Hillaire Belloc, Evelyn Waugh, and Rudyard Kipling, and by modern writers, including Douglas Adams, Salman Rushdie, and Terry Pratchett. Who is it and what’s his or her full name?” (Thanks to CHARLES GOULD)

The Pelican Club

by Alexander Connolly

It was whilst reading N.T.P. Murphy's *A Wodehouse Handbook* that I first came across the Pelican Club and Pink 'Uns – which immediately intrigued me. It seemed like an extremely sound organisation, full of untrustworthy characters who would just as soon steal your pocket watch as give you the dead cert for the 3.30 at Epsom in the same meeting.

The Pelican Club was founded by Ernest "Swears" Wells in 1887 and had a reputation for irresponsible behaviour amongst its members. It was this irresponsible behaviour that "Swears" wrote about in his book *Chestnuts* (published in 1900). After reading about this book, I immediately ordered a copy online.

When my first edition arrived, it had a very smart red cover, with slightly stained front pages; it may not be the smartest book that I have bought, but it is certainly the most distinctive! It represents the pre-Great War world in which Wodehouse and his colleagues lived and worked (although the word *worked* can only be used lightly in relation with the Pelican Club!). What wonderful anecdotes there are in this intriguing book.

Reading Swears's many chestnuts recounting his experiences during his time in The Pelican Club, what struck me were the comparisons that could be made today. The club's many members seemed to spend most of their time touching other members for a quid or two and avoiding creditors. I may be wrong, but is this not what members of Parliament have been doing for some time now?

The activities of Swears and the stories of P G Wodehouse are very comparable. The trouble with debtors and constant lack of funds could lead one to be easily confused between a member of the Pelican Club and many Wodehouse characters. Take the story of how Wuffalo Will paid his subscription. Coming down the stairs, he bumped into the secretary, who alerted him to a sign that stated no member could use the club if they had an unpaid fee. With this he asked the secretary to get his cheque and he would pay. He promptly borrowed a fiver off Swears with which he paid his subscription; Swears never saw his fiver again! This is not unlike when the Earl of Rowcester in *Ring for Jeeves* stole Rosalinda Spottsworth's pendant to pay off Captain Biggar whilst trying to sell her the crumbling stately home.

It is clear that there are many similarities between the Pelican Club and Warehouse's books. Put together, it would be hard to distinguish between them. I had planned to finish with my own "chestnut" but could not think of one I would be willing to allow printed. Maybe that is why Swear's chestnuts mainly featured others than himself!

Educating the Young

by Tony Ring

The usual perception of the reader who might be interested in Wodehouse has been tested twice in the last couple of years. Readers of *Wooster Sauce* will be aware of the Japanese bi-monthly manga publication *Melody*, with its target market of young Japanese ladies, in which strip cartoon versions of *The Inimitable Jeeves* and *Carry On, Jeeves* have appeared. It now transpires that in 2008 the American novelist Elizabeth Lockhart introduced the subject of Wodehouse to her adolescent schoolgirl readers in America in a most imaginative way, in the process becoming a finalist in the category of Young People's Literature in the 2008 National Book Award competition, and being featured in the Summer 2008 Kids Reading List of Oprah's Book Club.

The title of the book? *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks*.

Highly intelligent 15-year-old Frankie is about to start her second year at the prestigious American co-ed boarding school Alabaster, where she becomes the girlfriend of an important senior boy of 17. She is concerned that he won't trust her with information about a long-standing all-male secret society of which he is one of two joint kings, and the book's main plot describes how she manages to gain control of the society without its members realising.

So how does Wodehouse come into it?

The first reference is to *Something Fresh*, which she had read over the summer, inspiring her to seek out another Wodehouse, as something fun to read, from the school's library. She chooses *The Code of the Woosters* and soon finds that her boyfriend has read some Wodehouse as well, though he can't remember what.

About a third of the way through the book, the author, who has a pleasant, languid style, outlines the factors which have made Frankie embark on her brief career of hell-raising. Two were derived from Wodehouse – the fact that so many of his characters are members of the Drones Club, who are "always up for fun" (another 50 pages on and she is reading *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*); and the fact that he "is a prose stylist of such startling talent that Frankie nearly skipped around the room with glee when she first read some of his phrases." She reads, "He spoke with a certain what-is-it in his voice, and I could see that, if not actually being disgruntled, he was far from being grunted." Her mind begins to whirl, and throughout the rest of the book she is inventing words such as *maculate*, *ept*, and *petuous* and using them in her conversation whenever she can. It may seem bizarre, but a whole chapter of eight pages is devoted to this discovery!

For many years the Society has been seeking a way of bringing Wodehouse to the attention of the young. This is one of the most remarkable approaches yet discovered!

The Disreputable Behaviour of Frankie Landau-Banks, by Elizabeth Lockhart, is published by Disney Hyperion Books, New York (www.hyperionteens.com).

We May Be Some Time

by Nigel Rees

This article originally appeared in the April 2010 edition of Nigel's Quote . . . Unquote Newsletter.

A tricky query but a fascinating one came from Bryan Oates who is editing the letters of his great uncle, the illustrious Captain Lawrence Oates, the man who came up with one of the most famous exit lines of all: “I am just going outside, and I may be some time.”

We only have this on the say-so of Captain R. F. Scott, who put it in a diary as his own life ebbed away after the failure of his expedition to be first at the South Pole in 1912. But this may not be the quotation that Bryan is seeking a specific reference to. As he says, he is “tantalised by the possible connection with another hero of mine, P. G. Wodehouse. Richard Osborne tells us that Bertie Wooster invokes, on one occasion, Capt. Scott’s Last Message. I simply cannot find this quote. I wonder if you could please get me out of this quotational hole, of which I am not proud?”

Now, at this point, we should clarify. Strictly speaking, the quotations from Scott’s diary (like the Oates line) are a separate matter from his famous last ‘Message to the Public’. The diary also contains his concluding exclamation: “For God’s sake look after our people.” On the other hand, if we are looking for a quotable passage from his actual ‘Message’, then it might be: “Had we lived, I should have had a tell to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the hearts of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale.” However, I should think people might well tend to lump all these pronouncements together as being part of ‘Scott’s Last Message’.

Richard Osborne was a Wodehouse scholar of note. He died in 2006, aged 95 – so we can’t consult him as to what he meant, as he made the point that “Bertie Wooster’s sources may be anything from the Psalms (frequently) to Scott’s last message from the Antarctic (once).” Of course, any of the Scott/Oatesisms would be ripe for citing by PGW, whose novels, as I have written before, positively teem with references and allusions to quotations and sayings. However, I am not aware of him actually using any of these specific ones in his vast *oeuvre*.

After having used the searching tools that we now have available to us, I then turned to the Wodehouse experts Tony Ring, Barry Day, Martin Jarvis, and Norman Murphy, who between them know all there is to know about the writer. But they were no more able than I am to say what Osborne might have been alluding to. Tony Ring said he thought “Bertie might have referred to ‘stirring the hearts of every Englishman’, but I wouldn’t have a clue where to look.” Norman Murphy came up with another suggestion: “I would bet a quid that it is the Oates reference he means. Somewhere in the stories, Bertie says to Jeeves/Aunt Dahlia/whoever that he is going to take a walk and ‘may be some time’. Pure supposition at this stage of course but . . . When you think of the times Bertie goes off alone to brood over the trouble he or his pals are in and the reader gets the chance to see the way Bertie’s mind works, it is very easy to miss the introductory sentence.” Well, we are still looking for an example that would confirm Norman’s theory.



Captain Lawrence Oates
(1880–1912)

Meanwhile, I am advancing one of my own. If we look at the phrase “Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell . . .” and “our dead bodies must tell the tale” – which really do come from the ‘Last Message’ – and then turn to one of the Wooster/Jeeves stories, *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen* (1974), chap. 19, do we detect an echo of it in Bertie’s two statements – appearing in adjacent paragraphs: “And when you return, I shall a *tale unfold* [my italics] which will make you jump as if you’d sat on a fretful porpentine” and “When he returned with the steaming pot and I *unfolded my tale* [my italics], he listened attentively.” Here PGW is alluding to the Ghost’s speech in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (act 1, sc. 5). He is usually content to play about with the phrase ‘fretful porpentine’ and he does it on many, many occasions. But here, could he be echoing the beginning of the Ghost’s speech: “I could a tale unfold, whose brightest word could harrow up thy soul . . .” Might it be the case that Osborne mistook the Ghost’s “could a tale unfold” for Scott’s “should have had a tale to tell” and “must tell the tale”? Besides, earlier in *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*, chap. 11, PGW uses an actual “has a tale to tell”.

As I say, we are still working on this . . . and may be some time.

Service with a Smile

An Audiobook Review by Tony Ring

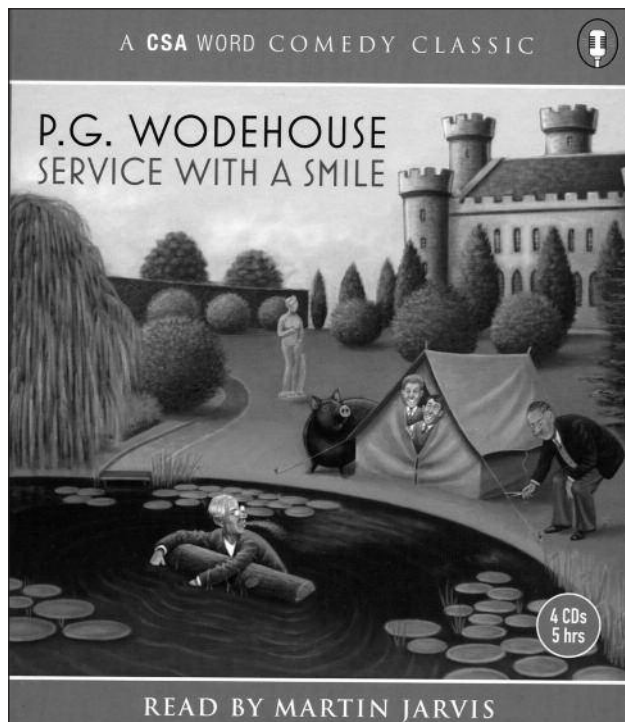
New authorised audio recordings of Wodehouse fiction (as opposed to the unauthorised recordings, mainly in the USA, of which there are a plethora available from Internet sources) continue to appear regularly, as regular readers of *Wooster Sauce* will be aware. One advantage the authorised recordings have – which certainly makes them value for money – is the identity of the readers, highly accomplished actors who are expert in this branch of their art.

A recent offering from CSA Word is Martin Jarvis's abridged version of *Service with a Smile*. I have read this book many times, but it is only when you hear the voices that you realise what a relatively minor part Lord Emsworth played in this particular novel, which in any event is one of the shorter Blandings books. His is such a distinctive voice, almost comparable in Jarvis's repertoire to William Brown, that you actually start wondering when he will reappear.

Another distinctive voice is that of George Threepwood, Lord Bosham's son, who is infesting the castle, making friends with the Duke of Dunstable, and causing mayhem with his camera. Wodehouse describes George's method of vocal delivery thus:

Owing to his tender years George had rather a high voice, and the sudden sound of it had made [the Duke] bite his tongue.

For once I felt that Martin Jarvis's rendering rather overdid the need for a distinctive voice. Especially in a scene about halfway through the book, George's voice jarred a bit, and I found myself wishing that Plum had been less explicit in his description! But that is a minor and personal cavil which by no means spoils another worthy addition to the CSA series.



Service with a Smile, Read by Martin Jarvis (4 CDs)
CSA Word TT4CD 251 / ISBN 978-190614743-3 (5 hrs)
www.csaword.co.uk

Passing References

From *Where Was I?! The World According to Terry Wogan* (2009)

P E TURNER notes with approval that, “whilst reading my 13-year-old daughter’s favourite holiday reading, Terry Wogan’s *Where Was I?!*, page 209, I came upon a quote from Plum: ‘There’s some rum work done at the baptismal font’. I always knew Terry Wogan had some good breeding and education.”

From *That Old Cape Magic*, by Richard Russo (2009)

CHARLES GOULD nominates this quote from Chapter 1 of Russo’s book as a candidate for the Department of Unlikely Juxtapositions: “His father alternated between literary pornography and P. G. Wodehouse, as if *Naked Lunch* and *Bertie Wooster Sees It Through* were intended as companion pieces.”

From *Blue Rondo*, by John Lawton (2006)

NIRAV SHAH spotted two Wodehouse references in this crime thriller set in 1959. In the first passage, the author gets a crucial point drastically wrong, something all Wodehouse fans will spot at once:

It was a pleasant drive through the burgeoning English countryside in summer, and a pleasant house spent on the joys of the Gloucester Old Spot. How Lord Emsworth could even keep Whites baffled Tory – as, indeed, he thought it must baffle all Mr Wodehouse’s readers. The thought sent him off at a tangent of fantasy. Would he be one day turned into Lord Emsworth? He already kept pigs and felt as though his life was a plague of sisters. What else did Fate have in store for him? The forgetfulness of the classic English duffer?

In the second passage, later in the book, the detective hero, Freddie Troy, expounds on the joys of Simpson’s, noting that “if you had a talent for half-way decent prose you could say it was a Temple to Food. At least, I think that’s what P. G. Wodehouse called it.”

After marrying Anastatia Bates, he wrote mystery thrillers, and so skilful was his technique that he was soon able to push out his couple of thousand words of wholesome blood-stained fiction each morning before breakfast, leaving the rest of the day for the normal fifty-four holes of golf.

(From ‘Rodney Has a Relapse’, 1949)

A Cluster of Clerihews

Well, what fun! The announcement in our March issue of a prize being offered for the Best Wodehouse Clerihew has resulted in a further outpouring of verses from our extremely talented members. This is going to make judging very difficult indeed. As a reminder, the competition runs through the end of September, and the winner will receive a DVD of all 23 episodes of *Jeeves & Wooster*, digitally restored and generously donated to the Society by ITV. There is no limit on the number of clerihews you can submit, though we cannot guarantee that all those we receive will be published. At this point the Editor is fairly drowning in clerihews, and we should be able to keep publishing them for many years to come. But *all* will be considered in our competition – so keep them coming!

Wodehouse or Plum
Is timeless to some.
"Oh, Boy!" but he knows
That "Anything Goes".

– Ian Isherwood

The Hon. Frederick Threepwood
Looks more like a sheep than a sheep could.
But for Donaldson's Dog Joy he'll risk it:
He only goes for those who take the biscuit.

– Fr. Rob Bovendeaard

Anatole was a great cook,
Who featured in many of Plum's books.
But what Bertie loved most,
Was his Foie Gras on Melba Toast.

– Alexander Connolly

Bertie needed Jeeves' advice.
It came, however, at a price.
When he wore a moustache or a tie
With Jeeves' wishes it had to comply.

– John Durston

Lord Ickenham, known as Uncle Fred
Is the best relative one can get.
Pongo Twistleton is the lucky nephew
And therefore present in this clerihew.

– Eric Backer

Wooster, B., can hardly expect
The sort of tributes to his intellect
That Jeeves
Regularly receives.

– Jonathan Bacchus

Sir Roderick Spode
Who could bully and goad
Would a quivering wreck be
At the mention of Eulalie.

– Geoff Millward

Bertie asked his Auntie Dahlia,
"Am I really such a failure
That you wished I'd been drowned in the baptismal font
If those are the words I want?"

– Lennart Anderson

Bingo's girls filled his friends with apprehension.
It was beyond their comprehension
That Cupid
Could be that stupid.

– Norman Murphy

Aunt Dahlia,
The aunt who'll never fail ya,
Vies from time to time with Agatha,
The aunt who's always there to nag a' ya.

– Charles E Gould, Jr

The Honourable Gally Threepwood,
Instead of going to sleep would
Sit up and write of his youthful excess,
Which caused Parsloe and others much distress.

– James Linwood

His man Jeeves
Bertie Wooster believes
Can always give him the answer.
The problem is never the problem, but the Aunts are.

– Peter Thompson

An Afternoon with Our President

On May 24, some Society members attended the National Theatre to enjoy 'In Conversation with Richard Briers', in which our President gave a humorous and sometimes very frank account of his long career of TV sitcoms, theatre, Shakespearean roles, and even a spell as a pantomime dame. Here is the group with Richard – from left: Richard's daughter, Lucy Briers; Uschi Knieper; Amara El-Gammal; Lesley Tapson; Norman Murphy; Society Chairman Hilary Bruce; Richard Briers and his wife, Ann Davies; and Robert Bruce.



Poet's Corner

Back to His Native Strand

Oh, Sherlock Holmes lay hidden
more than half a dozen years.
He left his loving London
in a whirl of doubts and fears.
For we thought a wicked party
Of the name of Moriarty
Had despatched him
(in a manner fit to freeze one).

They grappled on a cliff-top,
on a ledge six inches wide;
We deemed his chances flimsy
when he vanished o'er the side.
But the very latest news is
That he merely got some bruises.
If there is a man who's hard to kill,
why he's one.

Oh Sherlock, Sherlock, he's in town again,
That prince of perspicacity,
that monument of brain.
It seems he wasn't hurt at all
By tumbling down the waterfall.
That sort of thing is *fun* to Sherlock.

When Sherlock left his native Strand,
such groans were seldom heard;
With sobs the Public's frame was rent:
with tears its eye was blurred.
But the optimists reflected
That he might be resurrected:
It formed our only theme of conversation.

We asked each other, Would he be?
And if so, How and where?
We went about our duties
with a less dejected air.
And they say that a suggestion

Of a Parliamentary question
Was received with marked approval
by the nation.

And Sherlock, Sherlock, he's in town again,
Sir Conan has discovered him,
and offers to explain.
The explanation may be thin,
But bless you! We don't care a pin,
If he'll but give us back our Sherlock.

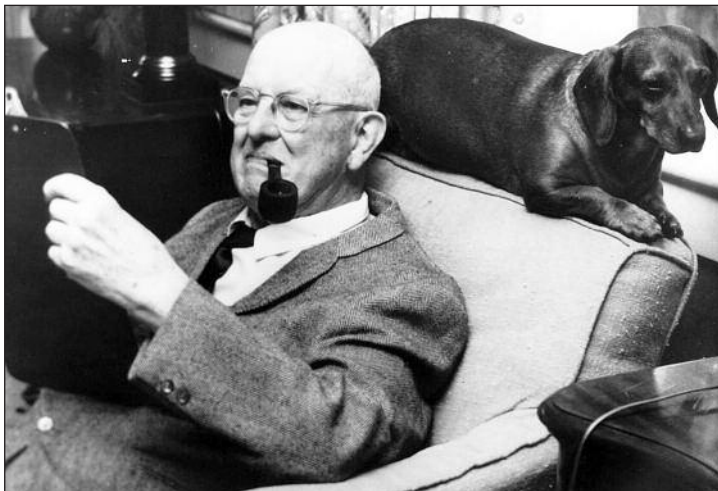
The burglar groans and lays aside
his jemmy, keys and drill;
The enterprising murderer proceeds
to make his will;
The fraud-promoting jobber
Feels convinced that those who rob err;
The felon finds no balm in his employment.

The forger and the swindler
start up shrieking in their sleep;
No longer on his mother
does the coster gaily leap;
The Mile End sportsman ceases
To kick passers-by to pieces,
Or does it with diminishing enjoyment.

For Sherlock, Sherlock, he's in town again,
The prince of perspicacity,
that monument of brain.
The world of crime has got the blues,
For Sherlock's out and after clues,
And everything's a clue to Sherlock.

From *Punch*, 27 May 1903

(Commenting on the report that Sherlock Holmes was to reappear in the *Strand Magazine*. The lines were to the air 'Archie' in *The Toreador*.)



Plum and Friend

This photograph of Wodehouse and his dog Jed, signed by him to Ernestine 'Teenie' Bowes-Lyon, appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of 13 March. The photo accompanied an item about a letter he had written to Teenie, a cousin of the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and one of the dedicatees of *The Pothunters*. The letter, which was to be sold with three other letters at auction, was written shortly before his death and concerned his recently conferred knighthood, as a result of which his home was "a pandemonium . . . a seething mass of interviewers and photo-graphers, all half-wits". (Thanks to JO JACOBUS)

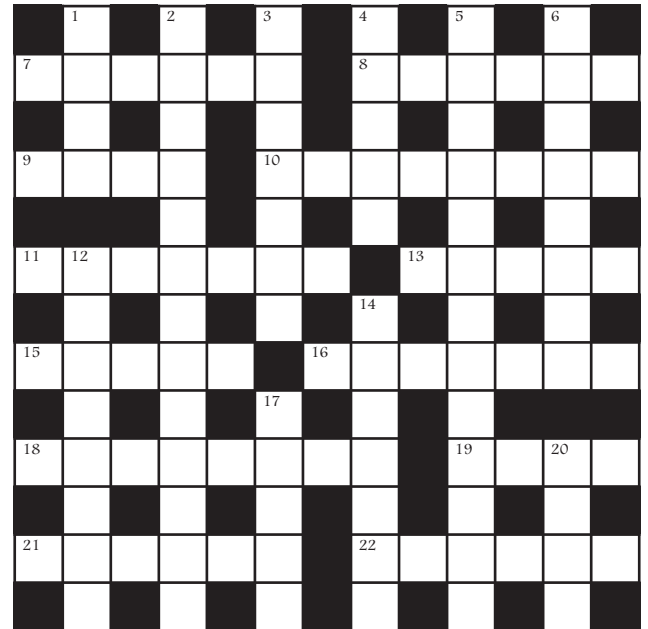
A Wodehouse Crossword

by Mark Smith

Answers to this puzzle will be published in the September issue.

Across

- 7/19 Comic, mere joker, not primarily one for whom PGW provided lyrics (6,4)
- 8 In Paris, I should stand by the first lady, initially serving for the valet
- 9 Dwelling place nowt messed about with (4)
- 10 See 21
- 11 To glide effortlessly, be quiet, always in the German fashion (7)
- 13 Jewel of the former British Empire, within diamond enclosure (5)
- 15 Offspring is to go to court (5)
- 16 Lovable eccentric from our country hills (7)
- 18 Tattered mitre conceals return of evil priest (8)
- 19 See 7
- 21/10 Bertie's fearsome aunt meets man with neckwear, a novelist (6,8)
- 22 Small dish in Spanish oak, perhaps (6)



- 5 Put salt on parasite and set about gaining year-round permits (6,7)
- 6 Making a choice, after a month, I sound a bell (8)
- 12 Sang hits about site of battle (8)
- 14 Risk getting torn apart by a bear, having moved close by (7)
- 17 God, what a book! (5)
- 20 Wild animal returns to the cane (4)

Down

- 1 Money from elaborate prose without initial restraint (4)
- 2 Night walkers emerge from long battle without me, before fellow returns and breaks about 51 (13)
- 3 Blandings butler meets journalist, all washed up
- 4 Having a reefer in the car, a Norwegian feature (5)

Solution to The Words of Wodehouse (March Acrostic)

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pinker / couch | 6. Angus / wound | 10. India / Peach |
| 2. Inject / flout | 7. Valentine / too | 11. Nutty / foil |
| 3. Guildford / pit | 8. Emsworth / hail | 12. Gullible |
| 4. Sudden / chi | 9. Watkyn / ha-ha | 13. South / whale |
| 5. Hubbard / hair | | |

Quote: You or I, Beach, finding a pig in the kitchen of a furnished villa in which we had just hung up our hats would keep calm and wait till the clouds rolled by. But not an author.

Novel: *Pigs Have Wings* (1952)

* * * * *

Solution to A Little Puzzle for the Logical Mind (Page 15)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 <i>Summer Lightning</i> | 7 <i>The Inimitable Jeeves</i> | 12 <i>The Code of the Woosters</i> |
| 2 <i>Pigs Have Wings</i> | 8 <i>Piccadilly Jim</i> | 13 <i>Good Morning, Bill</i> |
| 3 <i>The Pothunters</i> | 9 <i>The Clicking of Cuthbert</i> | 14 <i>Ukridge</i> |
| 4 <i>The Heart of a Goof</i> | 10 <i>Much Obligated, Jeeves</i> | 15 <i>Bring on the Girls</i> |
| 5 <i>Leave It to Psmith</i> | 11 <i>CD of Sitting Pretty</i> | 16 <i>Joy in the Morning</i> |
| 6 <i>The World of Mr Mulliner</i> | | |

Recent Press Comment

From *Daily Telegraph*, February 18

Jasper Rees's article on the return of *Yes, Prime Minister* (onstage at the Chichester Festival) included: "The comedy of *Yes, Minister* resided in an age-old inversion beloved of comedic writers from Moliere to Wodehouse, in which the servant is cleverer than the master."

From *The Times*, February 19

Reported that the Polish 'pianist supreme' Krystian Zimerman, who would be shortly holding a London recital using his own piano, was always busy: "tinkering, exploring, absorbing intellectual thought, savouring P G Wodehouse, buying parts of a piano's innards . . ."

From *The Glasgow Herald*, February 20

(from Melvyn Haggarty)

Commented on the lugubrious personality of then Celtic football manager Tony Mowbray: "To borrow P G Wodehouse's wonderful phrase, there is never any danger in mistaking Mr Mowbray with a ray of sunshine, at least in his discussions with representatives of the daily newspapers." [NB: Mowbray was sacked by Celtic in March.]

From *Daily Telegraph*, February 27

An article commented on the Duchess of Devonshire's interview in the *Tatler*, in which she said the British stiff upper lip "was now quivering like blancmange", asked whether it was the end of the "much-loved British quality of repressed emotion, the dignified silence we once laughed at but secretly admired", and went on to suggest that, as the language of Jeeves and Wooster (and as such a rich source of comedy), it was part of our cultural DNA.

From *Vanity Fair*, March

Christopher Hitchens wrote a long essay, 'Jeeves Spoken Here', in which he explained his conversion from wariness of the idea of audiobooks, aided by the skills of Martin Jarvis.

There is an acid test or gold standard, and it has to do with P G Wodehouse. His imagined universe is a sort of secret garden, which exerts such a hold on its regular visitors that they won't stand for any mucking about with, or in, it

(See also Press Comment in the March 2010 issue.)

From *The Guardian*, March 6

Reporting that Nancy Mitford's third book, *Wigs on the Green*, had been reprinted for the first time since it was published in 1935, Nicholas Lezard contrasted the gentle mockery of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts with Wodehouse's much more scornful comments four years later through the mouth of Bertie Wooster. He adds, in partial criticism of Miss Mitford's failure to maximise the comic potential of her selection of characters, that "there are reasons why Wodehouse is called 'the Master'".

From *Indian Express*, March 7

Reported a meeting of the Mumbai-based PGW fan club Blythe Spirits, which has more than 60 members.

From *The Guardian*, March 9

An article about apples as a seasonal food concluded with a reference to its "health-giving qualities – as P G Wodehouse famously remarked, 'an apple a day, if well aimed, keeps the doctor away.'"

From *Tribune Magazine*, March 12

In a tribute to the late Michael Foot, Tony Blair recalled how, before he had been elected to Parliament, he was standing for the safe Conservative seat of Beaconsfield: "I will always be grateful for the help and support he gave me when we first campaigned together at the Beaconsfield by-election. We met in a pub and I started asking him about P G Wodehouse, an interest we shared." (See also March 24.)

From *The Independent*, March 15

(from Murray Hedgcock)

In an interview about the audiobooks he has recorded, Society Patron Martin Jarvis revealed: "My director when I'm reading his novels is Wodehouse himself: his narrative, the way that he describes his characters. They're wonderfully plotted, comic and very moving." (See page 20 for a review of Jarvis's reading of *Service with a Smile*.)

From *Daily Mail*, March 17

David Wilkes's report of the memorial service for Keith Waterhouse commented that Waterhouse had left only one request for his memorial service – a passage from PGW's 'Goodbye to All Cats', which was delivered by Penelope Keith.

From *Evening Standard*, March 19

(from Carolyn de la Plain)

A review of a Channel 4 documentary about Rachel Johnson's editorship of *The Lady* started by wondering whether her world was more like Waugh's or Wodehouse's.

From *Daily Mail*, March 19

Responding to the Chairwoman of the Orange Prize's complaint that the 129 novels she read in compiling the long list were full of grimness, Julia Llewellyn wrote: "Pleasure seems to have become a rather neglected element in publishing." Recalling the thousands of books she had read, she said the ones she remembered involved being transported into a happier world and laughing out loud. Among other incidents, Llewellyn recalled a man banging the wall in the next room at a hotel in response to her guffawing at the antics of Jeeves.

From *Evening Standard*, March 22 (from Mark Taha)

An item in 'Londoner's Diary' quoted the commentator Anthony Howard regarding Tony Blair's planned memoirs and the fact that when the Labour leader Michael Foot met Blair in 1982, they discussed P G Wodehouse almost exclusively, which convinced Foot that Blair was destined for greatness. Noted Howard: "P G Wodehouse is the sort of writer I'd expect a public schoolboy to read. I'd be surprised if he has read George Eliot."

From *Seven Magazine*, *Daily Telegraph*, March 28

(from Sally Knowles)

In an item praising the publication of Everyman's 70th Wodehouse title, it was noted that PGW might revise a cynical opinion he expressed in *My Man Jeeves*: "All a publisher has to do is write cheques at intervals, while a lot of deserving and industrious chappies rally round and do the real work."

From Sunday Times, March 28 (From Lennart Andersson)
The 'Bookwise' quiz sought the source for characters named Constance, including: "This troublesome, aristocratic sister of Clarence became chaperone to Myra Schoonmaker. Failing in her attempts to keep the girl away from an impoverished suitor she sought help from Myra's father. Smitten, he proposed marriage to Constance."

From The Spectator, March 30

Alex Massie discussed an article by Jenny Haddon about Wodehouse's writing, in which she argued that the eccentricity of his characters existed only in their lack of self-consciousness. Massie responded by pointing out that so many were assailed by a world of knavery, whether it be a Bassett, a Glossop, a Baxter, a Steggles, and so on. He concluded:

Dame Fortune is always lurking round the next corner armed with the lead piping and when spring is in the air and all seems well then you know that trouble is looming. For all his sunny cheer, Wodehouse really puts his chaps through the wringer.

From BBC Radio 4, March 30 (from Alexander Dainty)

The Radio 4 programme *A Good Read* featured the book recommendations of Gyles Brandreth and Burt Caesar, who agreed on *Right Ho, Jeeves*. Brandreth said that P G Wodehouse was one of the funniest authors he had ever read, while Caesar reported that *Right Ho, Jeeves* was his first introduction to Wodehouse.

From The Australian, April 3

Recalling Bertie Wooster's comment to Jeeves that Spode could not be a successful dictator *and* design women's underclothing ("One or the other. Not both." "Precisely, sir."), James Allan pointed out that the Rudd government "can't go quiet about the one-sided pro-bill of rights report it commissioned and received, then pretend it has no position on bills of rights going into the election. Either it explicitly disavows any intention to enact one or it has to be taken as being in favour of bringing one in after the election. One or the other. Not both."

From The Times, April 3

Christina Hardyment favourably reviewed the unabridged audio-recording by Martin Jarvis of *The Inimitable Jeeves*. (*The Guardian* registered similar approval on May 22.)

From The Times, April 3 (from Mike Underdown)

Mike Wade's favourable review of *It Is Your Life*, by James Kelman, noted, "It is certainly never difficult to distinguish between this Scotsman and a ray of sunshine."

From ft.com (website), April 9

In an interview, novelist and biographer D J Taylor's answer to the question "What is the last thing you read that made you laugh out loud?" was "A sentence I read yesterday in P G Wodehouse's *Psmith Journalist*."

From Independent, April 10

The Saturday Quiz included the question "The Drones Club features in a series of 20th-century stories. By which author?"

From The Financial Times, April 10

Jonathan Guthrie wrote a short pastiche about Jeeves

advising Bertie Wooster (assumed to be an election strategist) about how to reel in the business vote.

From Scotland on Sunday, April 11 (from Iain Anderson)

One of a number of papers to carry a review of *Peter Pan's First XI*, a newly-published book about the Allahakbarries, the cricket team founded by J M Barrie for which such authors as Wodehouse, Milne, Doyle, and Jerome all played. The article included a 1903 photo of the team, with Wodehouse in the back row.

From The Guardian, April 17

'Jeeves Takes Charge' appeared in the paper's list of the sources of the top ten breakfasts in literature (in this case, Jeeves's pick-me-up!).

From the Eastern Daily Press, April 19 (from David Sharp)

An item on Lord Mandelson's dance with an elderly lady in Blackpool notes that he "has acquired the nickname of Lord Rio of Rumba, which makes relevant the comment by P G Wodehouse: 'He intensified the silent passion of his dancing, trying to convey the impression of being something South American, which ought to be chained up and muzzled in the interest of pure womanhood.' Or, as he also said: 'He was a man who never let his left hip know what his right hip was doing.'"

From The Week, May 1 (from Alexander Dainty)

A PGW quote led off a column headed 'Wit & Wisdom': "The great thing in life, if we wish to be happy and prosperous, is to miss as many political debates as possible."

From The Independent on Sunday, May 2

Emma Townshend extolled the virtues of gardening shows other than Chelsea, mentioning that the Malvern show is "right in the heart of P G Wodehouse's Emsworth country. It is organised by the Three Counties Agricultural Society, and I've always suspected that the competitive tendencies shown by Lord Emsworth with regard to his prize-winning pig, the Duchess [sic] of Blandings, are alive and well at Malvern."

From Sunday Post, May 9 (from Melvyn Haggarty)

TV presenter Sally Magnusson wrote: "There's nothing to beat a good laugh: If ever I'm low, I'll turn to the glorious nonsense of the master wordsmith P G Wodehouse."

From The Republican (Springfield, Massachusetts), May 11 (from Alvin P. Cohen)

Phillip Alder noted that the game of bridge "has its psychological side. It helps to be like Jeeves, the gentleman's gentleman of Bertie Wooster, invented by P. G. Wodehouse. Jeeves understood the psychology of the individual. He was a bridge player who adjusted his bidding and play dependent upon his opponents."

From Today, BBC Radio 4, May 12

(from Ian Alexander-Sinclair)

In discussing the impartiality of the civil service and its ability to cope with changes of government, Professor Peter Hennessey noted that "the career civil service shimmies, Jeeves-like . . ."

From Saturday Live, BBC Radio 4, May 15

(from Gwendolin Goldbloom)

On this programme, a poem by Elvis McGonagall likened the leaders of the new government to Bertie and Jeeves. (Gwendolin notes that it did not elucidate on which was which, or indeed who.)

Future Events for Your Diary

July 4, 2010 Cricket at Charterhouse School

Members of the Gold Bats will play the Intellectuals at Charterhouse School; start time is 2 p.m.

July 6, 2010 Society Meeting

We will meet from 6 p.m. at the Arts Club, 40 Dover Street. A very special entertainment is planned by Society member Paul Kent; see page 5.

Norman Murphy will conduct an abbreviated Wodehouse Walk prior to the meeting.

July 21, 2010 Cricket in Kent

Members of the Gold Bats will play together with the Siegfried Sassoon Society against the Matfield Cricket Club in Kent, starting at 2 p.m.

August 8, 2010 Gold Bats v Kirby Strollers

This annual charity match will take place in the grounds of Audley End House, near Saffron Walden; start time is 1 p.m. For more about Audley End, including a map, see <http://bit.ly/bVgjH1>.

September 11, 2010 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Norman Murphy will lead another walk around Wodehouse's London; start time 10 a.m.

September 18-19, 2010 Newbury Show

The Royal County of Berkshire Show at the Newbury Showground, Berkshire, includes the Berkshire Pig Breeders Club Champion of Champions, sponsored by the Society. Judging will be the morning of Sunday the 19th. For more info, see <http://www.newburyshow.co.uk/>.

October 28, 2010 Dinner at Gray's Inn

The application form for the Society's biannual formal dinner is enclosed with this issue. See page 5.

November 16, 2010 Society Meeting

We will meet from 6 p.m. at the Arts Club; speaker to be announced.

October 13-16, 2011 The Wodehouse Society Convention, Detroit, Michigan

Advance notice of our American cousins' biennial gathering, this time to be held in Detroit, Michigan.

When she spoke it was with the mildness of a cushat dove addressing another cushat dove from which it was trying to borrow money.
(From *Jeeves in the Offing*, 1960)

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