

WOOSTER SAUCE

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

Number 61

March 2012

Translating P G Wodehouse

by Tamaki Morimura

Editor's note: This article was originally published in ALS: The Journal of the Alliance of Literary Societies, Volume 5 (2011). We are publishing it, with Tamaki's kind permission, as the first in a series of articles on translating Wodehouse into other languages.

I translate P G Wodehouse into Japanese. I call myself a fortunate translator because I believe I have been very lucky. I have done 15 Wodehouse books so far, and two of them later appeared in mangas, which are Japanese comic books.

Translating Wodehouse is fun. If you are a singer, you probably enjoy singing Mozart. If you are a translator, you would definitely enjoy translating Wodehouse. When you sing Mozart, you can be constantly surprised by sophisticated phrasings, impromptu wit, solid construction, and clever twists, all along with incredibly lovely melodies. The joy of translating Wodehouse is something akin to that. One can become lost in translating Wodehouse.

But, of course, it is not like having fun singing karaoke with one's kind and patient family or friends. When you sing for a paying audience or in front of a recording microphone, you have a responsibility to your audience, to the composer, to your agent, and to the record company. Similarly, I have this Mozart of a comic writer as my responsibility, and it is I who must make him intelligible to Japanese readers. If I get it wrong, then I might destroy him literarily. If my poor translation means the books do not sell well, I am depriving

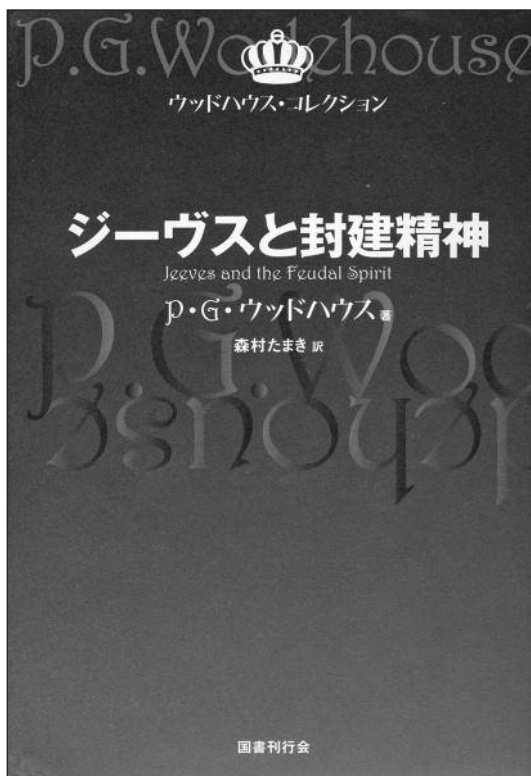
Japanese readers of the opportunity to enjoy Wodehouse.

Speaking of lost opportunity, we Japanese were deprived of Wodehouse for nearly 50 years. He had been practically forgotten for half a century after World War II. Before the war, Wodehouse used to be popular in Japan, and about ten of his books had been translated. But after the war, he was forgotten, probably because the magazines that carried his stories and the publishers who published his books went out of business. There were several attempts to reintroduce Wodehouse after the war, but none of them really succeeded.

Some people said that the British sense of humour was untranslatable into Japanese, and that Japanese readers would never be able to appreciate Wodehouse in the truest sense. Gussie Fink-Nottle in

Right Ho, Jeeves called such an attitude defeatist. I confess that I used to be defeatist myself. Even when I actually began translating Wodehouse, I could not throw off this view completely, wondering if Japanese readers would really appreciate Wodehouse's inimitable prose, and if I could convey the wonderful humour of his ideas and jokes to them.

Luckily, I kept on translating the 'untranslatable' Wodehouse books while thoroughly enjoying them. And it has turned out that many other Japanese readers also love Wodehouse. That is why I call myself a really fortunate translator, and why I now know that the defeatist view is wrong. Still, although mistaken, the questions that view raises are worth considering.



Cover of one of Tamaki's 15 – no, 17 – translations

Hilaire Belloc once wrote that “the end of writing is the production in the reader’s mind of a certain image and a certain emotion. And the means towards that end are the use of words in any particular language; and the complete use of that medium is the choosing of the right words and the putting of them into the right order.” Belloc believed P G Wodehouse did this better than anyone else and called him the best English writer then alive.

When you know you are translating the best English writer, one persistent question is: Am I doing justice to the Master? Am I choosing the right Japanese words and putting them in the right order? I hope that I am doing it. It is a challenge, and I know I am trying to attain an unattainable goal. What I can honestly say is that I am doing my best.

As for conveying the full sense of Wodehouse, I am more optimistic. Of course, there are so many things that need to be explained to Japanese readers. But I firmly believe that there exists a universal sense of what is funny and laughs that can be shared, regardless of time, language, and nationality. And Wodehouse’s works possess a quality that enables us to laugh heartily.

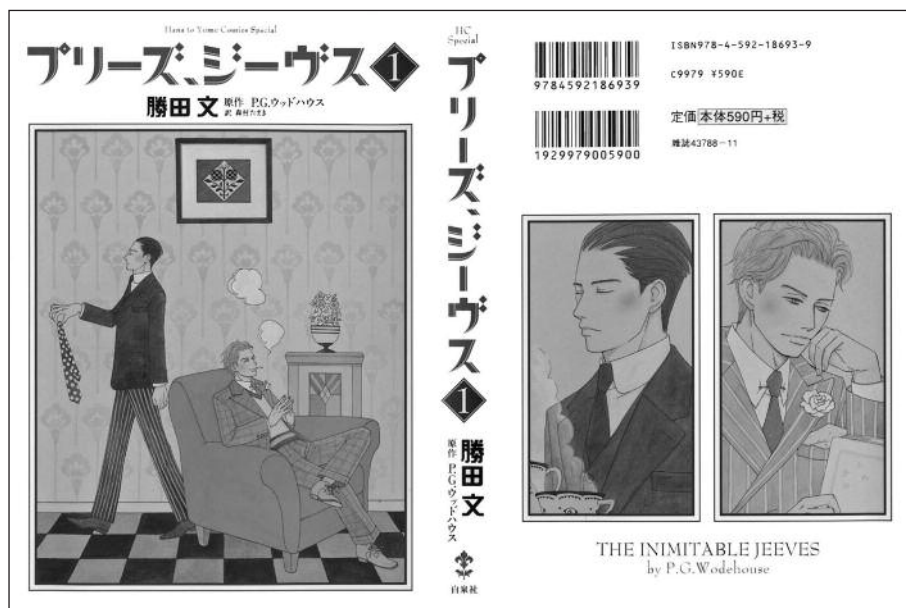
To supply explanations, I decided to include notes in the text, telling readers that, for example, this is an excerpt from the poet Tennyson’s *Mariana*; that is a reference to *King Lear*, act 1, scene 2; what a deaf adder is; and who Aubrey Smith and Marie Lloyd were. So mine is a kind of fully annotated version, and even though there are always risks of interrupting the flow of writing, and there might be other ways of providing supplementary information, I think my approach is working reasonably well.

It seems that there are common problems in the art of translation, and there are problems that are specifically inherent in Japanese translation. As an example, I would like to point out what I call the ‘I’ problem. In English, there is the first person ‘I’ and this ‘I’ is something unmistakable, unshakable, definite – always ‘I’. But, in Japanese, ‘I’ does change. I (I mean, I) just looked at a Japanese thesaurus and found ‘I’ (I mean ‘I’s’) has 33 different ways of putting it, and I personally can think of more. With more than 30 ways of identifying oneself, ‘I’ can be something that represents one’s personality and identity, and that shows what one is, where one lives, which school one went to, one’s way of life, and so on. I might seem to be overstating the roles of ‘I’, but in Japanese I have to treat ‘I’s’ this way, and I have to decide which ‘I’ a certain character should use as an integral part of narrating the story and describing the

characters. This may be immaterial in English, but it is very important in Japanese when one remembers that, with one exception, the many superb Wooster and Jeeves stories are narrated in the first person by Bertie Wooster.

That is enough about ‘I’, and I shall forbear from commencing on ‘you’, which my Japanese thesaurus lists in 20 different ways.

Finally, I should mention the matter of translating Wodehouse into a completely different medium: mangas, which are Japanese cartoon books. Many Wodehouse stories and novels have been made into movies, plays, and TV and radio shows, but rarely into cartoons. I should emphasise that Japanese mangas and animated cartoons are



Cover of the manga of The Inimitable Jeeves, drawn by Bun Katsuta

renowned for their artistry and not considered to be a form of entertainment just for children. There are a great many cartoon series for adults, and I am delighted to tell you that the ‘Jeeves Manga’ is one of the very best. It is drawn by an extremely talented young artist, Ms Bun Katsuta, and, if you see one, you will probably want to learn Japanese to appreciate the full meaning of what she has drawn. You will be astonished at the precision of her drawings and impressed by her obvious desire to depict the world of Wodehouse accurately.

Acting as a background adviser in creating a Wodehouse manga is a very interesting experience. I would not call it a collaborative effort because I do not suggest what Ms Bun should do; rather, I want Ms Bun to create and develop her own world of Jeeves and Wooster, so I just answer her questions. When I first started doing this, I became aware of how little I knew about the mundane details of the Wodehouse world of the 1920s–30s. One of Ms Bun’s first questions was what the old ‘tenner’ looked like, and I spent some time finding an image of an old ten-pound note. We travelled to London together to show her real English stately homes; old shops; country inns; the original of Wodehouse’s Drones Club (still

in existence); and the minutiae of Bertie Wooster's London, including townhouses, Victorian shop fronts, 1920s architecture, lampposts, and postboxes.

We are very fortunate, too, to have the secret weapon of knowledgeable English friends, especially Norman Murphy, who is a renowned Wodehouse scholar, social historian, and architecture enthusiast, and his wife, Elin. They very kindly took on the task of showing us the background of Jeeves and Wooster, pointing out features of English buildings and life seemingly unchanged since Wodehouse's time.

I do not want to sound complacent, but I cannot help thinking I am extraordinarily fortunate. Bertie Wooster once said: "These things cannot be mere coincidence. They must be meant. What I'm driving at is that Providence seems to look after the chumps of this world; and, personally, I'm all for it." I wholeheartedly agree with Mr Wooster and thank Wodehousean Providence for allowing me to follow the example of Uncle Fred (Frederick, Earl of Ickenham) in attempting to spread sweetness and light in the faraway island of Japan.

About the Author

An academic law scholar, Tamaki Morimura has been translating Wodehouse since 2004; her first full translation, *The Inimitable Jeeves*, was published in February 2005. Since then her publisher, Kokushokankokai, has published 17 of her translations (two more have been produced since this article was written). In January this year she published *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*, the last of her Jeeves and Wooster books; non-Jeeves titles published include *Summer Lightning*, *Heavy Weather*, and *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*. This



PC Tamaki, about to lose her helmet

autumn Tamaki will be publishing an anthology of Wodehouse stories. In addition to all this, she is an enthusiastic member of both The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) and The Wodehouse Society (US) and has made her mark at events of both societies. Married to Susumu Morimura,

Tamaki is the proud mother of three children, and all the family just nod their heads whenever she goes off on another Wodehouse adventure.

A Wodehouse Limerick

by John Durston

Along came the black-shorted Spode.
Leading his louts down the road.
A Lord he became,
Sidcup the name
But still the same nasty toad.

Society News

A Wodehouse Weekend in Norfolk

If you were interested in joining the Society's excursion to Norfolk, time may have run out by the time you read this. Or it may not. At the time of going to press, the coach was almost, but not quite, full, so there may yet be a chance to get a seat. If you live in Norfolk and want to join the group there, that may also be possible.

Cricket 2012

Last year, for the first time in the Society's history, both our traditional cricket matches, against the Dulwich Dusters and the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, were cancelled due to rain. This was hugely disappointing for those of us who look forward to these events, so let's keep fingers crossed that no such disaster mars play this year.

On Friday, June 15, we will gather at the pavilion on the grounds of Dulwich College, there to cheer on the Gold Bats against the college's masters. As always, the match will commence around 4.30 p.m., and as always, the Society will host the celebrated traditional cricket tea. If you plan to come and watch (as well as eat), please note that tickets are required for the tea; applications are enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

More than a week later, on Sunday, June 24, the Gold Bats will play against the Sherlock Holmes Society at the West Wycombe Cricket Club's ground, which is just off the A40 (Oxford Road) in West Wycombe. The match usually starts around 11 a.m., with a longish break between innings, the better to enjoy your picnic lunch (of the bring-your-own variety), and we usually finish up and then head off to the Swan Inn around 6 p.m. In the past, some members of both societies have attended the match in period costume, with the Holmesians usually cutting a very striking dash. The day is always enjoyable, and it's free, so do come and join us!

Details of other matches in which members of the Gold Bats take part will be published in Future Events in the June issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

Subscription Increase

Soon after you receive this *Wooster Sauce*, your committee will once again be debating a possible subscription rise, probably to £20. Last year, the vote went against increasing subs, largely because of the prevailing economic conditions. These haven't noticeably improved over the year, but neither have the ever-rising costs (mainly printing and postage) the Society faces. It will be an interesting debate; if subs are set to rise, the majority of members won't be affected until 2013, because those who pay by standing order will get a year's grace on any rise.

P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters

Reviewed by Harry Mount

In 1952, P G Wodehouse wrote to his old Dulwich school-friend William Townend, who was putting together an anthology of their correspondence, published the following year as *Performing Flea*. Shuffling through half a century of letters, Wodehouse was moved to say, “What a lot there is in it about Pokes and football! I shall probably have to cut the Pokes down a good bit, but I shall leave in a good bit of the footer.”

Well, Sophie Ratcliffe, the Christ Church don who has edited the Wodehouse letters, has left in not just the footer but also a good deal of the Pokes. We hear a lot about Wonder, the Wodehouses’ Pekingese, as well as plenty on the Dulwich match with Bedford – the contest Wodehouse most longed to hear about after the War, 3,000 miles away in his New York bolthole.

Perhaps the footer and the Pokes are for obsessive Wodehousians only. But I think Ratcliffe was right to include them. It’s through the day-to-day details of Wodehouse’s life that you build up a picture of what he was really like. The clichés are true – he did remain, if not in a childlike state, then in a state that looked back to childhood, and school life, rather obsessively. That state overlapped with a winning brand of innocence that only let him down during the infamous broadcasts from a German prisoner-of-war camp.

None of this will come as news to learned Wodehousians, who will know most of his correspondence, and his wartime shortcomings, inside out. Much of the correspondence has been published before, and not just in *Performing Flea*. But, still, to those less versed in Wodehousiana, his letters are a first-rate way into his mind, and into his agony over what he did during the war.

Again and again, in letters to his friends and to the government authorities, he emphasises that his broadcasts were only meant to be funny, not supportive of the Germans; that he was due to be let out of the camp at the age of 60 anyway, and not because the Nazis had taken a shine to any of his supposed propaganda. He leaps on defences from allies – such as George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh – and is plunged into Stygian gloom by any suggestion of Nazi collaboration.

How sad that the incident cast a shadow over his post-war life – and left him reluctant to return to

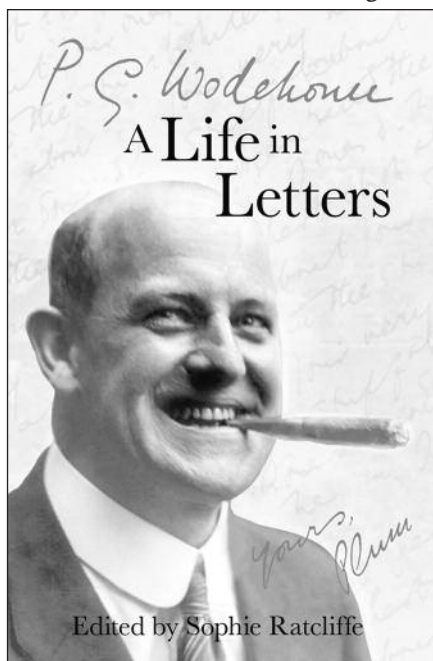
England. But the comprehensive selection of letters means the reader gets a far broader picture of Wodehouse’s life, going right back to his Dulwich days.

Already, in 1899, when Wodehouse is trying to get into Oxford, you can see the emerging writer in him. In a letter to his school-friend Eric George, he signs off with a bit of classic Wodehousese: “Yrs through the ever-rolling stremes of tyme” – a borrowing from Watt’s hymn ‘O God, Our Help in Ages Past’. This comic trick – of taking high poetry and transforming it into everyday, knockabout chit-chat – became a staple element in Jeeves-Wooster interchanges. Ditto the use of abbreviation: “best congraggers,” an 18-year-old Wodehouse writes, again to Eric George.

His overwhelming compulsion was to make light of everything, even the shattering news that his parents couldn’t afford to send him to Oxford; or, as he puts it, again in classic Wodehousese, “My people have not got enough of what are vulgarly but forcibly called ‘stamps’ to send me to Varsity.”

Wodehouse’s childhood gave him an attachment not just to school sports but also to an interest in money for money’s sake – and that’s not meant in a pejorative way. He was tremendously generous to all those around him, and his own needs were few, beyond books, chocolate, and tobacco. But he documents in a meticulous way every cent and penny that comes his way, keeping his own precise records. I’m with the great man on the dangers of over-egging psychological analysis rooted in childhood. But, presumably, his people’s shortage of stamps must have had a pretty powerful effect on his approach to money throughout his life, as would his failed banking career. In among the family-and-friends letters, shot through with a preternatural jolliness, gentleness, and friendliness, you can see the steel in Wodehouse’s backbone, forged perhaps by that childhood disappointment.

His work rate was staggering. In 1920, about to turn 40, he writes to Bill Townend, declaring without arrogance that he has written an 8,000-word golf story in two days, that he can do about 2,500 words of a novel in a day, and that he has written 100,000 words of *The Girl on the Boat* in two months. What’s more, this work rate continued more or less



through his wartime internment and into his 90s, right up until his death.

The steel also emerges in a brand of, if not malice, then effective observation of the shortcomings of others, a *sine qua non* of the comic writer. “Etonians as a class always strike me as a bit weedy,” he writes to his brother in 1936. “Perhaps it is those awful clothes they wear.”

To Nancy Spain, a journalist who had attacked *Performing Flea*, he really lays off the old oil. “I’ll give you a tip which will be useful to you. Always read at least some of a book before you review it. It makes a tremendous difference and you can always find someone to help you with the difficult words.”

Wodehouse is a natural at the old English trick of being extraordinarily intelligent, but doing his best to hide it. Occasionally, though, the planet-sized brains pop out. In a 1961 letter to his friend and fellow writer Guy Bolton, he carefully analyses Cole Porter’s technique, saying, “Why can’t he see that you must have a transition of thought in a lyric just as in dialogue?”

Now, to criticise Cole Porter’s songs is going it a bit, unless you’re a pretty good songwriter yourself, and a perfectionist to boot. Wodehouse was both. Throughout the letters, he’s on the lookout for plots, useful scenarios, and golden lines. Like all great writers, he is a magpie, storing up the gems for the perfect moment of deployment. In 1924, he writes to his adored stepdaughter, Leonora, about *Bill the Conqueror*, “Thank God, I have been able to work in that line about ‘I know it’s paraffin, but what have they put in it?’”

There is the occasional – the very occasional – editing mistake. Wodehouse’s step-granddaughter is not Lady Sheran Hornby, as billed, but Lady Hornby. These things may not matter much – they don’t really matter at all in the grand scheme of things – but the Master would never have got them wrong. Wodehouse’s Elysian world of planet-brained butlers and blessedly stupid toffs was entirely fictitious, but built on a scaffold of correct nomenclature, and reading as wide as the Atlantic. Or, as he puts it in a 1929 letter to Bill Townend, “Even in my stuff, the basis has to be solid.”

That fantasy was so expertly constructed, and so bewitching, that it could survive anything, even a World War, although you could forgive Wodehouse for writing in June 1945, “It seems a waste of time to write about butlers and country houses if both are obsolete.”

How wrong he was, how eternally, delightfully wrong.

P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters
 Edited by Sophie Ratcliffe
 Hutchinson ISBN 978-0-79634-1
 List Price £30

Harry Mount’s next book, *How England Made the English*, will be published by Viking in May.

What Other Reviewers Had to Say

This collection of letters shows Wodehouse more at ease among his intimate correspondents. At their best, they are funny, relaxed and charming – writing to his stepdaughter about her baby: “What a change from the old Chinese gangster who leered at us on your bed in April, fingering her gat under the swaddling clothes.”

In some other ways, the performance lapses and we glimpse what a hard-nosed professional Wodehouse really was. The jovial facade sometimes cracked, writing letters of surprising sharpness to reviewers, like Nancy Spain, who didn’t get the point. (“You certainly made a pretty bloody fool of yourself.”) . . .

The letters reveal a more complex, somewhat angrier, more venal character than the novels care to, and give an interestingly enriched self-portrait.

Philip Hensher in *The Daily Telegraph*

As with Robert McCrum’s fine biography, the narrative is more amiable than enthralling until it gains a galvanic impetus from Wodehouse’s moment of what he later described as “criminal madness”. Those are the pages that you turn with rapt attention, though fans will be absorbed by Wodehouse’s breezy bulletins both before and after. The early letters remind you of his early fame and (far more important to him) fortune. His spell in the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank, where he was despatched by his father instead of longed-for Oxford, proved to be as brief and fruitful as Dickens’s stint in the blacking factory. . . .

The penultimate letter gives the recipe for Jeeves’s celebrated morning-after restorative but this relishable collection will work equally well.

Christopher Hirst in *The Independent*

Ratcliffe, whose expertly deployed biographical titbits enliven this collection, says that the assembled letters ‘offer a fascinating and unique insight into a twentieth-century writing life, and the history of his time’. Maybe so. Any fan of Wodehouse will, at any rate, want to trot down to the local book emporium and collar a copy. The book is an essential part of the Wodehouse equipage, and a worthy companion to Robert McCrum’s magisterial 2004 biography. . . .

A consummate stylist and spinner of farcical romance: that was his chosen patch, and he tilled it assiduously. In 1933, Wodehouse wrote to Townend that ‘I sometimes feel as if I were a case of infantilism. I haven’t developed mentally at all since my last year at school. All my ideas and ideals are the same. I still think the Bedford match the most important thing in the world.’ Quite right, and thank goodness. Evelyn Waugh, in a famous BBC broadcast on the occasion of Plum’s eightieth birthday in 1961, got to the nub of his achievement when he stressed the ‘exquisite felicity of his language’ and the incorrigible innocence of his vision. That’s why he delights us, and anyone wishing to leaven that delight will want to tuck this volume of letters on the bookshelf next to the chronicles of Jeeves, Wooster, and the rest of the menagerie.

Roger Kimball in *Literary Review*

Is Rosie M. Banks For Real?

Asks Murray Hedgcock

I have my doubts about Rosie M. Banks. Of course I accept that she existed, that she was a popular novelist of supreme slush, that she married Bingo Little, presented him with the bouncing Algernon Aubrey, and, apart from keeping tight hold of the family finances and frowning on innocent pastimes such as gambling, contributed greatly to Bingo's happily married state.

But was Rosie M. Banks *really* Rosie M. Banks?

Let me explain. We meet her first when Bingo and Bertie Wooster lunch at the Senior Liberal, where members of the Drones were quartered while their club was being refurbished. Bingo discovers with interest that they have waitresses ("Good Lord – I thought that went out with the Armistice") only to be rebuffed by Bertie's "No" when he inquires: "Er – pretty girls?"



Bertie couldn't have been looking, because the lads are waited on by "a tallish girl with sort of soft, soulful brown eyes. Nice figure and all that. Rather decent hands, too". He admits: "I didn't remember having seen her about before, and I must say she raised the standard of the place quite a bit." Bingo duly reproaches his old chum ("I thought you said they weren't pretty, Bertie!") having of course fallen in love – yet again. And within a fortnight they are married, and Bingo brings her round: "This is my old pal, Bertie Wooster, darling."

Note the introduction – Bertie is named, but not Mrs Bingo. And it is not until she spots a copy of her book, *The Woman Who Braved All*, at Bingo's Uncle Mortimer's that we learn, from her own lips, that she is in fact the author – Rosie M. Banks.

Bertie is miffed: "She might have told you", to which Bingo explains: "It made such a hit with her when she found that I loved her for herself alone, despite her humble station [she was slinging foodstuffs at the Senior Liberal, to collect material for a book, *Mervyn Keene, Clubman*] that she kept it under her hat. She meant to spring it on me later on, she said".

And so on.

Now to my concern: under what name did Rosie M. Banks, spinster of some parish or other, become the bride of that popular man-about-town, Richard M. Little?

Bingo was a bit of an ass, but surely he would have noticed, if only when signing the register, that his bride bore the name Rosie M. Banks? That name surely was driven deep into Bingo's awareness, as he read her works to his uncle, in the Jeeves-inspired plan for convincing Mr Little Senior that it was to your credit if you wished to wed a waitress.

Why did Bingo at no stage, in reporting to Bertie the progress of his love affair, actually name the girl? Might Bertie not have thought to inquire? Was PGW hiding something from us?

I suggest that Rosie M. Banks was actually her pen-name, but she had become so accustomed to operating under that cloak that it stuck with her in private life, continuing into her marriage, so that Bingo for ever after would refer to her automatically as "Rosie".

Think of the espionage writer John le Carré: it is not his real name, but readers customarily think of the man who conceived Smiley and his people as "John le Carré". I am therefore convinced that Rosie M. Banks was a nom de plume – possibly adopted for tax purposes (a cause close to Plum's heart).

And I present one other puzzle: why were Rosie and Julia Purkiss such buddies? Yes, they went to the same school – but were they of comparable vintage?

We are told that Henry Cuthbert Purkiss is a stout elderly party; there is no suggestion that he married youth, so the implication, and the whole tenor of the stories, offers the prospect that Mrs Purkiss also is elderly. In such a case, would she not have left school long before Mrs Bingo started – and for that reason, how could they be "old school chums"?

Rosie M. Banks is a considerable figure in Wodehouse, but I fear that by failing to fill the blanks in her life, Plum has not done her justice. Or has he deliberately left this grey area for us to study and speculate, in hope of reaching a reasonable conclusion, as we waltz our way endlessly through his melodious literary muse?

Two Overlooked References: We do our best to include all press mentions that members send us, but every so often something falls through the cracks. Such was the case with two Wodehouse mentions that PAUL KERRIGAN sent last October. One was from *The Irish Times* of 8 August, in which an article on poster campaigns began with the comment: "Driving through Roscommon the other evening one could not help noticing, as Bertie Wooster might have put it, that the population was rather far from being grunted." The other reference was an excellent review of Arrow's paperback reprints of selected Wodehouse works; the author was glowing in his praise of Wodehouse and even mentioned the Russian Wodehouse Society (how he overlooked our own happy group is unknown). See <http://bit.ly/wYczqP> for the full article.

Wodehouse on the Boards

OR

Never Forget Wodehouse's Theatrical Career

For a week in November 1917, Wodehouse achieved the extraordinary feat of having contributed lyrics to five shows playing simultaneously on (or just off) Broadway. That is such a well-known statistic that it must seem barely worth repeating.

Except that almost 95 years later, he is about to find that his name will be attached to a greater or lesser extent to three shows playing simultaneously – on (or just off) Broadway. For a short period in April, there will be:



1. *Sitting Pretty*, the last 'Princess' style musical comedy written by Bolton, Wodehouse, and Kern, presented by Musicals Tonight! at the Lion Theatre on W42nd Street, from 17 to 29 April (for information on ticket availability, see www.musicalstonight.org/previews.html);
2. *Anything Goes*, the Bolton, Wodehouse, and Cole Porter show from the mid-1930s, in its latest incarnation, continuing its amazingly successful revival, which started in January 2011 at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre and is now booking until September 2012 (for ticket information, go to <http://bit.ly/wtqlaF>);
3. *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, a new show written by Joe DiPietro, incorporating some dozen or more George and Ira Gershwin songs, and with a plot containing significant elements of the Bolton, Wodehouse, Gershwin show from 1926, *Oh, Kay!* (see <http://niceworkonbroadway.com/>).

Much farther off-Broadway, the Ohio Light Opera Company (based, of course, in Wooster – where else?) seemed to be getting on the bandwagon by including *Miss Springtime* in their 2012 season. Take care before rushing off to see it, though. It seems to be a rather more direct adaptation of the original 1917 show, *Die Faschingsfee*. Still, with music by Emmerich Kálmán – though not Kern – it has an English libretto by Steven Daigle. So it is unlikely, I think, that it will feature such serious PGW songs as 'Saturday Night'!

– Tony Ring

Letters to the Editor

From Barry Lane

With regard to your December 2011 article ('Who's Your Modern Bertie?'), you may like to know that when Nigel Farage (Leader of UKIP) was in the 6th Form at Dulwich, he not only wore spats but also invited Enoch Powell to address the School without the Master's knowledge. Please tell Kushla that, if Nigel still has the spats, I suggest to him that they be passed to her son, 12-year-old Charlie, the very worthy winner of the competition and a true embodiment of Bertie Wooster.

From David McDonough

What a great article by Patrick Carroll ('Plum at the Polo Grounds', December 2011). A treat for those of us who are both Plumites and baseball fans!

I agree with Patrick that Rube Waddell could well have been the model for Looney Biddle, although by the year 1921, when Plum published *The Indiscretions of Archie*, Waddell had been dead for seven years. Still, he was in his heyday when Plum first came to America, and his exploits were in all the papers. Sadly, some modern historians suspect Waddell was mentally ill.

Plum didn't keep up with baseball, though. In 1917, when, in *Piccadilly Jim*, he described Matty as "shutting out the Cubs the day before I sailed", Christy Mathewson was retired, having thrown in only 13 games in 1916. And he didn't shut out the Cubs that year. But in his prime, when Plum was first in America, his duels with Cubs great Mordecai 'Three Fingers' Brown were the stuff of legend. So kudos to Plum for paying tribute to one of baseball's greatest pitchers. And all hail Patrick Carroll, who did such a fine job reminding us of Plum's baseball interest.

From Ian Isherwood

I thought you might be interested in a recent publication of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (August 2011), in which researchers examined the effect of age on linguistic markers using a measure of language called the MCU (mean clauses per utterance – or sentence). The MCU revealed no decline in language production with age. They concluded that P G Wodehouse (and G B Shaw) continued writing as well as ever into old age!

It was a country house dinner party. No fewer than ten of Hampshire's more prominent stiffes had been invited to the trough, and they stuck on like limpets long after any competent chucker-out would have bounced them. No doubt, if you have gone to the sweat of driving twenty miles to a house to dine, you don't feel like snatching a chop and dashing off. You hang on for the musical evening and the drinks at ten-thirty.

(From *The Mating Season*, 1949)

Where Is Twing Hall?

by Alexander Dainty and William King

In his celebrated short story ‘The Great Sermon Handicap’, P. G. Wodehouse takes Bertie and Jeeves to Twing Hall in Gloucestershire, the country home of Lord Wickhammersley. But where exactly is Twing Hall? Gloucestershire is a large county, stretching from Bristol in the south to the Forest of Dean in the west and the Cotswolds in the north and east. From the internal evidence of the story, together with information about where Wodehouse himself spent some of his childhood holidays, it has been possible to make a few speculations.

The first point to note is the names of the villages listed at the beginning of the story. With the exception of Stapleton, a real village in south Gloucestershire which has been absorbed into the city of Bristol, all the names are highly suggestive of the Cotswolds in the north of the county. Little Clifton-on-the-Wold, for example, is reminiscent of Stow-on-the-Wold, a small market town; Fale-by-the-Water suggests Bourton-on-the-Water, and Gandleby-the-Hill is similar to Clapton-on-the-Hill, a village a few miles to the south.

Given that Wodehouse spent some of his holidays with his parents in Cheltenham, it is likely that the Cotswolds was the area he had in mind when writing the story.

Wodehouse tells us that Bertie caught the five-ten from Paddington, which was “late as usual”, and that he was only just able to “dead-heat with the soup”. In the days of steam, he might have reached Stroud or Cheltenham in about three hours, with possibly a change in Swindon. Perhaps Lord Wickhammersley might have sent a car to complete the journey, but he can hardly have arrived at Twing Hall much before nine o’clock.

It remains, therefore, to search for a substantial country house in the area – not a stately home, but a residence appropriate to a peer of the realm. We researched the country around Stow-on-the-Wold and Bourton-on-the-Water, and a strong candidate emerged in Wyck Hill House, now a fine country hotel but once the home of the then Arthur Edward Wrigley. The villages of Upper Rissington and Little Rissington (themselves suggestive names) are about three miles to the south.

If you look at the OS Landranger map 163 covering Cheltenham and Cirencester, and look towards Bourton-on-the-Water and Stow-on-the-Wold, you will find Wyck Hill on the A424 and the word ‘hotel’ directly underneath. It is our belief that here is the model that Wodehouse used for Twing Hall in ‘The Great Sermon Handicap’.



Wyck Hill House, near Stow-on-the-Wold, which the authors posit is the model for Twing Hall

“Don’t speak of her in that horrible casual way. She’s an angel. An angel! Was she talking about me at dinner, Bertie?”

“Oh, yes.”

“What did she say?”

“I remember one thing. She said she thought you good-looking.”

Young Bingo closed his eyes in a sort of ecstasy. Then he picked up the notebook.

“Pop off now, old man, there’s a good chap,” he said, in a hushed, far-away voice. “I’ve got a lot of writing to do.”

“Writing?”

“Poetry, if you must know. I wish the dickens,” said young Bingo, not without some bitterness, “she had been christened something except Cynthia. There isn’t a dam’ word in the language it rhymes with. Ye gods, how I could have spread myself if she had only been called Jane!”

(From ‘The Great Sermon Handicap’, 1922)

Blandings Returns to Television

The Wodehouse world is abuzz with the news that the BBC is producing a new television series based on Wodehouse's Blandings stories. Appropriately titled *Blandings*, it will be written by Guy Andrews, who is also executive producer, and will star Timothy Spall as Lord Emsworth (incorrectly referred to as "Clarence Emsworth" in one press release) and Jennifer Saunders as Lady Constance. The casting of the solidly built Mr Spall as our beloved thin, dreamy-headed peer has sparked lively discussions in online Wodehouse forums, but the general feeling is that his outstanding acting abilities will more than compensate for the physical discrepancy. At the time of going to press, there was no word on who would be playing the Empress.

There will be six half-hour episodes, all set in 1929, and filming will take place in Northern Ireland

later this year. In an interview, Mr Andrews noted: "For any writer, it is the rarest privilege imaginable to have Wodehouse legitimately available as source material. Instead of just stealing from him as we usually do."

The series will be co-produced by Mammoth Screen, leading us to speculate that Lord Tilbury is somewhere behind the scenes, perhaps manoeuvring to steal the Empress while Lord Emsworth is busy on set.



Timothy Spall will play Lord Emsworth

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Arthur Robinson

Mine was a misspent youth. At the age of 21, I had never read any Wodehouse. I had heard of him, and put him on my mental list of authors to read someday, most of whom I have still not got around to. (Excuse me—around to whom I have still not got.) I had the impression that he had written before World War I (which of course was true), and was startled in 1975 to hear that he had just died.

In 1977 I took a summer job in the library of Trinity College (the one in Hartford, Connecticut, USA). One Thursday afternoon, while re-shelving books, I discovered a row of Wodehouse novels, including *A Damsel in Distress*, a title I recognized from the 1937 film. That evening I checked it out and took it home. It usually takes me at least two weeks to finish a book, but I finished *A Damsel in Distress* that night, and on Friday I checked out two more Wodehouse novels for the weekend. By Sunday afternoon I had finished both, and waited impatiently for Monday so I could go back to work and get some more Wodehouse. I was hooked.

Soon I had finished all the Wodehouse books in the college library and local public library, and I scoured all the bookshops in the city to find more. When I visited my parents at Christmas, I raided the bookshops and libraries in their area. Then in August 1978 I went to graduate school at Indiana University and discovered that their library had a nearly complete set of

Wodehouse. One book, *Ice in the Bedroom*, was in the rare book library, so I read it on a Saturday morning, surrounded by scholars studying medieval manuscripts and First Folios. When I returned it, the librarian looked at the cover and said she had wondered why I was laughing so loud. Apparently readers in rare book libraries are not expected to laugh like Honoria Glossop. I suspect that some of the scholars present wrote strongly worded letters to the committee.

By 1982 I had read all of Wodehouse's books except for a few, mostly the early school stories, so I ordered those from England. After that I suffered withdrawal symptoms, until I read somewhere about Wodehouse's uncollected magazine contributions. I searched the library's card catalog and found they had *Punch*, *Windsor*, early volumes of *Strand Magazine*, and many other magazines with Wodehouse stories and articles.

Now, 34 years after my first Wodehouse experience, I am still seeking more Wodehouse, with the help of McIlvaine's bibliography, Madame Eulalie's website, and the research of Tony Ring and others. On a recent trip to London, I bagged some more early articles and verse, and read some of his unpublished plays in the British Library. There is still more out there, and I am now devouring the new volume of Wodehouse's letters. My last Wodehouse experience is, I hope, still far off.



The Unrest Cure

by Tony Ring

Society members – and Wodehouse readers generally – enjoy a wide range of experiences directly or indirectly as a result of their interest. Two new members, Rob Groves and Simon Godziek, have recently experienced one of the most unusual – and most satisfying – that I have yet encountered.

Each has been reading Wodehouse since the mid-1970s (Rob having been introduced to *Thank You, Jeeves* by a school-friend at 16, and Simon's mother being the source for his introduction to *Carry On, Jeeves*), and they met in 1979 as undergraduates at the University of Bath. It was more than 30 years later – in 2010 – that they became aware of each other's mutual admiration for Wodehouse as they met at a tube station on the way to a night at the theatre, each carrying the Wodehouse paperback they had been reading on the train.

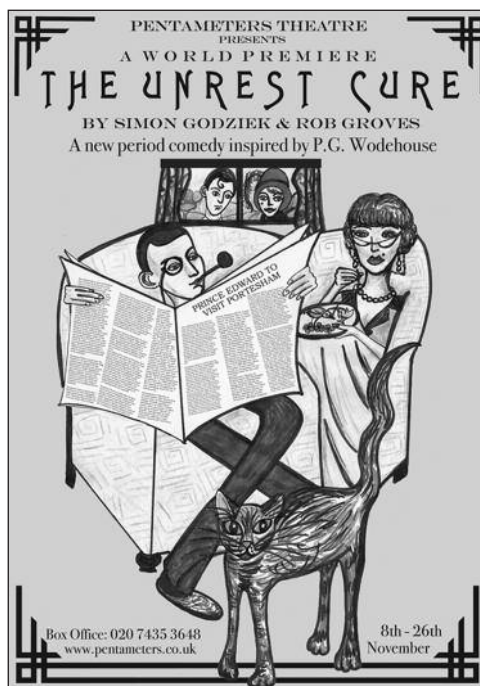
Around the same time, Rob, a theatrical agent, had been challenged by Léonie Scott-Matthews, artistic director of the Pentameters Theatre in Hampstead, to write and direct a play which she would produce. It was the work of a moment to discuss with Simon the idea of writing a play in the style of Wodehouse, and they chose as a basic plot the short story 'The Unrest Cure' by Saki. They believed that their extensive familiarity with Wodehouse would enable them to reflect the language, slang, and cadences to be found in the manners, attitudes, and etiquette of the early 1930s without descending to pastiche. After the first draft had been submitted for comment to a retired West End producer, and the opening scene rewritten, Léonie Scott-Matthews

arranged a read-through by professional actors, and commissioned it on the spot.

In November 2011, the play, retaining the title *The Unrest Cure*, ran for a well-attended three-week season of 17 performances at the Pentameters Theatre, earning a set of very creditable reviews. The marketing poster and programme made clear the

influence of Saki and Wodehouse on the production, and the enthusiasm of the writers fed through to the actors, who were all clearly enjoying themselves. As were the audience, including the members of the Dramatic Society of Haberdashers Askes School, who were there with two of their masters the night I saw the play.

Simon's other life is spent working for the charity Disability and Development Partners, which works with disabled people in some of the world's poorest countries. Even there, Wodehouse may sometimes be found; Simon says that the oddest place he ever found a Wodehouse book was in a guest house in Maputo, Mozambique – three Jeeves and



Woosters bound in one volume and the undoubted highlight of the establishment's library. It was, he says, "most likely placed there to distract one from having to acknowledge that one is indeed in Maputo, a city (unlike other parts of the country which are beautiful) where even its mother would have difficulty in finding aspects to compliment."

Here is a clear challenge to members – to describe your most unusual and unexpected experiences which have come about directly or indirectly through reading Wodehouse. The Editor awaits your submissions.

A Clutch of Clerihews

Sir Watkyn Bassett
Would scarcely be an asset
To a group of Bright
Young Things celebrating Boat-Race Night.
– Jonathan Bacchus

Veronica Wedge, the obedient beauty
Has been told by Mother it's her duty
To allow Tipton's approaches.
It'll mean a ring and diamond brooches.
– Norman Murphy

G. (ha ha) Butterwick
Knew every female trick,
So made Monty play possum
Next door to Lottie Blossom.
– Jenny & Susan Inglis

Sir Roderick Spode
Would march down the road
With his bunch of cohorts
Dressed up in their black shorts.
– Geoff Millward

What with one thing and another,
Lady Constance detests her brother.
His worst crime is to foster
Imposter after imposter.
– Jenny & Susan Inglis

In Search of P G Wodehouse – in Palm Beach

by Masha Lebedeva

Last October, before attending the formidable LTWS Convention in Dearborn, I spent a week in Florida. Following the advice of Norman Murphy, I re-read the *Bring On the Girls*, chapter 10, where Wodehouse describes his trip with Ethel and Guy Bolton to Palm Beach in December 1919.

They arrived at Palm Beach by train, which crossed Lake Worth (part of the Intracoastal Waterway) and stopped at the station, connected by the covered way with the Royal Poinciana hotel – the largest wooden construction at that time. They stayed at the Royal Poinciana, and their rooms overlooked the golf course (then with only nine holes), which had been laid out between the Royal Poinciana and the Breakers hotels. They even spent one night at Bradley's Beach Club, the nation's longest-running illegal gambling casino.

Unfortunately, none of the buildings described by Plum have survived to the present day. The Breakers hotel burned down in 1925, and the building that we see today was rebuilt in 1926. The Royal Poinciana was demolished in 1936, and the five-storey Palm Beach Towers condominium now stands at the former Poinciana site. Trains no longer run to the island of Palm Beach, and the Palm Beach Plaza was built on the land of the railway station. The Beach Club was closed in 1945 and razed later by a Colonel Bradley. Even the golf course, though it still exists, was completely redesigned in 2000, and it is now known as the 18-hole Breakers' Ocean Golf Course.

Nevertheless, one can step on the land where Plum's feet once stood. In 1960 a marker was placed at the site of the Royal Poinciana. It sits in Cocoanut Row, which, according to the internet, runs through the spot where the Royal Poinciana's Ballroom was located. From the former site of the Royal Poinciana, you can still reach the Breakers along the Australian Pine Walk. A century ago, guests of the Royal Poinciana or The Breakers could cross the grounds

between them on a mule-drawn trolley, which ran between rows of Australian pine trees.

Though not described by Wodehouse, several buildings from his time there have survived, standing within a few feet of the former Royal Poinciana's grounds. These are: Whitehall (built in 1902) – the residence of Henry Flagler, the 'father-founder' of Palm Beach (and now a museum); the Royal Poinciana



Masha, seeker of traces of Wodehouse in Palm Beach



The present-day version of The Breakers

Chapel (the Little Church at that time), built in 1898 in a vacant lot, donated by Flagler, at the south end of the Royal Poinciana hotel; and Sea Gull Cottage, today the oldest house in Palm Beach, which was constructed in 1886 (in 1893 it became Flagler's first winter residence in Palm Beach). The cottage was located next to the Royal Poinciana. In 1984 it was moved, and now it is the Parish House of the Royal Poinciana Chapel.



Sea Gull Cottage, which Wodehouse would have seen

Anyone in those days arriving for the first time in America's number one winter playground would have had to be very blasé not to experience a thrill. There was magic in the place. Nowadays you are deposited at a shabby Florida East Coast station situated in the least glamorous section of Palm Beach's frowsy namesake on the wrong side of the tracks, but when Guy and Plum opened their eyes shortly before eight that December morning, they found their train crossing a blue lagoon fringed with royal palms and a little later were deposited in a shining, white-painted terminus festooned with brilliant-hued bougainvillea.

(From Bring On the Girls, 1953)

The Wooster Family Tree: Tying Up Some Loose Threads

by Yasmine Gooneratne

Like many other readers of P. G. Wodehouse, I fell under the spell of the Master when I was still a child. In my case, the spell arrived in the form of a Christmas gift, when my book-obsessed parents presented me with a copy of *The Code of the Woosters*. After that beginning, the Bertie-Jeeves combination exerted a potent charm that continued throughout school and university days. I subsequently became a teacher of literature with a particular attachment to the novels of Jane Austen, and that made me very attentive, when re-reading Wodehouse, to the setting in which Jeeves and Bertie live and move and have their being.

“3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on,” wrote Jane Austen, while advising her novel-writing nieces and nephews on the choice of a suitable subject. The families of Bertie’s world are ‘county’ families, and they inhabit stately homes all over England. Brinkley Court, Market Snodsbury, that earthly paradise inhabited by Bertie’s favourite aunt Mrs Dahlia Travers and her second husband, Tom, is a large mansion in Worcestershire, the county in which resides also Dahlia’s younger (step-) brother the Hon. Clive Wooster. Easeby, owned by Bertie’s Uncle Willoughby, is in Shropshire. Woollam Chersey, Steeple Bumpleigh, the property of Bertie’s Aunt Agatha (Lady Worplesdon), is located in Hertfordshire (although in one novel, *Joy in the Morning*, the Wodehouse typewriter seems to make a rare slip, for it places this splendid house in Hampshire).

As if this scattering of Woosters all over England were not enough, their tentacles – and especially those of Aunt Agatha – extend into the homes of their relatives and friends. Lady Malvern, author of a book on social conditions in India and a resident of Much Middlefold, in Shropshire, is a close friend of Agatha’s. So are Miss Mapleton, headmistress of St Monica’s, a girls’ school at Bingley-on-Sea; the widowed Lady Wickham (mother of ‘Bobbie’ Wickham), who lives at Skeldings Hall, Hertfordshire; and Dame Daphne Winkworth, who dominates her sisters at Deverill Hall, King’s Deverill, Hampshire. Kathleen Travers, Dahlia’s sister-in-law, is married to a baronet, Sir Reginald Witherspoon, Bart., of Bleaching Court, Hampshire; and Sir Watkyn Bassett, CBE, Metropolitan Police Magistrate, resides at Totleigh Towers, Totleigh-in-the-Wold, Gloucestershire.

The Woosters of the novels live in stately homes, visit others, and are visited in turn by their owners.

One of Bertie’s first cousins, the Hon. Algernon Wooster, is among those present at a house party in Blandings Castle, Lord Emsworth’s home in Shropshire. Since, on this occasion, there is “nobody in the house who did not belong to the clan” (*Something Fresh*, chapter 7), the possibility arises that Clarence, 9th Earl of Emsworth, and his two sons, Lord Bosham and the Hon. Freddy Threepwood, are related to the Woosters. Dahlia Travers, too, does her share of country house visiting, notably to Eggesford Hall, Maiden Eggesford, Somerset, home of Colonel James and Lady Elsa Briscoe, who own a racing stable. The reader is confronted by an intricate social network that has its roots in the landowning county families of England, but ultimately reaches as far as South Africa (where Bertie’s cousins Eustace and Claude, twin sons of his pig-rearing uncle, the Hon. Henry Wooster, are forced by their Aunt Agatha to emigrate in order to make a living); and the United States, where Bertie’s (step-)cousin Augustus Mannering-Phipps (‘Extricating Young Gussie’) is dispatched for the same reason, and by the same person.

When my daughter gave me a present of the Folio Society’s set of the Bertie-Jeeves novels, my fascination with this family network led me to try my hand at constructing a family tree for Bertie. Very soon I came upon a major problem: the absence of names or titles for his parents. But, quickly realising that the idea of building a family tree must have occurred to other readers beside myself, I called for help. A tentative inquiry to *Wooster Sauce* editor Elin Murphy brought the delightful news that a family tree for Bertie did indeed exist, the ingenious construction of John Fletcher, who published an article on the topic in *Plum Lines* in June 1990. Elin kindly sent me a copy of Mr Fletcher’s ‘tree’, which, though it did not yield actual names for Bertie’s parents, satisfactorily indicated where they fitted into the Wooster clan.

What follows is intended to complement, rather than replace, the work done by John Fletcher in ‘disentangling’ Bertie Wooster’s relations. Readers who have not encountered Mr Fletcher’s useful work might like to know that its cornerstone is his well-founded theory that Bertie’s grandmother (whose name is never revealed) was twice married: first to a member of the Mannering-Phipps clan, and second time around to a Wooster (Lord Yaxley). Her first marriage produced three children: Agatha, Cuthbert, and Dahlia Mannering-Phipps. Of these three,

Cuthbert married Bertie's 'Aunt Julia', an English vaudeville artist, and fathered a son, Augustus (Gussie) Mannering-Phipps. The two girls took on their stepfather's surname (Wooster) when their mother remarried.

So far, so good. But is that all there needs to be said? Some threads appear to be loose in the fabric created by Mr Fletcher, and readers like myself who would like to try tying them up soon come upon some problems. I believe I have discovered three. First among these: the fact that though familiarity with the novels allows us without difficulty to trace names for eight aunts and uncles of Bertie's and an older half-sister resident in India (together with titles, where they exist), even Mr Fletcher's 'tree' does not reveal the names of Bertie's parents. Well, here, for what it's worth, is a simple solution: is it not probable that Bertie's father would have passed on his name to his only son? I think it very probable. Consequently, in the list on the next page, I have styled Bertie's father 'the Hon Bertram Wooster'. This would make the Hon. Bertram the second in age of the six male children from the second marriage of Bertie's grandmother Mrs Mannering-Phipps (to a Wooster, Lord Yaxley). His elder brother would have been George Wooster (Lord Yaxley, aka 'Piggy'), and his younger siblings would have been Willoughby, Henry, Clive, and James Wooster.

A second grey area: where does Bertie's extensive fortune come from? Stiffy Byng mentions it when, forbidden by her guardian to marry the clergyman she loves, she threatens to marry Bertie instead, and "take a whack at the Wooster millions". She is referring to Bertie's inheritance which enables him to exist 'beautifully' for all time, free of financial worries of any kind. What is the source of his wealth?

I suggest that it comes to him from his 'Uncle Willoughby' Wooster, at whose country house in Shropshire he is expected to spend a week or so each summer. Bertie tells us that he must be on his best behaviour while at Easeby, for he is down in Uncle Willoughby's will "for a substantial chunk of the right stuff". Was 'Uncle Willoughby' a Wooster, or a Travers? He could have been either: Mr Fletcher suggests that he is the brother of Bertie's (un-named) mother, which would make her a Miss Travers, and make him Sir Willoughby Travers, Bart. I, on the other hand, prefer to think of 'Uncle Willoughby' as Sir Willoughby Wooster, Bart. My reason for this divergence from Mr Fletcher's theory is based on the fact that neither Agatha nor Dahlia have high opinions of their nephew's intellect, and that Jeeves even goes so far as to describe his employer as "mentally negligible". Bertie's parents, making allowance for the intellectual shortfall in their only son, and dying young (as they obviously did, since they are no longer around when the novels begin), could have appointed Sir Willoughby Wooster, younger brother of Bertram (Sr.), to take charge of

Bertie's inheritance until Bertie came of age. Willoughby would not, of course, have been an ideal choice as a guardian of the young – he is the author of *Recollections of a Long Life*, a raffish autobiography – but he is kindly, hospitable, and richer than his male siblings. Readers will recall that Jeeves enters Bertie's employment just before one of Bertie's visits to Easeby. Since 'Uncle Willoughby' fades out of the picture very soon afterwards, leaving Bertie a bachelor of independent means with a flat in London and Jeeves as a permanent fixture in it, we could assume that Jeeves has replaced Sir Willoughby Wooster as Bertie's 'keeper'.

Finally, where does Algernon Wooster, guest at Blandings Castle in *Something Fresh*, fit in? Mr Fletcher suggests that he is the younger brother of Bertie's father, and is therefore Bertie's uncle; accordingly, Algernon is listed as 'Hon. Algernon [Wooster]' in Mr Fletcher's family tree. However, though Algernon is mentioned twice in *Something Fresh*, on neither occasion does Wodehouse award him the title of 'Hon' (which he certainly would have done if Algernon had been, like Bertie's father, the son of an Earl). I prefer to think of "young Algernon Wooster" as Bertie's cousin, rather than as his uncle, and would suggest that he is the son of Bertie's clergyman uncle, Rev. the Hon. James Wooster.

Readers who have not fallen under the master's spell might well question the time and effort spent by John Fletcher, myself, and (very probably) numerous others in tracing the forebears of a fictional invention such as Bertie Wooster. I can only reply that I offer what follows, not so much as a family tree for Bertie Wooster, which has already been convincingly supplied by Mr Fletcher, but as a guide for fellow novelists who, like myself, might care to observe the detail with which P. G. Wodehouse (a 'writer's writer' if ever there was one) builds the world which his principal character inhabits.

The Wooster Circle: A Tentative Guide

The fictional English family that bears 'the fine old name of Wooster' in the novels of P. G. Wodehouse is an ancient one, a Sieur de Wooster having presumably come over from France with William the Conqueror in 1066. Some members of the family fought at Agincourt, and others "did their bit in the Crusades". Also part of Bertie's inheritance and background is the Mannering-Phipps family, seemingly even more ancient than the Woosters, for they "were an old-established clan when William the Conqueror was a small boy going round with bare legs and a catapult" ('Extricating Young Gussie', 1917). Proud in the knowledge that his ancestors fought at the battles of Crécy and Joppa, and later under Wellington in the Peninsular War, Bertie Wooster's ideas about *noblesse oblige* and the 'feudal spirit', like his determination to live up to his image of himself as a *preux chevalier* in the noble Wooster

family tradition, are possibly derived from the example set by these distinguished ancestors. So is his code – i.e., “A Wooster never lets a pal down”. (Cf. *The Code of the Woosters*, chapter 8.)

(1) THE WOOSTER FAMILY CIRCLE

The list below (starting with Bertie’s formidable Aunt Agatha) gives the members of Bertie Wooster’s immediate family in what I believe is likely to have been the order of their seniority, together with selected details drawn from the Wodehouse books that illustrate their characters and the nature of their relationships with Bertie and with one another. The second gives in alphabetical order the names of persons who, having married into the family or being distantly related to some of its members, may be regarded as family connections of the Woosters.

Agatha Mannering-Phipps (later **Wooster**). Also known (to her nephew Bertie, who lives in terror of this particular relative) as ‘The Pest of Pont Street’ and ‘The Curse of the Home Counties’. *Une femme formidable*. Having voluntarily adopted, on her mother’s remarriage, her stepfather’s surname of Wooster, Agatha is married twice –

(1) To **Spenser Gregson** ‘of the Stock Exchange’. Agatha and Spenser Gregson are the parents of

one son, **Thomas (“Thos”) Gregson**, dedicated film fan

and, following her husband’s demise, she is married again

(2) To a peer, **Percival Craye Lord Worplesdon**, father, by a previous marriage, of

one daughter, **Lady Florence Craye**

one son, **Edwin Craye**, a keen Boy Scout

Lord Worplesdon is also guardian of

one ward, **Zenobia (“Nobby”) Hopwood**

Cuthbert Mannering-Phipps. A lavish spender. He and his wife, **Julia**, a vaudeville artist, have

one son, **Augustus (Gussie)**. Official head of the Mannering-Phipps family, married to **Ray Denison**, an American musical comedy actress.

Dahlia Mannering-Phipps (later **Wooster**). Bertie Wooster’s favourite aunt, the “genial [step-]sister of my late father”. Voluntarily adopting, on her mother’s remarriage, her stepfather’s surname of Wooster, Dahlia is married twice –

(1) To ? (Name not known)

(2) To **Thomas Portarlington Travers**. Dahlia and Thomas Travers are the parents of

one daughter, **Angela**, engaged to Hildebrand (“Tuppy”) Glossop

one son, **‘Bonzo’** (still at school)

George Wooster, Lord Yaxley. Official head of the Wooster family. Clubman. For many years a bachelor, George (‘Piggy’) eventually marries his first love and

old flame, **Maudie Wilberforce** (former barmaid at the Criterion Bar, London).

Hon. Bertram? Wooster (Sr). Married twice. He and his first wife (name unknown) are the parents of

one daughter (**Mrs Scholfield**). Mother of 3 daughters. Resident in India.

He and his second wife (formerly **Miss Travers?**) are the parents of

one son, **Bertram Wilberforce (‘Bertie’)**. Elegant ‘insouciant *boulevardier*’ of independent means, the darts champion of his London club (The Drones)

Sir Willoughby Wooster, Bart. Residence: Easeby, Shropshire. Author of *Recollections of a Long Life*. Was possibly appointed to administer Bertie’s inheritance until Bertie came of age. Leaves his money to Bertie.

Hon. Henry Wooster. A pig farmer. Married to **Emily Wooster**. They have three sons –

(1) & (2) The twins **Eustace Wooster** and **Claude Wooster**, six years younger than Bertie, elected members of the Seekers Club at Oxford; and

(3) their younger brother, **Harold Wooster**

Hon. Clive Wooster. Resident in Worcestershire. Possibly a bachelor.

Rev. the Hon. James Wooster. Presumably .the father of one son, **Algernon Wooster** (who makes a brief appearance as a guest at a Blandings Castle house party in *Something Fresh*, chapters 7 and 8).

(2) WOOSTER FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Clarence, 9th Earl of Emsworth. Owner of Blandings Castle, in Shropshire. Lord Emsworth and his two sons, Lord Bosham and the Hon. Freddy Threepwood, are possibly related to the Woosters.

Hildebrand (“Tuppy”) Glossop. Engaged to Angela Travers, daughter of Dahlia and Thomas Portarlington Travers.

Percival, Lord Stockheath (‘poor Percy’), a cousin of Algernon Wooster.

George Travers. Bachelor, possibly a brother of Kathleen Travers Witherspoon and of Thomas Portarlington Travers.

Kathleen Travers. Sister of Thomas Travers. Married to Sir Reginald Witherspoon, Bart., of Bleaching Court, Hampshire.

Thomas (Tom) Portarlington Travers. Keen collector of old silver. Wealthy husband of Dahlia Travers. Father of Angela and ‘Bonzo’ Travers.

Maudie Wilberforce. Former barmaid at the Criterion Bar, London. Marries George Wooster, Lord Yaxley.

Percival Craye, Lord Worplesdon. Second husband of Agatha Wooster Gregson. A shipping magnate and owner of the Pink Funnel Line.

About the Author



Emeritus Professor Yasmine Gooneratne, an academic, poet, novelist, and critic, holds degrees from the universities of Ceylon, Cambridge, and Macquarie in New South Wales. Patron of the Jane Austen Society of Australia, she received the Order of Australia in 1990 for services to literature and education. She lives in Colombo and is the author of numerous books, including studies of Jane Austen, Alexander Pope, Leonard Woolf, and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, and a biography of Sir John D'Oyly co-authored with her husband, a physician and historian. Her fiction includes *A Change of Skies* (awarded the Marjorie Barnard Literary Prize for Fiction in 1992) and *The Sweet and Simple Kind*, which was shortlisted for both the 2007 Commonwealth Writers Prize and the 2008 Dublin International IMPAC Literary Award. Her fourth novel (inspired by P. G. Wodehouse, and currently in draft) is tentatively titled *Rannygazoo: Or, The Mystery of the Missing Manuscript*.

Thoughts from Your Editor

Like any job, being an editor has its ups and downs. On the up side, I have the enormous pleasure of reading and publishing a great number and variety of submissions to these pages. On the down side, despite the care I take in editing and laying out each issue, sometimes embarrassing mistakes are made, leaving me rather, er, ruddy-complexioned. In the last issue of *Wooster Sauce*, I admitted to numerous boo-boos that had found their way into print in September, and I promised to eat more fish. I should have started a piscine diet sooner than that. Somehow I managed to overlook the fact that the December 2011 issue was numbered, not 60 as it should have been, but 66.

Also, on page 23 of that issue, I referred to the author Bailey White as "he" when in fact it should have been "she". Clearly I'm living evidence of the expression "nobody's perfect" – my apologies to all readers, especially those who collect *Wooster Sauce*.

Mistakes notwithstanding, I have had another problem, albeit of a more positive nature. Because I remain swamped with submissions to the journal, I thought it was time once again to advise members that there can be a considerable delay in seeing articles, especially the longer ones, through to publication. Editorially, I am a one-woman band and have only 24 (sometimes 28) pages to work with. Each issue becomes a jigsaw puzzle as I attempt to fit in as many pieces as I can, giving priority to reports of recent events, topical stories, and regular features. I also get an abundance of short items and 'nuggets' that have to be incorporated into regular columns or fillers. The work required to edit and assemble each issue is tremendously time-consuming, especially for just one person.

I must therefore beg the patience and understanding of all contributors, whether you have submitted a major article or a filler item. I will do my best to get your submissions in – so do please keep sending them. There may be a delay, sometimes a long one, before they appear – but you are the lifeblood of *Wooster Sauce*.

Desert Island Winners

by Jonathan Bacchus

To mark the 70th birthday of BBC Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* programme, a list of all the 'castaways' and their choices of book and 'luxury' items have been published. I was delighted to see that an impressive 17 castaways chose one or more books by PGW. Here is the list (the dates are those of the original broadcasts):

Douglas Adams (06-Feb-94): *The Golf Omnibus*
 John Allegro (25-Jun-62): Some PGW novels
 Rowan Atkinson (15-May-88): *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*
 Henry Blofeld (30-Nov-03): *A Pelican at Blandings*
 Robert Bolt (16-Jan-71): Novels of PGW
 George Chisholm (13-Mar-82): Novels of PGW
 Dr. Richard Dawkins (22-Jan-95): *The Jeeves Omnibus*

Stephen Fry (27-Nov-88): *The Jeeves Omnibus*
 Anatole Grunwald (29-Mar-65): PGW golfing stories
 Hugh Johnson (12-May-84): Complete works of PGW
 Ann Leslie (07-Nov-04): Complete works of PGW
 Jonathan Lynn (20-Oct-84): Collection of Jeeves & Wooster novels
 Jimmy Mulville (01-Aug-10): Complete works of PGW
 Lord Oaksey (11-Apr-93): *Mr Mulliner's Memoirs* [?]
 Peter Sallis (17-May-09): Collected works of PGW
 Alan Titchmarsh (07-Jul-02): One of the Blandings novels
 Terry Wogan (09-Oct-88 /21-May-83): The collected works/Favourite Wodehouse books

Mastermind Quiz #4: Utridge

by David Buckle

Well done, all who sent in answers for December's quiz! But our numbers are starting to diminish, so to stimulate participation, this time around we will offer four AudioGO Wodehouse audiobooks as prizes for David's test of your knowledge of the Utridge stories. Winners will be chosen at random from the correct answers received. Please submit your answers by April 30 to Elin Murphy: via post to 9 Winton Avenue, London N11 2AS; or via email to editor@pgwodehousesociety.org.uk.

1. What is Stanley Featherstonehaugh Utridge's distinctive preferred outdoor wear?
2. In which English county is Utridge's farm in *Love Among the Chickens*?
3. In 'Utridge and the Old Stepper', what does the old stepper suggest that Utridge get Myrtle Bayliss for her birthday?
4. What does Lieutenant-Colonel B. B. Bagnew (ret.) do in 'Utridge and the Home from Home' when he thinks there is a burglar in Aunt Julia's house?
5. In 'Success Story', what does Oakshott, the butler, turn the Cedars, Wimbledon Common, into when Aunt Julia was away (having apparently been shocked at Utridge's suggestion to do the same)?
6. Why does Utridge pawn Aunt Julia's brooch in 'The Level Business Head'?
7. In 'Utridge's Accident Syndicate', what does Utridge get a vagrant to do at Teddy Weeks's wedding after the film star has spent the syndicate's money?
8. After the failure of the chicken farm in *Love Among the Chickens*, what is Utridge's proposed next venture?
9. In 'A Bit of Luck for Mabel', what possession of Aunt Julia's does Utridge pawn in order to buy gifts for Mabel?
10. What is the name of the horse that Looney Coote bets on following on from Utridge's misadventures in 'The Long Arm of Looney Coote'?

Results of the December Quiz

Bravo (or brava) to Patrick Carroll, Elissa Foppa, and John Looijestijn, whose names were drawn at random from among those submitting correct answers to December's quiz. They have all won a Wodehouse audiobook, generously supplied by AudioGO (see audiogo.co.uk for a complete list of all Wodehouse titles they publish). Others who submitted correct answers were Stephen Briggs, Stephen Griffiths, Alan Hall, Brian Porter, Hans Schrijvers, and Nick Townend. Congratulations to all!

Answers to the December Quiz

1. Mr Mulliner's preferred drink is a Hot Scotch and Lemon.
2. Miss Postlethwaite is the Angler's Rest 'courteous and efficient' barmaid.
3. Mr Mulliner has three nephews named George.
4. Wilfred Mulliner was the inventor.
5. Webster is the cat left in Lancelot Mulliner's care.
6. Evangeline Pembury (Mrs Egbert Mulliner) is the authoress.
7. Ignatius Mulliner plays the ukulele.
8. Eustace Mulliner worked at Switzerland's embassy.
9. Lancelot turned down the chance to work for Jeremiah Briggs.
10. Archibald Mulliner is the expert impersonator of a hen laying an egg.

The Word Around the Clubs

Gussie Fink-Nottle Would Approve

Last autumn, BBC1 broadcast a series entitled *The Manor Reborn*, documenting the restoration of Avebury Manor. ALEXANDER DAINTY informs us that the episode of December 8 showed how workers came upon a colony of great crested newts, a protected species, in the Avebury garden. Work was consequently delayed, though we have no idea what happened to the newts.

All for a Good Cause

In December, LENNART ANDERSON sent along an item he had found in *The Star* of June 21, 2011. As had been reported in the WS September Press Comment, charity workers at the Chesterfield Oxfam store were delighted to discover several early Wodehouse novels in a box of donated books, including first editions of *Psmith in the City* and *Psmith Journalist*. Intrigued, Lennart decided to find out what happened to the books and sent an inquiry to Oxfam. He was informed that, happily, the books were sold

Further Details Will Be Provided

by Tony Ring

5 – The Right Approach – Eventually

The short story ‘The Right Approach’ is the second of the post-war stories whose complex history prior to its narration at the Anglers’ Rest deserves a separate article of explanation. It was only in the 1959 collection *A Few Quick Ones* that Mr Mulliner became involved, although, interestingly, the magazine version in *Lilliput* in September 1958 had Augustus Mulliner as a major character. However, in that version, the story was not narrated by Mr Mulliner himself.

Remarkably, three separate stories – and four magazine presentations in all – come together in ‘The Right Approach’, that in *Lilliput* being closest to the book version. They can be summarised as follows:

‘Dudley Is Back to Normal’	<i>Strand</i>	July 1940
‘Joy Bells for Barmy’	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	October 1947
‘The Right Approach’	<i>Lilliput</i>	September 1958
‘The Right Approach’	<i>Playboy</i>	January 1959

Perhaps the starting point of any analysis is to take the *Cosmopolitan* story, ‘Joy Bells for Barmy’, and reflect that the major characters in this story are Beatrice (wife of Wilberforce Gudgeon), Hermione Brimble, Eustace (Barmy) Fotheringay-Phipps, Mervyn Potter, the dog Tulip, and Bulstrode.

Barmy Fotheringay-Phipps is a Drone who, with the alternative Christian name Cyril, appears in a number of short stories such as ‘Fate’ and ‘Tried in the Furnace’ (both in *Young Men in Spats*, 1936), and in person or offstage in several novels in the Jeeves & Wooster saga. He is also the title character in *Barmy in Wonderland*.

Mervyn Potter is also a significant character in the latter novel, and indeed, ‘Joy Bells for Barmy’ is largely incorporated into it as chapters 5 and 6. The dog Tulip has a starring role, and the language in many instances is very similar. Barmy is Cyril rather than Eustace in this novel, in which he is overcome with desire for Dinty Moore rather than Hermione Brimble. She in turn is engaged to Mervyn Potter. There is no doubt that the chapters in the novel evolved from this short story.

It is now necessary to go back a further seven years to the *Strand* magazine of July 1940, and introduce into the equation the story ‘Dudley Is Back to Normal’. This story was offered to the *Saturday Evening Post* and rejected, and as *Colliers* were only prepared to offer \$750 instead of the more usual \$3,000 or so, Wodehouse wrote to his US agent, Paul Reynolds, on 26 June, 1939, saying that he would rather withdraw it:

If *Colliers* refuse it will you withdraw it from circulation. I may be able to get an idea for rewriting it. Perhaps it would be better as a story told at the Drones Club by the Crumpet. It may be significant that it is the only story I have written in years which is told as a straight story instead of being a yarn by Mr Mulliner or somebody.

‘Dudley’ had Bobbie Wickham as a key character, and as mentioned in ‘Further Details – 3’ (WS, September 2011), her mother had previously been identified as a cousin of Mr Mulliner. ‘Dudley Is Back to Normal’ follows on from ‘The Awful Gladness of the Mater’ (another Bobbie Wickham story which had later been converted into a Mulliner narrative), in which Dudley Finch, whilst under the influence (of Bobbie, not the sauce), had visited Skeldings Hall. While there, he had encountered Lady Wickham in circumstances which were not wholly conducive to producing the appropriate feelings of love and tenderness necessary for the development of a Wodehouse beau’s romance. The tenderness was more likely to have been felt in his nether regions, he having had to escape from Skeldings using knotted sheets and landing in a lovely soft flowerbed along which, at regular intervals, were planted large bushes of a hard and spiky nature.

It is of little wonder that Dudley, left mulling over his wounded body and soul, was relieved to be going to Australia with his benefactor, Mr Sampson Broadhurst, away from female Wickhams of all shapes and sizes. But it is on his first visit back to the UK (complete with Australian fiancée Ellabelle) that he once again encounters his former love. In a dress rehearsal for ‘Joy Bells for Barmy’, he is introduced to Bobbie’s cousin Cuthbert Wickham (who plays the role later taken by Mervyn Potter, and, indeed, Oswald Stoker) and is treed by the dog Tulip. Even the house Balmoral, in Wimbledon Common, is used in both stories.

It is fairly evident that these two stories, neither of which had appeared in book collections, were plagiarised by Wodehouse, first for the version of ‘The Right Approach’, which was published in *Lilliput* in 1958, and, after being rewritten yet again, for *Playboy* in 1959. For once, the reason for a rewrite is susceptible to a relatively straightforward explanation. *Playboy*’s policy was not to accept any contributions that had previously appeared anywhere in

the world, so the *Lilliput* story could not be submitted to it for consideration in its original form. Many of the changes from *Lilliput* to *Playboy* were in fact cosmetic, as indeed were the further alterations made to convert it from the *Lilliput* version to a traditional Mulliner story on its inclusion in the *A Few Quick Ones* collection. .

The *Lilliput* and book versions both starred Augustus Mulliner (taking Barmy's role), Hermione Brimble, Beatrice (now Mrs Willoughby Gudgeon), Oswald Stoker (taking the Mervyn Potter role), Staniforth (equivalent to Bulstrode), and Russell Clutterbuck, the American publisher, the catalyst for the story's plot development. Tulip lost his name and changed from a "large beige Tanganyika lion dog" to an anonymous dog "not unlike the Hound of the Baskervilles though not covered in phosphorous".

The *Lilliput* version has a neat ending, with Augustus and Hermione going off to find a few frogs which, together with a toad already in their possession, they considered might amuse the butler Staniforth. This scene was omitted from the *Playboy* version. Many of the other changes in the *Playboy* version were merely in the names of some of the characters. Augustus Brattle replaced Augustus Mulliner in the lead role, and the love of his life became Evangeline Elphinstone-Golightly, whose mother was not named. She did, however, have a nephew named Oswald Stoker, playing the same role as in *Lilliput*.

Russell Clutterbuck had retired, to be replaced as Augustus's employer by J Lester Clam of Lester Clam Inc, music publishers. (There is no evidence to suppose he was related to J Chichester Clam of Clam Line Inc fame in *Joy in the Morning*.)

We hope that readers will appreciate that not all these subtleties could have been easily explained in *A Simplified Chronology of P G Wodehouse!*

A Cosy Moment

(See more Cosy Moments on page 21)

The Impossible Art of Golf: An Anthology of Golf Writing, selected by Alec Morrison (1994)

(From Barry Chapman)

Barry writes that an examination of Wodehouse's golf writing takes up pages 212–225 of this book, with a mixture of commentary and quotations from Wodehouse's stories; the primary source being 'Chester Forgets Himself' in *Omnibus of Golf Stories* (1973). In addition, the book contains an anecdote by E. Phillips Oppenheim, who describes a game of golf played with Wodehouse. At the end of the day, PGW discussed how far he had hit one ball in particular (lost but then found):

There was a glow of happiness in P. G.'s expression. He dragged me down to where the ball had been found and checked the distance going back. Then he filled a pipe and was very happy.

Poet's Corner

Painless Dentistry

A sympathetic, kindly man
That dentist was of whom I sing;
He long had tried to find a plan
To lessen people's suffering:
It made him feel extremely ill,
His tears he barely could restrain,
Whene'er his deftly-wielded drill
Elicited a howl of pain.

"I feel a brute, distressed, ashamed,
Although my work's so highly fee'd."
Then "Jove! I've got it!" he exclaimed,
"A gramophone is what I need.
If every patient's favourite air
Was started as he took his seat,
A visit to the dental chair
Would be – by George – a perfect treat."

An hour within that dentist's room
Is now as good as any play:
A Sousa march will banish gloom,
Or *Hiawatha* make things gay.
The forceps, once a thing of fear,
Is treated as the best of jokes:
The patient smiles and bends his ear
To catch the strains of *Smokey Mokes*.

And every day from ten to four
(Such is the news that rumour speaks)
You'll find in queues outside his door
Excited crowds with swollen cheeks.
Perhaps the rumour has its truth.
It may suit some. Myself I own,
I'd rather have an aching tooth
Than listen to a gramophone.

From *Daily Chronicle*, 11 February 1904

(In response to a report that a certain dentist was using a gramophone to lessen the horrors of tooth drawing.)

"Beaten my own record by five yards,"
he confided with a grin.
"But listen," I pointed out, "how many
matches do you win?"
"I never win a match," was the prompt
reply. "I spend my golfing life out of
bounds. I never even count my strokes. I
know that I can never beat anyone who
putts along down the middle. All the same I
get more fun out of golf than any other man
I know when I am hitting my drives."

The Bibliographic Corner *by Nick Townend*

The Swoop: Part Two

In the first part of this article, I reviewed the publishing history of *The Swoop*, ending with details of its serialisation in 2006–10 by The P G Wodehouse Society (UK) with the claim that the title “has never been republished in the UK”. As I mentioned last time, I recently discovered that such a claim is not correct, and that there was a serialisation some 40 years previously.

Story Paper Collector was a periodical founded by a certain William Henry Gander (a newsagent in Manitoba) and first published in Canada in January 1941. It focused on the work of Frank Richards (of Billy Bunter and Greyfriars fame) and also on the Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee stories. A periodical with a similar focus, *Collectors’ Digest*, was founded in England in 1946 by one Herbert Leckenby.

In 1948 enthusiasts from *Collectors’ Digest* founded the London Old Boys’ Book Club, and a Northern Old Boys’ Book Club was established in 1950. In 1961 Wodehouse became President of the Northern Old Boys’ Book Club, succeeding Frank Richards, who had recently died (Mary Cadogan, *Frank Richards: The Chap behind the Chums*, 2000, p56).

In 1966, following Gander’s death, *Story Paper Collector* was incorporated within *Collectors’ Digest*, and the resulting periodical was published under the title of *Story Paper Collectors’ Digest*.

The July 1969 issue of *Story Paper Collectors’ Digest* (Vol 23, No 271) is of particular interest for the purposes of this article. Page 6 contains the following paragraph: “Sixty years ago, P G Wodehouse had already made a name for himself as a writer of first-class stories of school life. He was also becoming noted for a delightful, whimsical satire which was to bring him countless thousands of admirers all over the world. This story, written over 60 years ago, is sought by collectors, but is almost unobtainable at any price today. Here it is, for CD [*Collectors’ Digest*] readers, with the blessing of its famous author.”

There then follows the first magazine serialisation of *The Swoop*. The July 1969 issue (Vol 23, No 271, pages 6–9) contains the text of the first two chapters in its entirety and the illustration (right) which originally appeared on page 14 of the first edition, showing the news of the invasion relegated below the cricket news on a newspaper poster.

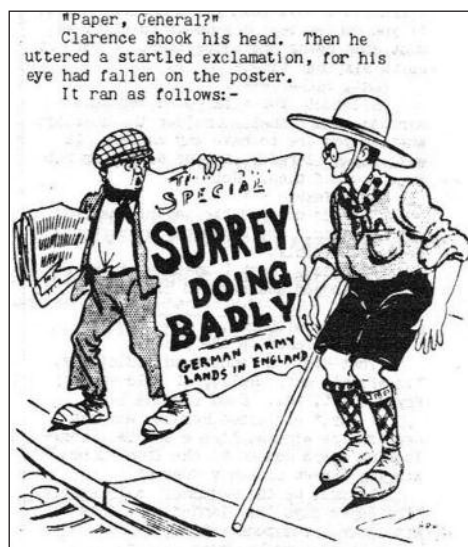
The August 1969 issue (Vol 23, No 272, pages 11–14) continued the serialisation, covering chapters 3–6. However, the text was quite considerably abridged. Generally, the abridgements fell into three categories: removing sentences which were not essential to the plot development; removing references which were no longer topical after 60 years; and removing language (relating to the actions of “dark-skinned warriors from the distant isle of Bollygolla”) which was probably felt to be no longer appropriate.

The September 1969 issue (Vol 23, No 273, pages 13–14) continued the serialisation, but contained only the final chapter, 11, in unabridged form, together with the illustration entitled “Clarence at the Duchess’s” from page 119 of the first edition. The action from the omitted chapters 7–10 was summarised in the introduction to the final chapter as follows: “England had been invaded by seven hostile countries. Always ready to commercialise anything, the music halls offered tempting contracts to the various generals of the invading armies. It was Horace [*sic*] of the scouts who set them squabbling amongst themselves. Horace [*sic*] saved England – so Horace [*sic*] himself is commercialised.”

Readers will no doubt be asking why the serialisation was truncated so suddenly. Unlike the case of *The Pothunters* in *The Public School Magazine*, it was not that this was to be the last issue of *Story Paper Collectors’ Digest*. The explanation provided by the magazine was as follows: “When we print a very old story in CD we do it with the object of giving readers the opportunity to read something which they cannot read elsewhere. *The Swoop* has now been reissued in facsimile by University Microfilms Ltd of Penn, High Wycombe, at 44/-. In view of this we are

winding up our serialisation with the final chapter of this delightful satire.”

If I had been amazed to discover the serialisation of *The Swoop* in *Story Paper Collectors’ Digest*, I was astounded to read the announcement of the facsimile by University Microfilms Ltd. I have never seen such a facsimile mentioned in any discussion of Wodehouse, and am intrigued to know if any copies exist. If any reader can supply further details, I would be delighted to hear from them.



Cosy Moments

Enthusiasms, by Mark Girouard (2011)

(from Ian Alexander-Sinclair)

In this book Girouard, an architectural historian, writes about other areas of interest for him, including PGW. His essay 'P. G. Wodehouse: From Hack to Genius' shows that he has certain critical reservations, but overall he is a Plum admirer. Ian cites this particularly delightful passage from the essay:

Wodehouse had an extraordinary ear and eye for the absurd: for double meanings, ambiguities and clichés in English language and literature; for all the oddities and snobberies in English society; for other absurdities wherever he found or could create them. Armed with this equipment he moved into his chosen venue – London clubland, golf courses, country houses, village entertainments, briefly and gloriously Hollywood – and spun out of what he found there his own filigree structures, which only approximately relate to the basis of reality on which they are raised. "Structure" is the wrong word, though, for work which is on the move, not static – moving with lightness, speed and economy to its conclusion, bang, bang, bang, and keeping the reader continuously delighted and amazed as it moves.

Summer Term at Trebizon, by Anne Digby (1979)

(from Nick Townend)

In this novel, the heroine is a second-form girl called Rebecca Mason (presumably age 12 or 13). Nick's daughter Ella spotted two Wodehouse references:

A faint stir of interest ran through the room, but Rebecca wasn't even listening. Before the lesson began she'd started reading a P. G. Wodehouse under the desk and was now deeply engrossed. (Chapter 12)

Rebecca didn't hear Max coming back to the form room. She was well into her book. . . . Much better to escape into a book than think about unpleasant things. At the moment, the

world of Blandings Castle seemed infinitely preferable to real life. . . . "Rebecca Mason. Come out here in the corridor." Guiltily, Rebecca shoved Wodehouse inside her desk, and went out to join Max in the corridor. (Chapter 13)

Introduction by Maeve Binchey to *An Eye for An Eye*, by Anthony Trollope (Folio Society, 1993)

(from Barry Chapman)

In describing one of Trollope's characters, Binchey writes: "Nobody but a Woosterish twit would have got himself into such a pickle as Lieutenant Fred Neville did, and if he had been a stronger man the huge conflicting forces swelling on each side to capture his heart and his promises would have been calmed."

***Empire of the Clouds: When British Aircraft Ruled the World*, by James Hamilton-Paterson (2010)**

(from Mike Rush)

In the introduction to this book, the author quotes from Wodehouse's *Blandings Castle* (1935):

They say Great Britain is still a first-class power, doing well and winning respect from the nations: and if so, it is, of course, extremely gratifying. But what of the future? That was what Lord Emsworth was asking himself. Could this happy state of things last? He thought not.

***Arthur and George*, by Julian Barnes (2005)**

(from Mike Rush)

The Arthur of the book's title is Arthur Conan Doyle, and Barnes writes as Doyle:

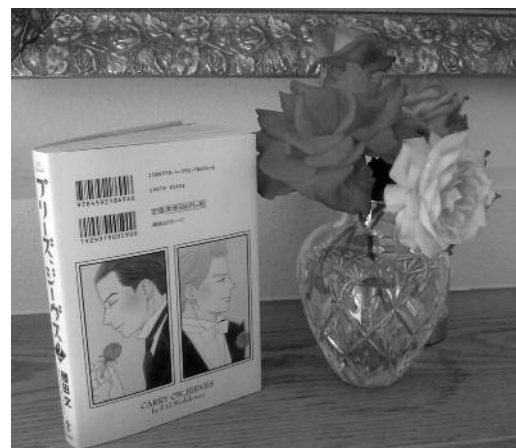
Captain of Authors v Actors. . . . On that June day he had opened the batting with Wodehouse, who got himself comically bowled for a duck. Arthur himself had made two, and Hornung didn't even get an innings. Horace Bleakley had made fifty-four. Perhaps the better the writer, the worse the cricketer.

Answers to The Words of Wodehouse (page 17)

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Reginald / wan | 9. Gooch / yo-yo |
| 2. O'Casey / sweat | 10. Lewis / wash |
| 3. Doctor / thaw | 11. ovens |
| 4. Early / ha-ha | 12. Stephen |
| 5. Reach / font | 13. Something |
| 6. iota / wheat | 14. Offing |
| 7. Cuthbert | 15. Pelham |
| 8. Kipling | |

Quote: He had a pair of shaggy eyebrows which gave his eyes a piercing look which was not at all the sort of thing a fellow wanted to encounter on an empty stomach.

Character: Roderick Glossop



Still Life with Wodehouse Manga, by Karen Shotting

Recent Press Comment

Kansas City Steaks, Holiday 2011 Catalog

(from Sharon Mitchell)

Offered a new dish, “frenched long bone Berkshire chop”, which they claimed is the “world’s finest pork”.

The Guardian, November 3

Robert McCrum noted the contrast between new books of Wodehouse and Hemingway letters, stressing the point that while they are both 20th-century literary greats, Wodehouse, the humorist, “gets one highly commercial volume put together by an overworked scholar and mother-of-two”, while the Hemingway volume is the first of a number to be published by CUP “organised by a fearsome team of American editors”.

Daily Telegraph, November 7

A review by Charles Spencer of a stage adaptation of Raymond Chandler’s *The Big Sleep* at The Mill, Sonning, drew attention to the “surprising amount” the Old Alleynians Chandler and Wodehouse had in common, “not least brilliant verbal panache and an underlying sense of moral decency”.

Financial Times, November 12

An article by A N Wilson naming six great fictional clergymen included the Rev. ‘Beefy’ Bingham alongside Rev. Josiah Crawley, Archdeacon Hoccleve, Rev. William Collins, Father Brown, and Pope Hadrian VII, and pointed out that in some respects Beefy is the closest to BBC television’s contemporary vicar in the comedy *Rev.*

BBC Radio 4, November 14

The introductory remarks to *I’m Sorry I Haven’t a Clue*, from Guildford, mentioned that it was PGW’s birthplace.

The Times, November 19

Philip Howard’s ‘Literary Quiz’ asked the question “What was the beat of PC Ernest Dobbs?”, and provided the abbreviated answer “King’s Deverill, Hants”.

Time Magazine, November 23

Lev Grossman, author of *The Magicians*, wrote a lengthy article, ‘In Praise of P G Wodehouse’, in which he explained that he came late to Wodehouse, his wife slipping a Jeeves volume into his overnight bag as he started a book tour. He started reading it “around city number 10” and “I don’t know if I’ve ever derived such an immense sense of calm and well-being from any book as I did from *Right Ho, Jeeves*”. The article as a whole described the awakening of Wodehouse’s world to a successful American fantasy novelist in terms to which all Society members can relate.

Daily Telegraph, November 26

Published an obituary of the late Society patron Jonathan Cecil, who died on September 22. The obit made specific mention of his show about Wodehouse, *Plum Sauce*, and the more than 40 PGW audiobooks he recorded.

Sunday Telegraph, November 27

Nigel Farndale’s article about the extensive diaries kept by James Herriot (the pen name of Alf Wight) as a student started by referring to a conclusion that he had been a Wodehouse fan, from the nature of the language used and one or two direct references. He then pointed out that the very successful Herriot books portrayed the

lives of hard-bitten farmers in the North of England as evocatively and whimsically as Wodehouse portrayed the lives of decadent aristocrats in the south.

The Times, December 2

Ran a piece listing ‘50 Reasons to be Cheerful’, and invited some of the paper’s columnists to offer their suggestions. Caitlin Moran suggested: “Getting in a hot bath with some P J [sic] Wodehouse and thinking about all the people who are pretending to enjoy skiing and will probably break their collarbones and spend until February pitifully asking people who didn’t go skiing to help them do their shoelaces.”

The Hindu, December 3

Lala Anantharaman used the new book of letters as an excuse to see whether Wodehouse’s work carried the sort of ‘imperialist sub-text’ recently reported to exist in the *Thomas the Tank Engine* books. He concluded that there wasn’t.

The Times, December 3

Sophie Ratcliffe’s book of Wodehouse letters was included in the suggested list of books for Christmas in the ‘biography and memoir’ category.

Wall Street Journal Magazine, December 3

(from Beth Carroll and Tom Hooker)

There were two PGW mentions in an article on four stately homes in the UK: “I half-expected to run into Wodehouse’s prickly Duke of Dunstable, the brain-specialist Sir Roderick Glossop, or Percy Pilbeam, the finder of lost pigs”; and (in reference to the Earl of Arran) “As the house parties are ushered into his presence, he emits a curious high cry which, to borrow a phrase from P. G. Wodehouse, he may have picked up from some wild duck of his acquaintance.”

The Times, December 14 (from Keith Alsop)

A letter referring to a report in the paper of a “storm-toppled tree” falling through the roof of a house pointed out: “Had [the owner] been more familiar with the works of P G Wodehouse, he would have described the noise as like the Royal Albert Hall, rather than the Eiffel Tower, falling into the Crystal Palace.”

The Globe and Mail, New Yorker, et alia, around December 16

Many articles and obituaries concerning Christopher Hitchens referred to his well-known love of Wodehouse’s writings.

The Guardian (guardian.co.uk), December 18

Graham Linehan, who has recently adapted *The Ladykillers* for the stage, explained how he did so using a ‘dynamite’ principle, recognising that sometimes remaining ‘faithful’ to the source can be the worst way to give a good account of the original material. He went on to say: “I wish the dynamite principle was applied more often to P G Wodehouse adaptations. Transcribe the events of a Wodehouse novel to the screen in a straightforward fashion, and you’ll leave people wondering what the fuss is about. You need new scenes and characters – and new plot twists for those new characters. Lose all that prose without providing a cinematic

replacement, and you might as well train the camera on a paperback lying on the floor. Something, in other words, needs to fit in that Wodehouse-shaped hole."

The Times, December 24

Philip Howard's 'Literary Quiz' asked the question: "What does a Drone buy at Blucher's of Burlington Arcade?"; answer: "Famous for generations as purveyors of gentlemen's neckties and shirtings".

Daily Telegraph, December 28

An end-of-year quiz included the question: "Nicknamed 'Plum', which celebrated British author was knighted in the 1975 New Year's Honours, a mere six weeks before he died?"

Times Literary Supplement, December 29

A N Wilson's review of *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* provided a comprehensive overview of Wodehouse's life as a "writing machine".

Business Standard (India), January 5

Reviewing Meryl Streep's performance in the film *The Iron Lady*, Charles McGrath wrote that "Streep effortlessly imitates those burnished, sometimes strident, declamatory tones, the one that novelist Angela Carter once said were 'reminiscent not of real toffs but of Wodehouse aunts'".

New York Times, January 3, 2012

Reporting on the relative popularity of different ballets in the UK since early December, the article noted: "This year, *The Nutcracker* has prevailed during the time that P G Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster likes to call 'the festives'."

BBC2 (King George and Queen Mary: The Royals Who Saved the Monarchy), the Daily Mail, and BBC1 (The Diamond Queen): respectively January 3, January 30, and February 6 (from a number of members, including Ian Alexander-Sinclair, Peter Read, Larissa Saxby-Bridger, and Mike Swaddling)

Each, with differing details, commented on the report, derived from researches into our present Queen's childhood, that when her late mother sent the then Princess Elizabeth books for summer reading, all 17 (or 18) in the parcel were novels by P G Wodehouse.

The Times, January 10 (from Christopher Bellew)

The clue to 11 down in the day's crossword was "Royal having to marry wife gets through another dose of medicine, upper-class twit!" (6,7). The answer is "Bertie Wooster".

Times Literary Supplement, January 13

(from Barry Chapman)

In a letter to the editor regarding A N Wilson's review of *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters*, John Yohalem pointed

out that Wodehouse's Broadway collaborations were not with Cole Porter, as Wilson had written, but with Jerome Kern on the 'Mermaid Theatre' shows.

Huffington Post, January 14

Ritwik Deo wrote an article entitled 'Jeeves in India: Why Does India Love P G Wodehouse?', following a visit to "witness something incredible: a P G Wodehouse re-enactment club in [New Delhi]".

Wall Street Journal, January 15 (from Barbara Jacobitti)

A review of *Below Stairs* by Margaret Powell, who worked below stairs in London in the 1920s, and was republished in the wake of the second season of *Downton Abbey*, mentioned that "Wodehouse gleefully subverts the stereotype of the passive manservant by giving his cretinous Bertie Wooster a brilliant valet, Jeeves, whose service to his helpless employer goes so far beyond discreet resourcefulness as to constitute behind-the-scenes control."

The Nation (Pakistan), January 26

A lyrical article by Chamburji entitled *Of myths and granddads* included this wonderfully evocative sentence: "The other day, as I sat reading my P G Wodehouse in the sun, my grandson padded up to me with his pet chameleon perched contentedly on a forearm."

The Guardian, January 31 (from Nirav Shah)

In an article regretting the run of failures in international cricket by the talented batsman Eoin Morgan, the writer suggested that Bertie Wooster's sentiments on first seeing Pauline Stoker (comparable to those of stout Cortez when with eagle eyes he stared at the Pacific and his men looked at each other with a wild surmise, silent upon a peak in Darien) were akin to those of most English cricket fans the first time they saw Morgan bat.

Total Politics, February (from Mark Taha)

When asked the question "What literary character would you like to be?" the Liberal Democrat Lord Addington replied: "That would have to be Jeeves. Anyone who hasn't at times wanted to be as smart and cool as P. G. Wodehouse's famous manservant has either an inflated idea of their own abilities or a lack of imagination."

Southern Writers Magazine, February 2

Lucy Merrill's recommendation for Valentine's Day – after describing her appreciation of the romantic themes in most Wodehouse books – was to "have a little Plum with your champagne and chocolates".

The Telegraph (online), February 15

In an article on how there are no good English novels about sport, Allan Massie named Wodehouse's *Mike* and *The Head of Kay's* as being among the few books in which cricket plays a major role.

"Did you visit England?"
"Only passing through."
"How did it look?" asked Mr. Faucitt eagerly.
"Moist. Very moist."

"It would," said Mr. Faucitt indulgently. "I confess that, happy as I have been in this country, there are times when I miss those wonderful London days, when a sort of cozy brown mist hangs over the streets and the pavements ooze with a perspiration of mud and water, and you see through the haze the yellow glow of the Bodega lamps shining in the distance like harbor-lights. Not," said Mr. Faucitt, "that I specify the Bodega to the exclusion of other and equally worthy hostleries. I have passed just as pleasant hours in Rule's and Short's. You missed something by not lingering in England, Sally."

"I know I did – pneumonia."

(From *The Adventures of Sally*, 1922)

Future Events for Your Diary

April 14, 2012 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Explore Wodehouse's London with Norman Murphy! The walk is free and lasts about 2½ hours (10–12.30).

April 17–19, 2012 *Sitting Pretty* in New York City

Musicals Tonight! presents the last 'Princess' musical by Bolton, Wodehouse and Kern. See page 21 for information about this and other Broadway productions featuring Wodehouse in some way.

April 29 and May 6, 2012 *Uncle Fred in the Springtime* on BBC Radio 4 (two 1-hour episodes)

Martin Jarvis adapted and directed this production, starring Alfred Molina as Lord Ickenham, plus Patrica Hodge, Rufus Sewell, Christopher Neame, and others.

May 25–27, 2012 A Wodehouse Weekend in Norfolk

We are close to full capacity on the coach, but if you may yet want to join the tour, see page 3.

June 15, 2012 Gold Bats vs. The Dulwich Dusters

Our annual match at Dulwich College will commence around 4.30 p.m. and will include the celebrated tea. *Please note that spectators must have tickets for the tea*; applications are enclosed with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

June 24, 2012 Gold Bats vs. Sherlock Holmes Society

The date of this match is now fixed. As usual, we will be playing at the cricket ground located just off the A40 (Oxford Road) in West Wycombe. See page 3.

July 10, 2012 Society Meeting

We will meet in the upstairs room of The George, 213 Strand, from 6 p.m.; the evening's entertainment will be announced in the June issue.

July 28, 2012 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Another chance to join Norman on a walk around Wodehouse's London. See April 14 for details.

September 8, 2012 Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Final chance this year to join Norman on a walk around Wodehouse's London. See April 14 for details.

September 15–16, 2012 Royal County of Berkshire Show

The Society sponsors the Berkshire Champion of Champions competition; judging takes place on Sunday morning at the show grounds in Newbury.

November 13, 2012 Society Meeting and AGM

We will meet in the upstairs room of The George, 213 Strand, from 6 p.m.; the AGM will be followed by a speaker (to be announced).

October 25, 2012 Dinner at Gray's Inn

Applications forms and full details regarding the Society's biennial dinner at Gray's Inn will be supplied in the June 2012 edition of *Wooster Sauce*.

October 18–20, 2013 TWS Convention in Chicago

Preliminary notice of The Wodehouse Society's 17th biennial convention, to be held at the Union League Club in Chicago, Illinois.

CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Translating P G Wodehouse | 12 The Wooster Family Tree: Tying Up Some Loose Threads |
| 3 Society News | 15 Thoughts from Your Editor |
| 4 <i>P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters</i> (review) | 15 Desert Island Winners |
| 5 What Other Reviewers Had to Say | 16 Mastermind Quiz #4 & Results of December Quiz |
| 6 Is Rosie M. Banks for Real? | 16 The Word Around the Clubs |
| 7 Wodehouse on the Boards | 17 The Words of Wodehouse (acrostic) |
| 7 Letters to the Editor | 18 Further Details Will Be Provided – 5 |
| 8 Where Is Twing Hall? | 19 A Cosy Moment |
| 9 Blandings Returns to Television | 19 Poet's Corner: <i>Painless Dentistry</i> |
| 9 My First Wodehouse Experience | 20 Bibliographic Corner: <i>The Swoop</i> , Part Two |
| 10 <i>The Unrest Cure</i> | 21 Cosy Moments |
| 10 A Clutch of Clerihews | 22 Recent Press Comment |
| 11 In Search of P G Wodehouse – in Palm Beach | |